

Diocese of Yakima



Norms for Parish Finance Councils

Guidelines for Parish Pastoral Councils

Guidelines for Parish Stewardship Committees

May 2014



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**Norms for Parish Finance Councils
Guidelines for Parish Pastoral Councils
Guidelines for Parish Stewardship Committees**

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Diocese of Yakima

Norms for Parish Finance Councils
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Guidelines for Parish Stewardship Committees



Area Regions of the Diocese of Yakima



† Parish
● Mission Church





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Diocese of Yakima

**Norms for Parish Finance Councils
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October, 2005

Dear Priests, Permanent Deacons and Parish Leaders,

It's been clear to me for the past two or three years that our diocese is in need of a revised edition of the Guidelines for Parish Pastoral Councils and Norms for Parish Finance Councils first published by the then Bishop of Yakima, Francis E. George, O.M.I. in November of 1995.

During the intervening years our experience in the diocese has shown that a greater clarity and a more extensive explanation of parish pastoral and finance councils would significantly benefit us all.

Over that same period of time, we've also come to the new awareness here in our diocese and throughout the church in our nation of the extreme importance of the Bible's emphasis on stewardship, both as a way of living our discipleship with Jesus and also of our union through Him with one another in our parishes and our dioceses.

Moreover, in the last few years, the parishes in our diocese have given ample evidence of their gradual transformation through the spirituality of stewardship to which I referred in the preceding paragraph. Four new churches have been built. Five other major building projects have been or soon will be started or completed. All of which witnesses, not only to some important physical changes in our diocese, but also, it seems to me, even more significantly, to the growing presence in our diocese of the spirituality of self-sacrifice that is at the heart of stewardship.

For those reasons, and to encourage a further commitment to stewardship in our diocese, this new edition of parish pastoral and finance council guidelines and norms also includes guidelines for parish stewardship committees.

I am grateful to Father Nicholas Milich, Pastor of Holy Redeemer Parish in Yakima, and to Mr. Robert Fontana, the former director of our diocesan Office of Evangelization, for their generous help in the preparation of this document.

I'd like to bring these introductory comments to a close by quoting the words with which Bishop George concluded his November 1995 Guidelines and Norms: "May the Lord help us to truly be His Body for all the people of Central Washington and may the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, make us one in Christ, her Divine Son."

Sincerely,

Carlos A. Sevilla, S.J.
Bishop of Yakima
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Diocese of Yakima

**Norms for Parish Finance Councils
Guidelines for Parish Pastoral Councils
Guidelines for Parish Stewardship Committees**

Chapter One: THE BODY OF CHRIST SHAPES PARISH LIFE

One of the many turning points in the life of St. Francis of Assisi came when he knelt in the ruined Church of San Damiano and heard a voice from its crucifix saying, "Rebuild my Church." Francis looked at the broken walls around him and at first started to do the obvious, to rebuild the abandoned church. But he soon came to realize that God was calling him to a far larger vision, a far greater mission. It was the life of Christ's Church, the life of His people, which needed to be renewed. Through the actions of the Second Vatican Council, the words addressed to St. Francis come to us as well: Rebuild my Church. Of course, only God builds and re-builds His Church. But He calls members of parish pastoral councils, parish finance councils and parish stewardship committees to the dignity of partnership with Him in the life-giving and ongoing effort of helping Him shape their parish communities so that those communities can more effectively channel His saving love to the world.



People in our parishes, of course, do have to attend to the demanding details of everyday life. Sometimes, as in San Damiano, the roof simply has to be fixed or the furnace replaced or the doors re-hinged. Parish pastoral and finance councils, as well as stewardship committees, can help to get those things done. But the Church is more than just bricks and mortar because it is rooted in the mystery of communion, which must shape, color and guide everything else. The word communion refers to the intimate union that results when love is fully given and received between persons. St. Paul is referring to communion in the Church when he writes to the Philippians (2:1-4):

"In the name of the encouragement you owe me in Christ, in the name of the solace that love can give, of fellowship in spirit, compassion, and pity, I beg you: make my joy complete by your unanimity, possessing the one love, united in spirit and ideals. Never act out of rivalry or conceit; rather, let all parties think humbly of others as superior to themselves, each of you looking to others' interests rather than his own."

