

PARISH

PASTORAL PLANNING



NOVEMBER 2009

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	3
History	3
This Document.....	4
PASTORAL PLANNING	5
The Purpose of Pastoral Planning.....	5
Who does Pastoral Planning?	5
How often should Pastoral Planning be Done?.....	6
Elements of Pastoral Planning	6
Prayer	6
Study and Reflection on the Nature and Mission of a Parish	6
Discernment.....	6
A Review and Evaluation of the Current Activities of the Parish	6
A Study of Needs which are not being Met.....	7
A Study of the Resources of the Parish.....	7
The Writing of a Pastoral Plan	8
Implementation of the Pastoral Plan.....	8
Evaluation	8
Special Considerations in Parish Planning - Assignment of Clergy to a Parish	8
WHAT IS A PARISH	9
A Parish - Christians in Community.....	10
A Community With a Mission	11
The Ministry of the Word	11
The Ministry of Prayer and Worship	12
The Ministry of Care and Service	13
The Ministry of Service In and For the World.....	13
Evangelization and Sanctification of the World.....	14
Works of Charity	14
Renewal of Society in the Spirit of the Gospel.....	14
Areas of Special Concern	15
Leadership Development	15
Welcome to All.....	15
Cooperation Within the Archdiocese	16
Ecumenical Outreach.....	16
Community Outreach.....	16
Resources of a Parish.....	17
People.....	17
Finances.....	17
Property.....	17
THE ARCHDIOCESE: COMMITTED TO SUPPORTING PARISHES.....	18
Assignment of Pastors.....	18

Table of Contents - 2

The Training of Deacons and Lay Ministers	18
Sacramental Ministry.....	18
Administrative Responsibilities.....	18
Pastoral Councils.....	18
Collaboration by Vicariates and Amongst Parishes	19
CONCLUSION	19

Appendix A: Missions

Appendix B: Area Vicariates

INTRODUCTION

History

The first parish councils in our Archdiocese were born in the enthusiasm of the Second Vatican Council. The Council itself had modeled collegiality on a dramatic scale and set forth a vision and a plan for the Church in the future. Parishes throughout the Archdiocese began to experiment with collegiality and lay ministry.

In 1969 Archbishop Dwyer established the first *Guidelines for Parish Councils*. These guidelines had been developed by Mr. Robert Gregor, then the Archdiocesan Director of Adult Education. Their vision of the mission of the parish and the unity of the ministries and roles became the foundation upon which most of the Parish Councils of the Archdiocese were built. By 1981 parish councils existed in the majority of parishes. They were preparing budgets, receiving reports from various parish commissions, committees and organizations and coordinating their efforts, and grappling with the difficult decisions parishes must make.

In the summer of 1981 the clergy of the Archdiocese asked that the guidelines be studied and revised in light of this experience and the official documents which had followed the Second Vatican Council. The study confirmed the power of the vision of the original guidelines, but surfaced some difficulties as well. Most councils had become bogged down in administrative detail. Coordinating the apostolic activity of the parish was consuming the council's time with endless reports from commissions, committees and organizations. Between this coordinating function and attention to the budget, little time was left for the study and analysis of parish life or long-range planning. Furthermore, professional lay ministry had burgeoned, but the relationship of the professional staff to the pastor and the parish council had never been clarified in a consistent way.

The committee charged with proposing a revision of guidelines came to several conclusions: 1) the principal mandate to councils ought to be long and short range planning with the development of a written pastoral plan, 2) the council should include the pastor, involve appropriate pastoral staff and volunteers, as well as people chosen by the parish to emphasize the collaborative nature of its work, 3) an administrative or finance council should be established in every parish in accord with the new Code of Canon Law. This council would relieve some of the administrative responsibility of the pastoral council.

In 1983, Archbishop Power promulgated a new Archdiocesan policy on Parish Pastoral Councils which required each parish to have a Pastoral Council whose principal mandate would be planning. Every parish was to develop a written pastoral plan. The name of the council was changed from Parish Council to Parish Pastoral Council, not only to conform to the terminology of the new Code of Canon Law, but to highlight this new emphasis on planning.

During the ensuing years, most parishes have made the transition from parish to pastoral councils. These councils have grappled with various means of pastoral planning. They struggled to fashion parish programs and activities which would give form to their vision and respond to the needs they discovered. Much of the vitality of parishes is the outgrowth of the planning by pastoral councils.

