



ONE WHO SERVES

Diocese of Harrisburg

NORMS AND GUIDELINES FOR PARISH PASTORAL
COUNCILS



Bishop of Harrisburg

April 29, 2013

Dear Friends in Christ,

Parish Pastoral Councils are an essential element of parish life and an invaluable resource to pastors in providing good pastoral leadership for the overall life of the parish. This revised version of *One Who Serves* is provided to assist you in establishing, educating and maintaining an active parish Pastoral Council. It also serves as an effective tool in the mission of evangelization.

Originally promulgated in 2005 by my predecessor, Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades, this manual has been updated in light of canonical standards and diocesan policies and the call to direct our efforts toward a New Evangelization. Every parish is blessed with enthusiastic parishioners who possess gifts of time, treasure, and talent and a deep desire to serve the Church.

As Bishop of Harrisburg, I reaffirm these twelve norms as particular law for our diocese to ensure common pastoral practices among all Parish Pastoral Councils and mandate that each pastor or parish administrator establish and maintain a Parish Pastoral Council according to these diocesan norms. Please review this material and share it with your staff and Pastoral Council so they may function more cohesively and effectively.

The ministry of evangelization and spreading the good news of Jesus Christ is shared by all of us. May we continue to work together to strengthen parish life and our service to the people of God.

Sincerely yours in Jesus,

Most Reverend Joseph P. McFadden
Bishop of Harrisburg

ONE WHO SERVES

DIOCESE OF HARRISBURG

DIOCESAN NORMS AND GUIDELINES FOR A PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL



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Revised 2013

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EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

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.

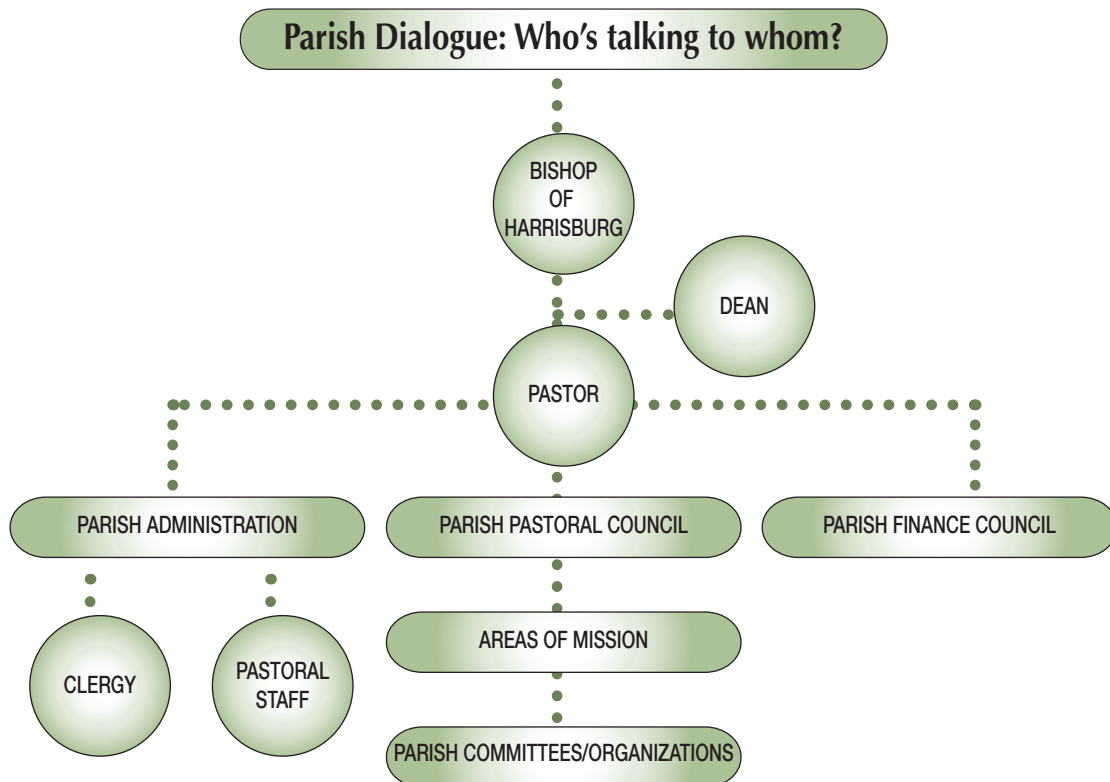
*“I have come among
You as one who serves”.*

(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 Laboure
 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
 Doylestown, 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

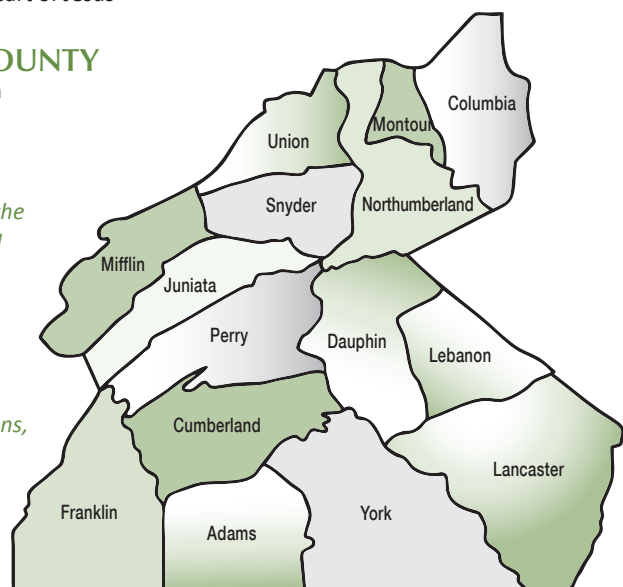
Selinsgrove, Saint Pius X

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



THE PARISH VISION

In a parish setting, all of the parishioners collectively should have dreams about their parish or be encouraged to have them. The parish is a living entity, driven by the life-giving Holy Spirit. Hopes and dreams are part of the vitality of any parish for they help to identify what is important to the parish community.

It is up to the parish leadership to invite parishioners to dream. The pastor may choose to begin with his Parish Pastoral Council, a representative group of the parishioners. With the help of this Parish Pastoral Council, the pastor may want to create a parish profile. It is this profile that can provide useful data to help the council begin to develop a vision of where the parish should be heading. The Parish Pastoral Council, in turn, could share this profile with the various ministries of the parish and solicit ideas from them. The pastor may also encourage, through various ways, those not connected through ministries to express their own hopes for the parish. Everyone who comes to a Sunday Liturgy desires some connection, some spark, to make their weekly celebration of the Liturgy more than an obligation. Listening to and sharing ideas and hopes can kindle this spark and give new meaning to parish life.

Setting up a format to accomplish this is the real challenge. It is the same challenge that confronted Jesus early in his ministry. As a young man, he was aware of what he was all about when he said to his parents, *“Do you not know that I must be about my Father’s affairs?”* As a young man he knew that Isaiah was referring to him when he wrote, *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord”*. (Lk 4,4-18) Jesus reflected on what it meant to be “anointed”

and how to carry out the challenges of Isaiah. This is how Jesus created the foundation of His church and identified its purpose.

The challenge of any parish is similar. A parish finds its identity and mission through its hopes and dreams, based on the mission of the whole Church in Sacred Scripture. The Acts of the Apostles provides many facets as to what Church should look like as a community of believers. The Apostles and disciples provided many models of how to reach out to the unbelievers and nurture the believers. Adapting these scripture texts to a parish is where the dreaming begins. The vision of a parish should determine its direction, its goals and its priorities.

While such discernment takes much time, it provides the springboard for eventually developing a Parish Pastoral Plan. But first, a parish vision leads to the articulation of a Mission Statement that provides the parish identity.

THE MISSION STATEMENT

Jesus’ format to carry out his vision into a productive mission is apparent from the Gospel narratives. Along the way, as He preached the Good News and supported his preaching with signs and good works, he

THE MISSION STATEMENT OF THE DIOCESE OF HARRISBURG

To proclaim the goodness of God
and to make truly present and
active the one, Holy, Catholic
and Apostolic Church of Jesus
Christ to all people through the
power of the Holy Spirit.

would remind those around him what he was about. At the very beginning of his ministry, he began to articulate his **Mission Statement** based on that passage from Isaiah (Isaiah 61:1-2). He told his newly chosen Apostles, *“Let us go into the nearby villages that I may preach there also. For this purpose have I come.”* (Mk 1, 38)

He had another part to his mission. Realizing his time on earth was limited, he prepared the twelve he personally chose and the people who chose to follow him, to carry on his mission after he ascended to the Father. At one point, on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he said to Simon and his companions. *“Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men.”* (Lk 5, 10)

Church History, beginning with the Acts of the Apostles, relates in detail how the various churches founded by Peter, Paul and their successors in many different lands down through the ages, kept before them the vision of Jesus and articulated it into the mission of the church as it spread across the world. As the faces of the people changed from country to country, so too did the needs of the people and the methods of challenging the people to persevere in the Faith. From the very beginning, the small communities of Catholics had to continue dreaming and hoping, examining their situation and, if necessary, making adjustments and changes, setting new courses for their mission so that the mission of Jesus could take root in the hearts of anyone who heard his Good News.

Today, this challenge continues as each parish uses its talents to gather all of the parishioners’ dreams and hopes together into a vision for the parish so that the pastoral leadership can begin to develop the Parish Mission Statement according to the vision of Jesus Christ. The Parish Mission Statement will articulate the dreams and hopes of the

parishioners. It establishes the boundaries within which the parish can successfully carry out realistic and achievable goals. It should be easy to read and understand, avoiding language that sounds pious but adds little to what is really important. The answers to the following four questions should help form a Parish Mission Statement:

Creating The Parish Mission Statement

1. **Who are we as a parish community?** (e.g. called by God; led by the Spirit)
2. **What functions do we have?** (e.g. form community, minister to peoples’ needs; respond to changing situations; discern new directions; foster gospel values; grow in faith)
3. **How do we accomplish these functions?** (e.g. supporting one another; challenging people to grow; prayerful discernment; outreach to others; adult education)
4. **For Whom?** (e.g. our parish community; those in need; ever-changing world; one another; all parishioners; the diocese; all who live within our parish boundaries)

An example of a Parish Mission Statement:

- Saint Robert’s Parish, a Roman Catholic community, is called to be a family of faith, working together in love by:
 - striving for a deeper knowledge and sharing of our Catholic faith;
 - reaching out to invite all people to become active members of the Catholic Church;
 - living our lives in such a way as to be witnesses to the teachings of Jesus.
- Through prayer and service rooted in mercy and justice, to become a sign to our Faith community, and the community in which we live, of God’s love, given to all through His Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

THE PARISH PASTORAL PLAN

An articulated Parish Mission Statement calls for action. Who of us would spend a lot of time asking for directions and then not use them? So, on each leg of our “journey”, each of the four parts of the Mission Statement needs to be mapped out through goals and objectives. Simply put, goals express the important “to do” list that exists between the lines of the mission statement and are seen as being accomplished over the long-term. The objectives are the short-term ways and means to accomplish the Parish Pastoral Plan.

STEPS IN PARISH PASTORAL PLANNING

The planning process is usually described and illustrated as a cycle. This role of the Parish Pastoral Council, committees and staff is to foster that cycle and see that it continues to enable the parish to make its vision a reality and to accomplish the work of Jesus Christ.

Planning should involve the broadest possible participation from the parish. However, this task needs to be focused by a group of individuals identified as the Planning Committee. This can be the Parish Pastoral Council or a combination of the Parish Pastoral Council members and other parish leaders.

A planning process involves:

- Developing or affirming the parish mission statement
- Knowing the history of the parish
- Assessing needs
- Visioning the future
- Establishing priorities
- Setting goals and objectives and developing action plans
- Implementing specific programs and services
- Evaluating and adjusting the plans as needed

Under the direction of the pastor and in collaboration with the pastoral staff, the Parish Pastoral Council and the Parish Finance Council, the parish should develop a long-range 3-5 year pastoral plan.

Formation of the Planning Group

This planning group can consist of the Parish Pastoral Council with the addition of pastoral staff as well as any other parish representatives deemed essential.

Assessment of the present situation of the parish

Information is gathered on the composition of the parish, activities, organizations and demographic make-up as well as on the larger community where the parish is located. There are three things that Pastoral Leadership should ask each parishioner:

- What do you like about the parish (commend)
- What would you like to see happen in the parish (recommend)
- What can the parish do to help you (amend)?

Assessing the needs

Based on demographics and other notable factors, the parish leadership should determine the areas of parish life needing attention. This would include parish facilities and finances required that might be affected by the ministry, outreach or educational programming under consideration.

Establishing priorities

This aspect of planning requires the planning group to evaluate the resources available: financial, personnel and facility requirements. This will greatly affect the level of priority and the needs that drive it. It may assist the pastor in determining that a reallocation of funding and personnel may be necessary.

Developing the action plan

An essential aspect of developing the Parish Pastoral Plan is to assign responsibilities for implementation as well as follow-up on the effectiveness and desired outcome. The parish should be informed of the Pastoral Plan of the Parish and the connectedness of all the various ministries, activities and apostolates that support the plan.

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL GUIDELINES FOR ESTABLISHING A STEERING COMMITTEE

The following guidelines may be helpful in identifying the necessary steps in establishing a Parish Pastoral Council.

1. The Pastor appoints a Steering Committee. He is careful to select members who represent the diversity present in the parish. The Steering Committee should be representative of the parish and reflective of the future composition of the Parish Pastoral Council. (As a guide 10-15 members are suggested for the Steering Committee; however, that can be lowered depending on size of parish). A Steering Committee can be convened when: a new pastor is appointed; the nature of the parish changes; re-structuring is needed; or there is a lack of organization and structure within an existing Parish Pastoral Council. The steering committee does not work apart from the pastor or without the pastor's clear approval.
2. The Steering Committee begins with prayer and incorporates prayer into the format of the working sessions.
3. The Steering Committee launches a program of self-education. The members should familiarize themselves with the following documents:
 - *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
4. Initially, the Steering Committee should conduct discussions and brainstorming sessions to assimilate and understand the role of the Parish Pastoral Council as it relates to the church, diocese and parish. It is also important to understand clearly the relationship of the pastor and his administrative staff to the Parish Pastoral Council.

*... "We cannot communicate with the Lord
if we do not communicate with one another".*

Pope Benedict XVI, May 29, 2005

5. The Steering Committee launches an educational program for the parish. It may include the following:
 - Series of homilies on the new role/ministry of the Parish Pastoral Council in the parish.
 - Bulletin inserts describing the Parish Pastoral Council.
 - Open parish forums for parishioners conducted by the Steering Committee.
 - Open discussion during meetings of all existing parish organizations.
 - Invitations to outside speakers to provide resources and training.
 - Parish survey of special talents, ministry, interests.
6. The Steering Committee develops a Mission Statement for the parish, a set of guidelines for the Parish Pastoral Council, and establishes the areas of mission.
7. The Steering Committee sets up the procedures for the first election of council members, which must be done with a written ballot. It will also determine voting eligibility, qualifications of candidates, list of nominees, and, finally, the form of the ballot. The committee will also decide whether elections will take place by mail or at the Sunday Liturgy.

In the announcement of the election, a bulletin insert may be considered with pictures and special biographical data on each of the candidates. Sometimes the pastor or chair of the Steering Committee introduces each candidate to the people before the Sunday Liturgy. Coffee and doughnuts after the Liturgies provide another opportunity to meet the candidates.

8. It is at this point in the process that the Steering Committee evolves into the Parish Pastoral Council. It is suggested that the

pastor appoint a representative number of Steering Committee members to the new Parish Pastoral Council to provide continuity and a smooth transition. The chairperson is selected from among this group through a process of discernment or a nomination/election process.

The key factor in starting a Parish Pastoral Council is **Communication!** Open and honest dialogue with everyone is crucial. **Good communication makes the difference.**

ELIGIBILITY FOR A PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

As is suggested by the Church documents, the pastor, along with the Parish Pastoral Staff, should set in motion a Steering Committee to develop the Parish Pastoral Council. It is this committee that establishes the guidelines for the election and/or appointment of council members by the members of the parish and the pastor. The following are important issues to be observed:

1. Every effort should be made to achieve adequate representation of a cross section of the parish. All ethnic, age (18 years minimum), economic and geographic groups should be reflected in the Council membership.
2. It is recommended that the number of persons on the Council should range from 12 to 21 members.
3. The Council should consist of priests, deacons, and religious (if members of the parish staff), but primarily laity. There are 3 forms of membership: elected, ex-officio and appointed.
 - a) **ELECTED:** These are elected by parish members and must make up at least 50% of the Council. They are voting members.