The Church, at its core, is rebuilt only through communion—which is all about self-giving. Jesus gives us the example of self-giving love with His life and death in service to God's kingdom. St. Paul helps us to understand that when he continues in his letter to the Philippians (2:5-8):

"Your attitude must be that of Christ: Though he was in the form of God, he did not deem equality with God something to be grasped at. Rather, he emptied himself and took the form of a slave, being born in the likeness of men. He was known to be of human estate, and it was thus that he humbled himself, obediently accepting even death, death on a cross!"



One of the great fruits of the Second Vatican Council was to refocus our experience of the Church as a living body, as a communion, a life-giving union with God, in Christ, and with one another. But this communion exists not merely for the Church, but also for the Church's mission in the world which is described so well in this text from the Second Vatican Council's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Article 9):

“This messianic people...established by Christ as a communion of life, love, and truth...is taken up by him also as the instrument for the salvation of all; as the light of the world and salt of the earth, it is sent forth into the whole world. ”

Essentially, this means that through the power of the Holy Spirit, people are brought into the Body of Christ, and become that Body for the life of the world. By its nature, communion with God is always life-giving and integrates us into the ongoing process of self-giving, because that is the very nature of God. In the end, our life literally depends on our willingness to give it away.

Communion and mission are, therefore, essential qualities of the Church. Moreover, they are at the heart of what the Bible describes as stewardship. Namely, a total commitment of all that we are and all that we have – time, talent and treasure – to Christ and to His Church so that God's kingdom can be ever more fully brought to fulfillment now and forever.

Seen through these lenses of communion, mission, and stewardship, parish pastoral and finance councils, as well as stewardship committees, are not simply administrative or consultative groups. These bodies bring together gifted and talented laity to work in collaboration with their pastor to strengthen parish unity around Jesus Christ and the Gospel. They are visible signs and effective instruments of communion, mission, and stewardship.

In our diocese many of the practical components of stewardship are focused on the goals and strategies of our diocesan and parish pastoral planning through the efforts of parish councils and stewardship committees.

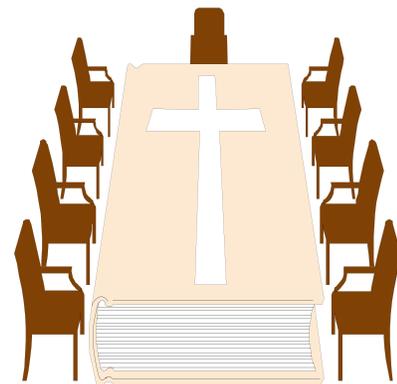
Information regarding diocesan and pastoral planning in our Diocese of Yakima can be found in the following documents: A Pastoral Plan for the Diocese of Yakima published in 2000, and the Supplementary Document to the pastoral plan published in March 2001. Copies of these documents can be obtained by calling the Ministry and Education Center at 509-965-7110, or by e-mailing a request to cfritsch@yakimadiocese.org.

All of the foregoing makes us each accountable for the work that is to be done in prayerful communion with the mission of Christ who asks us to rebuild His Church.