This Document

This document on parish planning was first published in 1992. Its purpose was to provide further direction to pastoral planning. Since that time, there has been a growing appreciation and understanding of the importance of pastoral planning. As a result, this document has been updated and is being presented anew.

Planning is important because the world we live in constantly changes. Neighborhoods grow and decline. Economic conditions can change dramatically, as we are currently experiencing. New cultural groups or immigrants can move into parishes. The resources of parishes, including its people and its income, also change. To remain faithful to its mission, a parish must respond to a changing world. Planning is a means of making such change consciously.

Planning becomes even more critical when significant changes are anticipated. The background history of the 1983 Policy noted the significant changes in pastoral life that had occurred during the seventies. The number of priests had declined while the numbers of professional religious and lay parish staff had increased dramatically. Some of these trends have continued into the present time.

In response to the declining number of priests, the Archdiocese has renewed its efforts to promote vocations to the priesthood. In recent years, there has been some promising increase in the number of seminarians studying for the diocese. In addition, the formation and training of permanent deacons has resulted in a growing corps of deacons serving the local church.

Lay pastoral ministry has also continued to develop. The Archdiocese is committed to the training of lay Catholic leaders, especially through ministry formation programs. There are now a large number of women and men working in our parishes who have many years of pastoral experience as well as professional and theological degrees. These professional lay pastoral ministers, along with the parish clergy and countless volunteers from every parish have provided collaborative leadership for the mission of the church. Lay ministry has continued to take different forms as needs develop, for example, many parishes have business managers serving on staff.

These and other changes make parish pastoral planning critical.

PASTORAL PLANNING

The Purpose of Pastoral Planning

Pastoral planning has but one end -- to enable a parish to faithfully and effectively fulfill its purpose in a changing world. The parish exists, as does the whole Church, simply to build the kingdom of God. A vision of the kingdom of God is set forth in the Scriptures, particularly the Gospels. Perhaps the most succinct expression of our part in bringing about the kingdom of God is the two great commandments: to love God with our whole heart, our whole soul and our whole mind, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. This is our response to God's prior and perfect love for us, made concrete in the incarnation, death and resurrection of his Son.

This revelation of the kingdom of God in the Scriptures has been further developed throughout the centuries by our Catholic Tradition. The vision set forth in the documents of the Second Vatican Council, and the documents which have followed, gives us a more concrete picture of how the evangelizing mission of the Church might be furthered in our time. Parish pastoral planning seeks to determine the best ways for a parish to fulfill its evangelizing mission.

Who does Pastoral Planning?

Parish pastoral planning is the responsibility of the Pastoral Council. (Parishes with missions present special circumstances. See APPENDIX A for a description of missions and their role in planning.) The pastor presides over the Pastoral Council as it develops and recommends pastoral plans for the parish. Appropriate pastoral staff should be involved throughout the planning process, but do not necessarily serve as members of the Pastoral Council. The final pastoral plan must have the approval of the pastor.

Although the responsibility for pastoral planning belongs to the Pastoral Council, it should involve others in the planning process. It is particularly important to include other groups with responsibilities in the parish. To the extent possible, it is good to include all the people of the parish.

The inclusion of others in the planning process is critical for two reasons. First, it is important to have a clear understanding of the actual needs of people, and the best way in which to meet them. Often the people with the needs, or those who have been working with specific needs have the best ideas about how these needs can be fully met. Second, people are the most valuable resource of a parish. Their involvement in the planning process serves to give ownership of the pastoral plan, and enthusiasm for its implementation.

The parish Finance Council provides a crucial service in the development of a pastoral plan. It must furnish the Pastoral Council with an analysis of the financial implications of the pastoral plan as it develops. It is the responsibility of the Finance Council to estimate the cost of programs and activities planned and to project the future income of a parish. It may also study the parish facilities to see if they can accommodate new programs. This information is essential for informed planning. A pastoral plan by necessity is restricted to the resources expected to be available.

How Often Should Pastoral Planning Be Done?

The development of a pastoral plan entails considerable time and effort. This effort need not be repeated every year. The plan should cover a three to five year period. In the years after a pastoral plan is developed, the Pastoral Council should evaluate its progress and make any revisions necessitated by changing circumstances.

