

Diocese of Yakima



Diócesis de Yakima

MANY GIFTS, ONE SPIRIT: CHURCH GOVERNANCE THROUGH CONSULTATIVE LEADERSHIP

There are different gifts but the same Spirit; there are different ministries but the same Lord.

1 Corinthians 12:4

(revised February 22, 2021)



THE DIOCESE OF YAKIMA • PASTORAL OFFICE
LA DIÓCESIS DE YAKIMA • CENTRO PASTORAL

PROMULGATION

DIOCESE of YAKIMA

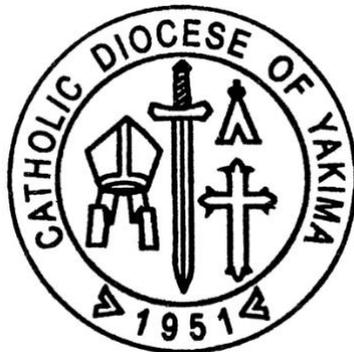
POLICIES and PROCEDURES for CONSULTATIVE BODIES

By the authority granted to me by Canon 31 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law, I promulgate that Many Gifts, One Spirit: Church Governance through Consultative Leadership will become particular law for the Diocese of Yakima thirty days after March 1, 2021 in accordance with Canon 8 § 2. From April 1, 2021 the guidelines set in these policies and procedures are to be followed by all parishes of the Diocese of Yakima.

Given February 22, 2021 at the Pastoral Office of the Diocese of Yakima.

Bishop of Yakima

Chancellor



**MANY GIFTS, ONE SPIRIT:
CHURCH GOVERNANCE THROUGH CONSULTATIVE LEADERSHIP**

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I. INTRODUCTION

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 rebuilds His Church. But He calls members of diocesan and parish 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 who join 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's 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 (2:58):

"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, and other councils & 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.

Many of these planning and strategy components will be defined and benchmarked within the Parish Standards of Excellence and Visitation Process. Copies of this document can be obtained by calling the Pastoral Center at 509-965-7117, or by e-mailing a request to stephanie.sanchez@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.

Throughout her history, the Church has borrowed structures, models, and language from the ambient culture and society. For example, the term "diocese" was drawn from a geographic area of the Roman Empire. While the Church still borrows organizational concepts from society, the documents of the Second Vatican Council and the Code of Canon Law provide a clearer understanding of the unique nature of Church governance. Our experience has clarified what is necessary to make Church governance structures effective. Given these new understandings, this revised document does not focus on power and authority as may commonly be experienced in government or business. Instead, this document is based on attitudes of trust in each other, belief in the power of the Holy Spirit working among us, and the exercise of authority as a ministry of service. These attitudes promote appropriate shared responsibility for the mission of the Church and work to build consensus and commitment as called for in Church governance and our tradition as a Roman Catholic community of faith.

Pastors serve the church's communion by striving to work out in practice the vision of St. Paul, who saw that;

“There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service, but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone” (1 Cor. 12:4-6).

The term “pastor” in this document refers to a priest appointed by the Bishop as responsible for the pastoral care of a parish (CIC, c. 519). Due to a shortage of priests, and in accord with the Code of Canon Law (CIC, c. 517 §2), the Bishop may assign the pastoral care of a community to a deacon, religious or lay person, who oversees the day-to-day leadership of a parish as “pastoral coordinator.” Although not sharing all of the canonical rights and responsibilities of a pastor or priest, the pastoral coordinator shares in the pastoral care of the parish community and relates to its consultative structures.

The purpose of this document is to promote a clearer understanding among pastors, councils, commissions, parish staffs, and other parish leadership about the pastor’s responsibility for governance and the respective collaborative roles that each individual or body performs in order to assist him.

This document focuses primarily on consultative bodies in the parish. Consultative bodies are those councils and/or commissions, which the pastor consults in order to provide direction for the mission, priorities, broad goals, strategic planning, and policies of the parish. The document will also address parish executive or administrative structures with which the pastor collaborates in the day-to-day administrative programs and ministries of a parish.

This document is divided into two parts. The first part provides canonical context, followed by a general description of the roles of the pastor, the parish pastoral council, finance council, commissions, committees and parish staff in the planning process.

The second part describes the roles and responsibilities of diocesan and parish consultative structures, including pastoral and finance councils, commissions and committees, principles of parish decision-making, and methods for assisting these groups in working together including consensus building and discernment, and presents guidelines regarding parish organizational structures in exceptional situations and during pastoral transitions. Also included are Organizational Charts showing how the flow of information occurs at the diocesan and parish levels.

This document provides direction and guidance for putting into practice our diocesan vision concerning the role of consultative bodies. The pastor should use the consultative process to develop the parish’s mission and pastoral planning. Each parish will be expected to adapt its structures in a way that suits its local situation and in keeping with the spirit of the document.

II. PARTICIPANTS IN DIOCESAN GOVERNANCE

The Code of Canon Law defines some of the roles that various ministers play in church governance; other roles are created by the Bishop. So long as it is a stable function, established for a spiritual purpose, the ministry is an ecclesiastical office (CIC, c.145). To promote clearer communication and understanding, the following terminology is to be used throughout the Diocese.

DIOCESAN LEADERSHIP

Bishop

The Bishop is appointed by the Pope as the principal teacher of faith, the priest of sacred worship, and the pastor of the “local Church” and the minister of governance of the Diocese (CIC, cc. 375, 377).

Auxiliary Bishop

When the pastoral needs of the Diocese suggest it, one or more auxiliary bishops may be appointed by the Holy Father at the request of the Bishop. An auxiliary bishop does not possess the right of succession (CIC, c. 403 §1). Auxiliary bishops assist the Bishop in the pastoral care of the Diocese.

Vicar General

The vicar general is a priest appointed by the Bishop to assist him in the administration and pastoral care of the Diocese (CIC, c. 475 §1). The office may be delegated by the Bishop to an auxiliary bishop.

Episcopal Vicar

Episcopal vicars are priests appointed by the Bishop to promote good government of the Diocese. Episcopal vicars have a specific area of focus such as clergy, education, tribunal, or charity (CIC, c. 476).

Dean

A dean is a priest recommended to the Bishop through a deanery process and appointed by the Bishop to promote and coordinate the common pastoral activity within a deanery. Leadership of the deanery requires serving on the Presbyteral Council (CIC, cc. 553-555).

Finance Officer

In every diocese, after having heard the college of consultors and the finance council, the bishop is to appoint a finance officer who is truly expert in financial affairs and is absolutely distinguished for honesty. (CIC, c. 494)

Chancellor/Moderator of the Curia

A moderator of the curia, under the authority of the bishop of a diocese in the Catholic Church, coordinates the exercise of the administrative duties and oversees those who hold offices and minister in diocesan administration. He must be a priest. His Chancellor duties constitute the chief record keeping authority of the diocese. The chancellor may be a deacon or lay person. (CIC, c. 469 & 473.2)

DIOCESAN CONSULTATIVE BODIES

Three structures are required by Canon Law to assist the Bishop in his role of promoting the spirit of communion in the Diocese: The College of Consulters, the Presbyteral Council, and the Diocesan Finance Council. At least eight commissions/councils assist in this ministry of collaboration, over which the Bishop presides to ensure unity and efficacy, these include: The Diocesan Pastoral Council, the Finance Council, the School Council, the Diaconal Council, the Liturgical Council, Building Council, CRP Board, Trustees of the Seminarian Education, and, Priest Retirement Trusts, and the Lay Advisory Board.

The Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People from Vatican II states "... 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." Through these consultative bodies, their gifts and expertise are brought into the decision process.

Diocesan Pastoral Council

At baptism each member of the Church assumes responsibility to carry forward the mission of Christ in partnership with other Church members. While roles and responsibilities differ, and not everyone is called upon to fulfill this fundamental responsibility in the same way, each is to contribute to the common mission according to her or his time, talent, and treasure (CIC, cc. 511- 514).

Consultative Leadership - Policy 1.

In order to further the shared responsibility for the mission of the Roman Catholic Church in Central Washington and to foster pastoral planning, the Bishop establishes the Diocesan Pastoral Council. The Diocesan Pastoral Council, made up of laity, religious, and clergy, provides a forum for mutual, open reflection and dialogue about diocesan priorities and goals. Diocesan Pastoral Council members serve for up to three years or longer at the Bishop's discretion and are decommissioned at the end of their term.

The council's purpose is to form community among the members of the council through prayer, study, and shared reflection in order to be a sign and witness of unity for the Diocese

and to listen to the many voices that make up the Church in Central Washington. The Council identifies needs, hopes and dreams of the faithful and recommends broad priorities, goals, and policies. In addition, the Council discusses, reviews, and advises the Bishop regarding issues he chooses to bring before the Council (CIC, cc. 511–514).

Presbyteral Council

The Bishop and the priests of this Diocese share in the one priesthood of Jesus Christ by their baptism and, in a special way, by their call to Holy Orders. Although all members of the Church belong to the one Body of Christ, priests, by their ordination, are called to a unique ministry in the Church. By their ordination priests are called to collaborate with their Bishop in his mission and ministry (CIC, cc. 495–502). In the diocese of Yakima, all Priests are members of the Presbyteral Council.

In a special way, priests collaborate with the Bishop in his role as Shepherd of the Diocese. While the Bishop is to attend to his presbyters with special concern and listen to them as his assistants and advisers, they, in turn, are challenged to collaborate with the Bishop as teacher, priest, and pastor.

In order to carry out his responsibilities as effectively as possible, the Bishop establishes an executive Committee of the Presbyteral Council to provide advice and counsel. Their pastoral experience, counsel, and collaborative wisdom are indispensable resources that support this mutual relationship. The Presbyteral Council is a special forum for open reflection and fraternal dialogue between the Bishop and the priests of the Diocese.

Consultative Leadership - Policy 2.

The membership of the Executive Committee of the Presbyteral Council consists of six elected representatives, one representative from each of the six deaneries of the Diocese, the Vicar General, the Judicial Vicar, the Vicar for Clergy (ex officio members), and up to six appointed members. The dean of each deanery, elected by the deanery priests, has a three-year term renewable once. The members appointed by the Bishop shall serve for a term of one year, which can be renewed indefinitely at the direction of the Bishop.

Diocesan Finance Council

The Diocesan Finance Council is a consultative body whose role is to advise the Bishop in his duties of canonical stewardship over the diocesan finances. In the context of Christian stewardship, the Diocesan Finance Council makes recommendations to the Bishop on the best use of Diocesan financial resources to fulfill the Church's mission and to meet Diocesan goals.

The Diocesan Finance Council was established in 1984 in accord with the Code of Canon Law. The Finance Council advises the Bishop regarding the financial health of the Diocese, the implications of potential decisions in light of the value of financial stewardship and

assists the Bishop in evaluating the financial management structures and policies in the Diocese.

Consultative Leadership - Policy 3.

The Finance Council is composed of up to eleven members (at least three members of the Christian faithful, expert in finance and civil law) who are appointed by the Bishop after an application and screening process for five year terms that are renewable (CIC, c. 492 §§1-2).

Consultative Leadership - Policy 4.

The Diocesan Finance Council recommends to the Bishop overall financial planning, financial policies, (e.g. funding policies, investment policies, and policies regarding balanced operating and capital budgets), and monitors fiscal activity by meeting with auditors to review the annual audit before it is finalized (CIC, c. 493). The Bishop must also obtain the consent of the Finance Council (and the College of Consultors) to place acts of extraordinary administration (CIC, c. 1277). The Presbyteral Council is a source of final recommendations for those decisions that directly impact parishes.

College of Consultors

The College of Consultors is formed by the Bishop to fulfill the functions prescribed by the Code of Canon Law and any other duties assigned by the Bishop. The Bishop is to obtain the consent of the College of Consultors to perform acts of extraordinary administration, alienate archdiocesan property, and authorize alienation within minimal and maximal sums set by the conference of bishops (CIC, c. 1277).

Members of the College of Consultors are selected from the presbyteral council. The College of Consultors is an independent body from the presbyteral council. There are no fewer than six and no more than twelve members appointed for a term of five years (CIC, c. 502, §1).

Diaconal Council

As an extension of diaconal service, the Diaconal Council advises the Bishop about the needs of the Diocese and assists him in fostering and promoting a spirit of unity and good order among the diaconal community. The Diaconal Council is responsible to the Bishop of Yakima under the direction of the Director of Deacon Formation.

The Diaconal Council consists of a minimum of six members, chosen from among deacons and spouses, and are appointed directly by the Bishop; two of the appointees must be spouses of the diaconal community.

Nominated members are appointed for three-year terms, which are renewable once and which are staggered in such a way that one third of the membership is appointed or reappointed each year. The Bishop or the Vicar for Clergy convenes and chairs meetings of the Diaconal Council once a quarter. The Bishop or the Vicar for Clergy approves the agenda of the Diaconal Council and publishes the minutes. Recommendations to the Bishop are made by consensus.

Diocesan Schools Council

The Diocesan Schools Council (DSC) is the chief advisory body to the Bishop and Director of Schools regarding the formulation of policies affecting Diocesan, Parish, and private Catholic Schools. The Membership is appointed by the Bishop from a list of diverse candidates screened by the nominating committee of the DSC.