- b) **APPOINTED:** the pastor appoints certain members to the Council at his discretion to fill a certain need, representing an age or ethnic group in the parish not represented by election, or for other reasons. These appointed members should make up about 25% of the council. They are voting members.
 - c) **EX-OFFICIO:** These include all clergy and religious assigned to the parish and other Parish Pastoral Staff, the Chair of the Parish Finance Council and those deemed appropriate by the Council's Constitution and By-laws. They are non-voting members.
4. Each candidate must adhere to the following established diocesan guidelines for anyone who is asked or offers to run for the Council:
- a) be a practicing Catholic in good standing with the Church.
 - b) be a parishioner of the parish (i.e., live within the parish boundaries or be registered in the parish).
 - c) possess a willingness to grow in an understanding of Church by taking advantage of opportunities for continuing education in Church doctrine and documents.
 - d) have the ability to work with others in a spirit of openness and trust.
 - e) understand that membership in Parish Pastoral Council is one of service to the People of God.
 - f) agree to uphold the teachings of the Church and the norms established by the diocese for a Parish Pastoral Council.

GUIDELINES FOR THE STRUCTURE OF A PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

The following elements should be included in the development of the Constitution and By-laws for the Parish Pastoral Council. Every parish should design a structure that most effectively meets its specific needs while furthering the mission of Christ and upholding the diocesan statements of policy. Every council must meet at least six times a year. However, monthly meetings are strongly recommended. All regularly scheduled Parish Pastoral Council meetings are open to all members of the parish. If there is an immediate need or an issue of great sensitivity arises, an additional closed meeting may be scheduled to accommodate this special need. The following explanation is offered for consideration in developing the structure for the Parish Pastoral Council.

Representation

Every effort should be made to achieve adequate representation of a cross-section of the parish. Membership should reflect all age, ethnic, economic and geographic make-up of the parish. Membership should not be forced on those who are not really enthusiastic about making the commitment called for by Council membership. Because maturity of judgment is necessary, eighteen (18) years is recommended as the minimum age for Council members.

Nominations

A nominating committee, consisting of three to five persons depending on the size of the Council, should be established and will include the pastor and other Council members who volunteer or are appointed by the Chairperson. The nominating committee's function is to develop the procedure for selecting candidates to the positions to be filled. Any parishioner at least eighteen (18) years of age is eligible to submit his/her name as a candidate for Council.

The nominating committee's responsibilities are:

1. to publicize the role and importance of the Parish Pastoral Council and stimulate interest among the parishioners in service to the Council.
2. to arrange a training session for potential candidates, to explain further the role of the Council and the duties and responsibilities of its members.
3. to interview potential candidates, to ascertain their understanding of the Council's role, their commitment to service and the requirements for membership before their name is accepted for nomination.
4. to prepare a slate of candidates and make each individual's qualifications known to the parish membership prior to the election.
5. to conduct the election by secret ballot, either by:
 - a) by establishing a centralized voting place where voting may be done before or after Mass (visitors should be asked not to vote).
 - b) by mailing the ballots to the parishioners.
6. publish the results of the election.

Elections

Individuals are elected to the Parish Pastoral Council, not to a particular mission within the Council. This procedure provides latitude to the Council Chairperson in consultation with the pastor, to ask for volunteers or to appoint members to positions where they will be most effective.

Elected members shall serve for a term of three years. No member may succeed him/herself to the Council. One year must elapse

between terms of office. A two term limit is recommended for each member. In the first year of organization the elected members will draw lots to determine their tenure of one, two, or three years. Individuals who serve a partial term of 1 or 2 years are eligible to be re-elected to one full term of 3 years. A turnover of one third of the elected members will be affected each year. Any parishioner at least eighteen (18) years of age is eligible to vote in the election.

The Chairperson and Vice-chairperson are elected by the membership of the Parish Pastoral Council each year. Eligibility for these two positions is limited to their terms of service.

In the event that a vacancy occurs among the elected membership, the person who received the next highest number of votes will be asked to fill the remaining term of the vacating member. In the event that he or she declines, the remaining members will be similarly asked to complete that term of office. If the vacancy, however, places the number of Council members below the minimum required, the pastor is to appoint someone to the Council to achieve the required minimum number of members.

Election Time Schedule

It is suggested that a nominating committee be appointed in January and present the nominees and their qualifications to the parishioners in March. The election of the Council members should take place during April or May. Newly elected members will be installed in June and should take office in July. This suggested time line be adjusted to suit the needs of the individual parish.

Parish Pastoral Council Officers

The Code of Canon Law stipulates that the pastor, by virtue of his office, presides over



any meetings of the Parish Pastoral Council. Council members are to elect a Chairperson and Vice-chairperson annually. The Secretary of the Council is appointed to provide secretarial functions to the Parish Pastoral Council. It may be the parish secretary or a member of the parish with the necessary skills. The secretary has a non-voting status.

The Pastor as President of Council

The pastor presides, not by “chairing” the meeting, but by using his pastoral authority:

1. to make certain that members have the proper formation for serving on the Council.
2. to clarify points of Church law or diocesan policy when necessary.
3. to build a community of faith and an atmosphere of trust among Council members.
4. to make certain that the scope of the Council’s concern reflects the entire pastoral mission of the Church.
5. to share in consensus for the formation of parish priorities.
6. to serve as chief administrative officer of the parish.
7. to assist in formulating the Council’s agenda.

Chairperson’s Major Functions

A. To facilitate the Parish Pastoral Council meetings by:

1. providing time for prayer and reflection.
2. presenting the agenda items for discussion. The presentation is made without indicating what solution is to be reached or any personal bias the chairperson may have with regard to the topic.

3. maintaining order and attention, regulating who will speak, adhering to a time schedule.
4. developing ideas and expressing the sentiments of the Council by restating, summarizing or contrasting them.
5. acting as monitor, reminding members and guests of time limits and procedural rules by which the Council operates.
6. making certain that everyone's input has been received in the consensus process.

Neither the pastor nor members of the parish professional staff should serve as the Parish Pastoral Council Chairperson.

B. To schedule open forums.

Since the Parish Pastoral Council should reflect the needs and desires of the total parish and act in the best interest of all parishioners, opportunities for Council members to meet with the parishioners should be made available. These meetings should be designed to elicit the concerns and opinions of parishioners, in general or on specific issues, and to inform parishioners about Council plans and

programs at a time other than a regularly scheduled Council meeting.

C. To ensure communications between the Parish Pastoral Council and parishioners.

Meeting dates, agendas, Council minutes, and reports on the work of the Council committees serve to keep open the channels of communication between the Parish Pastoral Council and the parishioners and should be published and reported on a regular basis.

Council Vice-Chairperson

The Vice-Chairperson performs the duties of the Chairperson in the latter's absence and serves as an aide to the Chairperson in conducting the Council's work.

Council Secretary

The Secretary documents the business of the Council (minutes, reports, etc), supplies members with information, maintains attendance and other records and handles all Council correspondence. The Secretary is not a member of the Parish Pastoral Council and has a non-voting status. The Secretary is appointed by the pastor.

In the parish we share one mission and together live out that mission through our worship and through the parish programs, ministries & activities. Everything that happens in the parish must be connected. Everyone must understand and experience this connectedness and common purpose.

SUGGESTED COMPONENTS OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

*Every Parish is to develop its own working constitution and by-laws.
A general outline follows, which is provided as a guide.*

PREAMBLE:

The basic identity, purpose and the Mission Statement of the parish that is establishing the Constitution and By-Laws.

PURPOSE:

The basic purpose and general goals of the Parish Pastoral Council as representative of the parish. In other words, it states what the parish wants to do through the efforts of the Council.

POWERS:

How the Council may act on behalf of the parish. The limits of its powers are stated as well as its role solely as advisory to the pastor.

MEMBERSHIP:

How many members the Council is to have and the eligibility requirements. It covers the removal of members for cause and the replacement of vacancies. It also includes the training requirements for potential members and makes provisions for continuous Parish Pastoral Council development.

TERMS:

It is suggested that a Council member be elected or appointed for a term of three years, with an intervening year between terms.

NOMINATIONS:

When, how and by whom (i.e., who is eligible to vote for members)

ELECTIONS:

At least 50 % of the members are nominated and elected.

OFFICERS:

What officers the Council has, and their respective job descriptions.

MEETINGS:

The dates and frequency of regular meetings; how special meetings may be called; and rules of procedure, (including consensus, gathering and quorum).

AREAS OF MISSION:

The names of all Missions and a description of each Mission's field of activity; also how the Missions are to be constituted and which parish committees, organizations and boards are subsumed under each Mission.

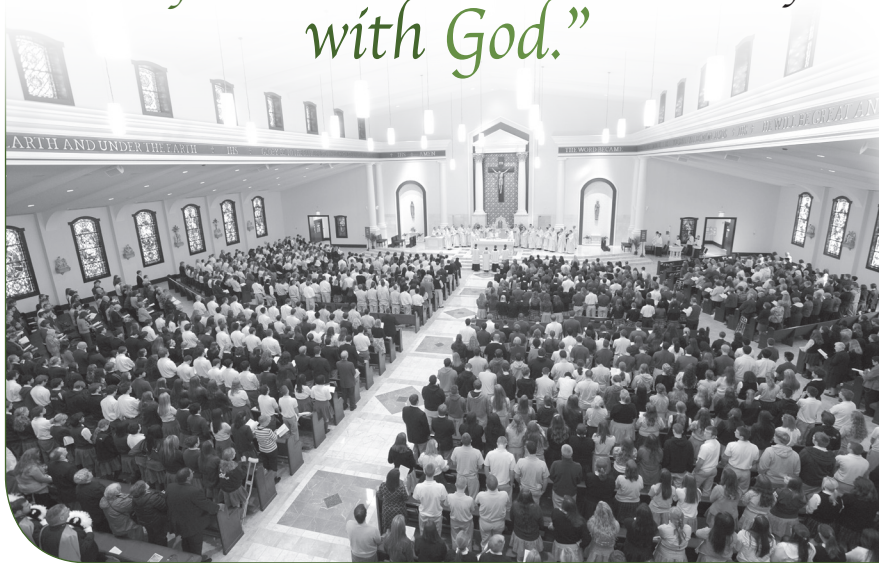
OPERATING RULES:

Meeting format; Chairperson's role; channels of communication with the parish at-large and other parish organizations.

AMENDMENTS:

Procedure for amending the Constitution and By-Laws of the Council.

“The role of the Parish Pastoral Council is to invite everyone in the parish into a closer relationship with God.”



PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL MEETINGS

Frequency and length of meetings

The Parish Pastoral Council should meet a minimum of six times a year although monthly meetings are recommended. The meeting should not exceed two hours in length.

Attendance

It is the responsibility of the Council Chairperson to contact any member who has been absent, without excuse from two consecutive meetings, to discuss the continued fulfillment of that member's commitment. A third unexcused absence could result in the pastor's dismissal of the member from the Council. This policy applies to all members.

If, in fact, a member was absent from 1/4 of the yearly meetings, the Pastor should consider his/her absenteeism an automatic resignation unless extenuating circumstances dictate otherwise.

Climate of Prayer

All meetings of the Parish Pastoral Council should open with prayer.

Maintaining a prayerful climate throughout the meeting will encourage the members to continuously renew, sustain, and increase their awareness of the faith and mission that brings them together as a Parish Pastoral Council.

Procedures for Conducting Meetings

It should be standard practice that each Council member has the opportunity to voice his/her opinion to each issue during the Parish Pastoral Council meetings. This practice will help insure participation and each member will know that his/her opinion is welcome and expected. To ensure that there be adequate time for this communication, it is necessary to establish an agenda. Normally the Chairperson of the Council works with the pastor in establishing the agenda. Input may be obtained from other Council members or outside sources.

DIOCESE OF HARRISBURG PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL GUIDELINES

Structure Format for Areas of Mission

THE AREAS OF MISSION OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

Each parish must be concerned with the totality of the pastoral mission given by Christ to His Church. A Council structure should give witness to the essential elements of that mission by establishing individual Areas of Mission. Areas of Mission are simply the categories used to group related activities together. These categories include every aspect of the overall mission of the Church. Each parish must establish Areas of Mission that encompass every goal and activity within the parish. Areas of Mission, then, divide the overall mission of the parish into more manageable sections. These divisions help the parish to organize its efforts and keep before it the diversity of specific ministries and activities. Through Areas of Mission, the parish can channel its efforts most efficiently and invite parishioners to live out their baptismal call.

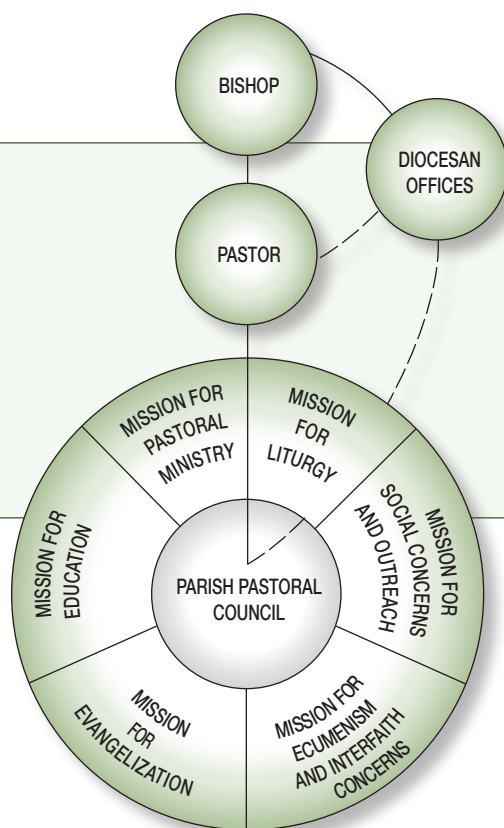
The basic functions of Areas of the Mission are:

1. **To investigate** the needs of each Area of Mission in the parish and make recommendations to the Parish Pastoral Council on meeting those needs;
2. **To collaborate** with the priests and parish staff in their particular Area of Mission in implementing the priorities of the Council;
3. **To communicate** with the various standing committees, parish organizations and boards in their Areas of Mission and keep the Council updated on their activities;
4. **To ascertain and implement** the diocesan norms in all Areas of Mission.

The Areas of Mission of the Parish Pastoral Council function as part of a whole, and all are interdependent in fulfilling the mission of the parish. While areas of the Mission will be discussed separately, it is clear that not one of them can function in isolation from the others. There will always be some overlapping in both organization and performance. The full development of each Mission with its related parish organizations and standing committees will call for coordination and cooperation. Following are some examples of the variety of parish programs, ministries and activities that come under the various areas of mission.



**The following
SIX AREAS OF MISSION
are the norms for
PARISH PASTORAL COUNCILS
in the Diocese of Harrisburg**



1. THE MISSION FOR EVANGELIZATION

This Area of Mission is constantly seeking new ways to reach out to others with the Message of God's Love. Some examples of the ministry carried out under the area of Evangelization would be:

- Caring Communities
- Charismatic Prayer Group
- Cursillo
- Eucharistic Adoration
- Home Visitations
- Legion of Mary
- Outreach to Inactive Catholics
- Parish Missions
- Parish Retreats
- Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults
- Support Groups

Evangelization is the continuous process by which the Church strives to deepen the faith of

those who believe and bring the Good News to those who do not believe. Evangelization is the primary goal of the Parish Pastoral Council. It has two major thrusts:

1. spiritual renewal, by which those who profess faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ are drawn to more clearly reflect that belief in their actions, their relationships and their whole lives.
2. outreach, whereby individuals, parishes and organizations seek ways of sharing the faith with others including Catholics who do not practice their faith and those who do not practice any religion.

Although the entire Council and indeed the entire parish and diocese shares the responsibility for evangelization, this sacred duty can best be met through the establishment of Evangelization as an Area of Mission.

The Mission for Evangelization must be filled with the creativity of the Spirit, constantly seeking new ways to reach out to others with the message of God's love. This Mission must work closely with the other Parish Pastoral Council Areas of Mission and parish organizations. It should provide the spark by which the entire faith community becomes a bearer of the Good News.