Elements of Pastoral Planning

There are many methods of planning. Different parishes have been successful using a variety of approaches to planning. There is no desire to promote one method over another. However some basic elements should be a part of any pastoral planning process.

■ **Prayer**

Prayer should permeate the whole process of planning. Prayer gives voice to our confidence in the direction and guidance of the Holy Spirit, and opens our minds and hearts to hear God's word.

■ **Study and Reflection on the Nature and Mission of a Parish**

The mission of the Church, and of the parish, is not arbitrary. Our Lord founded the Church with a purpose. The Second Vatican Council elucidated this mission of the Church in light of our own times. The next section of this document outlines the nature of a parish and the elements of parish life set forth by the Second Vatican Council and subsequent documents of the Church. Council members should study and reflect upon the nature and mission of the Church and the parish until these become intimately known. The Council cannot change the nature and mission of a parish. However, it is sometimes helpful in a planning process for a Council to formulate the mission of the parish in its own words. This process helps to ensure that all the members share a common understanding of the Church's mission. These statements are often called the Mission Statement.

■ **Discernment**

Pastoral planning must always include discernment of the will of God. We believe that the Holy Spirit dwells within us with the gifts of wisdom and understanding. Through prayer, study and reflection, the Pastoral Council can begin to discern the will of God for the life of the parish at this particular time. It is important to remember that the Pastoral Council is not seeking its own vision to bring alive in the parish; rather, it is seeking God's promise of the kingdom.

■ **A Review and Evaluation of the Current Activities of the Parish**

Planning does not take place in a vacuum. Parishes already are engaged in numerous activities which promote the evangelizing mission of a parish. Often these enterprises express what a parish has judged to be most important. Any planning process must take stock of these current efforts. They should be scrutinized to determine how they fit into the mission of the parish, and how effectively they are accomplishing their purpose.

■ A Study of Needs which are not being Met

A comparison of the current activities of the parish with the mission of the Church may give some immediate indication of a lack of comprehensiveness in the activity of the parish. It may not be involved in community outreach or in social justice efforts. It is equally important to study the demography of the parish. Who makes up the parish? What are their ages, their cultural backgrounds, their economic status? What trends are under way? Is the parish population growing or declining, getting older or younger, becoming richer or poorer? In addition to this demographic information, the parish planners must also find out what the people understand their needs to be. This information can be obtained only by involving people. This might be done in a variety of ways--by surveys, by one on one interviews, or by listening sessions.

■ A Study of the Resources of the Parish

A parish has three fundamental resources:

People

The faithful who make up the Church are her most important resource. They are the "Body of Christ." "There are different gifts but the same Spirit, there are different ministries but the same Lord,...To each is given a manifestation of the spirit for the common good." (1 Cor. 12) In addition to the pastor, most parishes have a paid staff, some who share in the pastoral care of the parish, and others who assist in the administration. The years since the Second Vatican Council have seen a tremendous growth in the numbers of trained and experienced professional lay ministers. By virtue of baptism, every Catholic is called to some form of ministry. Most parishes in the Archdiocese are blessed with a wealth of volunteers who bring experience, wisdom, and commitment to the work of the Church.

Finances

Money is a necessary resource of any parish just as it was of the Church in the New Testament. Without a regular income, it would be difficult for a parish to accomplish its work. Insufficient income can limit the ability of a parish to fulfill its mission.

Property

The land, buildings, equipment, furnishings, liturgical art, etc., are essential assets which enable the parish to carry out its mission more effectively.

The planning process should inventory these resources, and evaluate how they are being used. It should also make some projection of the future need for resources, (i.e. additional personnel or volunteers, financial projections, repair and maintenance of buildings, capital expenditures, building projects, etc.).

■ **The Writing of a Pastoral Plan**

The planning process should culminate in a written pastoral plan. This plan should first and foremost consider the current and projected pastoral activities of the parish. And insofar as they impact and serve the pastoral plan, factors such as current and projected staffing, maintenance and building needs, projected capital improvements, and budget should also be considered. There are forms in the appendix to help describe the pastoral programs and activities of the parish.

■ **Implementation of the Pastoral Plan**

There must be a clear understanding of who is responsible for the implementation of the parts of the pastoral plan, how it is to be implemented, and on what timetable.