They review guidelines and make recommendations to the Bishop and School Pastors concerning the opening of new schools, amalgamation and/or grade reduction, and school closure. DSC will also review School Budgets, Facilities, and, other areas as needed to determine best practices, and, provide Policy recommendations to the Bishop. When approved by the Bishop, policies recommended by the SDC are binding on the Director, local parish school commissions, pastors, school principals, staff, and faculty.

Diocesan Liturgical Council

The Diocesan Committee of the RCIA includes priests, deacons, religious, and lay members. As an educational arm of the Bishop, this Committee receives directions from the Bishop for presenting and ensuring the implementation of liturgical norms that reflect a local response to directives and norms of the universal church.

The Committee advises the Bishop, supports the Diocesan Educational Ministry and serves the Diocese by staffing committees on liturgical music, environment, and art and by forming liturgical ministers. The Commission coordinates RCIA Activities and special Diocesan celebrations and develops guidelines for the celebration of the sacraments surrounding RCIA.

Diocesan Building Council

All Facilities of the Diocese of Yakima are personally owned by the holder of the Office of Bishop. The Building Council consists of the Diocesan CFO, lay, and religious membership as assigned by the Bishop with expertise in building and construction matters, and, is the chief advisory body on all matters having to do with major repairs and expansions to existing facilities. It will review building plans and contracts for normalcy with current industry practices, and, may act as advisor to parishes and schools as requested.

The Diocesan Building Policy is the governing document, and, the DBC endeavors to keep projects to its guidelines, and, provides recommendation to Bishop for approval of projects.

It is the Bishop that approves all projects and signs all contracts associated with construction projects and repairs.

Capital Revolving Program Board

The Diocese of Yakima Capital Revolving Program (CRP), a 501(c)(3) exempt corporation, was formed on October 22, 2010 for the purpose of ensuring responsible administration and protection of the temporal goods of the Diocese of Yakima, its parishes, schools, cemeteries and missions, and Catholic Charities. The role of the CRP board is to review and discuss investments, loans and all other business affairs. The board meets 4 times a year. The fund is managed by an independent contractor hired by the Board, and, the CRP is audited annually by an outside CPA Firm. The Bishop is an ex-officio Member of the Board. The Chancellor, Vicar General, and, Chair of the Diocesan Finance Council serve along with up to 3 additional members.

All CRP investments are owned by depositors. Earnings (or losses), net of expenses, are distributed to depositor accounts every quarter. Depositors can request draws from their accounts at any time. Withdrawals for building projects must follow the current construction policy of the Diocese (as managed by the Diocesan Building Council).

Seminarian Education Fund & Trust

The future spiritual guidance of our church depends on the attraction, education and nurturing of the men serving as priests in our diocese. The Seminarian Education Fund is established to pay for the education and living expenses of priest candidates as they go through their Seminary education and experience. The Trust is established with the eventual goal to permanently endow the Fund.

A Board of Trustees is responsible to oversee and administer both bodies of money, and, to hire an independent contractor for the management of the Trust proceeds.

Priest Retirement Fund & Trust

The future spiritual guidance of our church depends on the attraction, education and nurturing of the men serving as priests in our diocese. The Priest Retirement Fund & Trust is established to assist in paying the living expenses of retired priests that served in our Diocese. The Trust is established with the eventual goal to permanently endow the Fund.

A Board of Trustees is responsible to oversee and administer both bodies of money, and, to hire an independent contractor for the management of the Trust proceeds.

Diocesan Lay Advisory Board (DLAB) for the Dallas Charter and its Essential Norms

The DLAB shall be a group of respected individuals of sound judgment who are appointed by the Bishop to serve as the principal confidential advisors to the Bishop both in his assessment of allegations of sexual abuse of minors by diocesan personnel and also in his determination of their suitability for ministry.

The DLAB shall be comprised of eight members of outstanding integrity and good judgment. Seven members shall be lay individuals who are not employees of the diocese, and one member shall be a priest who is an experienced and respected pastor of the diocese. The priest member shall be non-voting. Wherever possible, it is desirable that individual DLAB members shall include a psychologist or social worker, an attorney and representatives of the Church at large. Wherever possible, at least one of the members should have particular expertise in the treatment of the sexual abuse of minors.

Detailed information of how the DLAB is established, populated and functions can be found in the Diocese of Yakima Policy Regarding Sexual Abuse (Rev. 2017) by contacting the Pastoral Center at (509) 965-7117.

THE DEANERY STRUCTURE

The Bishop groups parishes together to form deaneries to provide effective pastoral care for the faithful in a given geographical area (CIC, c. 374). The pastors and, in some cases, all ministers of a deanery meet regularly, usually monthly, to provide mutual support and encouragement for ministry and to discuss inter-parish issues such as how to provide effective pastoral care for hospitals, correctional facilities, and other institutions. Deaneries also collaborate in pastoral planning and in sharing resources for common initiatives such as service of cultural communities, liturgical or catechetical formation, the support of Catholic schools, and the celebration of penance services.

Because pastoral needs and resources will vary over time, deanery boundaries may be redrawn to reflect changing circumstances.

For a parish to change deaneries, the following policies apply:

Consultative Leadership – Policy 5.

The pastor must bring a request to change deaneries to the current pastoral leadership of both deaneries for discussion.

Consultative Leadership – Policy 6.

The requesting dean must present the request to change deaneries to the Bishop, who consults with the Presbyteral Council before making his decision.

III. PARTICIPANTS IN PARISH GOVERNANCE

The Parish

The parish is a community of believers sharing in the mission of the Church. A parish is a definite community of the Christian faithful established on a stable basis within a particular church (diocese); the pastoral care of the parish is entrusted to a pastor as its own shepherd under the authority of the diocesan bishop. The diocesan bishop alone is competent to erect, suppress or alter parishes; he is not to erect, suppress or notably alter them without hearing the Presbyteral Council (CIC, c. 515 §§1, 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.” (CIC 212, 1 & 2)

Because it is a community of the Christian faithful, it is essential that the parish structures serve the community in carrying out the mission of the Church: sanctification of the world through proclamation of the Gospel, celebration of the sacraments and service to those in need. Parish organizational structures are never ends in themselves, but are means to promote the mission of the parish, the diocesan Church, and the universal Church.

In the Diocese of Yakima, some parishes are clustered under the leadership of a pastor or priest moderator. Parishes are clustered to ensure that pastoral care is provided by a priest who is assigned to these communities for this purpose. Depending on the communities’ history and pastoral needs, there will be a variety of consultative bodies. For example, in some clusters, each parish will have its own councils and committees; in others, one pastoral council and one finance council will advise for all parishes.

Faith communities for the purposes of consultative leadership policies and guidelines in the Diocese of Yakima are not parishes but are established communities of faith with a chaplain appointed by the Bishop. For example, cultural and ethnic communities, campus ministry, etc.

Priests

Pastor

A pastor is a priest appointed by the Bishop and delegated as the leader of a particular parish entrusted to him. The pastor’s role, expressed in its threefold mission of teaching, governing and sanctifying (CIC, c. 519), empowers the laity for their mission as light and leaven in the world. As stated in the policies for priestly ministry, “The ordinary term for a pastor is six years, renewable once.” In the case of a shortage of priests, a priest may be assigned to pastor more than one parish (CIC, c. 526 §1).

Priest Administrator

A priest administrator is a priest who is appointed by the Bishop as a temporary leader of a particular parish. He has the same authority as a pastor and serves a period of time determined by the Bishop (CIC, c. 540 §§1-3).

Chaplain

A chaplain is a priest appointed by the Bishop to provide pastoral care to a faith community (for example a cultural and ethnic faith community) or a particular group of the Christian faithful (for example in a university setting or a hospital) within the Diocese. According to PM 14, “The term for a chaplain’s term is ordinarily three years, renewable indefinitely.” (CIC, c. 564)

Priest Moderator

A priest moderator is a priest appointed by the Bishop with powers and faculties of a pastor for a parish. His role is to monitor and mentor the pastoral coordinator and parochial vicar, and to act as canonical pastor to the parish community to whom an ecclesial lay minister has been appointed (CIC, c. 517 § 2). According to PM 11, “The term of an appointment for a priest moderator is linked to the term of appointment for the pastoral leader he is moderating.”

Parochial Vicar

A parochial vicar is a priest assigned to a parish in addition to, and in collaboration with, the parish priest or rector. He exercises his ministry as an agent of the parish's pastor, who is termed parochus in Latin.

Deacons

A deacon is a sacred minister qualified by orders and by faculties from the Bishop to baptize, witness marriages, conduct the rites of burial, proclaim the gospel and assist at liturgy. He is assigned by the Bishop to fulfill his ministry of word, liturgy, and service according to the terms of a ministry agreement and under the supervision of a pastor. That ministry may take place in the parish, a Diocesan agency, or a public facility such as a hospital or prison. If granted faculties, a deacon may also preach.

Lay Ecclesial Ministers and Religious

Lay ecclesial ministers are non-ordained members of the church who are called to participate in the life of the church through specialized ministerial, pastoral, and formational service.

Men and women who live a life consecrated through the profession of the evangelical counsels (chastity, poverty, and obedience) in a religious community under the supervision of a local superior are commonly known as Religious.

Lay Ecclesial Pastoral Coordinator

A pastoral coordinator is a religious or lay ecclesial minister appointed by the Bishop under the supervision of a moderator and entrusted with the day-to-day leadership of a parish or faith community (CIC, c. 517 §2). A pastoral coordinator may also be a deacon.

A pastoral coordinator serves a term of one to three years at the discretion of the Bishop, as specified in the person's ministry agreement. The priest moderator assigned has final canonical responsibility for major decisions within a parish.

Pastoral Associate

A pastoral associate is a deacon, religious or lay ecclesial minister delegated by the pastor to assist in fulfilling the pastoral ministry of the parish.

Pastoral Assistant

A pastoral assistant is a deacon, religious or lay ecclesial minister delegated by the pastor to assist in a specific ministerial area, such as religious education, youth ministry, or administration.

Lay Associations

Lay Associations are defined as groups of the faithful who organize themselves to foster a more personal Christian faith, to promote public worship or Christian doctrine, or to exercise other works of the apostolate. Lay associations may also have a direct relationship with the Bishop and his delegates in extending the evangelical, pastoral, and catechetical mission of the local church.

PARISH CONSULTATIVE BODIES

Before describing specific guidelines for council and commission operations and membership, it is important to offer a brief summary of the roles of the pastor or, in exceptional situations appointed by the Bishop, the ecclesial lay minister, staff, and consultative structures and their relationship to one another.

It is the role of the Christian faithful to carry out the mission of the Church in the world. Therefore, all parishioners share the responsibility for that mission with the pastor or other appointed leader. They are called to be responsible stewards of the resources of time, talent, and treasure given to them and to their parish. In order to ensure a diverse group of consultative leadership, an intentional effort is made to invite broad representation. The pastor or pastoral leader, appointed by the Bishop, exercises a central leadership role in the parish. Using a model of servant leadership, those

called to leadership seeks to build a faith community exemplifying diversity in unity and to be a link to the larger Church. They are responsible for parish governance and therefore provides leadership for the parish pastoral council and commissions, the finance council, and the parish staff in accord with Diocesan and universal Church guidelines. The pastoral council's purpose is to be a sign and witness of unity, to recommend parish priorities and directions, to promote community, and to assist the pastor in pastoral planning. The pastoral council is a consultative leadership body of parishioners that advises and makes recommendations to the pastor.

Commissions can be formed that are responsible for the development of strategic plans and policies for their specific ministry areas in response to the broad directions articulated by the pastor and parish pastoral council. The Parish Finance Council, required by the Code of Canon Law, advises the pastor and pastoral council about effective stewardship of the parish's financial resources. It is responsible for developing and overseeing a parish budget process, as well as conducting long range financial planning.

Parish staff under the direction of the pastor or his delegate develop and oversee parish programs and ministries which flow from the directions determined as a result of the council's planning process. Staff may also have responsibilities in financial and personnel administration and/or in pastoral planning at the discretion of the pastor.

The following descriptions of councils and commissions are meant to be guidelines rather than rules. The appropriate application of these guidelines is the responsibility of the pastor, collaborating with his parish leadership.

Parish Pastoral Council (Parish Council)

“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.” (CIC, c. 536)

Consultative Leadership – Policy 7.

Each parish must have a pastoral council as recommended in CIC, c. 536.

The pastoral council is established (CIC, c. 536.1) as a consultative body and is governed by norms determined by the Bishop (CIC, c. 536 §2). Reflecting on the call of Vatican II, the Code of Canon Law and the tradition of the Diocese of Yakima, the parish pastoral council collaborates with the pastor to discern through consultation and strive for Consensus how to address the challenges and opportunities encountered by the parish in its particular time and place. The Council's 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.

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.

Purpose – 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.

The parish pastoral council is a consultative body to the pastor. The purpose of the pastoral council is to examine, consider, and draw conclusions concerning matters under discussion in order to recommend a course of action to the pastor. Through consultation and, pastoral planning, the pastoral council assists the pastor in:

- Developing and living out of the mission of the parish;
- Forming community as a sign and witness of unity for the larger parish community;
- Providing recommendations for parish priorities, directions, and policies;
- Promoting communication and understanding among parish organizations and between the parish, the Diocese, and the universal Church (CIC, c. 536 §1).
- The Council never meets without the pastor presiding.
- Decisions pertaining to long range pastoral direction and goals should be arrived at by Consensus which involved the pastor.