This Mission may find itself sponsoring parish retreats and renewal programs, information classes, home visitation of lapsed Catholics and many other types of outreach programs. As part of the universal Church, the Mission for Evangelization would also support and encourage the Church's missionary activity both at home, in the community and around the world. In the document *Evangelization in the Modern World*, Pope Paul VI has defined evangelization as *"...bringing the good news into all strata of humanity, and through its influence, transforming humanity from within and making it new."* (#18)

Parish Outreach

One of the more challenging tasks of evangelization is to lead the parishioners away from the idea of, "you and me God" to "we and you God." Jesus himself said, "I must proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom. That is why I was sent." Since the Church is the sign of Jesus to the world and together all parishioners make up the Church, then the parish must be a sign of Jesus to the world and carry out his mission. While it must take steps to insure the salvation of all, it must also recognize that, through the Spirit received in Baptism, all are part of the same Kingdom and, like Jesus, the salvation of all is tied in with the salvation of others. All parishioners must reach out, not only to those seen each Sunday in the pews, but to the fallen away and alienated; those of other faith traditions; and the unchurched. It is ultimately the challenge of the Parish Pastoral Council, in collaboration with the pastor, to lead the parish into active evangelization.

The Bishops of the United States have published the document, *Go and Make Disciples*. In that plan, the following three goals are identified to assist the Christian faithful in carrying out the plan for new evangelization:

Goal I = Believe

To bring about in all Catholics such an enthusiasm for their faith that, in living their faith in Jesus, they freely share it with others.

Goal II = Share

To invite all people in the United States, whatever their social or cultural background, to hear the message of salvation in Jesus Christ so they may come to join us in the fullness of the Catholic faith.

Goal III = Transform

To foster gospel values in our society, promoting the dignity of the human person, the importance of the family, and the common good of our society, so that our nation may continue to be transformed by the saving power of Jesus Christ.

Like his predecessors before him,
Pope Francis calls all of us to a

*new
evangelization.*

The ***new evangelization***
can be defined in one word:

Conversion.

2. THE MISSION FOR EDUCATION

This area of mission includes all parish activities that are directed to the formation of its members, both children and adults. The Catholic school, the parish faith formation program, youth ministry programs, and adult religious education programs, including the Rite of Christian Initiation (RCIA) are all areas of concern for the Mission of Education.

Religious Education Programs for Children, such as:

- Catholic Schools
- Parish Programs of Religious Education
- Sacramental Preparation
- Summer Vacation Bible School Programs

Religious Education Programs for Adults such as:

- Bible Study Groups
- Sacramental Preparation
- Workshops
- Faith Formation

One of the most important tasks entrusted to the Church is to teach, to teach the nations and to form anew the disciples of our Lord.

"The one mediator, Christ, established and ever sustains here on earth his holy Church, the community of faith, hope, and charity, as a visible organization through which he communicates truth and grace to all men."

(*Lumen Gentium*, #8) This communication takes the form of the proclamation of the Gospel, the celebration of the sacraments and teaching the faithful.

Catholic education is a genuine priority of the Church. Where there is a parish school, there should be an active relationship with the parish Board of Education. Where the parish is a cooperating member of a K-12 or

consolidated school program, or has children attending a neighboring parish school, a sense of cooperation and support should be fostered.

The Mission for Education has a special concern for the needs of the parish religious education program. The program requires a dedicated director or coordinator, trained catechists, and volunteers as well as the necessary resources and facilities to operate effectively. This includes the parish program of catechesis for children and youth, parish youth groups and summer enrichment programs.

Adult religious education is a vital component of parish life today. In all areas, from family life and the sacramental formation of their children to a deepening of personal prayer life, adults look for assistance in developing their own relationship to Christ. Since many adults have not had significant on-going formation in their faith, programs of adult catechesis are needed. The parish can be very helpful in forming the adults of the parish to take on an active role in the life of our communities, bringing with them the light of the Gospel.

The Mission for Education ensures that all members are given opportunities to foster their faith and to express that faith through service.



3. THE MISSION FOR PASTORAL MINISTRY

This Area of Mission fosters a sense of belonging among the members of the parish. The programs, ministries and activities strengthen and support the parish as a Community of Faith.

- Bereavement Committee and outreach
- Caring Community Activities
- Catholic Scouting programs for boys and girls
- Council of Catholic Women
- CYO Activities
- Divorced and Separated Outreach and support
- Family Life
- Knights of Columbus
- Marriage Preparation
- Men's Organizations
- Ministry to Persons with Disabilities
- Parish Archives
- Parish Communications
- Parish Nurse Program
- Prayer Chain
- Pro-Life Committee/Respect Life Concerns
- Senior Adult Ministry
- Service Projects
- Singles Group
- Social events, such as picnics, festivals, dances, etc.
- Stewardship
- Vocation Awareness Committee
- Welcoming Committee
- Youth and Young Adult Ministry Programs

The Mission for Pastoral Ministry encompasses all the programs and activities of a parish that strengthen the sense of being a Christian Community. Pastoral Ministry fosters a sense of belonging among the members of a parish. Most of the established parish organizations such as the Council of Catholic Women, the Holy Name Society, the Senior Adult Ministry, Youth and Young

Adult Ministry would be part of this Area of Mission. This mission would also include all those parish “special events”, such as picnics, dances, covered dish socials, etc., which bring the parish together to “build community”.

A welcoming or hospitality committee to help newcomers feel at home would be part of this mission.

This area of mission should also include a component of Youth Ministry that reaches out to students who are in Middle School and High School. Youth Ministry is a comprehensive approach to youth as described in the goals outlined in *Renewing the Vision*. In this document, the United States Bishops tell us that effective ministry with adolescents provides appropriate experiences, programs, activities, strategies, resources, content and process to address the unique developmental and social needs of the young and older adolescents both as individuals and as members of families.

Youth Ministry strives to reach out to 100% of young people through gathered and non-gathered activities which may include CYO basketball, scouting, social events, retreats, community service, peer ministry, leadership training (for both adolescents and adults), planning and involvement in liturgy and religious education.

Ministry with Young Adults is another important aspect of the pastoral mission of the parish. Generally speaking, young adults are people in their late teens, twenties, and thirties; single, married, divorced, or widowed; and with or without children. As stated in the document *Sons and Daughters of the Light*, “The Church can offer them (young adults) a vision of life based on a faith that calls each of them to holiness, community, and service”.

The document goes on to say that parishes need to be a “home” for young adults. This is where they experience life cycle events: birth, marriage, death and struggle with life challenges. The approach to Young Adult Ministry needs to have an awareness of the life patterns of young adults to connect them:

1. to Jesus Christ
2. with the Church
3. with the Mission of the Church in the world
4. with a peer community.

The Parish needs to provide opportunities for involvement in current Church life, allowing them to be visible and active in liturgy as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, lectors, ministers of music and hospitality; leaders in the parish as members of the parish pastoral team and parish committees; and partake in specific opportunities for young adults to be with one another, i.e. social activities, service opportunities, educational programs, and prayer experiences.

Since the family or “domestic church” is the core of parish ministry, family life is an essential component of the Mission for Pastoral Ministry. Supporting family life, as part of this mission does not simply mean encouraging programs and ministries. It also means nurturing attitudes that support the families of the parish in all their diverse forms.

The most important aspect of this support is *family perspective*. This *family perspective* views individuals in the context of their family relationships and uses family relationships as a criterion to assess the impact of the parish’s policies, programs, ministries and services.

Parishes with a family perspective recognize that:

- The family has a unique identity and mission that permeates its tasks and responsibilities.
- The family is not a collection of individuals but a living and developing system whose members are essentially interconnected.
- Diversity in structure, economic status, special needs, and ethnic and religious heritages and the influence of societal trends affect the roles and activities of families today.
- Partnerships need to be formed between families and the institutions that share family responsibilities. With this in mind, the family life component of the Mission for Pastoral Ministry might include:
 - Parish-based marriage preparation.
 - Marriage Enrichment
 - Retrouvaille for those in troubled marriages
 - Support groups for the Separated and Divorced.
 - Senior Adult Ministry, including parish-based clubs for seniors.
 - Parish-based teachers of Natural Family Planning
 - Elizabeth Ministry and other ministries with young families
 - Ministry with Families of Children with Disabilities, (includes parent-to-parent outreach.
 - Outreach and support for parents, whether they are married, divorced, widowed or single.
 - Support for families of deployed military personnel.
 - Parish Vocation Committee

4. THE MISSION FOR LITURGY

This Area of Mission is to nourish and give direction to the liturgical and worship elements of the parish.

- Altar Servers
- Art and Architecture
- Cantors
- Children's Liturgy of the Word
- Choir
- Devotions
- Eucharistic Adorations
- Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion
- Extraordinary Ministers to the Homebound
- Hand Bell Ensemble
- Hospitality/Greeters
- Lectors
- Liturgy Planning Committee
- Ministry Hearing Impaired (signing Mass)
- Nursery
- Ushers
- Youth Choir
- 40 Hours Devotion
- Liturgy of the Hours
- Music (includes an organist and/or liturgy director)

"...The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the church is directed; at the same time it is the font from which all the church's power flows. For the aim and object of apostolic works is that all who are made Children of God by faith and baptism should come together to praise God in the midst of His Church, to take part in the sacrifice, and to eat the (and drink) the Lord's supper. The liturgy in its turn moves the faithful, filled with the paschal sacraments, to be one in holiness; it prays that they may hold fast in their lives to what they have grasped by their faith; the renewal in the Eucharist of the covenant between the Lord and his people draws the faithful into the compelling love of Christ and sets them on fire. From the liturgy, therefore, and especially from the Eucharist, grace is poured forth upon us as from a fountain; the liturgy is the source for achieving in the most

effective way possible human sanctification and God's glorification, the end to which all the Church's other activities are directed."

(Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy # 10)

The Church earnestly desires that all the faithful be led to that full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations called for by the very nature of the liturgy. Such participation by the Christian people as "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people" (1 Pt 2:9; see 2:4-5) is their right and duty by reason of their baptism.

In the reform and promotion of the liturgy, this full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered before all else. For it is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian spirit and therefore pastors must zealously strive in all their pastoral work to achieve such participation by means of the necessary instruction." (CSL #14)

Because the purpose of the Mission for Liturgy is to nourish and give direction to the liturgical and worship elements of the parish, a thorough study of the Vatican II document quoted above, the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, is the natural starting place.

This mission must be constantly evaluating the parish liturgical celebrations. Have the norms for Liturgy, promulgated since Vatican II been brought to reality? Have the Church's guidelines regarding environment, music, gesture and texture been respected? Do the liturgical roles exercised by people with those gifts and skills allow for the best possible experience of work, music, prayer? Is there continuing formation of liturgical ministers? Are the sacraments celebrated with joy, with community participation, with reverence? Are the sacraments scheduled conveniently for participation by the people? The pastor, or his delegate, must work very closely with the Mission for Liturgy offering input, suggesting resources, etc. He may meet

regularly with a Liturgy Planning Committee, to discuss the liturgical calendar, with its up coming feasts and celebrations and to think creatively about what may be done to enhance each celebration.

The Mission for Liturgy also coordinates the efforts of all those who contribute to the Liturgy such as ushers, lectors, choir, altar servers, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, etc., as well as those who prepare and celebrate the Rites of Christian Initiation.

The Mission for Liturgy works closely with the Mission for Evangelization in planning and promoting parish programs of spiritual renewal.

5. THE MISSION FOR SOCIAL CONCERNS AND OUTREACH

This Area of Mission considers those issues that demand our concern in order that the dignity and rights of each person may be preserved.

- Advocacy Programs for Housing Assistance, Employment and Discrimination
- Bereavement Ministry
- Caring Community Activities
- Clothing Drives
- Drug and Alcohol Programs
- Food Pantries
- Health Care
- Legislation Advocacy
- Meals on Wheels
- Migrant Workers Assistance
- Operation Rice Bowl
- Prison Ministry
- Projects for World Hunger
- Shelters
- Soup Kitchens
- Saint Vincent de Paul Society
- Thrift Shops
- Urban Ministry
- Third World Missions
- Clothing/Blanket Drives

The Mission for Social Concerns and Outreach is a dynamic response to the Church's call to address the issues and social concerns of our times. This mission must challenge the institutions in our society to change when necessary in order that the dignity and rights of each person may be preserved.

The United States Bishops' issued a statement entitled *Communities of Salt and Light: Reflections on the Social Mission of the Parish*. The bishops say...

“The pursuit of justice and peace is an essential part of what makes a parish Catholic”. (#2)

The Church's social teaching is a rich treasure of wisdom about building a just society and living lives of holiness amidst the challenges of modern society. The following seven key themes are at the heart of our Catholic social tradition and should be an integral part of this area of mission:

- Life and Dignity of the Human Person
- Call to Family, Community and Participation
- Rights and Responsibilities
- Option for the poor and vulnerable
- The dignity of work and the rights of workers
- Solidarity
- Care for God's Creation

In an article entitled *Parish Ministry to the Poor*, Reverend David J. McBriar, OFM, identified five assumptions as the starting point to enable the parish to serve the poor. Father McBriar says that:

1. ***Serving the poor is not an option for a parish.*** A parish that turns in on itself sooner or later implodes. People soon discover that “nothing's going on” in such a parish and they are more likely to leave.

2. *The poor are not only those poor within one's parish.* Wealthy parishes are obliged to serve the poor outside their parishes if they are to fulfill the gospel imperative.
3. *Each person in the parish can be convinced.* With proper catechesis and example, everyone can be shown that it's his or her responsibility to serve the poor, not a responsibility left to a committee, the diocese or the parish.
4. *Issues like "poverty", "homelessness", "unemployment", "drug abuse", "domestic violence", "human rights", are not paralyzing if they are confronted one step at a time, one person at a time.* Parishes must show the parishioners how to do something about these issues.
5. *A parish budget is a theological statement.* At least ten percent of a parish's budget should be directed to the poor. A parish that tithes its income and gives its parishioners the responsibility for dispersing that tithe fulfills the gospel mandate."

It is essential for the Parish Pastoral Council to communicate and organize and invite their parishioners to speak out through word and actions to aid all those who require assistance so that they may live with respect and safety. This is the opportunity to live out the Corporal Works of Mercy in our everyday lives. In the encyclical letter, *The Gospel of Life*, John Paul II tells us that...

"by virtue of our sharing in Christ's royal mission, our support and promotion of human life must be accomplished through the service of charity, which finds expression in the personal witness, various forms of volunteer work, social activity and political commitment... In our service of charity we must be inspired and distinguished by a specific attitude: we must care for the other as a person for whom God has made us responsible...Where life is involved, the service of charity must be profoundly consistent."

(The Gospel of Life #87)



6. THE MISSION FOR ECUMENISM AND INTERFAITH CONCERNS

This area of mission encourages unity and understanding within the Christian family, and reaches out to non-Christians who share with us a belief in God.

- Implementation on the local level of the Lutheran-Anglican –Roman Catholic Covenant
- Providing opportunities for praying for and with others who share our faith in Jesus Christ
- Cooperative ventures with those of other religious traditions to address community problems
- Discussion groups and parish programs designed for Ecumenical and Interfaith Marriages

An understanding and appreciation for the beliefs of others can enrich our own faith and can be a privileged moment of sharing the Gospel as we share spiritual insights with those of other faith traditions. Therefore, the Mission for Ecumenism and Interfaith Concerns promotes unity and understanding within the Christian family and reaches out in a special way to non-Christians who share with us a belief in one God (Jews and Muslims), as well as, members of other religions.

The ecumenical aspects of this mission are to be guided by the Directory for Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism from the Holy See and the LARC Covenant of Central Pennsylvania.

This mission may sponsor ecumenical non-sacramental liturgical and prayer services and encourage both individual and common prayer for the unity Jesus wills for His Church as recorded in John 17:21.

Ecumenism on a parish level may also include educational programs. Formal theological dialogue between qualified theologians of different denominations has brought about major advances in ecumenism and Catholics should be informed of these breakthroughs, especially the agreed upon statements with Lutheran and Anglican (Episcopal) churches.

Ecumenical discussion groups on a parish level also encourage a spirit of unity and understanding. Although there are still many sources for disagreement, we who share one baptism have much in common and this should be emphasized.

The Mission for Ecumenism and Interreligious Concerns should also stimulate cooperative ventures in charitable, emergency relief, social justice and community concerns. These joint service projects are a positive and productive way for the Christian communities to show both their essential unity of purpose and their love and concern for others.

