

Making the Most of the Parish Pastoral Council Experience

“Where am I?
What am I doing here?”



Prepared by Rick Krivanka
for the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston
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Agenda

- Welcome and Opening Prayer
- Meeting people at the table
 - Name, parish, something about my family, my work, what is most inspiring to me about being on the PPC
- PPC Roots and Evolution
- PPC Purpose and Role
- Four Functions of a PPC
- PPC and Parish partnerships
- Conversation with my parish group
 - things we most want to further discuss in our PPC
- Final reflections and blessing





VATICAN II

Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People, #26

“In dioceses, as far as possible, councils should be set up to assist the Church’s apostolic work, whether in the field of evangelization and sanctification or in the fields of charity, social relations and the rest....

Such councils should be established too, if possible, at **parochial**, inter-parochial, inter-diocesan level, and also on the national and international planes.”

1983 REVISED CODE OF CANON LAW

536, Par. 1

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

The Purpose of a Parish

- The parish does not exist for itself, but to carry forth the mission of Jesus Christ – the work of the Church.
- The parish has two basic purposes:
 - To support the spiritual growth of its members through celebrating the Eucharist, proclaiming the Word, building up the community, and serving all God's people, and;
 - To enable its members to participate actively in the priestly, prophetic and kingly mission of Jesus Christ to the world



A Reflection on Evangelization

All that we do must lead to
bringing the Gospel message
into every human situation
and helping all people
to come to an encounter
with the living Christ.



Evolution of PPC Role

From

To

Parish Council



Parish Pastoral Council

A Body of Leaders



A Leadership Body

Coordinating Ministries



Articulating a Vision

Crisis Management



Pastoral Planning

Doing Activities



Empowerment & Oversight

Business and Politics



Prayer & Discernment

Voting



Consensus

Parish Pastoral Council

Nature and Purpose – Diocesan Norms

1. Be a representative body whose focus is on the whole community - its beliefs, its hopes, its joys, its needs, its sorrows, its concerns, its gifts and its pursuit of the mission of the Church.
2. Provide a means for uniting the parish community in expressing its collective wisdom re: pastoral plans and activities.
3. Read and reflect the “signs-of-the-times” to those planning or implementing pastoral activities in the parish.
4. Offer the best consultation possible to the pastor – the Council's task is counsel and consultation. Members and the pastor reflect and consider pastoral issues for the common good and for the future. Their role is to understand, to reflect carefully and prayerfully and to seek consensus.

“Consultative Bodies”

(Continuum of Authority)

**Advice
Giving**

Consultative

**Decision
Making**



**Recommendations
may or may not be
taken seriously.**

**No accountability if
recommendations
not followed.**

**Recommendations
taken seriously, but
not followed blindly.**

**If recommendations
not followed, then
reasons are made
clearly known.**

**Recommendations
are binding.**

**There is an
obligation to
implement all
recommendations.**

Overview of the Council Role

- 1) Centered in prayer and seeking God's will
- 2) Building relationships and connections among people and groups
 - Within the council
 - Within the parish
 - Within the larger Church (interdependence vs. independence)
 - Within the surrounding community
- 3) Listening to and understanding the life experiences of the people we are called to serve
- 4) Pastoral planning - discerning recommendations for parish priorities, plans, policies to carry forth the mission of Jesus

Parish Pastoral Council Purpose and Functions

The purpose of the Parish Pastoral Council is to promote the spiritual growth of the parish community and to plan ways for the parish to carry out the mission of the Church.

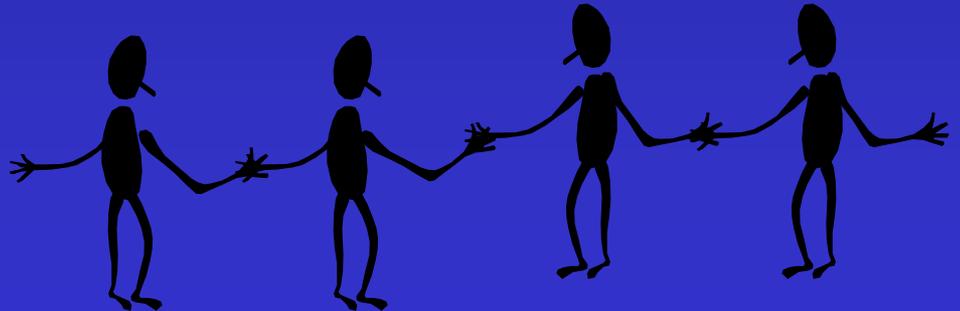
The Parish Pastoral Council accomplishes this purpose through four interdependent functions:

1. Spiritual formation
2. Pastoral planning
3. Pastoral Policy Development
4. Communication

Spiritual Formation

To operate effectively, Parish Pastoral Council must become a community of mutual trust, respect, listening, understanding, and prayer.

Our Father, who art in Heaven...



Reflection by St. Teresa of Avila

Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes, you are his body.
Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
compassion on this world.
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.