In forming community, council members are challenged to undertake ongoing renewal through prayer, study, listening, and dialogue. In developing priorities and directions for the parish, the council is to become the means of achieving full participation by the whole parish in its mission by giving all a voice in guiding and directing parish life. In fostering communication, the council encourages and initiates dialogue among parish leadership and organizations and brings to them the concerns of the universal Church.

In light of the Parish Standards of Excellence Program, 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;

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

Criteria for Membership – A primary value for selecting membership of a parish pastoral council is that the council should be a true reflection of the parish community. For example, members should be inclusive of the demographic realities of the community. Members do

not represent a particular constituency but should reflect the diversity of the parish in terms such as age, race, and length of membership in the parish. Staff members appointed by the pastor to the council are non-voting members of the council.

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.

Consultative Leadership – Policy 8.

Members of the pastoral council must be:

- **Baptized and confirmed Roman Catholics in good standing with the Church;**
 - **Registered and supporting members of the parish (usually 3 years);**
- **Grounded in and committed to an understanding of the Church in accord with the principles of Vatican II;**
 - **Committed to prayer, study, listening, and dialogue;**
 - **Committed to stewardship of time, talent and treasure;**
- **Not currently employed by the parish or parish school or a close relative or in-law of or living in the same household as a parish or school employee;**
 - **Not simultaneously a member of the parish finance council.**

Size – The size of the council can range from five to twelve members. The size should be small enough to promote a sense of community among the members and yet large enough to reflect the diversity of the parish. The complexity of the council’s agenda should also be a factor in determining its size.

Selection – Whatever method(s) a pastor uses to choose pastoral council members; the council’s selection should reflect the theology underlying Church governance. That is, the process of selection should promote a sense of ownership throughout the parish without creating a sense that the parish has adopted a merely democratic model of governance.

In appointing members to the pastoral council, the pastor may adopt a variety and combination of methods including:

- A communal discernment process coordinated by a facilitator, which is the preferred method;
- Appointments from recommendations made by the existing pastoral council;
- Parish wide nominations and elections, which is not recommended.
- In bilingual parishes, it is recommended council member also be bilingual.
- 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.

Terms of Office

Consultative Leadership – Policy 9.

Terms of office should be three years, renewable once and either Staggered so that council membership can rotate; or Concurrent so that all members discern onto the council together. Thus members learn together, develop into a small faith community, build trust, discern leadership and serve for three years.

Executive Structure - Every council should have an executive committee composed of the pastor, chairperson, vice chairperson(s), and where applicable, administrative secretary. The task of this group is to develop an overall working plan for the year, which identifies the issues facing the council and plans when the council will be dealing with the issue. The executive committee should meet before each council meeting to prepare the agenda and design processes (e.g., small group work, individual work, reflection sheets) for each meeting. The executive committee needs to be sure that prayer and study are a significant and regular part of the council's agenda. The executive committee also appoints chairpersons of task forces. The important responsibilities of this committee may require additional training and resources, which are provided by the Office of the Vicar for Clergy.

Roles and Responsibilities

Pastor - The pastor presides at (but does not usually chair) all pastoral council meetings and actively listens to the council's deliberations. The pastor assists the council in developing consensus around a particular issue by sharing information, providing his own perspectives and identifying common elements or areas of agreement that seem present in the council's discussion. As minister of governance in the parish, the pastor authorizes any final course of action. He should set the context for the council's discussion by sharing Church teaching and/or setting the parameters for acceptable alternatives. The pastor is the convener of the executive committee and is ultimately responsible for ensuring the council's effective operations.

Chairperson - The chairperson, selected by the council membership, is central to the effectiveness of the pastoral council. The chairperson is responsible for:

- Organizing and coordinating the agenda and processes of the council;
- Chairing and facilitating the meetings of the council (the chairperson may delegate facilitation of portions of the meeting to other members);
- Encouraging members and committees of the council to fulfill their specific responsibilities and delegations;
- Establishing an ongoing process of evaluation of the council's effectiveness.

The chairperson must be a servant leader of the group. He or she should be the facilitator of the council, encourage inclusion and participation, keep the meeting on track, be sensitive to conflict, and help resolve conflicts positively.

Vice-Chairperson - The vice-chairperson serves on the executive committee, assisting the chairperson and assuming the duties of the chair in her or his absence. The vice-chairperson may also facilitate designated agenda items during the meeting. The council may choose to have two or more vice-chairpersons depending on the size of the council and the complexity of its agenda. Expanding the executive committee in this way allows for more participation in the leadership of the council.

Administrative Secretary - The administrative secretary prepares summaries of the meetings of the council, maintains the membership roster, and ensures the preparation and dissemination of correspondence. Many parishes have chosen to have a non-member volunteer to serve in this capacity, which allows all members of the council to participate fully in council proceedings.

Meetings - The pastoral council should determine its annual meeting calendar prior to the fall of each year, being sure to schedule enough meetings throughout the year to achieve the purpose of adequate consultation. Adequate time should be devoted to council orientation, council formation (prayer, community building, etc.), as well as council business. Some councils hold special meetings for internal planning (setting annual council goals and objectives), formation (retreats, opportunities to strengthen the ministerial identity and spirituality of the council), and education (study of Church documents, skill development relative to council work). The pastor must decide whether all meetings or only some of them will be open or closed.

For the council's operations to be effective and satisfying, it is important for council members to develop an understanding of the components of a successful meeting. Components include: prayer, faith sharing, listening, clear meeting objectives or outcomes, a realistic agenda and timeframe, consideration of how agenda items will be handled, adequate preparatory material made available in advance, and periodic evaluation of meetings.

Community Building - To foster the spirit of community and the development of mutual trust among its members, a parish pastoral council should establish one or two occasions each year for non-business events such as retreats and social gatherings. Through active participation in these events, council members learn to know, value, and trust one another as they serve the common good of all.

PARISH FINANCE COUNCIL

Consultative Leadership – Policy 10.

Each parish must have a finance council as stated in CIC, c. 537 that meets at least Quarterly.

According to the Code of Canon Law, each parish must have a finance council (CIC, c. 537). The parish finance council is composed of Catholic faithful as appointed by the pastor after consultation with the Parish Pastoral Council who offer advice to the pastor in the administration of the parish's temporal goods. The pastor is not a member of the Council, but, presides over it. The Council never meets without the pastor.

Purpose - The finance council is a consultative body that provides the pastor with advice concerning the stewardship of the parish's fiscal resources. It assists the pastor by:

- Conducting long-range financial planning with regard to funding operational and capital needs in the parish;
- Developing and overseeing a parish budget process which results in an annual parish budget. This process should involve the participation of those responsible for parish programs. It should be so designed that it addresses the parish's priorities and goals as determined by the pastor and parish pastoral council;
- Providing financial analysis of current fiscal status reports;
- Providing fiscal analysis of proposed goals, strategies, programs and administrative aspects of parish life.
- Providing the members' expertise in the areas of Responsible Stewardship under Canon Law and Church Teachings of material goods available to further the Mission of the Church in and beyond the parish.
- If the parish has a parochial school, the Council will assist the pastor in all matters related to the parish's financial support of the school.
- 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.
- 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.
- The Parish Finance Council will assist the pastor in developing just salaries and benefits for parish employees.
- The Parish Finance Council is to keep abreast of diocesan policies regarding investments fund raising, property sale, new construction, etc.

While the finance council has significant responsibility for the stewardship of parish financial resources, it is not the role of the finance council to recommend directions, priorities, or programs other than those related to its delegation: namely, fiscal stewardship. For this reason, the other consultative structures must be in place for the finance council to fulfill its role responsibly and effectively.

Criteria for Membership - The purpose of the finance council is to provide the pastor, the parish pastoral council, and other leadership bodies with professional financial analysis. For this reason, it is important that the finance council membership should be as balanced as possible (e.g., by gender, age, race, and ethnicity) and composed of people who have had experience in the areas of business, finance, administration and accounting. Staff members appointed by the pastor to the council are non-voting members of the council.

Consultative Leadership – Policy 11.

Members of the finance council must be:

- **Baptized and confirmed Roman Catholics in good standing with the Church;**
 - **Registered and supporting members of the parish;**
- **Grounded in and committed to an understanding of the Church in accord with the principles of Vatican II;**
 - **Committed to prayer, study, listening, and dialogue;**
 - **Committed to stewardship of time, talent and treasure;**
- **Not currently employed by the parish or parish school or a close relative or in-law of or living in the same household as a parish or school employee;**
 - **Not simultaneously a member of the parish pastoral council.**

Size - The council should be large enough to include a broad representation of expertise, but not so large as to inhibit planning and the development of recommendations. Membership of three to five persons is recommended. One member of the Finance Council will serve as liaison to the Pastoral Council.

Selection - Council members should be solicited through an open search process that begins with an identification of membership needs, followed by recruitment, an application process, interviews, and a selection or discernment process. The pastor makes the final decision concerning the method of selection.

Term of Office

Consultative Leadership – Policy 12.

Terms of office should be three years, renewable once. Pastoral considerations may benefit from the stability of having some members renew for additional terms.

Executive Structure - Every council should have an executive committee composed of the pastor, chairperson, vice chairperson(s), and where applicable, administrative secretary. The task of this group is to develop an overall working plan for the year, which identifies the issues facing the council and plans when the council will be dealing with the issue. The executive committee should meet before each council meeting to prepare the agenda and design processes (e.g., small group work, individual work, reflection sheets) for each meeting. The executive committee needs to be sure that prayer and study are a significant and regular part of the council's agenda. The executive committee also appoints chairpersons of task forces. The important responsibilities of this committee may require additional training and resources, which are provided by the Office of the Vicar for Clergy.

Roles and Responsibilities

Pastor - The pastor presides over all finance council meetings and actively listens to the council's deliberations. The finance council will not meet without the pastor present. The pastor assists the council in developing consensus around a particular issue by sharing information, providing his own perspectives and identifying common elements or areas of agreement that seem present in the council's discussion. As minister of governance in the parish, the pastor authorizes any final course of action. He should set the context for the council's discussion by sharing Church teaching and/or setting the parameters for acceptable alternatives. The pastor is the convener of the executive committee and is ultimately responsible for ensuring the council's effective operations.

Chairperson - The chairperson, selected by the council membership, is central to the effectiveness of the pastoral council. The chairperson is responsible for:

- Organizing and coordinating the agenda and processes of the council;
- Chairing and facilitating the meetings of the council (the chairperson may delegate facilitation of portions of the meeting to other members);
- Encouraging members and committees of the council to fulfill their specific responsibilities and delegations;
- Establishing an ongoing process of evaluation of the council's effectiveness.

The chairperson must be a servant leader of the group. He or she should be the facilitator of the council, encourage inclusion and participation, keep the meeting on track, be sensitive to conflict, and help resolve conflicts positively.

Vice-Chairperson - The vice-chairperson serves on the executive committee, assisting the chairperson and assuming the duties of the chair in her or his absence. The vice-chairperson may also facilitate designated agenda items during the meeting. The council may choose to have two or more vice-chairpersons depending on the size of the council and the complexity of its agenda. Expanding the executive committee in this way allows for more participation in the leadership of the council.

Administrative Secretary - The administrative secretary prepares summaries of the meetings of the council, maintains the membership roster, and ensures the preparation and dissemination of correspondence. Many parishes have chosen to have a non-member volunteer to serve in this capacity, which allows all members of the council to participate fully in council proceedings. Meeting summaries or minutes are provided to the Parish Pastoral Council.

Meetings - The finance council should determine its annual meeting calendar prior to the fall of each year, being sure to schedule enough meetings throughout the year to achieve the purpose of adequate consultation. Adequate time should be devoted to council orientation, council formation (prayer, community building, etc.), as well as council business. Some councils hold special meetings for internal planning (setting annual council goals and objectives, budgets, etc.), formation (retreats, opportunities to strengthen the ministerial identity and spirituality of the council), and education (study of Church documents, skill development relative to council work). The pastor must decide whether all meetings or only some of them will be open or closed.

For the council's operations to be effective and satisfying, it is important for council members to develop an understanding of the components of a successful meeting. Components include: prayer, faith sharing, listening, clear meeting objectives or outcomes, a realistic agenda and timeframe, consideration of how agenda items will be handled, adequate preparatory material made available in advance, and periodic evaluation of meetings.

Community Building - To foster the spirit of community and the development of mutual trust among its members, a parish finance council should establish one or two occasions each year for non-business events such as retreats and social gatherings. Through active participation in these events, council members learn to know, value, and trust one another as they serve the common good of all.

OTHER CONSULATATIVE STRUCTURES – COMMISSIONS

Other parish consultative structures such as commissions for stewardship, school, faith formation, and social justice operate analogously to those just mentioned. Liturgical commissions are analogous to the liturgical commission for the Diocese as called for in the Second Vatican Council's Document on Liturgy (SC, 44).