Catholics participating in this mission must be truly knowledgeable about his/her own faith. To pass on misinformation to non-Catholics is a grave injustice.

By their words and actions, parishioners engaged in this mission witness to their faith in a gospel of love and their shared commitment to love one another as Christ has loved them, and to seek that unity for which he prayed.

“May they all be one. . . so that the world may believe.”

John 17:22

Advancing the Mission of Christ in the Parish

A structure or organization is only as effective as the people it draws together. These areas of mission will only further the mission of Christ if:

1. The Parish Pastoral Council sets its priorities in light of the Gospel; and the pastor, together with the Parish Finance Council, allocates its resources accordingly.
2. The Parish Pastoral Council members, regardless of which mission is their special area of concern, always place the overall good of the parish first.
3. The principles of the 12 diocesan norms put forth in this document are translated into action.

Standing committees, parish boards, parish organizations, and other units

of the parish are all to be subsumed organizationally under an Area of Mission.

Each Parish Pastoral Council member is assigned to an Area of Mission and should coordinate all activities through the Council. He or she should challenge, inspire and offer a sense of unity and common purpose to all involved in their particular Area of Mission.

Every Parish Pastoral Council may decide how many and which members should be involved directly with its areas of mission. Some areas may require more attention than others. Each parish should strive to balance its energies among all areas so that the overall mission of the Church may be advanced.

SUPPORTIVE MATERIAL

INSTALLATION OF PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL MEMBERS

This may occur during Mass, normally following the homily or outside of Mass within the context of the Liturgy of the Word.

Blessing within Mass

(Parish Pastoral Council Members are called forward)

Pastor/Priest: The Parish Pastoral Council provides the pastor with the wisdom of the laity for the good of the parish. Because of their knowledge and competence, the members of the Council are called to share with one another and with the pastor their insights honestly, with courage and with prudence. And so, the parish is strengthened by the unity of effort achieved in reverence and charity.

Pledge of Service

Pastor/Priest: Do you solemnly swear to serve to the best of your ability the parish of (name of parish) as a duly appointed member of its Parish Pastoral Council?

Parish Pastoral Council: I do

Pastor/Priest: Do you understand that each of you share a common mission as a member of this Council, the mission of Jesus Christ and His Church, and that your service to this parish involves, of necessity, service to the entire Church, in this parish, in the Diocese of Harrisburg and throughout the world.

Parish Pastoral Council: I do

Pastor/Priest: Do you promise your dedication to the best interests of the parishioners whom you represent and do you further promise to call upon the Holy Spirit to strengthen you with His presence as you live out this promise.

Parish Pastoral Council: I do

Prayer of Blessing

Pastor/Priest: Ever-living God, you gather us together as the parish of (name of parish) to carry the Gospel of Christ to all people. Bless the members of this Parish Pastoral Council. Let your Spirit enlighten their minds and guide all their actions that they may be renewed in faith, united in love, and bring to fulfillment the work of your Church, to your greater honor and glory. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

(Excerpts from The Book of Blessings, approved by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops)

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

A Check List—

The following items should be reviewed when new Council members are installed. This review will serve as an orientation for the new members as well as ensuring that the following items are current and supportive to the goals of the Parish Pastoral Council.

- Review Constitution and By-Laws of the Parish Pastoral Council and revise, as needed.
- Review and Proclaim the Parish Mission Statement.
- Identify Parish Needs.
- Develop a parish pastoral plan that enhances and strengthens the life of the parish.
- Evaluate effectiveness of existing parish ministries, committees, and parish outreach, etc.
- Meet with leaders of the various parish committees and organizations.
- Develop strategies to connect parish ministers so as to provide a greater opportunity to draw parishioners into the life of the parish.

PARISH TIME AND TALENT SIGNUP FORM (SAMPLE)

Name: _____ Age: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

CHRISTIAN SERVICE MINISTRIES

- _____ Short Term Meals
- _____ Transportation
- _____ Respite Care
- _____ Home Maintenance
- _____ Greeting Card
- _____ Welcoming Committee
- _____ Bereavement Committee
- _____ Funeral Luncheon
- _____ Parish Nurse Ministry
- _____ Communion to Homebound & Nursing
- _____ Missionary Work
- _____ Pro-Life Committee
- _____ Separated/Divorced Parishioners
- _____ Unemployed Parishioners
- _____ Children's Vacation Bible School
- _____ Babysitting for Church Events
- _____ Outreach

SOCIAL & FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES

- _____ Lenten Appeal
- _____ Golf Tournament
- _____ Parish Festival
- _____ Holiday Bake Sale
- _____ Sell Supermarket Gift certificates
- _____ Kitchen: Serve _____ Setup _____ Cleanup _____

FORMATION MINISTRIES

- _____ Children's Religious Education:
 - Catechist _____ Catechist Aide _____
- _____ Youth Ministry:
 - _____ High School _____ Junior High
 - _____ Middle School
- _____ Marriage Enrichment
- _____ Marriage Preparation Mentors
- _____ Adult Catechesis Instructor
- _____ Bible Study Facilitator
- _____ Infant Baptism Preparation
- _____ Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults Team (RCIA)
 - _____ Instructor/Facilitator
 - _____ Hospitality _____ Sponsor

WORSHIP/DEVOTIONAL MINISTRIES

- _____ Altar Servers
- _____ Greeters
- _____ Ushers
- _____ Lectors
- _____ Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion
- _____ Sacristans
- _____ Adult Choir
- _____ Children's Choir
- _____ Musical Instrument(s) played _____

OTHER MINISTRIES

- _____ Buildings and Grounds
- _____ Collection Counters
- _____ Eucharistic Adoration
- _____ Nursery
- _____ Publicity
- _____ Rosary Prayer Group
- _____ Social Media and Communications
- _____ Telephone Committee

OTHER

*Note: this form is for individual use only.
Please make sure each family member has a separate form.*

A PARISH PROFILE

Questions that will develop A Parish Profile and help clarify the vision for the parish

- Who are the parishioners? What is the age profile of the members? _____

- What are the trends in membership figures? _____

- What are the trends in Mass attendance? _____

- What is the history of the parish? _____

- What are the interests and needs of the parish and how can they be fulfilled? _____

- What are the program needs? _____

- What are the stewardship needs? _____

- What are the facility needs? _____

- What are the staffing needs? _____

- How are volunteers recruited or invited to assist in meeting identified needs? _____

The vision of the parish will be shaped in part by the unique features of the parish, the needs, interests, and longings of the people.

COMMUNICATING WITH PARISH COMMITTEES AND ORGANIZATIONS

Questions for Sharing and Discussion

1. Discuss the relationship between the Parish Pastoral Council and its committees.

■ What is working? _____

Strengths _____

Limitations _____

■ What needs to be improved? _____

2. Is there a need to revise the committee structure or add a committee in order to carry out the Mission of the parish?

3. What strategies will be developed to ensure that parish committees are well formed spiritually as well as organizationally?

4. What strategies will be developed to ensure that the parish Finance Council is in communication with the Parish Pastoral Council so that the resources of the parish serve the pastoral plan envisioned by the Council and that the financial considerations of the parish aid the Council in setting clear priorities that are financially responsible and feasible?

COMING TO CONSENSUS

Consensus sharing is a process in which a workable result is reached through dialogue, compromise, and modification of the contribution of all members. Many groups feel this community way of coming to agreement has a number of advantages; it puts more emphasis on maintaining the unity of the Christian Community; it gives a higher priority to persons and the growth of the group as a community of persons: it is less rigid, formal, and competitive; it is another way of saying, contrary to tendencies in our modern society, that people are more important than efficiency and productivity. It provides a better forum for exercising the gift of discernment and for the emergence of the prophetic voice. In 1 Cor. 12:10, it is clear that the gifts of discernment and prophecy are given to every baptized Christian.

Consensus sharing can be described in two phases: the first deals with ***consensus on broad goals and objectives; the second deals with the group process regarding specific issues discussed during a particular meeting.***

The second phase of consensus concerns how specific issues are discussed during a meeting. In the consensus system there is a communal dialogue, but no vote. ***Consensus is achieved when everyone can live with the outcome.*** In actual fact, no one has achieved exactly what he or she wanted; but everyone has offered input that has been taken seriously.

In most cases the proposal under discussion has changed because of this input. Thus more people can identify with and support the final outcome.

The facilitator seeks consensus by listening to the dialogue and by watching for signs of agreement. Each person is allowed to state his or her position once during the initial dialogue period and is asked to refrain from any remarks that depart from the issue. The facilitator may have to ask specific questions

like: "Joe, do you feel you can go along with this recommendation?" The facilitator may also encourage members to present alternatives that could result in consensus (the group is continually working through possible alternatives to reach its goal). Again, the facilitator "tests" for consensus. If consensus seems to be reached, it is very important that the facilitator confirm this by stating: "We have a consensus that..." When the facilitator moves toward stating consensus, no further dialogue is allowed.

If, in spite of dialoguing for some time, ***the group cannot reach consensus***, the facilitator is careful to try to define the exact area of disagreement, asking for all the reasons on the negative and all the reasons on the affirmative side. Finally, he or she asks: "Do we have all the facts?" At this point the group may be willing to table the issue to allow more time to gather additional data or to study the issues at greater length. This is especially true when a straw vote indicates the group is really divided on the issue. Generally, additional facts and more time will move the group toward a compromise solution. In such cases, it may be helpful to refer the matter back to an appropriate committee.

Generally, consensus should be used for a major outcome. At times, a simple majority vote may serve as well. The consensus system will not be effective when groups are not genuine faith communities, are polarized around strong personalities, or are being manipulated by pressure groups. In such cases, the group would do well to honestly admit these obstacles and then set aside some meeting time to build up the group as a faith community and to reflect on its internal dynamics. If the group is not at least trying to become a faith community, long discussions about consensus techniques will be a waste of time.

Excerpts from: The New Practical Guide for Parish Councils,
William J. Rademacher with Marliss Rogers

BECOMING AN EVANGELIZING PARISH

Effective leadership that evokes the enthusiasm of the parishioners creates an atmosphere for an evangelizing parish. At the center of an evangelizing parish is an attitude of welcome, outreach, and conversion all generated from bringing the gospel message of Jesus into the lives of the parishioners.

Pope Paul VI, in his exhortation *Evangelization in the Modern World*, asks three important questions:

1. **Why isn't the Gospel of Jesus Christ having an effect on individual consciences in our world today?**
2. **How can the Good News transform the people now and in the future?**
3. **What methods should be used so that the Good News of the Gospel may have its effect?**

With these questions in mind, Pope Paul VI, in his document, *Evangelization in the Modern World* goes on to define evangelization as, “*bringing the Good News into all strata of humanity and, through its influence, transforming humanity from within and making it new.*” (#18) He also states, “*The Church exists in order to evangelize, that is to say, in order to preach and teach, to be the channel of the gift of grace, to reconcile sinners with God and to perpetuate Christ's sacrifice in the Mass.*” (#14)

By trying to answer those questions of Pope Paul VI and accepting his definition of evangelization, each parish is provided the incentive for defining its parish vision and creating its own mission statement. Both

the vision statement and the subsequent articulation of its mission provide the ways and means for the parish to “bring the Good News into all strata of humanity”.

The ministries that come about because of this effort further enhance the evangelistic mission of the parish and lend themselves to “transforming humanity from within and making it new”, thus beginning to formulate answers to the three questions asked at the top of this section.

The Bishops of the United States have adopted a plan to make evangelization a reality in each parish in this country. Francis Cardinal George, Archbishop of Chicago has said “*I hope that Go and Make Disciples will be taken up by all pastors and their people in the Church in the United States, by catechists, by all engaged in education in the faith and in projects of evangelization, and by those who serve in parish and diocesan ministries nationwide. It is an instrument no one can afford to overlook. If we adopt its goals intelligently and wholeheartedly and follow the strategy it proposes, we shall be faithful stewards of the gifts that Jesus has given us in his church.*”

The I's Have It!

IDENTIFY people with a variety of gifts in the parish that will be valuable in promoting the goals of Evangelization.

INVITE them into a specific component of Parish Evangelization.

INCLUDE them in the planning process so their input and personal investment takes root.

INTEGRATE the Evangelization initiatives into all aspects of parish life.

IMPLEMENT the Evangelization Programs with an ongoing format.

GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES

**A National Plan and Strategy for Catholic Evangelization in the United States.
USCCB/1992 + 2002**

Goal I

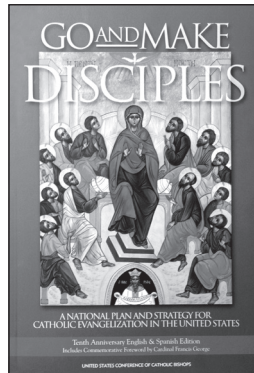
To bring about in all Catholics such an enthusiasm for their faith that, in living their faith in Jesus, they share it with others.

Goal II

To invite all people in the United States, whatever their social or cultural background, to hear the message of salvation in Jesus Christ so they may come to join us in the fullness of the Catholic faith.

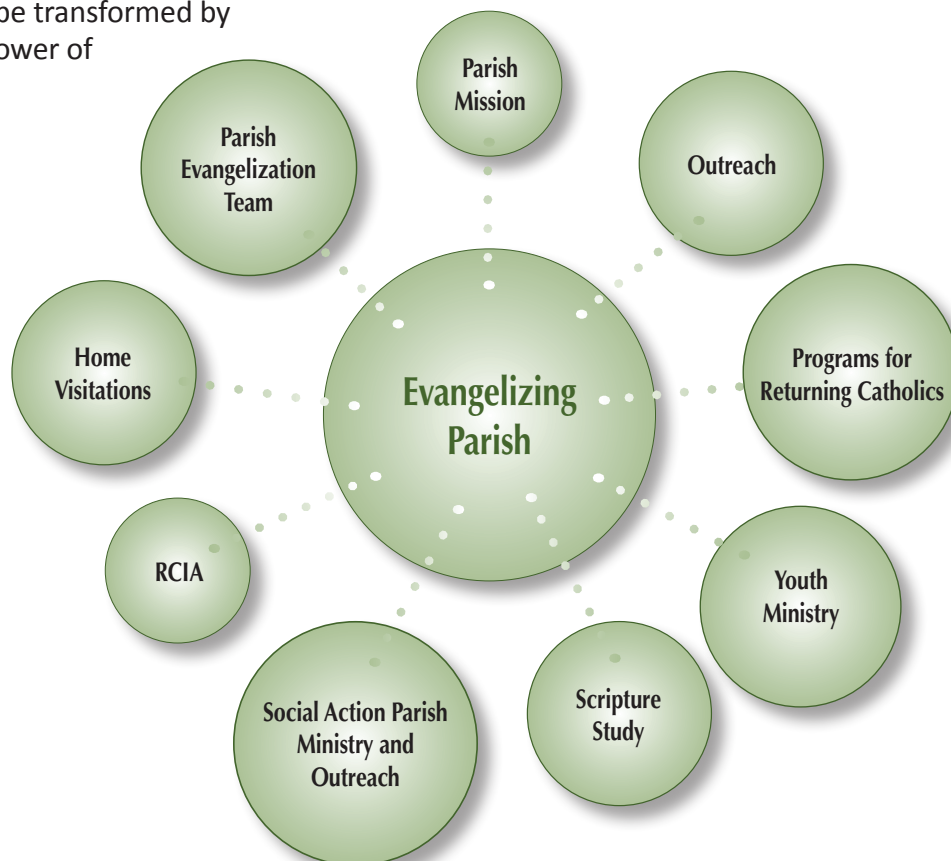
Goal III

To foster Gospel values in our society, promoting the dignity of the human person, the importance of the family and the common good of our society so that our nation may continue to be transformed by the saving power of Jesus Christ.



BECOMING A MISSIONARY PARISH: AN EVANGELIZING COMMUNITY

These three goals must be developed into an order that leads to pastoral action. The Parish Pastoral Plan should reflect all the components of missionary outreach through regular home visitations, programs for returning Catholics, in other words, the catechetical and biblical; community and social; worship and sacraments; the ecumenical dimension; liturgical structure and the apostolic commitment of everyone. All these components should be directed toward specific recipients, such as the family, adolescents and young adults, the sick and those who need assistance, so as to bring about a conversion experience in each and every person.



DEVELOPING A PARISH EVANGELIZATION COMMITTEE

The formation of a Parish Evangelization Committee is recommended to enhance the proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ and the response of a person in faith, which are both the work of the Holy Spirit. Evangelization must always be directly connected to the Lord Jesus Christ. "There is no true evangelization if the name, the teaching, the life, the promises, the Kingdom and the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God are not proclaimed."