**Chapter Two:
UNIVERSAL AND LOCAL CHURCH LAWS SHAPE PARISH LIFE**

- I. VAT. II: DOGMAIC CONSTITUTION ON THE CHURCH, ARTICLE 33:
"Through Baptism and Confirmation all are appointed to this apostolate by the Lord himself....The laity, however, are given this special vocation: to make the Church present and fruitful in those places and circumstances where it is only through them that she can become the salt of the earth."
- II. VAT. II: DECREE ON THE APOSTOLATE OF LAY PEOPLE, ARTICLE 10:
"...the laity have an active part of their own in the life and action of the Church. Their action within the Church communities is so necessary that without it the apostolate of the pastors will frequently be unable to obtain its full effect."
- III. VAT. II: DOGMAIC CONSTITUTION ON THE CHURCH, ARTICLE 40:
"The followers of Christ, called by God not in virtue of their works but by his design and grace, and justified in the Lord Jesus, have been made sons of God in the baptism of faith and partakers of the divine nature, and so are truly sanctified. They must therefore hold on to and perfect in their lives that sanctification which they have received from God. They are told by the apostle to live 'as is fitting among saints' (Eph. 5:3), and to put on 'as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, and patience' (Col. 3:12), to have the fruits of the Spirit for their sanctification (cf. Gal. 5:22; Rom. 6:22). But since we all offend in many ways (cf. Jas. 3:2), we constantly need God's mercy and must pray every day: 'And forgive us our debts' (Mt. 6:12)."
- IV. CODE OF CANON LAW, CAN. 212: 1 and 2:
"The Christian faithful, conscious of their own responsibility, are bound by Christian obedience to follow what the sacred pastors, as representatives of Christ, declare as teachers of the faith or determine as leaders of the Church. The Christian faithful are free to make known their needs, especially spiritual ones, and their desires to the pastors of the Church"
- V. CODE OF CANON LAW, CAN. 536: 1 and 2:
"After the diocesan bishop has listened to the presbyteral council and if he judges it opportune, a pastoral council is to be established in each parish; the pastor presides over it, and through it the Christian faithful, along with those who share in the pastoral care of the parish in virtue of their office give their help in fostering pastoral activity. This pastoral council possesses a consultative vote only and is governed by norms determined by the diocesan bishop"
- VI. CODE OF CANON LAW, CAN. 537:
"Each parish is to have a finance council which is regulated by universal law as well as by norms issued by the diocesan bishop; in this council the Christian faithful, selected according to the same norms, aid the pastor in the administration of parish goods with due regard for the prescription of canon





532".

- VII. FROM A LETTER OF BISHOP FRANCIS E. GEORGE, O.M.I., TO THE PEOPLE OF THE DIOCESE OF YAKIMA ON THE FEAST OF CHRIST THE KING, NOVEMBER 26, 1995, IN WHICH HE INTRODUCES NORMS AND GUIDELINES REGARDING PARISH PASTORAL AND FINANCE COUNCILS:

"All pastors of parishes are to govern with the help of a parish pastoral council...This will demand much prayer, discussion, listening, respect and good communication on the part of all, pastors and parishioners alike. Furthermore, the parish pastoral council must find ways to include the entire parish in this ongoing effort to seek God's will for the future of the parish.

With the guidelines (for parish pastoral councils) are norms for the parish finance councils mandated by Canon 537."

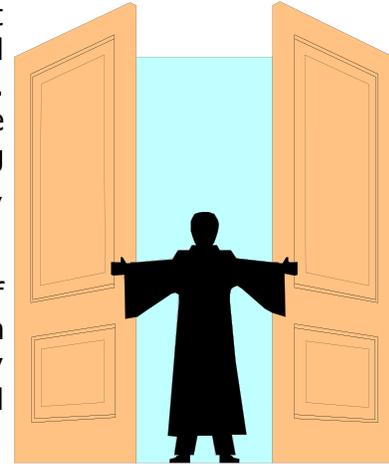
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**Chapter Three:
KEY TERMS FOR PARISH COUNCILS and STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEES**

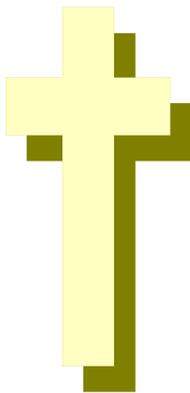
Parish Pastoral and Finance Councils, as well as Stewardship Committees, give visible expression to what Catholics believe about themselves as church: laity and clergy together are a hierarchical communion of disciples. Parish Councils and Stewardship Committees move the Church from theory to practice when the following principles are observed: shared responsibility, subsidiarity, consultation, and consensus building.

Shared Responsibility - The pastor invites lay members of his parish who have particular gifts and expertise in parish ministry and finances to share in the responsibility he has to be a wise steward of the spiritual and material resources of the parish.