Whereas parish pastoral councils are responsible for all directional and strategic planning, in some parishes, particularly larger parishes, strategic planning for specific areas may take place through commissions. In this case, it is recommended that several commissions be constituted, corresponding to the areas of spiritual life and worship, stewardship, Christian formation, and human concerns/social ministry. Parishes with parish schools must have a school commission. Unlike parish committees that are involved in specific programs or ministries, these commissions engage in strategic planning and policy development in their specific areas in response to parish priorities and goals.

The size and membership of a commission will depend upon the skills needed by its members. The terms of office are similar to those of the pastoral council.

Function and Membership of Commissions

Because of the specialized focus of a commission, each commission should determine its own meeting schedule in response to the complexity of its agenda. One commission may determine it will only focus on one issue for the year and will conduct its work over several meetings. Other commissions may require regular monthly meetings. Every attempt should be made to schedule meetings in response to the need rather than having regular meetings for which there is little substantive agenda.

Membership on the commissions should be balanced between those with special expertise and general parish membership. The pastor may preside at each commission but more often will delegate a parish staff person or a parishioner to act as his liaison. The commission can elect its own chairperson, although for new commissions a temporary chair may be appointed by the pastor. Other members should be sought through an open search. This process would begin with an

identification of membership needs, followed by recruitment, an application process, interviews, and a selection process by the commission itself, the parish council, or the pastor.

Parishes Without Commissions

For any number of reasons, especially parish size, a pastor may not establish any or all of the below mentioned commissions. In parishes without commissions, strategic planning is conducted by the parish pastoral council. Care should be taken by the pastoral council to ensure that the areas of the parish's mission for which commissions would ordinarily provide assistance to the pastor (e.g., worship, formation and education, stewardship, and social outreach) are adequately developed and evaluated on a regular basis.

Existing parish committees may become involved in strategic planning and policy recommendations in assistance to the pastor and pastoral council. For instance, a parish liturgy committee which normally assists the pastor in planning for weekend liturgies may initiate policy recommendations. They may, for example, recommend significant alterations of the worship space to make it more welcoming and accessible or to better conform to Church norms. The week-to-week work of committees rarely requires significant consultation; however, when the task of strategic planning is undertaken, much broader consultation is required to foster ownership and commitment.

The following commissions are usually required for the good of parish life:

Faith Formation Commission

The coordination of catechesis is not merely a strategic factor, aimed at more effective evangelization, but has a profound theological meaning. Evangelizing activity must be well coordinated because it touches on the unity of faith, which sustains all the Church's actions (GDC, 272).

Nature or Purpose - The purpose of the Faith Formation Commission is to assist the pastor/pastoral leader "to ensure that the parish will offer faith formation to all in the parish, either directly or in cooperation with one or more parishes" and that a parish faith formation plan is developed and implemented.

This Commission's Role Includes:

- Assessing parish needs for faith formation;
- Advising the pastor/pastoral leader and their delegates regarding faith formation needs, and;
- Ensuring that quality faith formation programs are implemented in the parish.

Composition - The commission should strive to represent the diversity of the parish and wider local church. It is preferable to have some members of the commission who possess experience in offering faith formation programs, parenting, and/or qualification as an educator.

Specific Roles

- **Pastor:** The pastor regularly attends a meeting and/or appoints a delegate to act as an ex officio member and liaison to the pastor. He reviews recommendations from the commission and ensures the parish school collaborates and participates in the development and implementation of the parish plan for faith formation.
- **Pastoral Associate or Assistant:** The pastor may entrust the ministry to a pastoral associate who could be responsible for the Commission. Responsibilities vary from parish to parish. The pastoral associate or other staff person assigned to work with the Commission shall serve as an ex-officio member.
- **Commission:** The Commission members are called to work collaboratively and supportively with the pastor, designated parish staff and other consultative bodies. They should be familiar with Church documents related to catechesis, be familiar with “Diocesan Parish Faith Formation Policies and Guidelines”, and act in an advisory role to the pastor and/or his delegates in recommending general policy and plans for faith formation.

Responsibility

- **Planning:** The pastoral plan for faith formation should be consistent with Diocesan Parish Formation Policies and Guidelines. The Faith Formation plan should be consistent with the parish mission statement and live out goals and priorities of the parish. Faith Formation planning incorporates the parish and parish school (if present).
- **Policy Development:** The Faith Formation Commission recommends policies to the pastor that give general direction for faith formation in the parish.

Authority - The commission serves the pastor and staff as a consultative body. The commission recognizes the decision-making authority entrusted to the pastor and makes recommendations.

Relationship with Staff and Other Councils/Structures - The faith formation commission is entrusted with supporting and sustaining the faith, life, and development of the community and responsible to parish staff and leadership in the

areas of Education of the Faith, Formation for Prayer, Liturgical Catechesis, Moral Formation, Community Life, and, Invitation to Mission.

Liturgy Commission

Nature or Purpose – The Liturgy Commission assists the pastor in achieving the goal of full, conscious, and active participation of the people at the Eucharist, as stated in the Constitution on Sacred Liturgy (SC, 14). The overall purpose of the Liturgy Commission is to advise and support the pastor on the spirituality and prayer life of the parish community. The Commission under the direction of the pastor may have oversight of the formation of parish liturgical ministries.

Composition – It consists of a Pastor or Parochial Vicar, and a diverse group that reflects the composition of the Parish. The appropriate staff can be assigned by the pastor or priest moderator.

Specific Roles

- **Pastor** - Promotes the liturgical instruction of the people and also their active participation in the liturgy both internally and externally.
- **Pastoral Assistant** - The pastor may entrust the implementation of diocesan policies and parish guidelines for quality liturgy and training/formation of liturgical ministers.
- **Commission** - Advises the pastor, supports the parish's liturgical staff, and serves the parish by staffing committees, such as, liturgical music, liturgical art and environment, and the oversight of the formation of liturgical ministers.
- **Parishioners** - Are to fully engage in the dialogical prayer at the Eucharist and all other sacramental rites. The baptized come together to give God thanks and praise in the midst of the Church.

Authority – The commission serves the pastor and delegated staff as a consultative body. In making recommendations the commission recognizes the decision making authority entrusted to the pastor.

Relationship with Staff and Other Councils/Structures – The relationship between the Diocesan Liturgical Commission and the parish liturgical commission is to assist and support priests especially in the training and formation of liturgical

ministers. Consultation is to take place with the Liturgy Office in building and/or renovation of all worship space.

The liturgical commission under the direction of the pastor is entrusted in supporting and sustaining the communal prayer life of the Church (i.e. all sacramental life). As needed it relates to Faith Formation, the School Commission (if present), Ethnic and Cultural Communities, and, its own Liturgical Communities.

School Commission

Parishes with parish schools must have a school commission. It engages in strategic planning and policy development for the school in response to parish priorities and goals, and, is consultative to the Pastor and Principal. Membership on the commission should be balanced between those with special expertise and general parish membership. The commission can elect its own chairperson. Other members should be sought through an open search. This process would begin with an identification of membership needs, followed by recruitment, an application process, interviews, and a selection process by the commission itself, the parish council, or the pastor.

Nature or Purpose - The overall purpose of the school commission is to advise and support the pastor and principal in the operation of the parish school. School Commissions may be responsible for the following:

- Assessing the needs of the school community.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the school in performing its educational and formational missions.
- Collaborating with the pastor and principal in educating the parish as a whole about the importance of the school, while building a sense of connection with the overall parish mission.
- Collaborating with the pastor and principal in educating other parishes about the school's mission.
- Working collaboratively with the pastoral council and other consultative bodies.

Composition – It should consist of a diverse group that reflects the composition of the parish and the school. A non-Catholic parent may be eligible to serve.

Specific Roles

- **Pastor** - The pastor provides leadership to the commission based on his knowledge of the parish community, the relationship of the school's mission within the parish's mission, and familiarity with the parish's financial circumstances. The pastor may attend and participate in commission meetings. He approves local school policies, and, is the

employer of the principal, responsible for hiring, supervision, evaluation, and contract renewal.

- **Principal** - The principal operates as the spiritual, educational and managerial leader of the school. The principal administers the school in accord with diocesan policies, and, attends school commission meetings as a non-voting member, while serving the role of executive officer. The principal identifies policy needs and assists the school commission in developing policies, and, the monitoring/administration of same.
- **Commission** - The commission members are called to work collaboratively and supportively with the pastor and principal. Members must become familiar with church documents relating to the mission of Catholic education and Diocesan policies relating to the operation of parish schools. They act in an advisory capacity to the pastor and principal in matters of general policy recommendations and ongoing strategic plans for the school. The commission will fulfill these functions in collaboration with the pastor and principal and within the context of parish priorities and goals.

Responsibility

- **Planning** – Establishing a Mission Statement, Goals, and, Future Plans for the School.
- **Policy Development** - Recommending policies that give general direction for the school to the pastor and the principal.
- **Finance** - Developing a plan and means to finance school programs, including tuition, development and fundraising, Allocating resources according to the budget, and, Monitoring the budget.
- **Public Relations** - Communicating with various public groups or interested persons about the school, Listening to the needs and concerns of the school community through appropriate forums set up for this purpose, Recruiting students, and, Promoting the school to the parish and parents.
- **Evaluation** - Determining whether commission goals and plans are being met, and, Evaluating the commission's own effectiveness.

Authority - The commission serves the pastor and principal as a consultative body. In the spirit of collaboration, the commission recognizes the role and authority of the pastor and the principal as his delegate, while the pastor and principal respect the authentic witness and expertise offered by the commission members. All parties work collaboratively to build consensus.

Relationship with Staff and Other Councils/Structures

- **Diocese** - The relationship between the parish school commission and the Diocese is stated in the diocesan education policies, which are available for local school commission members.

- **Parish Pastoral Council** - The parish pastoral council establishes parish priorities regarding the use of parish resources, personnel and finances. The principal in consultation with the school commission is responsible for clearly and accurately articulating the needs of the school to the pastoral council. In consultation with the pastor and principal, the parish school commission should maintain regular communication with the parish pastoral council about the direction of the school, the state of the health of the school, and future planning.
- **Parish Finance Council** - The school's budget is drawn up according to the parish budgetary financial policies and procedures and long-range financial planning which are established by the pastor in consultation with the parish finance council. The parish finance council is not responsible for determining priorities or evaluating the worth of parish programs and ministries. The parish finance council oversees an annual budget development in response to priorities set forth by the pastoral council. The pastor makes the final decision on the annual budget. The principal in consultation with the school commission has the responsibility for the effective use of the parish financial investment (the subsidy) and is accountable for keeping expenditures within budget.
- **Principal** - The principal is the educational leader and executive officer of the school commission. He or she is the link between the commission and the school with the pastor, staff, students and parents. She or he shares information with commission members regarding current educational trends, assessment results, and federal and state programs. The principal will keep the commission informed regarding the operation of the school and Diocesan policies and procedures.
- **Parent Club (PDO)** - The school commission works closely with the officers of the Parent Club in order to understand more fully parental needs and concerns. It works with parental fund-raising groups as part of coordinating the overall financing of programs for the school. It uses the communication mechanism of the Parent Club to report to school families about commission activities.

Parent Club (PDO)

Nature or Purpose - The overall purpose of the Parent Club is to facilitate, encourage, and ensure ongoing community building by providing activities, fundraising events and service to the parish school. The club is a vehicle supporting communication between home and school, offering a mechanism for parent education and serving as a resource for political action when endorsed or recommended by WSCC.

Composition – Its Membership is all Parents and Staff of the School.

Selection of Executive Committee/Board –

- Parents are nominated/selected by Parent Club membership to fulfill leadership roles within the club (i.e.: chair person, vice chair, secretary and treasurer).
- Chairs of various committees within the club also make up the membership of the committee/board (e.g., scrip and auction).
- An effort should be made to select individuals who have the time and gifts necessary to fulfill this role. Additionally, the executive committee/board should reflect the diversity of the community.
- In determining the size of the committee/board, membership should ideally total no fewer than seven and no more than thirteen.

Specific Roles - The Parent Club is a vehicle through which parents can provide support and service to the parish school. It works within the framework of the parish school and collaborates with the principal before decisions are made.

- The Parent Club is responsible for organizing and conducting fund raising activities that support the school.
- The executive committee/board works closely with the school commission to fully understand the needs and concerns of the school.
- Disbursements from income raised by Parent Club are to be determined by the pastor in collaboration with the principal, the school commission, and the Parent Club members.

Responsibility –

- **Communication** - Keeps parents informed about the Parent Club activities, projects and/or events, provides social opportunities for parents to form community, and, provides a forum for parent education.
- **Service to School** - Provides volunteers for school needs, and Revenue to the school through fundraising efforts.
- **Education** - Provides a mechanism for parent education on current topics of interest to parents.
- **Advocacy for the School** - Promotes the school to the parish and parents. It provides letter writing, phone calls, and/or visits to legislators when needed for issues that might concern the school. (Typically done in conjunction with WSCC principles and guidelines.)
- **Evaluation** - Determines whether Parent Club goals and plans are being met, and, evaluates the Parent Club's own effectiveness.

Authority - The Parents Club is established by the pastor and school principal in accordance with diocesan policy.

Justice and Peace Commission

“[The Church] cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice. She has to play her part through rational argument and she has to reawaken the spiritual energy without which justice, which always demands sacrifice, cannot prevail and prosper.”