A Spirituality of Communion

Pope John Paul II said that:

"Before making practical plans, we need to promote a spirituality of communion, making it the guiding principle wherever individuals and Christians are formed, ...wherever families and communities are being built up."

"A spirituality of communion indicates above all the heart's contemplation of the mystery of the Trinity dwelling in us, and whose light we must also be able to see shining on the face of the brothers and sisters around us."

"What we are about is serious conversation leading to blessed communion."

–Walter Brueggemann

Conversation, Relationships, Hope

Hope is dependent upon the quality of our conversations.

Conversations build relationships. Relationships build hope.

The key to our future is in tending to our conversations.

Hope springs from the appreciation of life and goodness among us.

There is more is going on around us than first meets the eye.

Discouragement comes more from the words we exchange than from the realities that confront us.

When we have right relationships, we sense that no matter what the future holds, we will be together. And hope abounds.

- Bishop John Hopkins, East Ohio United Methodist Church

Elements of Good Formation

- Prayer and faith-sharing
- Social activities
- Study of relevant Catholic teaching (encyclicals, pastoral letters, canon law, etc.) and current diocesan policy
- Relevant articles and research
- National and diocesan presentations and workshops

Prayer and Faith Sharing

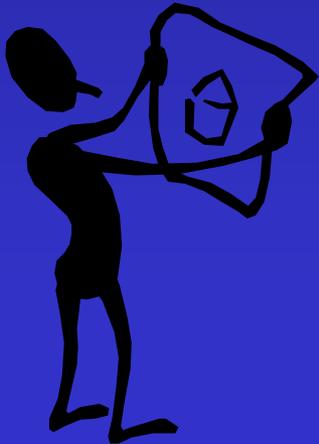
- Choose a prayer format appropriate to your Council from the rich tradition of the Church (e.g., Liturgy of the Hours, Lectio Divina, Prayer and Faith-Sharing on the upcoming Sunday's readings, etc.).
- Create a warm and inviting atmosphere that helps the group be attentive to the presence of God's Spirit in their midst.
- Create a setting with a Bible and other sacred symbols.
- Silence and/or time for quiet reflection is an important part of prayer.
- Prayer may be done at anytime during the meeting, but prayer at the beginning is preferred.
- Invite as many members of the council as possible to take part.
- Prayer at the end of the meeting should provide closure and send the councilors forth with a sense of mission.

(adapted from *A Guide for Parish Pastoral Councils:
A People of Mission and Vision*. Diocese of Youngstown, 2000)

Pastoral Planning

The Council is responsible for two things:

Listening to and evaluating the overall experience and quality of life of the parish community; and then...



...developing or recommending parish pastoral priorities, plans and policies for the future.

Prophetic Planning

Planning for the future is based on knowledge of and appreciation for the story of how the parish has evolved from the past.

This approach to planning in faith-based organizations is primarily about faith, conversion and healing, and secondarily about organizational development.

- John Reid, Seattle

Prophetic Planning

While appreciating what has been, this approach to planning invites leaders to be bold, and ask questions like:

“What would we do if we were 10 times bolder?”

“What would we do if we REALLY considered ourselves a FOR PROPHET organization?”

Prophetic planning seeks to discern the movement of the Spirit and the will of God for a parish at this moment in time.

- John Reid, Seattle

On Listening...

The following are some ways Councils listen to and evaluate the overall experience and quality of life of the parish community:

- “Appreciative Inquiry” – Understand the stories of our people and what gives them life
- “Town Hall” style meetings
- Surveys
- Focus groups
- Analysis of demographics & sacramental activity
- Program evaluations

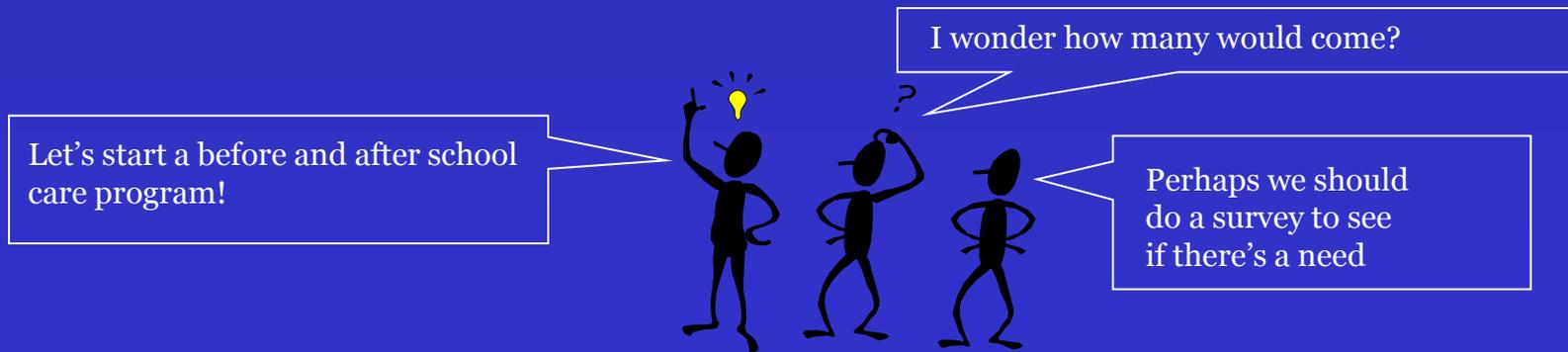
A Spirituality of Communion

Pope John Paul II said that:

"A spirituality of communion also means an ability to think of our brothers and sisters in faith within the profound unity of the Mystical Body, and therefore as "those who are a part of me". This makes us able to share their joys and sufferings, to sense their desires and attend to their needs, to offer them deep and genuine friendship."