Subsidiarity - This word refers to the principle that decisions within an organization are best made, at the lowest organizational level possible, by the individuals and people most affected and involved with an issue. For example, in regard to parish finance councils, all decisions regarding money need not be made by the pastor if a budget is well prepared and staff or parish volunteers are delegated to oversee portions of the budget. As part of their shared responsibility they may make decisions to spend or not-to-spend or to raise funds in accordance with the budget approved by the pastor.

Consultation - Consultation is understood here in the best sense of the word, namely that the pastor will take to heart and prayerfully consider the suggestions and recommendations of his council. The council will look to the good of the Church in its advice to the pastor. Should he decide to act in a way counter to the council's advice or to alter it in any way, he will return to the council before acting and give members clear and precise reasons for his decision.



Consensus - This word expresses the spirit of communion within a parish community which seeks unanimous agreement on issues that are costly or will impact a good portion of parishioners. Consensus is never reached without the pastor's full participation and ratification of decisions. Searching for consensus means truly opening one's self to God's grace and praying and discussing until a conviction pervades the council that a particular plan of action is God's will for the parish. It does not mean that everyone is in complete agreement, but it does mean that all can live in peace with the decision. Peace is the fruit of the Spirit's action in the Church.



Chapter Four:
NORMS FOR PARISH FINANCE COUNCILS

In order to assist the pastor in carrying out his responsibilities, in accord with the Code of Canon Law (Canon 537), the following norms will govern the functioning of all parish finance councils within the diocese:

- I. The term pastor signifies a canonically appointed parochial shepherd.
- II. Members of the Parish Finance Council are to be appointed by the pastor after consultation with the Parish Pastoral Council. A chair person is selected from Parish Finance Council members.
- III. The pastor represents the parish in all matters of church law (Canon 532), and is responsible to the bishop for the total communion of the parish community in word, worship, and service. According to the law of the Church, the Parish Finance Council assists the pastor in a consultative capacity. The importance of the consultative role of the Parish Finance Council is found in the particular expertise the members bring to the area of responsible stewardship of material goods available to further the mission of the Church in and beyond the parish.

It is essential that the pastor and the members of the Parish Finance Council be aware of their stewardship responsibilities in light of the Gospel, the teachings of the Catholic Church, and the Code of Canon Law.

- IV. The Parish Finance Council assists the pastor in the formulation of the parish budget as it relates to the overall life of the parish and with special concern for the goal and strategy(ies) of the parish pastoral plan established by the Parish Pastoral Council.
- V. The pastor is not a member of the Parish Finance Council but presides over it. The Parish Finance Council never meets without the pastor.
- VI. It is recommended that membership on the Parish Finance Council shall consist of no less than three (3) but no more than five (5) members of the parish who have a recognized expertise in financial matters and, where possible, in matters of civil law as applicable to parochial circumstances. Furthermore, they are to be prayerful people who are fully aware of the mission of the parish in the church. Other specific qualifications may be identified as necessary by the pastor or Pastoral Council.

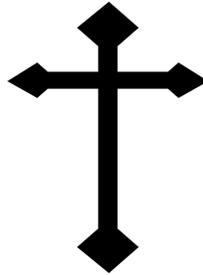




- VII. The members of the Parish Finance Council serve a limited term determined in the bylaws established by each Parish Finance Council.
- VIII. When the pastor ceases from office and upon the appointment of a new pastor or administrator, the existing Parish Finance Council continues in existence for a period of six months. During this time, the new pastor or administrator, together with the Pastoral Council, should enter into a period of discernment focused on whether the present Finance Council should complete its term or be partially or entirely replaced.
- IX. The Parish Finance Council is to adhere to church law governing the administration of ecclesiastical goods as stated in the Code of Canon Law. (For example, Canon 1292 par. 4.)
- X. The Parish Finance Council, adhering to the guidelines of the diocese and its accounting procedures, is to assist the pastor in preparing the yearly parish budget of income and expenses. Procedures should be developed to guide this process.
- The Parish Pastoral Council recommends final approval of the budget to the pastor.
- The Parish Finance Council will assist the pastor in monitoring the budget during the course of the fiscal year through quarterly financial statements and through the required monthly financial cash disbursement and receipt reports. These financial statements are to be made available to the Pastoral Council and the parish community.
- XI. The Parish Finance Council is to meet quarterly or more often, if necessary.
- XII. If the parish has a parochial school, the Parish Finance Council will assist the pastor in all matters related to the parish's financial support of the school.
- XIII. The Parish Finance Council will assist the pastor to insure that there is active and informed participation of the parishioners in the Annual Catholic Appeal.
- XIV. The Parish Finance Council is to be especially concerned that diocesan assessments are kept current and that funds for health insurance, lay-retirement, etc. are not used as operating funds.
- XV. The Parish Finance Council will assist the pastor in developing just salaries and benefits for parish employees.
- XVI. The Parish Finance Council should be available to assist the pastor in any financial area of parochial administration where their financial expertise might be needed in addition to the areas outlined above.
- XVII. The Parish Finance Council is to keep abreast of diocesan policies regarding investments, fund raising, property sale, new construction, etc.