Pope Benedict XVI, God is Love, 28

Nature or Purpose - The purpose of the Justice and Peace Commission is to assist the parish in the promotion and implementation of Catholic social teaching. The Commission assists the pastor “to foster works through which the spirit of the gospel is promoted, even that which pertains to social justice” (CIC, c. 528 §1).

Commission’s Role - Assisting the parish to be a witness of charity and justice to the larger community, Ensuring education of staff, consultative groups, and parish at large regarding Catholic social teaching. Engaging in strategic planning, policy development and recommendation in the area of Catholic social teaching in response to parish priorities and goals. It also serves as a liaison to affiliated diocesan initiatives.

Composition - Diversity reflecting the parish profile, especially economically, racially and by gender. Youth and young adult representation is highly recommended. A direct communication vehicle/link to the councils, such as a Commission member assigned to attend Councils’ meetings or ex officio representation from Pastoral and/or Finance Councils.

Specific Roles

- **Pastor** - The pastor provides leadership to the commission based on social justice concerns and knowledge of parish life. The pastor is not a commission member. However, the pastor is strongly encouraged to visit Commission meetings, listening and offering information. If there is a pastoral staff person with responsibilities in this area, the pastor is the employer of that person, responsible for hiring, contract renewal, supervision, and evaluation.
- **Pastoral Assistant** - The pastor may entrust the social justice ministry to a pastoral assistant who preferable could be responsible for the commission as an ex-official member. Responsibilities of the pastoral assistance may vary from parish to parish.
- **Commission** - The Commission members are called to work collaboratively and supportively with the pastor, designated parish staff and other consultative bodies. Social Justice Commission members support other ministry areas by offering assistance in integrating Catholic social teaching with all parish ministries.

- **Pastoral Council** - The Pastoral Council and Social Justice Commission should strengthen the parish's efforts in offering and implementing Catholic social teaching. Council and Commission should collaborate in efforts that promote social justice affecting many areas of parish life, such as Stewardship, St. Vincent Centers, Twinning or sister parish relationships, and, Donations/support for works of charity and justice.
- **Finance Council** - The Finance Council is the consultative body who provides the pastor and Social Justice Commission with advice concerning parish fiscal resources.

Responsibility - Social Justice Commission members must become familiar with key WSCC, USCCB and Vatican documents in the area of Catholic social teaching. The commission, acting on the parish's mission and pastoral priorities, will develop an annual plan for implementing Catholic social teaching in the parish. This may include:

- Promoting the inclusion of Catholic social teaching in all areas of faith formation and education, liturgy and prayer life, and parish stewardship of resources; Linking to local Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) funded organizations;
- Collaborating with the local Catholic Charities agency and non-parish organizations that share the Catholic approach to social justice;
- Using resources and programs of, or supported by, Catholic Relief Services, as well as CCHD, Pro-Life Secretariat, Social Development and World Peace and other offices of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops; Supporting Church advocacy efforts such as the Legislative Network of the Washington State Catholic Conference;
- Promoting and educating about the various Special Collections that support the social mission of the Church, locally, nationally and globally;
- Collaborating on an ecumenical and inter faith basis around social justice issues, especially with advocacy for the poor and/or marginalized.

Authority - The commission serves the pastor and staff as a consultative body. The commission recognizes the decision-making authority entrusted to the pastor and makes recommendations.

Relationship with Staff and Other Councils/Structures - The Social Justice Commission should be on the same level as other commissions in the parish and its relationship to the Pastoral Council, Finance Council, staff and pastor should be the same. Catholic social teaching should be seen as affecting all areas of parish life. The Commission should work with other commissions where areas of mutual responsibility are identified. "Social Justice" is one possible name for this type of commission. Other possible titles for such a commission, e.g. Human Concerns, Social Outreach, Outreach, Justice and Peace, Social Ministry.

Stewardship Commission

A USCCB 1992 letter named “Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response” states that “once one chooses to become a disciple of Christ, Stewardship is not an option”, but an entire way of life. By gratefully receiving God’s gifts, tending, and, sharing them with all, they are returned with increase to the Lord. We make conscious decisions to be Christ’s followers regardless of cost to self by not a single or multiple actions, but by committing ourselves to the Lord.

Nature or Purpose – To prayerfully identify, collaborate with pastoral leadership, and, promote opportunities for parishioners to give of themselves in Time, Talent and Treasure.

This Commission’s Role Includes:

- Advise the Pastor and Pastoral Council of stewardship education and opportunities inside and outside the parish.
- Promote and coordinate programs within the parish. Appropriately acknowledge parishioners’ gifts.
- Identify parishioners’ strengths/areas of stewardship interest.
- Responsible for Stewardship Awareness within the parish and its connection to discipleship and evangelization.
- Develops the annual parish plan to promote Time/Talent/Treasure.

Composition – The size of the Committee will vary based upon parish size and talents. Ideally, 6-8 people representing the parishioner composition will serve. The ideal member loves stewardship and shows it by participation in parish and community affairs. They will have a spiritual motivation and relationship with God, collaborates well others when discussing Time/Talent/Treasure, is Reliable and Zealous towards the concept of Stewardship.

Specific Roles

- Attends diocesan and regional stewardship trainings.
- Oversees the parish annual renewal process such as a Ministry Fair, and how it permeates all aspects of parish life.
- Provide an Annual Report to the parish that is pastoral in nature in addition to providing statistical information.
- Collaboration with Religious Education to promote Stewardship programs among children and youth.
- Promote parish-wide efforts towards charity in the community.
- This can collaborate with a Social Justice Committee.
- Oversee the parish’s Annual Catholic Appeal Campaign.

Responsibility

- **Planning** – Providing the Stewardship Plan and Events to the Pastoral Council and integrating with the fellow Committees under the parish pastoral plan.
- **Promotion & Management** – Overseeing the parish Time/Talent/Treasure activities. Acknowledging individuals' efforts.
- **Reporting** – Providing information back to the pastoral council and the parish.

Authority – The Commission is consultative to the Parish Pastoral Council, and, manages & reports on activities and programs directed to them.

Relationship with Staff and Other Councils/Committees: Stewardship permeates all aspects of parish life. Correspondingly, it has vigorous dialogue with the Pastoral Council, the Pastor, Religious Education programs and other groups involved in Social Justice and Hospitality activities of the parish.

Other Consultative Structures – Committees

Like all councils and commissions, parish committees play a very important part in the life of the parish, providing parishioners opportunities to live out their baptismal call to serve. Like commissions, committees focus their attention on a particular ministry. However, unlike councils and commissions, committees seldom attend to questions of what the parish should do such as policy setting and strategic planning. Instead, committees concern themselves with doing the work of the parish.

Committees usually consist of members who know their particular area of ministry well and work cooperatively to use their knowledge to help the parish better serve the people. Like all the people of God, committee members are called to prayer, service, and a deeper life of faith. An example of such a committee is the Parent Club.

IV. PARISH PASTORAL PLANNING

Consultative Leadership – Policy 13.

Parishes are to build models of planning and staffing that are theologically and ecclesially sound, consistent in application across the Diocese, collaborative in vision, and consistent with the vision and values of the wider church.

The Planning Process

The pastoral planning process draws upon concepts and skills used in organizational development, organizational structures, and research. Pastoral planning is distinguished from corporate and civic planning in that it integrates theological reflection into the planning process, bringing the light of the Gospel and our tradition of faith to the specific situation. Understanding the roles and relationships of parish ministers and consultative structures in pastoral planning, clarifying the areas to which planning can be applied, and utilizing the steps of effective decision-making will promote effective church governance (see Appendix B).

Directional and Strategic Planning by Consultative Bodies

Directional Planning results in statements of mission and direction. It seeks answers to questions such as: Who are we? What is our unique identity within the context of the diocesan and universal Church? How does who we are and what we do as a parish reflect the goals of encuentro? How well do we promote communion? Where are we called to go? What are our priorities? Directional decisions concern the broad mission and goals of the parish in the context of the larger Church. Directional planning requires being familiar with and faithful to Church teachings and the mission of the larger Church and being willing and able to listen to the people of the parish.

Strategic Planning focuses on specific issues or areas of concern. Strategic decisions are those that result in the commitment of major personnel and financial resources. Strategic decisions usually take months or years to achieve.

For example, directional planning may result in a parish priority of “Evangelization of Alienated Catholics.” Through strategic planning, parish leaders would study various methods and approaches, analyze potential personnel and financial resources, and determine a general strategy, such as “making our facilities accessible to persons with disabling conditions,” or “conducting a major parish census.” Strategic planning is most successful when it takes place within the context of established parish priorities, goals, and policies.

It is primarily the responsibility of the parish pastoral council to assist the pastor in directional and strategic planning. Consultation with the parish membership, leadership, and staff by the parish pastoral council is essential to the integrity of the process. As the pastor consults with the council, so the council itself is called through shared responsibility

to consult with other parish leadership and parishioners in general in its planning processes. The pastoral council must ensure that systems are in place to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of goals, priorities, policies, and resource allocations. These systems should lead to a recurring planning cycle resulting in new priorities and goals every three to five years.

In some parishes, particularly larger parishes, commissions will advise about major, strategic initiatives for their area of ministry, operating under the broad direction defined by the pastoral council. For instance, to promote the parish's priority of honoring diversity, a spiritual life and worship commission might develop a policy to include persons with disabilities in liturgies.

The *Code of Canon Law* makes special reference to the finance council. The council's primary function is to provide the pastor with advice concerning the stewardship of parish fiscal resources. It assists the pastor by developing a parish budget process, providing financial analysis of proposed goals, strategies, and programs, and by conducting long-range financial planning with regard to funding capital and operational needs in the parish. While the finance council has significant responsibility for the stewardship of parish financial resources, it is not its role to recommend directions, priorities, or programs other than those related to its delegation: fiscal stewardship.

Administrative and Operational Planning by Parish Staff and Committees

Administrative and operational planning focuses on converting strategies and policies into programs and action. Planning in these areas involves program goals and objectives, program design, personnel administration and evaluation, and budgeting. Administrative planning develops, organizes, and manages the programs and human and financial resources necessary to carry out strategic decisions. Operational planning deals with the actual "hands-on" day-to-day operation of ministries and programs.

Parish Staff - The parish staff, hired and supervised by the pastor or his delegate, is responsible to the pastor or his delegate for developing and implementing ministerial programs and services that respond to the priorities and directions of the parish in their areas of responsibility. Some pastoral staff may be entrusted with the responsibility for pastoral administration and management. While parish consultative groups such as the pastoral council and the finance council may advise about the effectiveness of a given program, it is the responsibility of the pastor or his delegate to hire,

supervise, evaluate and determine compensation for staff members. It is the responsibility of the staff to collaborate with the pastor to evaluate program goals and objectives.

Parish Committees - Parish committees take responsibility for the "hands on" ministry in a parish. Membership should include those parishioners who feel called to the specific ministry entrusted to the committee. Through their work, they experience God's presence in each other and in the ministry they do and feel connected with the larger church community. Committees live out the planning done by councils and commissions, often in

mutual consultation with the staff assigned to that ministry. In small parishes, committees may have multiple responsibilities.

Summary - Distinctions among planning structures provide important insights into the kinds of planning activities that are to be undertaken by those who participate in parish governance. The pastor is charged by the Bishop with the responsibility for governance of the parish and therefore with developing a parish planning process. In each instance, the parish should be guided by the diocesan vision statement that sets out goals and priorities.

The parish pastoral council, the finance council, and commissions (and in some situations, staff) share a primary responsibility with the pastor for directional and strategic planning. The parish staff, finance council and committees have a primary responsibility for assisting the pastor in administrative and operational planning. Quite often, particularly in smaller communities, individuals or entire groups may have responsibilities in a number of areas of pastoral planning. In such cases it is even more important that these distinctions be clear to ensure that the appropriate focus of the group is maintained. Each area for planning is essential to the overall health of the parish and therefore the integrity and importance of each should be respected.

V. CONSULATATIVE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Effective Church governance and pastoral planning depend upon effective decision-making, a process that can be carefully thought out or left to unfold haphazardly. It is essential to pay attention to the decision-making steps and to the people who should be consulted and how they should participate. Attention to these aspects will generate commitment and avoid conflict when decisions are reached.

To avoid raising unrealistic expectations, it is important to note that some issues, such as official church teaching and church law, (e.g. liturgical practices) are not subject to a decision-making process on either the parish or Diocesan level.

People's experience of inclusion in the decision-making process can often times be far more important and have more far reaching consequences than the actual decision. No matter in what area pastoral planning is applied, the same steps in the decision-making process should be followed.

According to Sharon Euart, RSM; *"If one understands ecclesial decision-making to be a process utilizing a broad range of gifts rather than only a moment of 'jurisdictional' choice making, that is, saying yes or no, the opportunities for the involvement of laypersons in such decision-making are far broader than may appear initially. Such an understanding might help shed light on the often-forgotten aspects of ecclesial decision-making and respond to the questions and tensions about consultation versus decision-making. Most of all it might revitalize our consultative structures with an enhanced understanding of shared responsibility and its role in the governance of the church (Origins 35:2, May 26, 2005)."*

Steps in Decision-Making - Decision-making involves four steps: 1) Evaluation/Reflection, 2) Recommendation, 3) Choice and Authorization, and, 4) Action. A description of each step of the process and of their relationship to one another is described in Appendix C.