■ **Evaluation**

Planning must include some means of evaluation. An evaluation should answer at least these questions--did the planned activity take place and did it accomplish its purpose?

Special Considerations in Parish Planning - Assignment of Clergy to a Parish

Unlike the other staff of a parish, the pastor and any parochial vicars are assigned by the Archbishop. This is true also of a lay person assigned as a pastoral administrator in a parish where there is not a resident pastor. It is the policy of the Archdiocese for the Vicar for Clergy to meet whenever possible with the staff and the Pastoral Council of a parish when a change of pastors is anticipated. The purpose of this meeting is to review the pastoral activities of the parish, as well as any problems or plans the parish may have. This information is helpful to the Clergy Personnel Board, and ultimately to the Archbishop in trying to match the skills and qualities of a priest with the needs of a parish. In cases when a priest may not be available for assignment, the Archbishop, through his staff, will work closely with the parish to determine the best way to provide pastoral care for the parish.

WHAT IS A PARISH?

The parish forms an integral part of the Body of Christ. The Church, which began with the proclamation of God's love and the kingdom of heaven by Jesus, and his sending out of the apostles to continue proclaiming that message and witnessing to it with their lives to the ends of the earth, is called the temple of the Holy Spirit, the People of God, the Body of Christ living in the world today.

The Church has no other purpose than that of Jesus Christ, who came into the world to fulfill the will of his Father as priest, teacher and pastor (older models use the images of priest, prophet and king). This threefold description of the mission of Christ is helpful to describe the mission of the Church and of the parish.

The apostles functioned as priest, teacher and pastor in the communities of disciples which they evangelized, and since apostolic times the role of the apostles has been exercised by the Bishops, who are responsible for particular churches or dioceses as pastors or shepherds, and who together with the Pope as successor of St. Peter, exercise responsibility for the universal Catholic Church.

In each diocese, the bishop ordains priests to be his collaborators in giving a pastor's or shepherd's care to the people of God. Priests exercise this function primarily as pastors of parishes. They share the bishop's responsibility to preach the word of God as it is written in the Bible and handed down in the tradition of the Church, in celebrating the sacraments and especially the Eucharist – the Sunday worship of praise and thanksgiving to God for his gifts of grace and love, and in shepherding the people to live lives of holiness in accord with God's will as expressed in the commandments, especially the great commandment of love of God and of neighbor.

The program of every parish, then, is the mission of Jesus Christ himself - the proclamation of the kingdom of God, the building up of the Body of Christ as a witness to God's love and care for the world and the people he has created, and the invitation to every person to make of their lives what God has destined them to be. It is through the disciples of Jesus Christ – through the Church, that Jesus is reconciling the world to God. It is through the Church that he is weaning the world away from sin, and setting it on its true and proper course to be a consecrated and holy people. The people of God, through the gifts bestowed upon them by the Holy Spirit, make the love of God a lived reality in the world.

Hence the Church, and each of its parishes, will have both a spiritual aspect and an institutional aspect. The spiritual is the intangible interchange of God's grace and our response, which lead us to holiness of life. The institutional aspect is the organization of services to meet the needs of parishioners and to help them become a sign of God's love for the world in which we live. This Church, with its institutional and spiritual dimensions, is led by the Holy Spirit on its pilgrim journey through history to the fulfillment of God's saving plan for humanity.

A Parish - Christians in Community

The Code of Canon Law defines the parish as "A definite community of the Christian faithful established on a stable basis within a particular church" (diocese). It is normally established as a territory within the diocese but may be formed on another basis as well, such as language, nationality, or a community with a particular affinity (such as a university). The emphasis on community is an important one, and helps to balance an individualistic approach to religion and Christianity which can be prevalent in our culture today. The emphasis on community highlights both the communion and the mission of the Church. These two elements together comprise the focus of attention for parish planning.

When we are baptized, we are incorporated into the mystical Body of Jesus Christ -the Church. Adults who are baptized will experience this moment of grace and union with God as an intense moment of conversion and closeness to Jesus Christ. At the same time, the interaction between the individual Christian and God opens us up to membership in the community of the disciples of Jesus, the Church. As Church we celebrate the gifts God has given us in worship and praise. We are renewed by the proclamation of his holy word in the Scriptures and are continually called to grow in holiness. We are challenged to seek out the ways of loving service in imitation of Christ, for the sake of building up his kingdom in the world.