(Go and Make Disciples # 10)

Formation of this Evangelization Committee would include creating a clearer understanding of Evangelization in the Parish as well as promote and support programs and activities to draw others into the life of the parish thus enhancing their commitment of faith.

CREATING A SYSTEM FOR SUCCESSFUL VOLUNTEERS

Recruitment

- Conduct a survey of needs.
- Develop a plan for recruitment.
- Advertise for the volunteer ministries or program positions required.

Interview

- Use an interview assessment form.
- Develop a job description for the positions available.
- Evaluate the volunteer based on giftedness and abilities.

(See sample on page 46)

Orientation

- Schedule an orientation session for all potential volunteers to make them aware of the commitment, parish liability and the requirements associated with these volunteer positions.
- Have the various ministry leaders present an overview of the ministry requirements.
- Inform the volunteers of the policies that apply to the ministry or program and the policies of the Diocese (i.e., Youth Protection).

Placement

- Based on the giftedness and ability of the volunteer to make a commitment to the requirements of the ministry or program, have the volunteer meet with the group or committee.

Record keeping

- Develop a system of tracking volunteers. It can be a card file or a computerized system. Whatever method is chosen, it is important to note any special clearances or training required for the position as well as when these requirements were completed or need to be updated.

Recognition

- Recognize their hours of service by conferring pins or a religious symbol. Recognition could be through a luncheon, reception or special liturgy, etc. Offer volunteer benefits such as free lunch, reduced school tuition; tuition credit; a baby-sitting option.

Development

- Plan regular opportunities for continuing education or ministry development.

VOLUNTEER INTERVIEW FORM

Name: _____ Age: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Conducting an initial interview is the first step in identifying the gifts, abilities and level of commitment that the volunteer possesses. The following is a suggested format for conducting the initial interview.

Reason(s) for Volunteering? _____ personal _____ spiritual _____ career _____ social

How much time are you able to commit?

(Please be specific) _____ hours per week _____ hours per month

Please circle the days you are available and list time of day beneath each day.

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY

Is there a specific time of the year you are not available due to job, school, travel, etc? _____

Please list any special needs or restrictions you may have. _____

Do you need transportation? _____ Yes _____ No

Do you have a Van or Truck that could be used if needed? _____ Yes _____ No

Are you willing to receive training for visitation, respite care or other applicable ministry? _____ Yes _____ No

Are you willing to undergo a background clearance (through whatever agencies are required)? _____ Yes _____ No

Please list any areas of ministry you are interested in serving: _____

Additional Comments: _____

NORMS FOR PARISH FINANCE COUNCILS

In the 1983 Code of Canon Law, the Church required each parish to organize a Parish Finance Council. Canon #537 of the Code states the following:

In each parish there is to be a finance council to assist the pastor in the administration of parish temporal matters. It is ruled by universal law and by the norms laid down by the Diocesan Bishop, and it is comprised of members of the Faithful selected according to these norms.

An active, well-formed Parish Finance Council (PFC) is a key element for promoting the financial health of a parish, assuring accountability and assisting the pastor with his temporal responsibilities.

The Parish Finance Council is a mandated body having an advisory and consultative role with the pastor in providing oversight of the financial management of the parish, with respect to the administration of all material goods belonging to the parish, and all fiscal matters of the parish, within the limits of the Code of Canon Law and the directives of the diocesan Bishop. Major responsibilities include providing input and review of the annual parish budget and periodic financial statements; review internal controls and procedures and planning for the temporal needs of the parish.

The PFC shall offer its technical expertise to the Parish Pastoral Council on fiscal matters. One member will be elected by the PFC or appointed by the pastor to be an ex-officio, non-voting member of the Parish Pastoral Council.

In keeping with the directives of the Code of Canon Law, the Diocese of Harrisburg mandates the following for the organization and operation of a Parish Finance Council:

MEMBERSHIP

- ◆ The PFC should consist of no less than three (3) members who are chosen based on demonstrable skills or expertise in management, finance, and accounting. Members should be drawn from the parish community and reflect its diversity. This requirement may be waived if special expertise is sought. A quorum shall consist of the majority of members. It is recommended that the PFC have an odd number of members and that, except for unusual circumstances, membership be capped at no more than nine (9) voting members. No parish employee or member of the family of an employee or relative of the pastor may serve on the PFC. It is also recommended that no member should serve on the PFC at the same time as a closely related person (e.g. husband and wife/mother and son...).
- ◆ There should be a Chairperson and Secretary for the PFC. The pastor will appoint the Chairperson after a period of discernment. The Secretary is responsible for recording and distributing the minutes of the meetings and notifying members of upcoming meetings as well as any other information pertinent to the function of the Council.
- ◆ Parish employees are not members of the PFC; they are staff and support to it. They should be available to answer questions regarding parish life, financial reporting and internal controls. The parish Business Manager should attend meetings in a consultative, non-voting capacity. Likewise, other staff members may be invited to enhance the discussion, should Council discusses their areas of responsibility.

- ◆ Members are to be appointed by the pastor for fixed terms to be determined at the local level, and may be reappointed or terminated by the pastor at the pastor's sole discretion. It is suggested that reappointments are limited to a specific period of time. It may be helpful to stagger the terms so that there is a continuity of service and no disruption to the function of the PFC.

MEETINGS

- ◆ To be effective, meetings should be scheduled at least once a quarter, or more frequently, if required. Meeting times and dates should be predictable, such as the day and week of each month. The pastor must be present at PFC meetings.
- ◆ There should be a specific agenda and Council members should have access to all relevant financial information of the parish.
- ◆ Meeting agendas should be prepared in advance of the meeting, in consultation between the pastor and the Chairperson of the PFC. The agenda should list major items for discussion. Supplying information in advance to members will lead to more productive meetings. Minutes of all meetings should be recorded by the Secretary to the Council and archived as part of the parish permanent record.
- ◆ Members should maintain confidentiality on those matters designated as confidential. PFC meetings are typically not open to the parish community. The primary purpose of the PFC is to provide open and honest advice to the pastor. If the meetings occurred in a public forum, the discussion may be too limited.

SPECIFIC DUTIES

- ◆ The PFC shall assist the pastor in the preparation of a yearly budget of income and expenditures and will bring the budget to the Parish Pastoral Council for their review and information. This budget is to be prepared at least two months prior to the beginning of each fiscal year.
- ◆ The PFC should review the annual parish budget and parish annual report. After review, the chairperson of the PFC is to co-sign each report before it is submitted to the diocesan bishop through
- ◆ The Council shall be charged with the responsibility of assuring that there is adequate revenue to meet expenses. To this end, the Council shall review the parish income and expense budget report on at least a quarterly basis.
- ◆ The Council shall assist the pastor in preparation of an annual financial report of income and expenditure for dissemination to the parishioners. This financial statement shall be distributed to the parishioners no later than ninety (90) days following the close of each fiscal year.
- ◆ The Council shall be responsible for as much segregation of conflicting financial duties among volunteers as possible, such that no one individual handles a financial transaction from beginning to end.
- ◆ The Council shall verify that all parish and organization checking accounts are reconciled monthly and that the pastor receives a copy of each organization's monthly bank statement, as well as a quarterly statement of its income and expenses.

- ◆ The Council shall periodically review petty cash expenditures for appropriateness and proper disbursement procedures.
- ◆ The Council shall ensure that those counting offertory monies are rotated on a periodic basis, as part of its role in developing and monitoring proper fiscal controls for parish financial operations.
- ◆ The Council shall assist the pastor in assuring that the following fiscal functions are performed:
 - Timely deposit and recording of income.
 - Timely submission of vendor invoices for payment.
 - Timely payment of debt interest and principal.
 - Investment of surplus funds with the Diocese.
- ◆ To advise and assist the pastor in the fulfillment of all pertinent norms and mandates of the Canons in Book V of the Code of Canon Law (regarding Ecclesiastical Goods).

ADDENDUM

It is understood that a parish or mission with less than three-hundred (300) souls may request a possible deviation from these Finance Council Policies. Such a request shall be made in writing and directed to the Office of the Bishop.

Approved July 25, 1984
 Revised November, 1996
 Revised July 11, 2005
 Revised April 29, 2013

Fostering Stewardship in Sacred Places and Spaces, Diocese of Harrisburg,
 Project Planning and Construction Procedures Manual, 2010
 is available on the diocesan website at www.hbgdiocese.org

Diocese of Harrisburg Guidelines and Procedures for Parish Financial Management, 2013,
 are available on the Diocesan Intranet

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

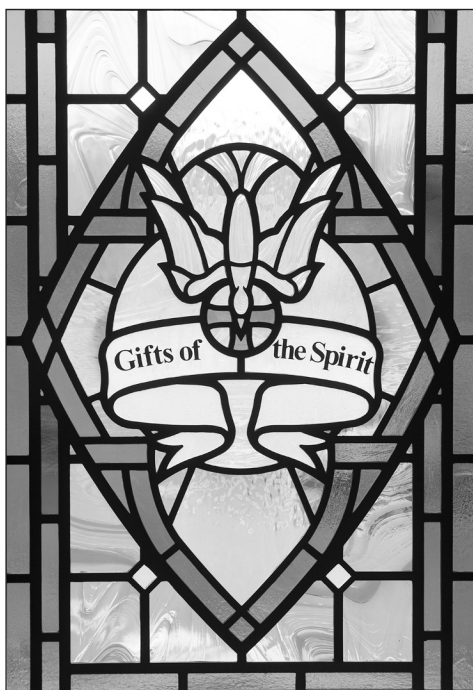
- Center for Applied Research the Apostolate (CARA) 202.687.8080; Website: www.CARA@georgetown.edu
- Liguori Publications; Website: www.liguori.org
- Our Sunday Visitor, 1.800.348.2440; Website: www.osv.com
- St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1.800.488.0488; Website: www.americancatholic.org
- The Liturgical Press 1.800.858.5450; Website: www.litpress.org
- The Paulist Press, 1.800.218.1903; Website: www.paulistpress.com
- Twenty-Third Publications, 1.800.321.0411; Website: www.twentythirdpublications.com
- USCCB titles, call 1.800.235.8722; Website: www.usccb.org

DISCIPLES CALLED TO WITNESS

The New Evangelization

Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis

UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS



*“But you will receive power
when the
holy Spirit
comes upon you,
and you will be my witnesses . . .
to the ends of the earth.”*

—Acts 1:8

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Msgr. Ronny E. Jenkins, JCD
General Secretary, USCCB

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PREFACE

“But you will receive power when the holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” When he had said this, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him from their sight. While they were looking intently at the sky as he was going, suddenly two men dressed in white garments stood beside them. They said, ‘Men of Galilee, why are you standing there looking at the sky?’”

—Acts 1:8-11

Christ commands us to be his witnesses to the ends of the earth. We are to proclaim his Good News to all people, everywhere and at all times. After Christ promises the disciples that the Holy Spirit will come upon them, he ascends into heaven. The disciples, rather than heeding Christ’s command to be his witnesses, stare “intently at the sky.” It takes “two men dressed in white garments” asking, “Men of Galilee, why are you . . . looking at the sky?” for the disciples to begin to realize the meaning of Christ’s command (Acts 1:10-11).

How often do we fail to realize that we are called to be Christ’s witnesses to the world? Do we realize that our Baptism, Confirmation, and reception of the Eucharist bestow on us the grace we need to be disciples? Are we like the disciples staring at the sky rather than inviting those around us to experience Christ’s love and mercy through the Church? How often do we reach out to our missing brothers and sisters by inviting them to join us at Mass or by asking why they no longer feel welcomed at the Lord’s Table? The answers to these questions underlie the evangelizing mission of the Church, especially in the call of the New Evangelization.

The New Evangelization seeks to invite modern man and culture into a relationship with Jesus Christ and his Church. The New Evangelization strives to engage our culture and to help us draw our inspiration from the Gospel. The New Evangelization calls all Catholics first to be evangelized and then in turn to evangelize. While it is directed to all people, the New Evangelization focuses specifically on those Christian communities that have Catholic roots but have “lost a living sense of the faith, or even no longer consider themselves members of the Church.”¹

The Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis seeks to take up the call of the New Evangelization with this online resource. Diocesan bishops, eparchs, pastors, diocesan and parish staff, and indeed all Catholics will find this resource helpful in the creation of outreach efforts aimed at inviting and welcoming Catholics back to the Lord’s Table. This resource discusses

- The call of the New Evangelization within our cultural context (Part I)
- The theological foundations of the New Evangelization (Part II)
- The importance of evangelization and personal conversion, or metanoia (Part III)
- Ideas on how to create a “culture of witness” (Part IV)
- Key Components of outreach programs for diocesan and parish-based evangelization programs (Part V)

PART I: CURRENT CULTURAL CONTEXT

“While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion. He ran to his son, embraced him and kissed him.”

—Lk 15:20

The Ministry of Jesus

Christ calls all people to himself. Throughout his public ministry, the Lord Jesus welcomed the stranger,² healed the sick,³ offered forgiveness,⁴ and expressed his eagerness to give rest to the weary and burdened.⁵ How do we, today, follow the call and summons of Jesus to seek out the stranger, heal the sick, and welcome the weary? Jesus, in and through his Church, wants us to experience the urgent vigilance of the father of the prodigal son so that as we anxiously await the return of missing family and friends, we will be ready to run to greet and embrace them.

Our Current Situation

Today, through the ministry of the Church, Jesus continues to call all people to himself. It is estimated that only 23 percent of U.S. Catholics attend Mass each week.⁶ Those 77 percent absent from the Eucharistic feast each week are not strangers: they are our parents, siblings, spouses, children, and friends. According to a recent Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) study, the most common reasons given by Catholics who do not regularly attend Mass are not related to controversial issues. The reasons given instead point to a gradual slipping away from the faith. Most Catholics stop attending Mass because they (1) have busy schedules or a lack of time, (2) have family responsibilities, (3) have health problems or disabilities, (4) have conflicts with work, (5) do not believe missing Mass is a sin, or (6) believe that they are not very religious people.⁷ In other words, many of our brothers and sisters have simply drifted away from the Church. This is due in part to the busyness of modern life and to a changing culture. There are also Catholics who attend Mass on a regular basis but who feel unconnected to the parish community.

The reasons for not attending Mass highlighted in CARA’s study also point to an increased secularization, materialism, and individualism.

Secularism influences all aspects of society, claiming religion is merely a private matter. Pope Benedict XVI has cautioned, “Any tendency to treat religion as a private matter must be resisted. Only when their faith permeates every aspect of their lives do Christians become truly open to the transforming power of the Gospel.”⁸ Materialism also presents an obstacle to Christ. The ability to acquire limitless goods and an overreliance on science create a false sense of hope that we alone can fulfill our deepest needs. However, without God, our deepest needs cannot be fulfilled. “Without God, who alone bestows upon us what we by ourselves cannot attain (cf. *Spe Salvi*, 31), our lives are ultimately empty. People need to be constantly reminded to cultivate a relationship with him who came that we might have life in abundance (cf. Jn 10:10).”⁹ Individualism leads to harmful forms of freedom and autonomy. After all, “we were created as social beings who find fulfillment only in love for God and for our neighbor.”¹⁰ Our personal relationship with Christ does not hinder our participation in the community of believers—the Church.

In addition, there is an unsettling ignorance of the Eucharist as well as an erosion of Sunday as the Lord's Day dedicated to prayer and rest. The reasons that Catholics cite for missing Mass can be met and overcome by parishes that foster a welcoming environment for adolescents, young adults, singles, married couples, parents, families, the sick or disabled, and anyone who is no longer active in the faith. The means for fostering a welcoming environment is the New Evangelization. The New Evangelization places a special emphasis on welcoming back to the Lord's Table all those who are absent, because they are greatly missed and needed to build up the Body of Christ.

The New Evangelization

The New Evangelization is a call to each person to deepen his or her own faith, have confidence in the Gospel, and possess a willingness to share the Gospel. It is a personal encounter with the person of Jesus, which brings peace and joy. The New Evangelization provides the lens through which people experience the Church and world around them.