Distinction of Roles in Decision-Making - While the steps in decision-making are the same in all areas of pastoral planning, the characteristics are quite distinct in different roles. In directional and strategic planning, decision-making processes are characterized by collaboration, consultation, and consensus-building by consultative structures. Particularly in the evaluation and recommendation phases of decision-making, participation should be the guiding principle.

While this can be time consuming, greater commitment is attained and less energy is expended in the authorization and implementation stages.

Once a consensus is attained and directions are determined, decision-making in the administrative and operational phases is characterized by delegation of responsibility to appropriate bodies or persons such as staff, committees, organizations and/or individuals. In administrative and operational planning, decision-making processes are characterized by delegation. Frustration will occur in groups if the principle of subsidiarity is violated and when the characteristics of directional and strategic decision-making steps are applied to administrative and operational steps (for example, purchasing copy machines, choosing a color to paint the gym or the best way to stripe the parking lot).

Models of Decision-Making

A variety of models represent different attitudes toward decision-making within our culture:

Political Model - In a political system, decision-making is characterized by majority rule and a system of checks and balances. Such a model prevents the consolidation of centralized power by any one group. On the other hand, it does not work toward a unified commitment. Such a model promotes competition because of the desire to decentralize power. This model is characterized by winners and losers.

Business Model - A business decision-making model is traditionally centralized and hierarchical, with policies and directions determined at the top. However, regarding decisions that impact terms of employment, a model of negotiation is frequently followed. In this model, both management and labor take positions and then bargain or make tradeoffs until, ideally, some compromise is reached. In this model, both parties theoretically win and lose something. However, because both parties will attempt to develop stronger bargaining positions for the next round of negotiations, the model does not finally work toward unity.

Civic Model - Because membership and participation are the highest values in most civic organizations, the most active members are usually the ones who make decisions about direction and priorities. This model, too, falls short of ensuring the inclusion and unity of all members of the community.

Church Model - While each of the models mentioned above has its own strength and may be appropriate in a certain context, the mission of the Church calls all to share responsibility according to their appropriate role and delegation. Therefore, within the context of faithfulness to the teachings of the Church, parish decision-making about direction and priorities should favor the “Church” model which will promote communion and a commitment to the Gospel and our faith tradition. This requires a posture of servant leadership on the part of parish leadership, seeking to understand the needs of the community and building consensus around particular directions. Moreover, in order to honor the diverse cultures in parishes, pastoral leaders and people should encourage an awareness and sensitivity to the different ways by which cultures make decisions.

While the pastor has ultimate authority for authorizing all decisions, he must take particular care to authorize a course of action in such a way that the unity of the parish is promoted. There may be situations where the parish pastoral council has reached a consensus, but the pastor does not concur. Although in no way obliged to accept their recommendations, the pastor should give strong consideration to supporting the council’s recommendation, especially when there is a consensus, unless there is a compelling reason, which, in the pastor’s judgment, is overriding. Here, the pastor must weigh the relative importance of pursuing the course of action he would prefer versus the impact on the community of acting contrary to the consensus. What is especially needed in such situations is a clear identification of issues involved, as well as clear communication between the pastor and the parish pastoral council.

Discerning God's will is not easy and reaching consensus is often a time consuming process. Time spent building consensus about the major priorities and directions for the parish can ultimately save time as the commitment generated facilitates the administrative and program decisions that follow. Working toward consensus is much more characteristic of directional and strategic planning. However, there may be occasions when the pastor and parish staff determine that a consensus would be important around certain administrative or program issues.

To be a discerning community, then, is to be a community of prayer. This is a particular challenge for councils and commissions that may meet only monthly or less frequently. Nonetheless, these organizations are challenged to be examples for the larger parish: The members of the council/commission, even though composed of individuals from diverse backgrounds and with diverse opinions, should spend significant time praying together and through prayer attempt to discern the will of God for themselves and for the parish community.

Discernment - Ultimately, the Church's model of governance and decision-making is in service to the parish community by discerning the will of God and carrying out the mission of the Church in accord with Church teaching. No specific decision-making process will guarantee true discernment, but every organization and process should include time for prayer and openness to the Spirit speaking through the group discussion and personal reflection. Ladislav Orsy, S.J. in "Toward a Theological Evaluation of Communal Discernment," defines communal discernment:

Communal discernment in its best and purest form is the articulation of a contemplative insight into the working of God's grace in a community... Community discernment should be an ongoing process. The actual time of discernment is no more than an intense period in the continuously evolving life of the community.

Discernment, an ancient gift from God for building up the community, is decision-making focused on God's will, on prayer for learning God's will, and on the community. Discernment can be a process for individuals who are making significant life decisions, but in this context it is communal discernment—communities and groups working together for the good of the whole. Since no one has all the gifts, discernment takes time for listening: listening to each other and listening to God through prayer, reflection, dialogue, and communal discernment.

Prayer drives discernment while goals and values are the core. If the community's goal is to live out the mission of Christ and His church as God called Him and us, then prayer and discernment are the heart of parish decisions. Each of the steps of decision-making invites the question, "What is God willing us to?"

Consensus - A consensus model of decision-making implies the need for discernment and reflects the spirit of Church governance and organization called for by the Second Vatican Council. It requires a different attitude, a new way of thinking, on the part of those who participate in the process. In the evaluation step it is important that those participating be familiar with Church teaching on the topic. It is important that each person formulate and express her or his own perspective, each person agreeing to suspend judgment so she or he can actively listen to what each person is sharing. In moving from evaluation to recommendation, time is spent by the group trying to identify areas of agreement and disagreement, as well as new alternatives that have emerged through the sharing. Individuals in the group then need to move away from their own first preference and begin to examine which alternatives are most viable and have the greatest commitment.

Consensus does not imply unanimity (that is, everyone's first choice), but it does indicate substantial commitment to the chosen direction (that is, a direction to which everyone is sufficiently committed). In working towards consensus, various process tools are available to assist groups in determining which alternative has the greatest underlying commitment. In the end, however, it is the group that must decide if, in fact, there is enough consensus to move in a particular direction. The process can be time consuming but the commitment generated can be significant. No group is able to reach consensus on every issue. In the end, it may be impossible to reach a consensus. In that case, the group needs either to stand behind the potentially divisive decision or decide that it would be better to defer the decision until a consensus can be reached.

Summary

No matter which model is used for consultation and even when all parties are committed to working by consensus, conflicts can arise over personalities, leadership styles and final decisions. In the spirit of Matthew 18:15-19, the church is committed to prayer, respecting each person and discerning God's will. Voting may be an option for issues with little conflicting emotion. Consensus assures prayer, that each person is heard, and that the group supports the final conclusion on issues that could be divisive and need time, thought and reflection. Discernment can be personal (as in a vocation choice) or communal (as in membership on the Pastoral Council) and also requires prayer, time, and sharing. Tools for consensus and discernment are available from the Diocese.

VI. INTEGRATING PARISH CONSULTATIVE STRUCTURES

As it is the responsibility of the Bishop to create structures for the Diocese, so it is the responsibility of the pastor to determine the consultative structures of the parish. The pastor should carry out this responsibility mindful of the provisions of canon law, Diocesan guidelines, and the history of the parish's organizational structures. In modifying or enhancing parish organizational structures, the pastor should consult parish leadership.

Each parish will vary its consultative structures to respond to the unique identity of the parish. No matter what structures are used, it is important that the work of these groups take place in a coordinated and integrated manner in the spirit of prayer, awareness of God's presence, and trust. Integration provides for better communication, enhanced efficiency, and a greater spirit of collaboration among all those involved in the work of consultative bodies. Integration can be achieved in the following ways:

- By creating levels of consultative bodies;
- By having groups relate to positions in the executive structure; or
- By developing a planning process in which all groups work collaboratively given their roles and responsibilities.

Whatever integrating mechanism is used, the principal of subsidiarity should be maintained. Sharing of responsibility demands sharing of authority in proportion to the delegated responsibility. When a potential decision requires the support of the whole parish, all the appropriate parish leadership must be involved. However, when an issue falls within the scope of a delegated responsibility, with limited impact on any other aspect of parish life a recommendation can be made directly to the pastor by the responsible group. Obviously, the pastor needs to provide guidance to the various consultative structures regarding which matters should be brought before one of the councils or commissions.

Integration through Levels of Consultative Structures

Integration of parish structures can take place through levels of accountability, through executive structure, or through a planning process.

Organizational integration can be realized by placing commissions and councils in a hierarchical relationship to each other with various levels of accountability (e.g., commissions subordinate to the pastoral council). This is the most traditional way of integrating the groups. It is easily understood and easily communicated.

This method of integration, however, has drawbacks of placing some councils and commissions in subordinate roles to others and thereby minimizing the sense of empowerment the participants feel in carrying out the mission of the parish. With this method, pastoral council members are often assigned as liaisons to various commissions to ensure communication, with the result that the role of staff is less defined.

In addition, unless there is trust in the competence and ability of a commission, very often issues are passed up through the hierarchy to the pastoral council, so that issues which were

already adequately examined by the subordinate group are needlessly re-stated and re-heard.

Integration through the Executive Structure

Another way of achieving integration is by having all the councils and commissions relate directly to the pastor or his delegated staff person. The pastor and staff ensure coordination and communication among the various structures. For instance, the pastoral council would relate to the pastor, the Christian formation commission would advise the pastoral assistant responsible for religious education, the social justice/human concerns commission would advise the justice and peace coordinator, etc. This method does not subordinate any council or commission but views them as working collaboratively together with the pastor. This method requires excellent communication and coordination among the pastor and his staff as well as trust between the consultative and executive structures.

Although all Church governance is based on an attitude of trust and a theology of communion, this method requires from the pastor and staff an even greater spirit and model of service. If trust is not present, the groups will perceive themselves as being “run by the staff.” This model of integration also requires a very clear understanding of the distinctions between the consultative role of the councils/commissions and the executive role of parish staff. On the other hand, where it has been effective, this model can be a vibrant witness of shared responsibility for the whole parish.

Integration through a Planning Process

Integrating the work of consultative structures can take place through a planning process where each group is seen as having a unique role and responsibility toward a common goal: an integrated parish plan for ministry and administration. Using this method of integration, an overall planning process is developed with the responsibility of each group established and clear timeframes determined. Periodic meetings of the leaders of these bodies and other parish organizations are set. Systems for communication are developed and the leaders of the various councils and commissions meet regularly to coordinate their work.

In using this method, it is not necessary to set up hierarchical relationships among groups. Because there is a common focus—the ongoing planning cycle—there is not such a burden on the pastor and staff to serve as the integrating factor. This model, however, requires experience and expertise and therefore may initially require outside assistance. Ongoing training for the members of councils and commissions, and particularly for new members, is essential.

VII. CONSULTATIVE STRUCTURES IN EXCEPTIONAL SITUATIONS

For some parishes in the Diocese, the structures described in the previous guidelines may be inappropriate. Some parishes have special needs or unique qualities, which mitigate against having such structures. For example, many rural missions and some smaller parishes have too few people involved in leadership to support such an organizational structure. Other communities have found other more effective structures for expressing shared responsibilities. However, it is expected that all parishes have pastoral and finance councils.

Rather than following in detail the guidelines for consultative structures in this document, these communities should study the policies and guidelines presented in the first section and, in the spirit of communion, create meaningful structures for their community's life. In order to continue to build on our experience, it is of paramount importance that these communities communicate with the Bishop about the structures that are used.

VIII. CONSULTATIVE STRUCTURES DURING PASTORAL TRANSITION

The parish staff, pastoral council and other structures provide much needed stability for the parish during a change of pastors. Pastors are strongly encouraged to recognize and respect these structures and to resist altering them or parish policies significantly, at least in the first year, except in extraordinary situations.

Parishes are exhorted to be flexible in adapting to the leadership style of newly appointed pastors. The parish's transition team in collaboration with the pastor, staff and the members of the consultative structures of the parish should work collaboratively during times of re-organization with the mission of the parish as the primary value in structuring the parish.

Consultative Leadership – Policy 14.

A transition process, provided by the Bishop, is required whenever a parish or faith community experiences a transition in pastoral leadership.

Purpose of the Transition Process - The transition process serves the following functions. 1) To celebrate and give thanks for the ministry of the outgoing pastor. 2) To welcome and orient the incoming pastor. 3) To communicate with and involve the larger faith community. 4) To assist the community in moving forward following a difficult or sudden pastoral transition.

Role of the Transition Team - During the time of a pastor's transition, the Office of the Bishop will work with the outgoing pastor to form an ad-hoc transition team. The transition team consists of members selected from both the formal and informal leadership of the parish.

The parish's pastoral council in collaboration with the parish staff, the finance council, and commissions will work with the Diocesan Office of the Bishop to gather together as a group that reflects the diversity of the community in order to develop and implement an effective transition plan. The sitting Finance and Pastoral Councils will remain for 6 months, during which time the new pastor/administrator determines whether they will complete their terms, or, be replaced.