- XVIII. One member of the Parish Finance Council is to be designated as liaison to the Parish Pastoral Council.
- XIX. If appropriate, pastors may hire a parish manager who will oversee administrative duties in the parish and work with the Parish Finance Council.





**Chapter Five:
GUIDELINES FOR PARISH PASTORAL COUNCILS**

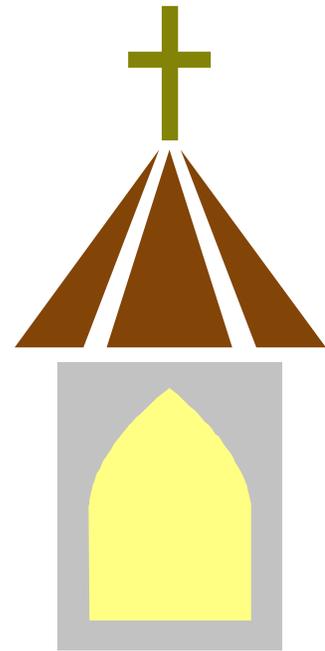
Fundamental Considerations

- I. The ordained priest, through the Sacrament of Holy Orders, receives the grace and authority from Christ to govern the Eucharistic community to which he is assigned as pastor by the bishop. In order to exercise his ministry in complete service to and union with the faithful who gather around him to be one in Christ, he is to govern with the help of a Parish Pastoral Council whose guiding concern in all of its deliberations must be a commitment to self-sacrificing communion and stewardship.

Through the Parish Pastoral Council, the pastor seeks to strengthen parish unity and mission around Jesus Christ and the Gospel. Through prayer, study, research, listening, evaluation, discussion and recommendations, the Parish Pastoral Council helps foster the pastoral life of a specific Eucharistic community called a parish through a pastoral plan with a goal and strategy appropriate to the parish.

Parish Pastoral Councils may serve in two ways:

- A. Striving for consensus, a word expressing the spirit of communion which seeks unanimous agreement on issues that are costly or will impact a good portion of parishioners. Consensus is never reached without the pastor's full participation and ratification of decisions. Searching for consensus means truly opening one's self to God's grace and praying and discussing until a conviction pervades the council that a particular plan of action is God's will for the parish. It does not mean that everyone is in complete agreement, but it does mean that all can live in peace with the decision. Peace is the fruit of the Spirit's action in the Church.
- B. Advising the pastor on specific issues before the parish.
- II. The pastor of the parish regularly consults the Pastoral Council about the life of the parish. Consultation is understood here in the best sense of the word, namely that the pastor will take to heart and prayerfully consider the suggestions and recommendations of his council. The council will look to the good of the Church in its advice to the pastor. Should he decide to act in a way counter to the council's advice or to alter it in any way he will return to the council before acting and give members clear and precise reasons for his decision.