The New Evangelization invites people to experience God's love and mercy through the sacraments, especially through the Eucharist and Penance and Reconciliation. Evangelization is the essence of the Church's identity: "The Church on earth is by its very nature missionary since, according to the plan of the Father, it has its origin in the mission of the Son and the holy Spirit."¹¹ Pope Paul VI reawakened the Church's evangelizing mission, Blessed John Paul II championed the call for the New Evangelization, and Pope Benedict XVI has reaffirmed the need for the New Evangelization. In *Go and Make Disciples: A National Plan and Strategy for Catholic Evangelization in the United States*, the Catholic bishops of the United States have expressed a sincere desire to invite all of God's children to their place in the Church: "We want to let our inactive brothers and sisters know that they always have a place in the Church and that we are hurt by their absence—as they are. . . . we want to help them see that, however they feel about the Church, we want to talk with them, share with them, and accept them as brothers and sisters."¹²

Positive Developments

Dioceses and parishes have already responded to the call of the New Evangelization by creating evangelization formation programs. This formation helps prepare parish leaders to initiate catechetical and reconciliation initiatives, which are meant to invite back to the faith and welcome our brothers and sisters who have been away. Sources of hope in the Church include diocesan and parish efforts to continually strengthen high school-level catechetical programs and to re-energize youth ministry programs and young adult ministries so as to reach these populations before they stop practicing the faith. Currently, dioceses focus their efforts on marriage preparation programs for young couples discerning marriage and on programs for couples becoming new parents. Diocesan and parish leaders also make an effort to welcome immigrants and attend to the needs of diverse groups. Opportunities to live the Gospel through concrete action, and thus to transform our culture, are numerous through advocacy and social justice ministries. Direct service opportunities frequently bring people back to the faith; this is especially true of young adults who value service projects. Many parishes offer not only Masses but also religious education, formation programs, and other pastoral services for cultural groups in their native languages. Additionally, new ecclesial movements and communities are flourishing, and they are eager to join dioceses and parishes in evangelization efforts.

Areas of Growth

Even though much has already been done to welcome our missing brothers and sisters back to the Lord's Table, there is still so much more that can be done. Catholics may desire to take on the call to evangelize but feel ill prepared to explain Church teachings. Some believe they lack the formation to be personal witnesses to Christ. Also, our brothers and sisters who have drifted away from the faith may be unable to vocalize why they stopped regularly attending Mass and parish activities, or they may not know with whom they can speak about why they left. Adolescents and young adults need active and engaging ministries and formation opportunities, including direct service.¹³ Communication and attention to cultural differences need to be addressed in ministry with diverse groups. Cultural factors, including the lack of Masses and sacraments celebrated in languages other than English, also contribute to people slowly slipping away from the Church.

The task before the Church is to form Catholics who are willing to communicate and witness the faith to those who are no longer actively practicing. By taking up the call of the New Evangelization, we will do as St. Paul commands us: "Welcome one another, then, as Christ welcomed you."¹⁴

PART II: HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE NEW EVANGELIZATION

*"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit."
—Mt 28:19*

The Church's *ad gentes* ("to the world") mission given to her by Christ is the proclamation of the Good News to those who do not know him. The historical and social circumstances of the twentieth century prompted the Church to renew her mission to evangelize. This renewed vision of evangelization includes, as Pope Benedict XVI has stated, the challenge to "propose anew"¹⁵ the Good News to all of the Christian faithful, most especially to those of the faithful who are absent from the Lord's Table.

Pope Paul VI's Call for Evangelization

Ten years after the close of the Second Vatican Council and a year after the 1974 Synod of Bishops, Pope Paul VI issued *Evangelii Nuntiandi*. Pope Paul VI stated that the Church "exists in order to evangelize, that is to say in order to preach and teach, to be the channel of the gift of grace, to reconcile sinners with God, and to perpetuate Christ's sacrifice in the Mass, which is the memorial of his death and glorious Resurrection."¹⁶ *Evangelii Nuntiandi* describes the essential aspects of evangelization as well as its effects on the one evangelizing and the one being evangelized. The proclamation of the Kingdom of God and salvation for all people through Jesus Christ is at the very core of the Church's mission and the essential aspects of evangelization.¹⁷ To evangelize, one bears witness to God's Revelation in Jesus through the Holy Spirit by living a life imbued with Christian virtues, by proclaiming unceasingly that salvation is offered to all people through the Paschal Mystery of Christ, and by preaching hope in God's love for us.¹⁸ Pope Paul VI recognized

that the first proclamation of the Good News is directed *ad gentes*. However, he also recognized the need for the evangelization of the baptized who no longer practice their faith.¹⁹ He called upon the Church to evangelize these two groups, to invite them to a life of conversion, and to add new meaning to their life through the Paschal Mystery of Christ.

Blessed John Paul II and the New Evangelization

Blessed John Paul II renewed the call to all of the Christian faithful to evangelize in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council and Pope Paul VI. “No believer in Christ, no institution of the Church can avoid this supreme duty: to proclaim Christ to all peoples.”²⁰ Blessed John Paul II made evangelization a focus of his pontificate and emphasized man’s need to be evangelized by the Church. Evangelization occurs most effectively when the Church engages the culture of those she evangelizes. In 1983, he addressed the Catholic bishops of Latin America in Haiti and called for a New Evangelization: “The commemoration of the half millennium of evangelization will gain its full energy if it is a commitment, not to re-evangelize but to a New Evangelization, new in its ardor, methods and expression.”²¹ This marked the first time Blessed John Paul II used the term “New Evangelization” as the theological concept of proclaiming the Gospel anew to those already evangelized. He called for new “ardor, methods and expression” of evangelization, ones that engage the present-day culture and modern man. Blessed John Paul II, in the encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*, provided three circumstances in evangelization: (1) preaching to those who have never heard the Gospel (*ad gentes*), (2) preaching to those Christian communities where the Church is present and who have fervor in their faith, and (3) preaching to those Christian communities who have ancient roots but who “have lost a living sense of the faith, or even no longer consider themselves members of the Church, and live a life far removed from Christ and his Gospel. In this case what is needed is a ‘new evangelization’ or a ‘re-evangelization.’”²²

Blessed John Paul II alluded to the New Evangelization again in his opening address to the Catholic bishops of Latin America in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, as well as in *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*. Although Blessed John Paul II did not develop a full theological scheme of the New Evangelization, his writings reveal central themes of the New Evangelization, including the implementation of the call of the Second Vatican Council to proclaim the Good News of Christ by the engagement of the present culture and to accompany individuals on their journey from this life to eternal life. For Blessed John Paul II, evangelization must proclaim the Good News, which when appropriated into one’s life, leads to conversion. This conversion provides a life of witness to the Good News and compels one to fulfill his or her vocation to the universal call of holiness. One’s vocation to holiness is strengthened through the gifts of the Church, namely the grace of the sacraments, prayer, Scripture, and the Church’s teachings and traditions.

Pope Benedict XVI and the Future of the New Evangelization

During his homily on the Solemnity of SS. Peter and Paul at the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls on June 28, 2010, Pope Benedict XVI renewed the Church's call to the New Evangelization. Pope Benedict XVI called for the *riproporre* ("re-proposing") of the Gospel to those regions "still awaiting a first evangelization" and to those regions where the roots of Christianity are deep but that have experienced "a serious crisis" of faith due to secularization.²³ He clarified that the New Evangelization is new, not in its content but rather in its inner thrust; new in its methods that must correspond to the times; and new because it is necessary to proclaim the Gospel to those who have already heard it.²⁴ Pope Benedict XVI calls the Church to evangelize by entering into dialogue with modern culture and confronting the cultural crisis brought on by secularization. To aid the Church in re-proposing the faith to modern society, Pope Benedict XVI established the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization on September 21, 2010, and proposed that the New Evangelization be the focus of the next Synod of Bishops. When describing why he created a council for the promotion of the New Evangelization, Pope Benedict XVI stated that the mission of the Church has always remained the same, but the cultural contexts confronting man and the Church have changed. The council will help the Church understand the cultural contexts of the twenty-first century. Pope Benedict XVI noted that the Church is being challenged by "an abandonment of the faith—a phenomenon progressively more manifest in societies and cultures which for centuries seemed to be permeated by the Gospel."²⁵ He also outlined the modern cultural factors, such as secularism, that are contributing to the decline of the Christian identity in the world. Pope Benedict XVI has also indicated that the New Evangelization is not a single formula meant for all circumstances; first and foremost, it is a personal "profound experience of God."²⁶

PART III: THE FOCUS OF THE NEW EVANGELIZATION

*"Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest."
—Mt 11:28*

Jesus grants all people rest and comfort from the burdens of this world. The rest and comfort of Christ comes from the hope offered by him: the hope of salvation and eternal life. The hope of salvation proclaimed in the Gospel transforms our lives with the promise of eternal life and comfort to the weary. "The Christian message was not only 'informative' but 'performative.' That means: the Gospel is not merely a communication of things that can be known—it is one that makes things happen and is life-changing. *The dark door of time, of the future, has been thrown open. The one who has hope lives differently; the one who hopes has been granted the gift of a new life*" [emphasis added].²⁷ Jesus Christ offers us new hope through a New Evangelization. Through the re-proposing of the Gospel, the Church seeks to comfort all those who are burdened by offering faith, hope, love, and the gift of new life in Christ.

Those Who Are Evangelized

The New Evangelization calls us to renew our faith so that we can share it with others. Before one can evangelize, one must be evangelized. A disciple of Christ must continually renew his or her faith. The disciple who then shares the faith is an evangelist. The Church is called to renew her faith in every age and at the same time proclaim it: “The Church is an evangelizer, but she begins by being evangelized herself. . . . This means that she has a constant need of being evangelized, if she wishes to retain freshness, vigor and strength in order to proclaim the Gospel.”²⁸

With a renewed faith, the Church goes forth to share the faith. Given the current cultural context of our society, the Church is directing her evangelization efforts in a particular way to those members of the Body of Christ who are absent. In *Go and Make Disciples*, the Catholic bishops of the United States described in general terms some reasons that have contributed to Catholics who no longer actively participate in the life of the Church: “Some were never formed in the faith after their childhood. Some have drifted away because of one or another issue. Some feel alienated from the Church because of the way they perceive the Church or its teaching. Some have left because they were mistreated by church representatives.”²⁹ These broad categories represent various reasons why our brothers and sisters are no longer involved in the life of the Church. These descriptions are meant to help bishops and diocesan and parish staff to better understand why our missing brothers and sisters have stopped coming to the Lord’s Table, enabling the Church to be an agent of healing and reconciliation.

The Response of the New Evangelization to Today’s World

Attention should also be paid to the cultural contexts and situations that our missing brothers and sisters face. Pope Benedict XVI described some of the contemporary situations confronting modern man, including secularism, globalization, social communications, the economy, scientific and technological research, and civic and political life. Many of these societal realities are positive, but when taken to the extreme, they can lead to disillusionment and weariness. For example, more people than ever before are able to participate in politics and enjoy political freedom, but current extreme political forces are also causing war, injustice, and the slow erosion of human rights, including religious freedom.³⁰ The disparity in economic development, while lifting some out of poverty, has also led to an inequitable distribution of goods as well as damage to God’s creation, which adds to the plight of the poor. Secularism has led to a diminishing recognition of Sunday as the Lord’s Day, a holy day of prayer and rest. “[The New Evangelization] involves . . . the proclamation and demonstration that the Christian faith is the only fully valid response to the problems and hopes that life poses to every person and society.”³¹ The New Evangelization offers hope. Our hope is not in a program or philosophy but in the person of Jesus Christ, who comforts those who are burdened.

Currently, there are numerous pastoral programs meant to encourage and support people in their journey back to the faith. However, for these programs to be effective, bishops, eparchs, pastors, catechists, and indeed all Catholics reaching out to our missing brothers and sisters must touch the lives of others, interact with them, and show them how the faith answers the deepest questions and enriches modern culture. Many might ask, “How do I touch people’s lives? How do I interact with others in a spirit of love? How do I explain how the faith addresses modern concerns?” The Church has the resources to help. One such resource involves cultivating a culture of witness.

PART IV: CULTURE OF WITNESS

*“I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”
—Jn 13:34-35*

Christ teaches us how to evangelize, how to invite people into communion with him, and how to create a culture of witness: namely, through love. A Christian life lived with charity and faith is the most effective form of evangelization. Evangelization testifies to the transformative power of the Gospel and the mission of the Church to sanctify society, hand on the faith to future generations, strengthen the faith of her members, and renew the faith of those who have slipped away from the Church:

“Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.” . . . It is therefore primarily by her conduct and by her life that the Church will evangelize the world, in other words, by her living witness of fidelity to the Lord Jesus—the witness of poverty and detachment, of freedom in the face of the powers of this world, in short, the witness of sanctity.³²

The faithful become agents of evangelization through living witness and commitment to the Gospel. The everyday moments of one’s life lived with Christian charity, faith, and hope provide witness to family members, friends, neighbors, colleagues, and others who have stopped actively participating in the life of the Church. This witness is essential for reaching others in today’s modern world.

Conversion

The witness of Christians, whose lives are filled with the hope of Christ, opens the hearts and minds of those around them to Christ. This openness to Christ is a moment of conversion (metanoia). It is the moment in which a person’s life is reoriented to Christ, when he or she—by grace—enters into a relationship with him and thus enters into a relationship with the community of believers, the Church. “The purpose of this [new] evangelization is to bring about faith and conversion to Christ. Faith involves a profound change of mind and heart, a change of life, a ‘metanoia.’”³³

The New Evangelization does not seek to invite people to experience only one moment of conversion but rather to experience the gradual and lifelong process of conversion: to draw all people into a deeper relationship with God, to participate in the sacramental life of the Church, to develop a mature conscience, to sustain one’s faith through ongoing catechesis, and to integrate one’s faith into all aspects of one’s life.³⁴ The process of conversion and evangelization that accomplishes the objectives above must include the witness of the Church through her members in the everyday living out of the Gospel. In light of today’s cultural contexts and situations, many struggle with how to create a culture of witness that will invite our missing brothers and sisters back to the Lord’s Table. In the National Directory for Catechesis, the Catholic bishops of the United States have provided catechetical methodologies that foster and sustain an evangelizing culture of witness.

Methodologies

Catechetical methodologies are based on the proclamation of the faith from Sacred Scripture and Tradition and their application to human experience, or they are based on human experience examined in light of the Gospel and teachings of the Church.³⁵ These catechetical methods, though distinct, are complementary and should guide pastoral programs aimed at renewing the faith of all Catholics, including our missing brothers and sisters. For these methodologies and the programs based on them to be effective, they must be grounded in witness to the Gospel. This section explores the following methodologies:

- Discipleship
- A commitment to the Christian life
- Parish life
- The liturgical life of the Church: popular devotions and piety
- The Christian family
- Catechists and teachers of the faith
- Human experience

Discipleship

To create a culture of witness, we must live explicit lives of discipleship. Being a disciple is a challenge. Fortunately, one does not become a disciple of Christ on his or her own initiative. The work of the Holy Spirit within the Christian community forms the person as a disciple of Christ. One seeking to learn how to be a disciple of Christ does so through apprenticeship. Those seeking to return to the faith are seeking to live a life of discipleship, to follow in the footsteps of Christ.³⁶ The parish must provide formed disciples who can accompany those who are returning to the Church and guide them throughout their journey. Apprenticeship “links an experienced Christian believer, or mentor, with one who seeks a deeper relationship with Christ and the Church.”³⁷ Furthermore, this relationship is a “guided encounter with the entire Christian life, a journey toward conversion to Christ. It is a school for discipleship that promotes an authentic following of Christ based on the acceptance of one’s baptismal responsibilities, the internalization of the word of God, and the transformation of the whole person to ‘life in Christ.’”³⁸ Apprenticeship is an essential element in witnessing to the Gospel message.

A Commitment to the Christian Life

The commitment to living the Christian life provides an essential element of the culture of witness. To those seeking answers to the increasing secularization, individualism, and materialism of society, a Christian life provides a powerful witness to the Gospel. The public profession of one’s faith through active participation in prayer, the sacraments, and especially Sunday Mass contributes to the sanctification of the world. Additionally, the works of charity and justice as well as the promotion of solidarity, justice, peace, and stewardship of creation build up the Kingdom of God.³⁹ Increasingly, we recognize that generosity of spirit and commitment to charity and justice are vehicles to bring people into relationship with Jesus and his Church. Social justice and direct service opportunities provide powerful experiences with the person of Jesus, especially for adolescents and young adults. Service, when understood as serving Christ in others and as a means to share the Gospel, has the ability to bring the server and the one being served closer to Christ.