APPENDIX A: A VISION OF SHARED RESPONSIBILITY—THEOLOGICAL CONTEXT OF DIOCESAN AND PARISH CONSULTATIVE STRUCTURES

Trinitarian Life-in-Communion

In the vision of the Vatican Council, the church, in Christ, is “in the nature of a sacrament—a sign and instrument, that is, of communion with God and of unity among all men” (LG, 1). Sharing the life of the triune God through God’s Spirit, the church seeks to preserve the gift of unity through the bond of peace. As St. Paul counseled the Corinthians, unity presumes and mediates diversity: “There are different kinds of spiritual but one Spirit, there are different forms of service but the same Lord, there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone” (1 Cor. 12:4-5). Rooted in the Trinitarian life of three persons and one God, the church is a sign of the life that is shared through love in ways that are both equal and diverse. The vision of a communion of three persons and one God grounds the church’s way of being in the world. This especially shows in her respect for the dignity of each person, the importance of subsidiarity, and the need for consultative leadership and shared responsibility for mediating the common good.

God’s Self-Communication through Grace

Grace is the principle underlying Christian life, action, and mission.

To understand the Church implies an understanding of the theology of grace. Grace is both God’s self-communication to humanity and the effects of that communication. This theological understanding of grace is grounded in the New Testament perspective that the human community and the entire world is oriented toward Christ and sustained by Him.

The grace of Jesus Christ and the power and wisdom of the Holy Spirit are present throughout the entire life of the Church. Thus grace is the principle and the power underlying Christian life, action, and mission. The grace of God, not earthly wisdom, guides its conduct. It is through grace that inclusion of all God’s people is possible. Grace also enables the people of God to assume roles and responsibilities, offices, and functions in the Church.

It is by grace that you have been saved, through faith; not by anything of your own, but by a gift from God; not by anything that you have done, so that nobody can claim the credit. We are God’s work of art. (Eph. 3: 7-10)

The Mission of Jesus: Sacrament of God-With-Us

Jesus has been called the “primal sacrament,” the Word of God in the flesh, the sign and instrument of God’s love and saving grace in the world. Through his ministry of teaching and healing, Jesus brought people to life and gave them reason to hope that God was with them. In the parables and miracles of Jesus the kingdom of God erupts onto the scene of everyday life in surprising ways. In the “signs” that he works, Jesus testifies that he is the one “sent from God.” In his ministry, Jesus commissioned disciples not only as witnesses but also as workers, people who assisted him and worked collaboratively with him so that all would have a shared responsibility in proclaiming the

good news and bringing people to life. The church serves as the body of Christ in our time, a sign and instrument of God's love and saving grace here and now.

The Mission of the Church, the Mission of Jesus

The mission of the Church, and therefore of the parish community, is to be a living sign of the self-communication of God. It is to be an incarnate expression of the mysterious reality of God's presence, love, and transforming power, which lies hidden in human life.

The Church fulfills its role in the world through the celebration of this mystery of God's presence and action in our lives, through a clear articulation of doctrine and theology, through its community life and, most importantly, through the transformation and conversion of our individual and social lives.

The mission or the work of the Church is to carry forward the very mission of Jesus Christ himself. Indeed, the missions are one and the same, for at its deepest level the Church is mysteriously identified with Christ, who said, "As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (John 20:21). All of our efforts as Church in the Diocese of Yakima should be patterned upon the ministry and mission of Jesus Christ and the Gospel shared by the Roman Catholic Church as a whole.

The earthly mission of Jesus was threefold: to proclaim the Good News of God's saving love for all people, to establish a prayerful community of believers, whose many members are motivated by the same Spirit, and to give practical expression to the Gospel's law of love by serving the needs of others.

Baptism is the vocational sacrament for all members of the Church. At baptism each member of the Church assumes responsibility to carry forward this threefold mission of Christ in partnership with other Church members. Some of the baptized are called to serve the community as ordained ministers with special responsibility to preach the Gospel, celebrate the Eucharist and other sacraments, and to lead the Christian faithful. Others, collaborating with the ordained, also carry out the Church's mission of teaching, pastoral leadership, and sanctification.

Individual talents and circumstances differ; not everyone is called upon to fulfill this fundamental responsibility in the same way. The Church invites each person to contribute to the common mission of the Church according to the gifts that each has received (Romans 12:6-9). Through collaboration and respect for their shared responsibility, all of the baptized, lay, religious, and clergy, strengthen the bonds of communion.

The Parish: The People of God in Communion with God and with One Another

A theological context for parish consultative structures begins with an understanding of the unique character of the parish.

As it is impossible for the Bishop always and everywhere to preside over the whole flock in his Church, he must by necessity establish groupings of the faithful; and among these, parishes, set up locally under a pastor who is delegated to share in the leadership and responsibility of the Bishop, are the most important, for in some way they represent the visible Church constituted throughout the world (SC, 42).

For most Catholics, the most immediate experiences of the redeeming presence of God in Jesus Christ are through the family and the parish. It is within the family that the seed of faith is first planted, nourished, and sustained for many people. The parish community, as an extension of the family, is the primary means for providing resources for individuals and families to find community and live out the mission of the Church. As stated in *A Future Full of Hope*, “Most Catholics experience community primarily in the parish or mission, where we join friends and neighbors in prayer, celebration of the sacraments, and various social projects and other activities.” (FFH, 15)

However, the parish does not exist solely for itself or its own members but is called to minister to all those around them where they live. No parish is an island; no community of believers may pursue its mission in isolation from the universal Church. Rather, the individual parishes, which make up our Diocese are linked together in mutual interdependence under the diocesan bishop. The responsibilities of each parish extend beyond itself, to other diocesan parishes, and to the Catholic Church throughout the world. In the Catholic Church in Central Washington, all parishes are united with the Bishop as a single communion of churches in this Diocese. In turn, the dioceses of the world, through their bishops in communion with the Pope, the successor of Peter, form the Roman Catholic Church as a whole.

Parishes are called to be means of Christian transformation enabling people to live their lives in the world as the mission given them by Christ. A newer reality, which is also a return to the reality of the early Christian Church, is the nature of parish as a community of communities.

The Roles of the Christian Faithful in Consultative Structures

In Catholic theology and tradition, the hierarchy and the laity have specific, complementary and interdependent roles. The Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity from the Second Vatican Council states:

In the Church there is diversity of ministry but unity of mission. To the apostles and their successors Christ has entrusted the office of teaching, sanctifying and governing in His name and by His power. But the laity are made to share in the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ...Their apostolate is exercised when they work at the evangelization and sanctification of all people; it is exercised too when they endeavor to have the Gospel spirit permeate and improve the temporal order, going about it in a way that bears clear witness to Christ and help forward the salvation of men (AA, 2). Participants in the function of Christ, priest, prophet, and king, the laity have an active part of their own in the life and action of the Church (AA, 10).

The layperson, through baptism, is called to share actively in the work of Christ. To fulfill this role, the Holy Spirit gives to the faithful special gifts (1 Cor. 12:7), “allotting to everyone according as He will” (1 Cor. 12:11). Thus may the individual “according to the gift that each has received, administer it to one another,” and all of the baptized become “good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1 Peter 4:10). It is from the receiving of these gifts that each believer has the right and

the duty to use them in the Church and in the world for the good of all and for the building up of the Church (AA, 3).

It is the role of the hierarchy to make visible and believable the reality of God's presence and love so that the entire Church membership can carry out the Church's mission. The Bishop, with his priests, seeks to make the Church a clearer and more believable sign of God's presence, love and transforming power. They accomplish this by nurturing the realities of God, grace, and truth already present to and in people and helping to bring these realities to their fullness. In the words of the Second Vatican Council Constitution on the Church, bishops are asked to be "teachers of doctrine, ministers of sacred worship and holders of in government" (LG, 20).

The pastor is a priest entrusted by the Bishop with the obligation to fulfill the role of servant leader in a special way for faith communities entrusted to his care. The pastor preaches the Word of God, guides the faithful, and unites the parish community through divine worship (LG, 28). He serves as the central leader in the life and development of the parish. The pastor's role is an empowering one, expressed in its threefold mission of teaching, governing, and sanctifying.

The Church is the sacred sign of God's presence. A Church faithful to the tradition is one in which the responsibility for the mission of the Church is

shared by the entire body, not just the bishop or clergy in isolation from the faithful, nor the faithful in isolation from the bishop or clergy. The pastor has the ministry of empowering the parish community to carry out its task. The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church asks pastors to "recognize and promote the dignity and responsibility of the laity in the Church" (LG, 37). Consequently, pastors share responsibility for carrying out the mission of the Church through collaborative forms of decision-making. The whole body must be involved in the task to which it is called according to respective roles and responsibilities. In the absence of a pastor, the Bishop may appoint a deacon or a lay ecclesial minister to assume responsibility for the unity of a community.

Authority and Shared Responsibility

Two principles that receive emphasis in the 1983 Code are: 1) the authority entrusted to the hierarchy; and 2) the call for shared responsibility. This emphasis reflects the documents of the Second Vatican Council and in particular *Lumen Gentium*, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church.

The authority of the hierarchy and the call to shared responsibility are primary values that are linked to servant leadership and consultation.

Regarding the authority of the pastor, the 1983 Code of Canon Law states: The pastor is the proper pastor of the parish entrusted to him, exercising the pastoral care of the community committed to him under the authority of the diocesan bishop, in whose ministry of Christ he has been called to share, so that for that same community he carries out the functions of teaching, sanctifying, and governing also with the cooperation of other presbyters or deacons and with the assistance of lay members of the Christian faithful, according to the norm of law (CIC, c. 519).

Canon 204, which precedes a list of rights and duties common to all the Christian faithful (CIC, cc. 208-223), states:

The Christian faithful are those who, inasmuch as they have been incorporated in Christ through baptism, have been constituted as the people of God. For this reason, made sharers in their own way in Christ's priestly, prophetic, and royal functions, they are called to exercise the mission which God has entrusted to the Church to fulfill in the world, in accord with the condition proper to each.

According to their particular gifts, their state of life, and their office in the Church, Christ's faithful worship God in spirit and truth, proclaim the Gospel and care for the needs of their brothers and sisters in charity. Within this context, the laity are called to assist the pastor in the pastoral care of God's people and in the stewardship of the temporal goods of the Church (LG, 37; AA, 10; SC, 42).

A Leadership of Service and the Nature of Consultation

In the day-to-day living out of these two primary values, the authority of the hierarchy and the call to shared responsibility, misunderstandings and conflict can arise unless other values are embraced, namely, servant leadership and consultation.

Clearly, the responsibility for the mission of the Church is shared by the entire body with bishops and priests called to nurture the community's ability to be that sacred sign of God's presence in the world. In the same regard, laity who participate in parish leadership roles are also challenged to be servant leaders, enabling and fostering the participation of all parishioners in the mission of the Church. Pastors and lay leaders must always focus on using the responsibility entrusted to them to enable all parishioners to participate more fully in the life and mission of the parish.

Servant Leadership

So important is the ministry of service that on Holy Thursday, when the Church remembers the initiation of the sacraments of Eucharist and Orders, the central reading is taken from John's Gospel, the description of Jesus' washing his disciples' feet (Jn 13:1-17). The account of the Last Supper found in Luke carries a similar message:

"...the greatest among you be as the youngest, and the leader as the servant. For who is greater: the one seated at table or the one who serves? Is it not the one seated at the table? I am among you as one who serves." (Lk 22:26-27)

In business and government, leadership is often expressed by the ability to assert one's power and influence; pastoral leadership, by contrast, is a ministry of service. The Directory on the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops, promulgated by the Sacred Congregation for Bishops, May 1973, states:

"Authority is exercised in the best way—and this is something for which the bishop works and to which he trains his assistants— when, while insisting on the observance of law to safeguard truth and justice, the bishop at the same time stimulates and fosters corporate

sharing of burdens of labor among the sacred ministers as well as the religious and laity, all in their own way (37)."

Consultation

A theological implication of shared responsibility is that the laity share with the pastor responsibility for guiding the mission to which God calls the Church. In order for the Church to have the fullness of God's light and guidance, the laity need to be involved in decision-making through processes of consultation. Consultative bodies are a primary means of participation of the laity in the exercise of ecclesial authority.

Consultation, in the context of Church, is not a question of either radical democracy or constitutional monarchy. Instead, consultation and consultative bodies establish a relationship of communion whereby the Church, clergy and laity, attempt to listen to the Spirit who is leading the Church and speaking to her through gifts and experience, as well as through office and ordination.

According to Pope John Paul II, consultation and shared responsibility "should not be misunderstood as a concession to a secular 'democratic' model of governance but as an intrinsic requirement of the exercise of episcopal authority and a necessary means of strengthening the bishop's authority." (2004 ad limina address to the bishops of New Jersey and Pennsylvania)

These principles speak to the need for a different attitude or perspective when exercising authority and participating in Church governance. They challenge the entire Body of Christ to a new understanding of and belief in a theology of grace: that God is present and active in human life and that God sustains the Church as guide and helper. These principles call all pastoral leadership to a spirit of selflessness. They call all the Christian faithful to be responsible for the mission of the Church.

Diocesan and parish structures do not enter into consultation on core central truths of our faith or the clear teachings of the magisterium. Instead, the process of consultation essentially seeks the most effective way to make the Gospel and our legacy of faith come alive in today's world through shared decision-making.