The Church began with the proclamation of God's love and the Kingdom of heaven by Jesus.

Through baptism we become members of the Catholic Church - the word Catholic means universal. Living out the Christian life according to God's plan in word and sacrament and loving service of others requires that we do this as a community of believers. For this reason the community of believers worldwide is divided into particular churches, or dioceses, under the pastoral care of a bishop. The bishop in turn confides the pastoral care of specific communities to pastors.

The parish community therefore is intimately linked with the diocesan community and its bishop, and with the universal Church, which is made up of all the particular churches and presided over by the Pope, the Bishop of Rome. It is the responsibility of the bishop to provide for the most suitable pastoral care of all the people of the diocese. The administration and pastoral care of a parish is entrusted to a pastor appointed by the bishop. The parish must also have a finance council to assist the pastor in the administration of temporal parish goods, and a pastoral council to study and plan for the pastoral activities of the parish.

Each parish is called to be the Church of Jesus Christ.

It is a primary task of the bishop to assist the people of God in parishes and other associations and institutions to fulfill their role of building up the body of Christ, of proclaiming God's kingdom in the world. He does this through programs of education and formation - of future priests, of catechists, teachers and pastoral ministers. He provides resources for the work of education, for family life programs, and for the sacramental life and worship of the people. He provides oversight by providing aid and policies which seek to ensure good management of resources, as well as ensuring conformity with the requirements of civil society and the law. He provides for guidance in special technical areas,

such as Catholic schools and the marriage tribunal. He promotes service to the needy and poor, often through special collections, or through the work of Catholic Charities and other service organizations.

The links between a parish and the bishop of a diocese ensure that parishes not become locked into a "parochial" mentality, in which a group of Christians becomes isolated or an island unto themselves. Through the celebration of the Eucharist and the links of the pastor with the bishop, the Catholics in each parish can be assured of their participation in the fullness of the Catholic tradition, since through their bishop they are linked to the College of Bishops - successors to the Apostles - in union with the successor of St. Peter, the Pope. These links ensure that Catholics remain within the tradition of word and sacrament handed down from the apostles, and guaranteed to the Church throughout the world by the assistance of the Holy Spirit as God's precious gift to ensure the fidelity of his Church to the evangelizing mission of its founder, Jesus Christ.

A Community With a Mission

Each parish is called to *be* the Church of Jesus Christ. It does this by fulfilling to the best of its ability the threefold mission of Christ as priest, teacher and pastor. This work, which Christ was sent by God the Father to do, has two key aspects. The first is called *koinonia*, or communion, and the second is called *diakonia*, or service. We as Christians are both the recipients of the ministry of Christ, and it is our privilege to be co-ministers with him in bringing the service of God's love through word and sacrament and apostolic service to the world in which we live. Each parish is responsible for developing to the best of its ability - hence the importance of parish planning - this ministry of word, sacrament and service which it shares with Christ. In order to accomplish this pastoral mission of Christ, the parish needs pastoral ministers who will help to build it up for the sake of its witness and service to the world. Such pastoral ministers - priests, deacons, and lay ministers, both professional and volunteer, will respond to the needs of the mission of the parish and serve as the primary resources in fulfilling that mission.

■ **The Ministry of the Word**

The Word of God creates and informs the Christian community. The faithful must hear the Gospel proclaimed and be instructed in the truths of the faith. The Gospel is proclaimed regularly in the preaching that takes place on Sundays and holy days, at weekday liturgies and the celebration of the Sacraments. From time to time the proclamation of the Word takes place during a parish mission, retreat or revival.

In the beginning was the Word.

Jn 1:1

The ministry of the Word includes the entire area of religious education, both sacramental preparation and religious instruction. Parishes are expected to provide sacramental preparation, and to follow the archdiocesan policies for sacramental preparation. Parishes should have a sacramental preparation program for children approaching the sacrament of Penance and First Holy Communion. These programs should take place in the parish and involve the families of the children. The parish should provide a Confirmation program for young people receiving this sacrament of initiation. Adults also need preparation

for the sacraments. Each parish should have an adult catechumenate and a program for candidates seeking full communion with the Catholic Church. Couples entering marriage should be provided with preparation to celebrate the sacrament of marriage and enter family life. Parents of children who are to be baptized should be given catechesis about the sacrament and Christian life. Sometimes it is useful for parishes to join together in some of the sacramental preparation or to use other resources, such as Engaged Encounter, as part of the preparation for sacraments.