- III. The Parish Pastoral Council is the council of the pastor. Since the pastor, by virtue of his office and ordination, is responsible for the Catholic life of the parish, it is his proper role to preside over the Parish Pastoral Council. He calls it into service; nurtures within its members a disposition of openness to the Holy Spirit; participates in its process; delegates various tasks and duties; and ratifies all decisions. Associate pastors are automatically members of the Pastoral Council. Without the permission of the bishop, who is pastor of the diocese, the Pastoral Council never meets without the pastor of the parish.
- IV. If a Parish Pastoral Council already exists and new members need to be selected, parts B and C of the next section can be helpful.
- V. If a Parish Pastoral Council has never before existed in a parish, the pastor is to appoint an ad-hoc committee of parish leaders who review these pastoral council guidelines, and then, for approval by the pastor, prepare bylaws and establish a process for selecting membership:
- A. Necessary qualities for a member of the parish pastoral council: 1) love of God and the church; 2) active member of the parish (usually three years); 3) good skills in listening and communication; 4) prayerfulness; 5) openness to the good of the entire parish. An ad-hoc committee may add other qualities to this list, for example, reliability.
- B. Selection process for council members: 1) prayerfully identify candidates who have the gifts needed for council membership; 2) review these pastoral council guidelines and any existing parish pastoral council bylaws with potential members; 3) ask identified candidates if they would be interested in serving on the council; 4) select those needed for the council or submit their names to a vote before the entire parish. (The number of members on the Parish Pastoral Council may be determined by the size and the needs of the parish. It should be noted that groups larger than twelve can find it difficult to function efficiently and groups smaller than five risk being unable to represent the parish.)
- C. Bylaws should address, for example, the following: frequency and length of meetings; executive committee members and their duties (chair, vice-chair, secretary, etc.); meeting structure; membership (general membership and/or standing committees); selection process, terms of membership; communication method to the parish at large; process, both for agenda preparation by members and allowing non-members to submit agenda items.

Auxiliary Considerations

- I. When the pastor ceases from office, and upon the appointment of a new pastor or an administrator, the existing Parish Pastoral Council continues in existence for a period of



six months. During this time, the new pastor or administrator, together with the Pastoral Council, should enter into a period of discernment focused on whether the present Council will complete its term or be partially or completely replaced.

- II. The Parish Pastoral Council is to select its leadership, e.g. chairpersons, secretaries, etc., from among its members. Ordinarily, pastors, chairpersons and other leaders prepare agendas and maintain communication. Chairpersons facilitate council meetings.
- III. In order to better preserve the spirit of communion within a parish, there is to be only one Pastoral Council serving a parish. Those parishes that are bilingual should have a Pastoral Council member who is bilingual gather information regarding a particular language group and then make a report to the Pastoral Council.
- IV. The Parish Pastoral Council in its planning function is to be distinct from the Finance Council.
- V. It is recommended that every Parish Pastoral Council include in its membership a member of the Stewardship Committee whose responsibility it is to put forward as a priority the spirituality of stewardship and also to emphasize the importance of inviting the laity to place their gifts of time, talent, and treasure at the service of the Lord.
- VI. It may be necessary to form special committees for the implementation of the strategy(ies) chosen by a parish to help in the implementation of its pastoral goals. For example, committees for Stewardship, Liturgy, Christian Religious Education, RICA, Youth, etc.
- VII. The members of the Parish Pastoral Council, except for those who are members by reason of office (pastor and associate pastors), shall have limited terms as directed in its bylaws.
- VIII. One member of the Parish Finance Council is to be designated as liaison to the Parish Pastoral Council. The Parish Pastoral Council recommends final approval of the budget to the pastor. (See the Norms for Parish Finance Councils, paragraph X).
- IX. Decisions of the Parish Pastoral Council, when pertaining to long-range pastoral direction and goals, should be arrived at by consensus. There is no consensus without the pastor's full participation and agreement.
- X. A parish's mission church (for example, Holy Angels in Coulee City, Washington is a mission church of St. Patrick Parish in Hartline, Washington) is considered an integral part of that parish. As such, it may have a guaranteed membership on the Parish Pastoral Council through a participant (or participants) elected by the mission church faith community or designated by the pastor. As an alternative, it may have its own pastoral council if the pastor and the members of the mission's faith community judge it to be of pastoral importance.