Summary

For the pastor, the staff, and all the members of the community to work effectively together for the building up of the church, the following are required:

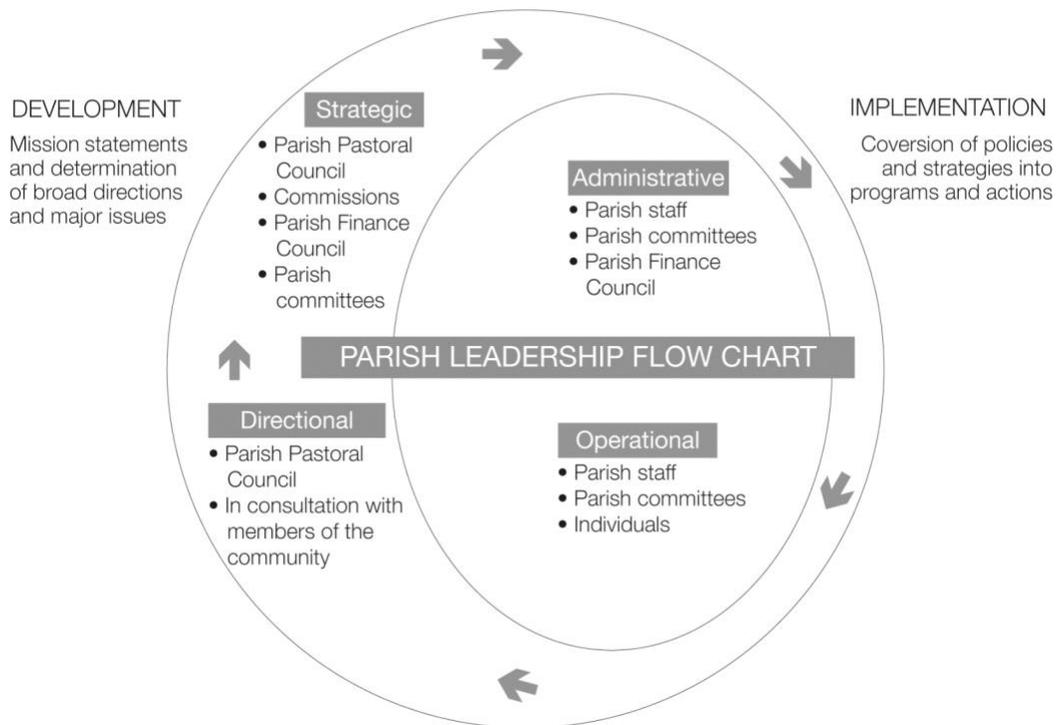
- Belief in the power of the Holy Spirit and the presence of grace;
- Belief that we are all called to share responsibility for the mission of Christ and the Church;
- Commitment to build consensus whenever possible;
- Mutual trust.

APPENDIX B: PASTORAL PLANNING PARISH LEADERSHIP FLOW CHART

While pastoral planning results in goals, policies, and priorities for the use of resources, the process can be applied to short-term programs as well as broad three to five year goals. Pastoral planning can be used by an individual in organizing her or his work for the month or by a pastoral staff as they plan programs for the year. In general, using the decision-making model, pastoral planning takes place in several areas as indicated in the following graphic:

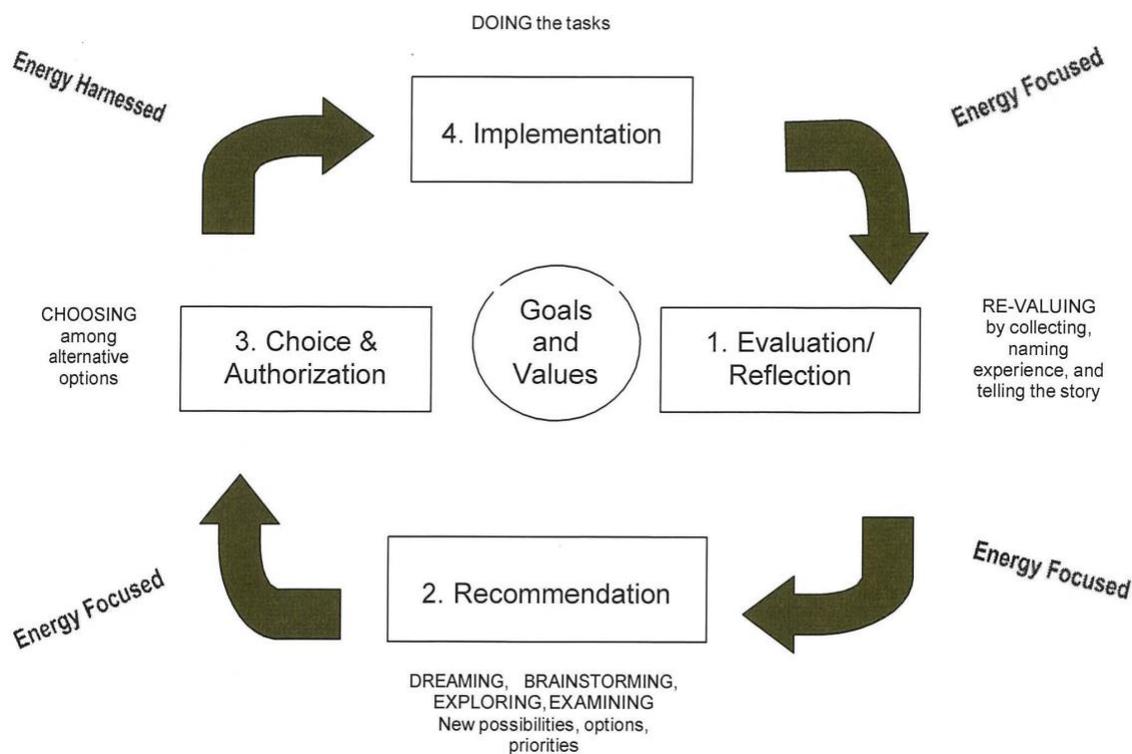
- Setting broad direction through the development of a parish mission statement;
- Choosing goals and strategies that are keyed to the mission statement;
- Establishing effective administrative structures and procedures;
- Planning operations (programs).

PASTORAL PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT THROUGH PARISH STRUCTURES



Consultative structures (e.g., parish pastoral councils, commissions, etc.) are focused on development—directional and strategic planning. The executive structures of the parish (e.g., pastoral staff, committees, etc.) are focused on implementation—administrative and operational planning.

APPENDIX C: EMPOWERMENT CYCLE FOR BUILDING COMMITMENT



Principles:

- Collective commitment builds to the extent that people share in the roles of the empowerment cycle.
- Commitment dissipates when any step is bypassed or people are unclear about a particular agenda item.
- The process leader brings formalization to the informal processes of the body.

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Step 1 – Evaluation/Reflection

Decision-making begins with Evaluation. Evaluations of the parish, the pastor, staff, consultative leadership, activities, liturgies, etc., are always taking place by those involved in parish life. Such evaluations are usually informal, random, unorganized, and unshared. In an effective decision-making process, an intentional and formal process of evaluation is undertaken. The first step in evaluation is to define the subject of the decision-making process. What is the issue, the question that needs to be answered? An effort is then made to identify objectively what the present reality is and what is happening now.

An effective parish planning process will include the following elements:

- A focus on values – how is who we are and what we do as a parish a reflection of encuentro and communion with the Lord?
- A review and possible revision of the current mission statement;
- Identification of the current reality (what is happening now) – trends, feelings, perceptions, assets, resources, finances, current ministries, organizational chart, and physical plant;
- Analysis of parish history and how it influences current reality;
- Evaluation of previous goals and objectives;
- Situating the parish issues within the context of the local civil community, the Diocese, and the wider church.

It may be helpful to ask, “What are the feelings and intuitions about what has been learned?” “Is the issue the same as originally perceived, or are new issues emerging which should be addressed?” This part of the evaluation process includes identifying trends, feelings, and perceptions: the experience of the reality described. It also includes analysis of what assets and resources are available to the parish.

Step 2 – Recommendation

Once an evaluation has been conducted, the next step is to develop recommended ways of responding to what has been discovered. This process begins by generating alternatives. Alternative ways of addressing issues can be found by researching what other parishes and communities have done in responding to similar situations. Original alternatives that meet the unique needs of the situation also need to be considered.

For a parish planning process these questions should be asked:

- Have the necessary needs assessments been done? Have we listened to the parish, to leadership, to the marginalized, the inactive, the local community, the Diocese, the larger church? Have the implications for various alternatives been explored? Have the merits and risks of each been fully understood?
- What is the level of commitment for each of the options? Have the parishioners participated in the discussion? Have the options been prioritized: Have the staff and parish leadership been involved?
- In light of our current reality, our history and our dreams, what is most important?

Once a wide set of alternatives has been generated, a critical review is conducted. This review should include a thorough examination of the benefits, risks, and implications of pursuing each course of action. Each of the alternatives is weighed in light of its potential impact for promoting identified values or hindering them.

Step 3 – Authorization

Once alternative recommendations have been developed and critically reviewed, conclusions must be drawn about which course of action is to be followed. Canonically, the pastor exercises the authority vested in him by the Archbishop to authorize the course of action to be taken. If all steps

in the decision-making process have been followed, this step should be the easiest. When a conclusion is authorized, it should include the delegation of responsibility for implementing the actions called for. Information should be provided about the resources available to those who will be responsible for the action.

For a parish planning process these questions should be asked:

- Are the recommendations clearly understood?
- How will the goals be lived out? Is the recommendation SMART: that is, Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Responsibilities identified and Time bound?
- Are the values and risks of choices presented clearly understood?
- Are the recommendations for goals consistent with the core values and mission of the parish? Are the necessary resources, time, personnel and money available for the implementation of the decision?

Once authorized by the pastor, the goals can be promulgated, communicated and celebrated by the community. Objectives and strategies are finalized.

Step 4 – Action & Implementation

Action follows authorization. Those who are responsible for the action should have a clear understanding of what is being asked and its relationship to the overall purpose and goals of the parish. Action is facilitated if there is careful attention to schedules and timelines and if there is regular and visible support of those responsible.

For a parish planning process these elements ought to be present:

- Do the implementers have the information, resources and authority necessary to carry out the goals?
- Is there dialogue between the developers and the implementers? Is follow up and feedback designed into the process?
- Are the strategies and objectives appropriately evaluated yearly and as completed?
- Do the implementers receive recognition for their accomplishments?

Ongoing evaluation is an integral step in pastoral planning. Additional resources, materials and support are available through the Office of the Bishop.

APPENDIX D: DEFINITION OF TERMS

Accountability - The obligation to carry out responsibility and to exercise authority in terms of established standards or assigned tasks.

Collaborative- To work together as a joint effort. A term used analogously to collegiality as expressed in the relationship of the Pope and the bishops.

Commission - A group that develops recommendations concerning strategic plans and policy for a specific area of parish life.

Committee - A group involved in implementation of parish ministries and programs that flow from parish priorities and strategic plans.

Communio - The church is a universal community of communities in which each member participates, worships, and bears responsibility to witness the Gospel.

Consensus - A process of decision-making in which the members of a group work to reach substantial, though not necessarily unanimous, commitment on an issue. This word expresses the spirit of communion within a parish community which seeks agreement on important issues that 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.

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.

Deanery - A geographic grouping of parishes designed to facilitate communication among the parishes, enabling the parish priests and representatives to voice the needs and concerns of the people of the Archdiocese. The 167 parishes and missions in the Archdiocese of Seattle are grouped into ten deaneries.

Discernment - A process which promotes a community's ability to seek the will of God in the life of the community. Communal discernment is not distinct from consensus, but adds prayerful reflection and study to the process.

Diversity - All the ways we are different. Includes: Internal - values, customs, history, personality, beliefs, place of origin, learning style, world view, sexual orientation, various types of disability, hobbies, habits, social & economic status, etc. External: physical attributes, visible, physical disabilities, dress, mannerisms, etc.

Encuentro - The intentional effort to bring people together to encounter the Lord and build up the Body of Christ involves sharing lived experiences, understanding those lived experiences in light of Gospel values, and taking action to advance the common good.

Goal - Statement of a desired end, stated three to five years hence. Goals should be written in specific and challenging terms so that they are recognizable when reached.

Mission Statement -The statement of the group's reason for existence, its purpose and philosophy.

Objective - A sub-goal to be accomplished in one year or less. It has the same criteria as a goal.

Participative - Sharing in, taking part in.

Participative Leadership - Leadership which calls forth involvement and ownership from those sharing responsibility as plans, issues and problems are addressed.

Pastoral Staff - The group responsible for collaborating with the pastor in implementing the programs and policies of the parish. Usually this term refers to paid staff, but, in a wide sense, it can refer to volunteer staff.

Policy - A guide for actions and decisions that articulate values and principles of the organization.

Priority - A preferential ranking of specific pastoral needs or goals.

Shared Responsibility - The principle that each member of the Church has the right and duty to assist the Church, offering time and talent so that its mission among humankind will be effective. The principle of shared responsibility received great emphasis during the Second Vatican Council.

Subsidiarity - A principle of authority whereby decisions are entrusted to the appropriate body and not assumed by a higher authority. Issues are dealt with and policies are established at the lowest proper level of responsibility and competency.