Besides the preparation for sacraments there should be ongoing catechesis and faith formation. Every parish should have a regular faith formation program for children and young people. In parishes with schools this education is part of the school curriculum. However, the parish also needs to provide adequate instruction for children who are not attending the school.

The Church has no other purpose than that of Jesus Christ . . . as priest, teacher, and pastor.

Adults also need the continuing nourishment of the Word of God. Every parish should provide for study of the Scriptures and the Catholic faith. Adult education seminars, study and discussion groups, adult faith formation classes as well as talks are among the ways parishes provide educational opportunities for their members. The parish should foster programs which nourish spiritual development, further the understanding of the teachings of the Church, inspire moral growth, promote the Gospel of life and support social justice activities.

The educational efforts of a parish must not forget the needs of the disabled or those whose first language is not English. It must also take into account cultural differences among the people of the parish and to the extent possible provide opportunities for all.

■ The Ministry of Prayer and Worship

The Eucharist must be the center of the life of the parish. The hearing of the Word of God gathers the Church and prepares it to celebrate the mystery of redemption. The Eucharist expresses and brings about our communion with Christ, with one another and with all of the saints. It nourishes the faithful so that they may live the call of baptismal ministry in the service of one another. The parish community also celebrates the other sacraments of the Church. The parish must see that these sacraments are celebrated well and in accordance with the liturgical norms of the Church. Particular emphasis should be placed on the communal celebration of the sacraments where it is called for and on the full participation of people during the sacramental celebration.

People should be trained for the liturgical ministries called for in the liturgical documents. Particular attention should be given to music and the physical environment of worship. The liturgical celebrations of the parish should take into account the different cultures which might exist within the parish. The contributions of different cultures to the worship of the parish can add richness to the liturgy and express the universality of the Church.

The parish should also promote prayer and devotion among Catholics. Some parishes

provide Eucharistic devotions or the Liturgy of the Hours. Many parishes have prayer groups which meet regularly for prayer and praise. Parishes sponsor retreats, days of recollections, missions and revivals. Parishes should provide instruction and materials to foster family prayer.

■ **The Ministry of Care and Service**

By Baptism every Christian is called to service. The parish should be a community which provides support for its members who are suffering or are in need. Pastoral care within the parish includes care of the sick and dying, care for the poor, the afflicted, the lonely, the outcasts. It includes support for those who are suffering or facing difficulties.

Many parishes are well organized for service and support of parishioners. Youth ministry and family life ministry are common in parishes. Lay ministers and others regularly visit the sick and bring them Communion. Some parishes organize meals for funerals, and others have grief groups for those who have lost family members.

Some parishes are organized to provide emergency service for parishioners who are poor or have faced some personal disaster. Other parishes provide counseling services for troubled marriages or family problems.

There are countless human needs among parishioners. Each parish should ascertain how best to enable the ministry of care and service within the parish.

■ **The Ministry of Service In and For the World**

The first three aspects of the mission of a parish serve principally to nurture the faith of the parish community and the individuals who belong to it. However, it is clear from the gospels and our tradition that we are a missionary Church. The Church is called to go beyond itself and bring the Good News to others. The Gospel demands that Christians reach out to all those around them, particularly those on the margins of society, with compassion and a thirst for justice. The nurturing of the parish community by the ministries of the word, prayer and worship, and care and service equip it for this missionary work. Until the parish and individuals within the parish are engaged in service in and for the world, the other ministries have not come to their full fruition. It is often easy for a parish to become absorbed with the needs of its own parishioners. It can seem that there are no resources left to serve those outside the parish community. However, until a parish sees bringing the Gospel to the world as central to its mission, it is incomplete.

Christians are called as individuals to this missionary activity. They are to bring the Good News and the kingdom of God into the neighborhood and the public square. They should receive support from their parish community for this missionary work. Christians have often joined together in associations or organizations to accomplish this work. The St. Vincent de Paul Society is a fine example of an organization formed and run by lay people to promote the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. Many parishes in the Archdiocese have a chapter of the St. Vincent de Paul Society.