Parish Life

Because the parish, through its pastor and members, is typically the first contact that returning Catholics have with the institutional Church, “it is the responsibility of both pastors and laity to ensure that those doors are always open.”⁴⁰ Evangelization must remain rooted in the parish. It is in the parish that one becomes engaged with the Church community, learns how to become a disciple of Christ, is nurtured by Scripture, is nourished by the sacraments, and ultimately becomes an evangelizer. Successful evangelization and catechetical initiatives must be focused on the parish and parish life. The parish is where the faith is passed down, lived, and sustained for all members of the Body of Christ, most especially for those members seeking to return. “It is the responsibility of the parish community and its leadership to ensure that the faith it teaches, preaches, and celebrates is alive and that it is a true sign, for all who come in contact with it, that this truly is the living Body of Christ.”⁴¹

The Liturgical Life of the Church: Popular Devotions and Piety

The active participation and practice of the liturgy, prayers, devotions, and popular piety of the Church provide a powerful witness to the faith. Participation in Mass should be encouraged, as the Eucharist is the heart of the Church’s life. By participating in Mass, learning common prayers, and practicing devotions, a person appropriates the teachings of the faith. The prayers, popular devotions, and liturgies of the Church form the basis of “Catholic culture”; they allow for the community to pray together in a common language and contribute to one’s continuing faith development.⁴² Often, our returning brothers and sisters remember and have a fondness for their cultural and familial devotional practices. Asian and Pacific Islander and Hispanic devotions to our Blessed Mother, such as Our Lady of Antipolo and Our Lady of Guadalupe, should be encouraged. The use of gospel music by the African American community and liturgical movement by the black community should be fostered. The rich traditions of prayers, liturgy, and devotions such as *Akathistos*, *Paraklesis*, and *Molebens* of our Eastern Catholic Churches are a great grace and blessing. The desire of returning Catholics to reconnect with their cultural devotional practices should be encouraged and fostered, as it presents an opportunity to invite them into a prayerful relationship with God.

The Christian Family

A culture of witness is sustained within the Church through marriage and the family. The communal relationship that exists between and among the three Persons of the Trinity is the model for Christian marriage,⁴³ and through the Sacrament of Matrimony, married love actually participates in Trinitarian love. It is within the Sacrament of Matrimony that the husband and wife evangelize, become evangelized, and share their witness of the faith to their children and to society. “Spouses, ‘not only receive the love of Christ and become a saved community, but they are also called upon to communicate Christ’s love to their brethren, thus becoming a saved community’ (cf. *Familiaris Consortio*, no. 49). The family founded on the Sacrament of Matrimony is a particular realization of the Church, saved and saving, evangelized and evangelizing community.”⁴⁴

The family, called the domestic Church,⁴⁵ is often the first place where one experiences and is

formed in the faith. In fact, “the new evangelization depends largely on the domestic Church.”⁴⁶ It is through the example of mothers and fathers, grandparents, siblings, and extended family members that one most concretely witnesses how to live a Christian life: “Family members learn more of the Christian life by observing each other’s strengths or weaknesses than by formal instruction. Their shared wisdom and experience often constitute a compelling Christian witness.”⁴⁷ It is vital that multiple generations, including grandparents, are engaged with the faith formation of younger family members. It is through the family that one journeying back to the faith can be awakened to, affirmed in, and encouraged by the love and mercy of Christ.

Catechists and Teachers of the Faith

The witness of catechists and teachers of the faith also creates and fosters a culture of witness. Catechists, together with the pastors of the Church, are entrusted with the duties of teaching the faith, overseeing sacramental preparation, supporting the formation of consciences, and developing a love of prayer in those they catechize.⁴⁸ Catechists, who are dedicated disciples of Christ, provide a powerful witness to the Gospel. Additionally, Catholic schools and their teachers are witnesses to the faith. For over one hundred years, the Catholic school system in America has prepared generations of disciples in this country and been a powerful evangelizing presence. A vibrant Catholic identity and active promotion of gospel values in Catholic schools help foster future generations of disciples and evangelists.

Religious Experience

Discipleship is rooted in human experience. It is through human experience that one enters into a dialogue with modern culture. The human experience provides the “sensible signs” that help us come to know ourselves, one another, and God.⁴⁹ It is through common human experiences that the Word of God is revealed to us. These sensible signs are not abstract metaphysical signs but the concrete actions of the Holy Spirit present in the Christian’s everyday life. These concrete actions of the Holy Spirit are numerous. Some common examples are retreats, direct service opportunities, parish prayer groups, Bible study programs, and involvement in the ecclesial movements. It is through the prompting of the Holy Spirit that one comes to understand the Good News of the Gospel. One’s interaction with a Christian who lives an authentic gospel life leads to questioning about how to better appropriate the faith into one’s own life. “Catechesis links human experience to the revealed word of God. . . . Catechesis helps them relate the Christian message to the most profound questions in life: the existence of God, the destiny of the human person, the origin and end of history, the truth about good and evil, the meaning of suffering and death, and so forth.”⁵⁰

These catechetical foundations are necessary for creating a culture of witness that testifies to the transformative power of the Gospel. The next section of this resource examines concrete skills and methods that can be used in diocesan and parish-based programs designed to invite our missing brothers and sisters back to the Lord’s Table.

PART V: KEY COMPONENTS OF OUTREACH PROGRAMS

*“Then Jesus said to them, ‘Do not be afraid.’”
—Mt 28:10*

Christ’s message to the women at his tomb is also addressed to us. With his Passion, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension, Christ has vanquished death and granted us the hope of eternal salvation. Therefore, there is nothing to fear. However, because of Original Sin, we still experience fear and anxiety. Our brothers and sisters who no longer actively practice the faith may have apprehension about “coming back.” They may wonder and worry about the following: Will the Mass be the same? Will I be judged because I stayed away so long? Maybe I have sinned so greatly that I cannot come back. What if I cannot remember the words to Mass?

Those who minister to our missing brothers and sisters are filled with questions also: Who am I to welcome people back? Am I actually capable of explaining what the Church teaches? Can I offer guidance and listen to their concerns without judgment? Indeed, Christians often experience these concerns when they evangelize. We are often afraid to ask our family, friends, and co-workers, “Would you like to come to Mass with me this weekend?” We have difficulty saying, “I saw the same news story, but this is what the Church actually teaches.” We have trouble revealing, “Yes, sometimes going to confession is hard, but once I am there, I experience God’s peace and mercy. If you haven’t been in awhile, consider giving it another chance.” There are several key components to successful evangelization programs designed to engage our missing brothers and sisters. This section of the resource will examine these components and offer concrete practices for fostering a culture of witness in diocesan and parish-based programs designed to invite all Catholics to a fuller participation in the life of the Church.

In 2010, the Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis conducted a nationwide survey of dioceses and eparchies on their best practices for outreach to Catholics. Based on the results of this survey as well as the *National Directory for Catechesis*, *Go and Make Disciples*, and *A Time to Listen . . . A Time to Heal: A Resource Directory for Reaching Out to Inactive Catholics*, the Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis proposes several key components for programs meant to invite Catholics back to the Lord’s Table.⁵¹ These components are not meant to be comprehensive but rather serve as a foundation for diocesan and parish based programs. The key components are the Holy Spirit and conversion, leadership, team preparation, an atmosphere of hospitality and trust, catechesis (including sacramental catechesis), prayer and popular piety, the Sunday Eucharist and effective preaching, resources, and continued support.

The Holy Spirit and Conversion

The New Evangelization is an opportunity for ongoing conversion. This reorientation of one's life toward Christ is possible because of the work of the Holy Spirit. The process of returning to active participation in the Church is a process of conversion that unfolds through the prompting of the Holy Spirit. For some Catholics, the conversion process to return to the Lord's Table will take time. Therefore, complete trust in the work of the Holy Spirit is essential. Programs designed to invite Catholics back to the Church should emphasize the following aspects of the role of the Holy Spirit and conversion:

- Openness to the Holy Spirit
- Personal witnessing to the role of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the pastor and team members
- Recognition that each person's conversion will be unique and unfold at a different pace
- Realization among team members that it was the Holy Spirit who led participants in their journey back to the Church (It is God who reaches out first.)
- Use of the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) model for conversion
- Ability of the pastor and team leaders to articulate personal faith experiences
- Programs that are flexible, because some individuals may not be able to participate in an entire program
- Participation in retreats (e.g., marriage preparation and enrichment, adolescent, and young adult)
- Involvement in faith formation programs and direct service opportunities
- Recognition that the conversion process may go beyond the length of the program and require follow-up with the person by a team member or pastor (All participants would benefit from follow-up contacts.)
- Evangelization and long-term evangelization planning in the parish

Leadership

The bishop, as the shepherd of his diocese and chief catechist, has been entrusted with the sacred duty to provide for the spiritual needs of those in his care, especially those who are absent from the community. The bishop's witness and active engagement in reaching out to our missing brothers and sisters demonstrates to the entire diocese the importance of this ministry. Pastors who assist the bishops in this sacred duty are vital elements in welcoming back our missing brothers and sisters. Lay parish leaders and staff also have a role in this ministry, as they are often the first points of contact and witness to the parish community. The following leadership skills and practices ought to be emphasized in outreach programs designed to welcome Catholics back to the Church:

- Public testimony and witness by the bishop about the importance of this ministry, including a personal invitation by the diocesan bishop to reconnect with one's parish
- Personal invitations to those who are missing to join the community for Sunday Mass
- Reaching out to former parishioners and demonstrating a spirit of welcome to all those who seek assistance
- Use of various ways to invite Catholics back (e.g., through letters, phone calls, social media, and home visits)
- Diocesan support of pastors and parishes implementing the bishop's pastoral plan for this ministry
- Support for pastors when engaging in and setting aside parish resources for this outreach

- Periodic parish censuses to determine the population and parish demographics (This is an opportunity to invite people to return to the Church.)
- Involvement of the clergy in the formation of lay leaders as evangelizers

Team Preparation

Programs that utilize a team-based approach should ensure that team members have been carefully selected and formed and that they embody a sense of welcome. Team members need not be master catechists, but they should have a deep love of the Church and a mature prayer life. If possible, the team should include Catholics who have had a lifetime commitment to the faith and others who have returned to the active practice of the faith. Some additional skills and practices for team formation include the following:

- A love of God and his Church
- Involvement and assistance of the pastor in the program
- Dedication to daily prayer
- Team members who are joyful mentors to returning Catholics
- Willingness to share one's own spiritual journey
- Ability to articulate how Christ changed one's life
- Knowledge to share the Gospel message
- Attendance at catechetical formation programs and retreats offered by the diocese or parish
- Participation in training programs for one-on-one evangelization, including online resources that make use of social media
- Ability to empathize
- Willingness to learn active listening skills
- Commitment to participate in the entire length of the program

An Atmosphere of Hospitality and Trust

The next element needed for effective evangelization is hospitality and trust. The entire parish community, especially the parish leadership, must foster a spirit of hospitality and welcome. This sense of hospitality extends beyond those who participate in formal “welcome back” programs. It includes Catholics who approach the Church at key “teachable moments,” such as couples seeking the Sacrament of Matrimony, parents who have children in Catholic schools or parish-based religious education programs and are bringing their children for sacramental preparation, and Catholics who seek assistance from parish social ministry programs. Additionally, Catholics who choose to participate in a “welcome back” program ought to feel supported in their journey by the entire community. The following are among the other aspects of hospitality and trust that could be included in outreach programs:

- Fostering a liturgical environment that invites, spiritually fulfills, and welcomes the full and active participation of the parish
- Encouraging words of welcome by pastors at all liturgies, especially key liturgical moments when Catholics attend liturgies, such as weddings, funerals, quinceañeras, and Christmas and Easter Masses

- Offering the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation during hours that are convenient for those with busy work schedules, such as during lunch and after work
- The use of multiple languages in every aspect of parish life when culturally diverse groups are members of the parish
- Accessibility of worship and inclusion in all aspects of parish life for all, especially those with physical and mental disabilities
- Creation and pastoral formation of a welcome committee to help greet and support new parish members
- Parish-based support groups for those populations who tend to drift away from the Church, such as young adults, the newly married, new parents, and the recently divorced or widowed
- Openness to the participant's questions and listening to the group's concerns
- Respectful dialogue during the meeting sessions
- Confidentiality of conversations that take place during formation opportunities

Catechesis, Including Sacramental Catechesis

Many times, Catholics who have been away from the Church return with questions about the Mass, Scripture, and the teachings and traditions of the Church. These questions should be addressed openly and honestly by pastors and knowledgeable team members. Participants should be encouraged to ask questions, learn more about the faith, and receive the Sacraments of the Eucharist and Penance and Reconciliation to experience God's grace and mercy. The catechetical component should include the following elements:

- Teaching and reflections on the Creed, sacraments, and moral teachings of the Church based on the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and the *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*
- Bible study and reflection on the role of Scripture in one's life
- Opportunities for more thorough scriptural studies
- Sacramental catechesis on the Seven Sacraments, especially the Eucharist and Penance and Reconciliation
- Encouraging returning Catholics to receive the Sacraments of Penance and Reconciliation and the Eucharist
- Emphasis on the transformative grace of the Eucharist, including a sense of discipleship
- Links on the parish website to credible Catholic catechetical websites and Catholic social media sites
- Use of teachable moments (e.g., Christmas, Easter, Baptism, First Communion, and other special liturgies) when Catholics come in contact with the Church (These are important opportunities not only for catechesis but also for evangelization.)
- Information about parish adult faith formation programs

Prayer and Popular Piety

Outreach programs must include prayer and help nurture the spiritual life of those returning to the Church. Even if someone has been away from the Church and Sunday Mass for a significant period of time, it should not be assumed that they have ceased praying. Indeed, many Catholics who have slipped away still have a deep devotion to Mary, the saints, and popular piety practices. These devotions should provide the basis for deepening their spiritual life. Programs developed for reaching out to our missing brothers and sisters should emphasize the following teachings and practices:

- Because prayer is the means through which we enter into a relationship with God, what a regular prayer life entails and how to pray each day should be explained.
- The Mass is the source and summit of the Church's life because it is through the Eucharist that one is nurtured by the Body and Blood of Christ.⁵²
- The common prayers of the Church (Our Father; Hail Mary; Glory Be; Acts of Hope, Faith, Love, and Contrition) should be taught, explained, and prayed.
- The various expressions of prayer (vocal, meditative, and contemplative) along with the basic types of prayers (adoration, petition, intercession, thanksgiving, and praise) should be examined.⁵³
- The rich spiritual traditions of the Church (Rosary, *lectio divina*, Liturgy of the Hours, novenas) should be explored.⁵⁴
- Popular piety practices and devotions (devotion to the saints, scapulars, house blessings, home altars) should be taught and encouraged.
- The popular cultural devotions of various ethnic communities represented in the parish should be incorporated in various aspects of parish life.
- Ecclesial movements may be involved in parish life and faith formation.

The Sunday Eucharist and Effective Preaching

Outreach programs ought to invite people to return to the Sunday Eucharist. It is during this celebration that we encounter Jesus in the Eucharist. Pastors endeavor to ensure that both the preaching and the assembly are sensitive and welcoming to those who infrequently attend the Eucharist. The following are among the other aspects of the Sunday Eucharist and preaching that should be emphasized:

- Prayerful and faith-filled celebrations of the Eucharist with thoughtfully prepared homilies that stir the heart and mind
- The celebration of Sunday Mass in multiple languages when culturally diverse populations are present
- The accessibility of the Church building for those with disabilities, including the use of American Sign Language for the Deaf community
- A welcoming and inviting atmosphere toward those who infrequently attend
- Homiletic training during clergy formation and ongoing training for ordained clergy
- Opportunities for the clergy to study and reflect on Scripture
- Dedicated time for clergy for prayer and homily preparation
- Focus on integrating the teachings of the Catechism with Scripture in preaching

Resources

Catholics returning to the faith may need resources beyond what a team can provide. Team members will also need resources and support from the parish. Additionally, the community will need to commit parish resources to the program. The following resources should be readily available before a program begins:

- Meeting space in the parish that is set aside for the program
- A program budget for supplies, such as catechetical materials and refreshments
- Catechetical materials for team members so that they can better explain the Church's teachings
- Contact information for professionals who can assist those struggling with depression, addiction, or other related needs
- Contact information for the diocesan tribunal to assist those who wish to regularize their marriage

Continued Support

An evangelization program for returning Catholics is the first step in the process of rejoining the community at the Lord's Table. The Church's outreach cannot end with the completion of a program, no matter how good the program is. The Church's outreach cannot end upon one's return to Sunday Mass. We are called to continually support and encourage our returning brothers and sisters so that they can become true disciples of Christ. Continued support should include the following:

- An ongoing relationship between the participants and team members
- Encouragement to join parish prayer groups and small faith communities
- Opportunities for lifelong faith formation and catechesis, including reflection on Scripture
- Catechetical formation through parish and diocesan programs, including online formation programs
- Occasions for service within the parish community (e.g., to the sick and homebound)
- Involvement of ecclesial movements and new communities
- Parish revivals and missions
- Continued hospitality at parish liturgies and events

Dioceses, eparchies, and parishes are encouraged to use this resource to develop their own programs or enhance existing ones to "re-propose" the Gospel to our missing brothers and sisters. Outreach to Catholics seeking to more fully participate in the life of the Church is dependent upon the entire community's commitment to the New Evangelization.