“A spirituality of communion implies also the ability to see what is positive in others, to welcome it and prize it as a gift from God: not only as a gift for the brother or sister who has received it directly, but also as a "gift for me".

Pastoral Planning Cycle



Study Major Pastoral Concerns

- 1) Relate to the overall direction and focus of the parish
- 2) Have a relatively broad impact on the life of the parish
- 3) Involve a significant change from past practice
(i.e., something new or different)
- 4) Are separate from administrative concerns, which deal with the details and daily operation of parish programming, school curriculum, budgeting, personnel matters, and scheduling

Planning Questions and Challenges

- 1) Identify pastoral priorities to grow parish life and move to another level.
- 2) Time is precious – we have so much time – need for a rightful sense of urgency.
- 3) Need for breakthrough thinking – what can move us beyond (in as simple and effective a way as possible) to a new level of impact and effectiveness – the ‘new wine’ for becoming a better parish
- 4) We know what we know – we need to learn, vision, pilot, experiment, risk-take, do things ‘out-of-the-box’ of current practice – or nothing will really change (just words and packaging).

Leadership, Belonging, Engagement

- Belonging leads to believing – believing leads to discipleship
- Welcoming & hospitality lead to belonging
 - What about ‘the lost’? Do they feel welcome?
- Emotions matter: engagement is how you *feel* about your church – involvement is what you do in and for your church
- Engaged people (vs. disengaged)
 1. Serve others more often
 2. Invite others to participate in the parish
 3. Give financial support more generously
 4. More overall life satisfaction
 - *Growing an Engaged Church* – Albert Winseman, Gallup

Best Practices of Catholic Pastoral and Finance Councils

By Charles Zech, Mary Gautier, Robert Miller,
Mary Bendyna, RSM - 2010

Analyzed parish pastoral guidelines from 24 dioceses,
reviewed 2 national surveys from 2003 and 2004,
conducted a in 2007 with a random sample of 3076 parishes to
which 661 parishes responded.

PPC Planning Functions

	<i>“Very”</i>	
	<i>Important</i>	<i>Involved</i>
• <i>Recommending action to the pastor</i>	<i>65%</i>	<i>58%</i>
• <i>Setting parish vision</i>	<i>63%</i>	<i>51%</i>
• <i>Planning responses to pastoral needs</i>	<i>56%</i>	<i>43%</i>
• <i>Developing parish policy</i>	<i>54%</i>	<i>41%</i>
• <i>Studying issues in-depth</i>	<i>40%</i>	<i>35%</i>

- Best Practices of Catholic Pastoral and Finance Councils

PPC Communicating Functions

“Very”
Important Involved

Serving as a parish sounding board

- | | | |
|---------------------|-----|-----|
| • for parishioners | 58% | 50% |
| • for pastor/staff | 57% | 48% |
| • for parish groups | 50% | 42% |

- Best Practices of Catholic Pastoral and Finance Councils

PPC Coordinating Functions

	<i>“Very”</i>	
	<i>Important</i>	<i>Involved</i>
• <i>Developing parish community</i>	<i>58%</i>	<i>50%</i>
• <i>Coordinating parish activities</i>	<i>42%</i>	<i>31%</i>
• <i>Facilitating parish communications</i>	<i>38%</i>	<i>26%</i>
• <i>Evaluating parish programs</i>	<i>41%</i>	<i>28%</i>

- Best Practices of Catholic Pastoral and Finance Councils

Recommendations for Pastoral Councils

- Leadership shared among all members
- Establish group norms such as bylaws
- Provide education/formation programs for council members
- Include parish finance council member on pastoral council
- Communicate with the parish at large (vision, outcomes, 2-way...)
- Match decision procedures with the situation
- Include prayer/faith-sharing on the agenda at every meeting

- Best Practices of Catholic Pastoral and Finance Councils

Parish Partnerships

- Archdiocesan Pastoral Plan - Objective 6:
*Partner with at least one other parish
by meeting regularly with parish leadership
to identify opportunities to share resources.*
- Build relational capacity and possibilities
to be and do more than we could separately.
- What are we discovering and finding helpful?

Table Discussion

1. What points clarified or enhanced your understanding of the ministry and leadership of the parish pastoral council?
2. What are some questions that this presentation raises or leaves unanswered?
3. What are some ideas and possibilities we most want to discuss in our PPC?



Further questions or comments

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Thank you for
your presence!