The parish supports its members in all of its pastoral activities in order to accomplish its evangelizing mission.

Evangelization and Sanctification of the World

The Great Commission in Matthew's Gospel challenges us to go forth and "make disciples of all nations," baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Oregon remains one of the most un-churched states in the nation. There is a great need for people to hear the Good News, which has changed our lives.

Catholics must develop a desire to share their faith with others. They must have an attitude of hospitality towards those who visit and interest in those who inquire. Most people who enter the church through baptisms were initially influenced by some Catholic, a family member or acquaintance.

Most parishes have inquiry classes to respond to those who show interest in the faith. Some parishes have developed other means to reach out to people in the community.

Works of Charity

Works of charity are a special mark of the Christian community-- "See how they love one another." The Gospels are filled with stories of Jesus' compassion for the poor, the sick, the grieving and the oppressed. Matthew's Gospel presents a vision of the last judgment in which the sheep will be separated from the goats. The judgment will be based on feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, welcoming the homeless, clothing the naked and visiting the ill and imprisoned.

By Baptism every Christian is called to service.

There are many in our midst who are in need: the homeless, the sick, the dying, the single parent, the unemployed, the abused, the addicted, the disabled. So many are in need of spiritual healing. A compassionate response to the poor and those in need should be a hallmark of every parish.

Renewal of the Society in the Spirit of the Gospel

The Church calls us to do more than simply respond to the immediate needs of people. We are called upon to change the very institutions, the social and economic structures which result in poverty, oppression or injustice. The Second Vatican Council draws attention to five specific areas where the laity are called upon to help renew society: marriage and family life, the economy, political activity, the culture, and promoting peace.

By virtue of baptism, all Christians have a responsibility to bring their faith into the world – especially into the arena of politics, the public square and the culture.

The renewal of society is often a difficult area for parish involvement. It frequently stirs controversy and conflict. However, parishes have found it possible to come together, sometimes in collaboration with other parishes or groups, to address justice issues.

Areas of Special Concern

■ Leadership Development

Since the Second Vatican Council it is clear that one of the principal goals of every parish should be the development of lay leadership. Each parish needs people capable of planning and providing direction together with the pastor and staff for the work of the parish. Leaders are needed to assist in all the areas of mission and ministry of the parish. Parishes need lay leadership in every aspect of parish life.

. . . all Christians have the responsibility to bring their faith into the world

Parishes should challenge their members to live their baptismal calling. They should provide opportunities for people to use their special charisms as well as training, formation and support for the people who are giving service.

Baptism calls people not only to service within the Church, but also to apostolic work in the wider community. Parishes should take seriously the responsibility to encourage apostolic involvement in the world. Some parishes offer opportunities for people to examine how Christian principles can be applied in the workplace. Other parishes have encouraged involvement in pro-life activities, community organizing, political action, and advocacy. People of the parish should feel both challenged and supported in bringing the principles of Catholic social teaching and morality into the world in which they live.

■ Welcome to All

Jesus demonstrated particular care and warmth towards those who were excluded or placed on the margins of society. His actions challenged the prejudices and mores of society. His attention to the sick and the outcasts was widely recognized, to the extent that they even sought him out. The Samaritan woman was astounded when he asked her for a drink because "Jews use nothing in common with Samaritans" Jn 4:9. Jesus responded without hesitation to the Roman soldier whose child was seriously ill.

The early Church followed the example of Jesus and welcomed all who heard and responded to the gospel. When the Greek-speaking members of the church in Jerusalem complained that their widows were not getting a fair share of the daily distribution of food, the Twelve and the community of disciples placed seven men from the Hellenists of the community in charge of serving the food. As the number of Gentile Christians increased, they objected to the obligation to follow the Jewish dietary laws. These were foreign to their culture and placed a burden on them. In a general council at Jerusalem, the apostles and presbyters decided to "stop troubling the Gentiles who turn to God." Acts 15: 19.

Parishes too must be sensitive to whatever might impede any of its members or potential members from full participation in parish life.

Many Catholics in the United States are from diverse cultural backgrounds. Some are recent immigrants who may speak little or no English and feel like foreigners. Others have lived here longer but wish to preserve their religious, cultural and linguistic heritage for

themselves and their children. African Americans have lived in this country for centuries, but their historical experience here has been forged in the crucible of slavery and oppression. Other Catholics suffer from physical or mental disabilities which present some challenges to their participation.