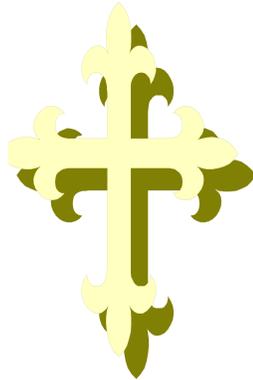


XI. The Parish Pastoral Council and Pastoral Planning

In light of the 2001 Pastoral Plan for the Diocese of Yakima and the goals and strategies it describes, every year a Parish Pastoral Council, guided by its pastor, should evaluate the pastoral life of the parish.

This evaluation should include communication with the parish at large regarding:

- A. an assessment of the blessings and challenges experienced by the parish;
- B. reflections on this assessment in light of the Scriptures and Catholic teaching;
- C. in the light of A and B, a review of the goal and strategy(ies) of the current parish pastoral plan and stewardship's place within it.





**Chapter Six:
GUIDELINES FOR PARISH STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEES**



I. Stewardship Is Not An Option

The 1992 pastoral letter of the United States Catholic Bishops, Stewardship: A Disciple's Response, A Pastoral Letter on Stewardship, (USCCB Tenth Anniversary Edition, December 2002) states that "once one chooses to become a disciple of Jesus Christ, Stewardship is not an option."

Four convictions in particular underlie what the bishops say in this pastoral letter:

- A. One who receives God's gifts gratefully, cherishes and tends them in a responsible and accountable manner, shares them in justice and love with all, and returns them with increase to the Lord.
- B. Mature disciples make a conscious, firm decision, carried out in action, to be followers of Jesus Christ no matter the cost to themselves.
- C. Beginning in conversion, change of mind and heart, this commitment is expressed not in a single action, nor even in a number of actions over a period of time, but in an entire way of life. It means committing one's self to the Lord.
- D. Stewardship is an expression of discipleship, with the power to change how we understand and live out our lives. Disciples who practice stewardship recognize God as the origin of life, the giver of freedom, the source of all they have and are and will be. They are grateful for what they have received and eager to cultivate their gifts out of love for God and one another.

II. Suggested Stewardship Committee Models

- A. In a large parish where parishioner resources are more plentiful and its ministries more numerous, the Stewardship Committee might consist of some of the members of the Parish Pastoral Council and some members who do not belong to



the Parish Pastoral Council who are responsible for the stewardship effort. These additional members would only interact with the Parish Pastoral Council during times of the stewardship effort.

- B. In a medium size parish the Stewardship Committee might consist of a smaller group of individuals, i.e. 6 - 8, and one or two members of the Parish Pastoral Council.
- C. A small parish where parishioner resources are more limited may find it necessary to assign stewardship responsibilities to an existing group such as the Parish Pastoral Council.
- D. There is no magic number for the size of the Stewardship Committee. Each parish must determine how to structure the committee based on the availability of volunteers to serve. Members should be appointed to serve a term of three years.

III. Parish Stewardship Committees

An active, praying Stewardship Committee is absolutely critical to a parish for the ongoing education and commitment of parishioners to the stewardship of time, talent and treasure.

The Stewardship Committee functions as a committee under the Parish Pastoral Council with the general responsibility for stewardship awareness and developing the annual stewardship plan to promote time, talent and treasure among the members of the parish. The Stewardship Committee functions best when it is not under the auspices of the Parish Finance Council because that group emphasizes the needs of the church more than an individual's need to give thanks for all of God's gifts. It also tends to focus on treasure (money) instead of giving equal emphasis to time, talent and treasure.

For new information and ideas on how to create the most successful stewardship effort, pastors, associate pastors and permanent deacons should attend the stewardship training and renewal session sponsored each year by the diocese. This session is an excellent tool for evangelization and education about stewardship for all attendees, especially members of the Parish Pastoral and Finance Councils, as well as other parish leaders.

IV. The Responsibilities of a Stewardship Committee

- A. It fosters the Spirituality of Stewardship as a Way of Life:
 - 1. It spends a little time learning about stewardship at every meeting (this includes prayer and reflection).
 - 2. It attends Stewardship Days and Regional Stewardship Conferences provided by the Diocesan Stewardship Office.
 - 3. It promotes the U.S. Bishops' Pastoral Letter on Stewardship. A six-week small group study guide is available called "*The Disciple as Steward.*" (This study guide is available in English and Spanish from the Diocesan Stewardship Office. Please call that office at 509-965-7117 for copies.)