CONCLUSION

“You will be my witnesses . . . to the ends of the earth.”
—Acts 1:8

Through our Baptism, we become witnesses to the Gospel and disciples of Christ. As disciples and witnesses, we are called to ongoing conversion. To become evangelizers, we must first be evangelized. If we truly believe in the Gospel, then as a Church, we must take seriously Christ’s commandment to “go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.”⁵⁵ We bring the Good News to all people and nations, including those who have never heard of Christ, those who are no longer actively practicing their faith, and all those who are fervent in the faith. The New Evangelization challenges us to “re-propose” the Gospel to our missing brothers and sisters—those members of the Body of Christ who have drifted away from the Lord’s Table.

The purpose of this resource is to encourage and assist diocesan and eparchial bishops and their pastoral leaders in their outreach efforts to engage our missing brothers and sisters. As the Church prepares for the 2012 Synod on the New Evangelization, new material will be added to this web-based resource. Each diocese, eparchy, and parish will implement this document in the manner most suited to its needs. Some will create door-to-door programs, use social media, develop printed resources, participate in local or national programs, or engage in a combination of all these activities. As dioceses and parishes begin preparations to create or renew their outreach to our missing brothers and sisters, it is important to remember that the New Evangelization is “primarily a spiritual activity.”⁵⁶ We are called to invite our missing brothers and sisters back to life in the Church—a life in which we all experience God’s love and mercy through the community of faith, nurture our spiritual lives through the sacraments and prayer, and are formed into true disciples of Christ.



PARISH REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Diocesan and parish leadership are encouraged to reflect on the following questions as they prepare pastoral plans aimed at “re-proposing” Christ to the faithful and inviting our brothers and sisters to the Lord’s Table:

- How does the parish community provide people with opportunities for a personal encounter with Jesus Christ?
- In addition to offering sound catechetical instruction in the teachings of the Church, to what extent do faith formation programs have as an objective fostering a personal relationship with Christ?
- What does the parish do to help people deepen their prayer life?
- How has the parish recruited, formed, and supported individuals to be evangelizers through the witness of their lives?
- How are pastors fostering the consciousness of the laity to be evangelizers in the modern world?
- How do pastors engage people during “teachable moments,” such as Baptisms, weddings, and funerals?
- Are there faith formation programs on how to pass down the faith for parents, grandparents, and godparents?
- Are there faith formation programs for adolescents and young adults on how to share their faith with others in college and in the workplace?
- How are pastors supported in their vocation to evangelize?
- Are there ongoing faith formation programs for pastors on homiletics?
- Is there instruction for pastors and parish leaders on how to use social media to reach people?
- What parish-based pastoral programs support people in their everyday lives? Are there programs for the newly married, new parents, divorced, grieving, and unemployed?
- How has the diocese and parish promoted the New Evangelization?

RESOURCES

- 1 John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio* (RM) (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops [USCCB], 1991), no. 33. (Also available online at www.vatican.va/edocs/ENG0219/_INDEX.HTM.)
- 2 Jn 4:4-42.
- 3 Mt 20:29-34.
- 4 Jn 8:1-10.
- 5 Mt 11:28.
- 6 Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA), "Sacraments Today: Belief and Practice among U.S. Catholics," CARA, cara.georgetown.edu/sacraments.html (accessed February 15, 2011).
- 7 CARA, "Missed Mass Chart of Sacraments Today: Belief and Practice among U.S. Catholics," CARA, cara.georgetown.edu/missmass.jpg (accessed February 15, 2011). For the detailed analysis of reasons why Catholics do not regularly attend Mass, please see "Sacraments Today: Belief and Practice among U.S. Catholics," CARA, cara.georgetown.edu/sacraments.html.
- 8 Benedict XVI, Address of the Celebration of Vespers and Meeting with the Bishops of the United States of America, www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2008/april/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20080416_bishops-usa_en.html.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 *Ad Gentes*, no. 2.
- 12 *Go and Make Disciples: A National Plan and Strategy for Catholic Evangelization in the United States* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2002), no. 40.
- 13 Statistics point to a median age of twenty-one when Catholics are more prone to stop practicing their faith. Please see "The Impact of Religious Switching and Secularization on the Estimated Size of the U.S. Adult Catholic Population," CARA, cara.georgetown.edu/CARAServices/FRStats/Winter2008.pdf (accessed February 15, 2011).
- 14 Rom 15:7.
- 15 Benedict XVI, Homily of First Vespers on the Solemnity of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/homilies/2010/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20100628_vespri-pietro-paolo_en.html.
- 16 Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (EN) (Washington, DC: USCCB, 1975), no. 14. (Also available online at www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi_en.html.)
- 17 Cf. EN, nos. 8-9.
- 18 Cf. EN, nos. 26-28.
- 19 See EN, nos. 52-53; 56-57.
- 20 RM, no. 3.
- 21 John Paul II, *Address to CELAM* (Opening Address of the 19th General Assembly of CELAM, 9 March 1983, Port-au-Prince, Haiti), *L'Osservatore Romano* English Edition 16/780 (18 April 1983), no. 9.
- 22 RM, no. 33.
- 23 Homily on the Solemnity of SS. Peter and Paul.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Benedict XVI, *Ubi cumque et Semper*, www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/apost_letters/documents/hf_ben-xvi_apl_20100921_ubicumque-et-semper_en.html.
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 Benedict XVI, *On Christian Hope (Spe Salvi)* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2007), no. 2. (Also available online at www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20071130_spe-salvi_en.html.)
- 28 EN, no. 15.
- 29 *Go and Make Disciples*, no. 39.

- 30 These factors enunciated by Pope Benedict XVI in *Ubicumque et Semper* are elaborated on in the *Lineamenta for the 2012 Synod*. Please see Synod of Bishops, *Lineamenta for the 2012 Synod: The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith*, www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20110202_lineamenta-xiii-assembly_en.html.
- 31 *National Directory for Catechesis* (NDC) (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2005), no 17.A.
- 32 EN, no. 41.
- 33 NDC, no. 17.A.
- 34 See NDC, no 17A.
- 35 The first methodology is deductive, while the second is inductive. For a detailed examination of these two methods, please see NDC, no. 29.
- 36 NDC, no. 29.B.
- 37 NDC, no. 29.H.
- 38 NDC, no. 29.H.
- 39 NDC, no. 29.G.
- 40 USCCB, “Welcome and Justice for Persons with Disabilities: A Framework of Access and Inclusion,” USCCB, www.usccb.org/_cs_upload/8104_1.pdf (accessed March 7, 2011).
- 41 NDC, no. 29.C.
- 42 NDC, no. 29.F.
- 43 NDC, no. 13.
- 44 Benedict XVI, Address to the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for the Family, www.radiovaticana.org/en1/articolo.asp?c=542493 (accessed December 1, 2011).
- 45 USCCB, pastoral letter *Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2009), 38-42.
- 46 Benedict XVI, Address to the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for the Family, www.radiovaticana.org/en1/articolo.asp?c=542493 (accessed December 1, 2011).
- 47 NDC, no. 29.D.
- 48 NDC, no. 29.E.
- 49 NDC, no. 29.A.
- 50 NDC, no. 29.A.
- 51 For additional components and concrete practices, see *A Time to Listen . . . A Time to Heal*, 12-17 and *Go and Make Disciples*, nos. 90-127.
- 52 See *Lumen Gentium*, no. 11.
- 53 See USCCB, *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* (USCCA) (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2006), 467-468, 473-475.
- 54 See USCCA, 472.
- 55 Mt 28:19-20.
- 56 *Lineamenta*, no. 5.



PRAYER

Gracious and merciful God, we pray that through the Holy Spirit
all Catholics may hear the call of the New Evangelization
and seek a deeper relationship with your Son, Jesus.

We pray that the New Evangelization will renew the Church,
inspiring all Catholics to “go forth and make disciples of all nations”
and transform society through
the power of the Gospel.

We pray for all members of the Church, that we heed the words of Christ—
“do not be afraid”—and strengthened by
the Holy Spirit’s gift of courage,
give witness to the Gospel and share our faith with others.

We pray that we may become like the father of the prodigal son—
filled with compassion for our missing brothers and sisters—
and run to embrace them upon their return.

We pray that all people yearning to know Christ
and the Church may encounter him
through the faithful who witness to his love in their lives.

Loving God, our Father, strengthen us to become witnesses
to the saving grace of your
Son, Jesus, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

AMEN.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Please visit the *New Evangelization* website for more interactive resources, including prayers, cultural diversity practices, marriage and family life information, and numerous catechetical tools. The documents and other materials listed in this section focus on evangelization and catechesis.

Second Vatican Council Documents on Catechesis and Evangelization:

- *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity (Apostolicam Actuositatem)*. Teachings on the baptismal vocation of the lay Christian faithful in the Church and the world. www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651118_apostolicam-actuositatem_en.html
- *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium)*. The Council's teaching on the nature of the Church and the universal call of holiness. www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html
- *On the Mission Activity of the Church (Ad Gentes)*. The Council's teaching on the missionary vocation of the Church. www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651207_ad-gentes_en.html

Vatican Documents on Catechesis

- *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. The official *Catechism* of the Universal Church that serves as a point of reference for all regarding the faith and morals of the Church. www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM
- *Compendium of the Catholic Church*. The *Compendium* contains, in a concise manner, all the Catholic Church's teachings on faith and morals as found in the *Catechism*. www.vatican.va/archive/compendium_ccc/documents/archive_2005_compendium-ccc_en.html
- *General Directory for Catechesis*. The *Directory* presents both the content and methods for handing on the faith through catechesis. www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccclergy/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_17041998_directory-for-catechesis_en.html

Vatican Documents on Evangelization

- *Address to the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for the Family*. A message from Pope Benedict XVI on family life and the New Evangelization. www.radiovaticana.org/en1/articolo.asp?c=542493
- *Lineamenta for the 2012 Synod: New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith*. The working document of the 2012 Synod Fathers that begins to examine the possible discussion topics at the Synod on the New Evangelization. www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20110202_lineamenta-xiii-assembly_en.html
- *Message for the 2012 World Day of Migrants and Refugees*. A message from Pope Benedict XVI on migration and the New Evangelization. www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/messages/migration/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20110921_world-migrants-day_en.html
- *On Christian Hope (Spe Salvi)*. Pope Benedict XVI's encyclical on the theological virtue of hope. www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20071130_spe-salvi_en.html
- *On Christian Love (Deus Caritas Est)*. Pope Benedict XVI's encyclical on Christian love. www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20051225_deus-caritas-est_en.html
- *On Evangelization in the Modern World (Evangelii Nuntiandi)*. Pope Paul VI's letter on preaching the Gospel and sharing the faith in the modern world. www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi_en.html
- *On the Permanent Validity of the Church's Missionary Mandate (Redemptoris Missio)*. Blessed John Paul II's encyclical on the nature of the Church's mandate to spread the Gospel and his urgent call to all Christians to participate in missionary activities. www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/index.htm

- *The Door of Faith (Porta Fidei)*. The Announcement of the Year of Faith, October 11, 2012–November 24, 2013. www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/motu_proprio/documents/hf_ben-xvi_motu-proprio_20111011_porta-fidei_en.html
- *The Lord's Day (Dies Domini)*. Blessed John Paul II's letter on keeping the Lord's Day holy. www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_05071998_dies-domini_en.html
- *The Word of the Lord (Verbum Domini)*. The post-synodal document on the Word of God in the life and mission of the Church. www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_ben-xvi_exh_20100930_verbum-domini_en.html

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Documents on Evangelization and Catechesis

- *A Time to Listen . . . A Time to Heal: A Resource Directory for Reaching Out to Inactive Catholics*. Washington, DC: USCCB, 2002.
- *Empowered by the Spirit: Campus Ministry Faces the Future*. old.usccb.org/education/highered/empowered.shtml
- *Go and Make Disciples: A National Plan and Strategy for Catholic Evangelization in the United States*. www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/evangelization/go-and-make-disciples/goand-make-disciples-a-national-plan-and-strategy-for-catholic-evangelization-in-the-unitedstates.cfm
- *National Directory for Catechesis*. Washington, DC: USCCB, 2005.
- *Sons and Daughters of the Light: A Pastoral Plan for Young Adult Ministry*. Washington, DC: USCCB, 2010.
- *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry*. Washington, DC: USCCB, 2002.
- *Teaching the Spirit of Mission Ad Gentes: Continuing Pentecost Today*. www.usccb.org/beliefs-andteachings/what-we-believe/teaching-the-spirit-of-mission-ad-gentes-continuing-pentecost-today.cfm
- *The Hispanic Presence in the New Evangelization in the United States*. Washington, DC: USCCB, 1996.
- *To the Ends of the Earth: A Pastoral Statement on World Mission*. old.usccb.org/wm/earth.shtml
- *What We Have Seen and Heard: A Pastoral Letter on Evangelization from the Black Bishops of the United States*. Washington, DC: USCCB, 1984.

Diocesan Evangelization Resources

The following list represents a sampling of diocesan resources. All diocesan websites are available at www.usccb.org/about/bishops-and-dioceses/all-dioceses.cfm.

Selected Diocesan Evangelization Documents

- Bishop Robert J. Carlson, Pastoral Letter on Evangelization. saginawdiocese.samsa.com/images/Pastoral_Evangelization_010608.pdf
- Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio, "Do Not Be Afraid": A Pastoral Vision for the New Evangelization. dioceseofbrooklyn.org/about/dont_be_afraid_english.aspx
- Bishop Paul D. Etienne, A Pastoral Plan for Holiness of Life for the People of God of the Diocese of Cheyenne. www.dioceseofcheyenne.org/pdfs/BishopPastoralLetter.pdf
- Bishop José H. Gomez, You Will Be My Witnesses: A Pastoral Letter to the People of God of San Antonio on the Christian Mission to Evangelize and Proclaim Jesus Christ. www.archsa.org/documents/anv_en.pdf
- Bishop William E. Lori, Praying for a New Pentecost: A Pastoral Letter on Evangelization. www.bridgeportdiocese.com/index.php/ourbishop/article/pastoral_letter_2001_05
- Bishop David L. Ricken, Parishes Called to Be Holy, Fully Engaged, Fully Alive: A Pastoral Letter on Priorities for Parishes and the Diocese. www.gbdioc.org/images/stories/Main_Links/Who_we_are/Bishops/pdf/2011-Pastoral-Letter_06-02-2011.pdf
- Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl, Disciples of the Lord: Sharing the Vision. A Pastoral Letter on the New Evangelization. www.adw.org/pastoral/eletterlink.asp

Selected Diocesan Evangelization Websites

- Chicago, IL: www.wearemissionary.org
- Cincinnati, OH: www.catholiccincinnati.org/ministries-offices/evangelization-and-catechesis
- Green Bay, WI: www.gbdioc.org/evangelization-a-worship/spirituality-and-evangelization.html
- Houma-Thibodaux, LA: www.htdiocese.org/OfficeofNewEvangelization/tabid/607/Default.aspx
- Philadelphia, PA: archphila.org/evangelization/formlaity/parish_evangelization/parish_evangelization.htm
- Portland, ME: www.portlanddiocese.org/info.php?info_id=93
- St. Petersburg, FL: home.catholicweb.com/dosp_elff
- San Antonio, TX: www.archsa.org/evangelization/about.aspx
- Seattle, WA: www.seattlearchdiocese.org/CFF/CatholicsComeHome.aspx
- Washington, DC: site.adw.org/archdiocese-of-washington-living-the-new-evangelization

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