4. It promotes discipleship and evangelization and comes to a greater appreciation regarding the way in which these two concepts relate and radically connect to stewardship. This might involve encouraging and collaborating with the parish pastoral council to give birth to an evangelization committee.
 5. It recruits individuals and couples to give witness by their stories to the parish about Stewardship of Time, Talent and Treasure.
 6. It recognizes and affirms parishioners for their gift of Time and Talent.
- B. Annual Renewal Process: Oversees an annual presentation and weekend renewal process of Time, Talent and Treasure commitments each spring. This may include an annual Parish Ministry Fair, or any other event designed to highlight and/or showcase the gifts people are sharing in the various ministries and activities in the parish. It may also include ongoing gift discernment, matching gifts for ministry, and other components of shared ministry.
 - C. Children and Youth: Encourages and collaborates with the religious education team and school committees and staff to foster stewardship among children and youth. Produces and distributes a regular stewardship activity for children.
 - D. Annual Report to the Parish: This should not just be a financial spreadsheet. It should be pastoral in nature – verbal and written –which tells parish ministry stories or highlights the spirituality of the parish. Collaborates with other ministries in the parish to prepare this report, for example, the Parish Pastoral and Finance Councils.
 - E. Parish decision to give a percentage of its income to the poor and other charities: In order to model this way of giving, it is strongly recommended that the leadership of each parish decide that a percentage of its parish income be given to programs performing the corporal works of mercy at the local, regional, national and international levels. Parishes that have chosen to do this have found that their own needs are now seen in better perspective given the needs of those outside their own parish boundaries.
 - F. Collaborative efforts to promote stewardship permeating all aspects of parish life: This has to do with helping other groups or staff in the parish know more about what their role might be with regard to stewardship. Share the vocabulary of stewardship with other groups and activities. Let them see how they have been living stewardship for years! Invite them to share in the vision of stewardship.
 - G. Promote Hospitality/Belonging/Community: The first step is to come to a greater appreciation as to how these things relate to stewardship. The second step might involve encouraging and collaborating with the pastoral council, perhaps to give birth to a hospitality committee which might in turn give birth to many more groups, all of which can be encouraged to discuss how each and all connect with stewardship.



- H. Social Justice: The point here is not to become the social justice committee. Rather it is to meet with the parish groups that oversee efforts of social justice (e.g. taking care of the poor) to affirm them, to discuss common ground, help them see how their efforts relate to stewardship and to lay a foundation for future collaborative efforts.



V. Suggested Profile of a Stewardship Committee Member

When recruiting parishioners to serve on a stewardship committee, it is recommended to look for people who have these qualities:

- A. Spiritual Motivation - It is important that members be people of prayer who are concerned about parishioners' relationship with God, not solely about the material needs of the church. A person whose primary concern is raising money for the church or getting more volunteers for the church is not necessarily an appropriate candidate for the Stewardship Committee. Look also for people who are Eucharistic, who have a deep relationship with Jesus, who are grateful for that relationship and who act out of that gratitude. Such persons might spend time in studying Scripture and often are people who go to daily Mass.
- B. Lives Stewardship - Look for members who are already personally committed to stewardship as a way of life. They may not call it stewardship but they live it. Those committed to stewardship volunteer their time in various parish and community activities. The pastor will certainly know or can find out about people's volunteer activities at the parish and may even know about a person's involvement in the community. Those committed to stewardship will also be committed, regular and appropriately generous givers to the offertory collection.
- C. Collaborates Well - It is important that all members of a stewardship committee have the same general understanding of stewardship before they join the committee and are educated. Initially some may see stewardship only as giving money; others may see stewardship as recycling paper, volunteering time to church organizations only. Developing a working definition of stewardship will help consolidate the diverse viewpoints of the committee members.
- D. Zealous - Is willing speak to parishioners regarding all aspects of the stewardship effort.
- E. Reliable - A person who does what he says he is going to do when he says it will be done, and who is persistent, optimistic, organized, patient, creative and willing to share his faith with others.