Every parish must make the conscious effort to remove any barriers to participation. Sometimes these barriers are psychological. Racism and prejudice are sinful, and cannot be tolerated in parish life. More often ignorance stands in the way. The leadership of the parish may not be aware of the presence of individuals or groups within the community which have special needs, or if they are aware of them, they may not know what their needs are or what they can uniquely contribute to the parish. Other times the barriers are physical. The facilities may not be accessible to the physically disabled, or the physical environment may not reflect anything familiar or significant to other cultures. Language can also be an issue.

In its pastoral planning the parish pastoral council must look at more than simply removing barriers. It must seek ways to facilitate full participation. The Pastoral Council should inquire from the people themselves what their needs are and what they would like to contribute to the work of the parish. It should invite them into leadership roles within the parish. The goal of the parish should not be to assimilate minority groups into the dominant culture, but the enrichment of the parish by the celebration of different cultures.

■ **Cooperation Within the Archdiocese**

It is becoming increasingly clear that in many areas -- youth, family life, special celebrations -- our parishes are called upon to find new ways of cooperation and collaboration to make their work more effective. The Vicariates and other associations of parishes are especially helpful in providing opportunities for effective collaboration in pastoral programs and activities. Some parishes blessed with ample resources have reached out to other parishes in poorer neighborhoods with a sister-parish approach. This is an especially fruitful way of providing for the building up of the Body of Christ. Parishes must beware of an unhealthy spirit of competition; rather, we should all try to develop the attitude that whatever is lacking in one parish affects the whole Church, and whatever is strong and flourishing in a parish is a strength for the whole Archdiocese, indeed the whole Catholic Church.

■ **Ecumenical Outreach**

Thanks to the initiatives of the Second Vatican Council, our parishes are encouraged to develop cooperation with other churches and religious groups. Recognizing in particular the bond we share in baptism with many fellow Christians, our pastors participate in ministerial associations and our people work together with other Christians in programs to serve the poor. Often parishes join with other churches on special occasions like Thanksgiving or Good Friday in ecumenical prayer services. As a church, we should foster the desire which ecumenical opportunities encourage -- of hastening the day when all believers in Christ "may be one".

■ **Community Outreach**

Parishes exist within neighborhoods, towns and regions. Parishes have responsibility, together with other institutions and groups residing in an area, for the overall well-being of the

community. Programs such as soup kitchens and emergency services, and the participation of parishioners in the work of organizations such as St. Vincent de Paul Society, are exemplary means of ensuring the best example of Christian citizenship in the community at large.

Resources of a Parish

■ **People**

People are the most important resource of a parish. Most of the activities of a parish, from planning to worship to service, rely heavily on volunteers. Involvement of the people of a parish must be nurtured by the parish leadership. People should be invited, trained and given recognition for their work. Almost every parish has the need for paid staff in addition to the pastor. There is a large number of lay ministers working in parishes, many of them with advanced degrees in theology, pastoral ministry, religious education or liturgy. Most parishes also depend on paid support staff, maintenance persons, parish secretaries, bookkeepers, business managers, etc. These people are a valuable asset not only to the individual parish they work for, but to the whole Archdiocese. Parishes have a responsibility to see that its employees are paid a just wage and are treated fairly.

■ **Finances**

A parish cannot operate without some form of income. The income must be sufficient to pay for all the parish expenses. These include just salaries and benefits for all employees, maintenance of buildings and equipment, program costs, archdiocesan assessments, and contributions to the poor.

Good financial planning is an important part of successful pastoral planning. The Finance Council must develop strategies for raising income to a level sufficient for the parish needs, and at the same time limit expenditures to within its means.

The major source of parish income is the regular donations of parishioners. The people of the parish should be reminded of their responsibility to contribute to the support of the Church.

■ **Property**

It is impossible for a parish to exist without the use of property. The community gathers in a church to worship. Faith formation and education take place in classrooms or other facilities. Parishes need offices for the staff. Most parishes have a community center or social hall of some sort that often has a kitchen so that parishioners can more easily come together.

The property of a parish is not an end in itself. It exists to make possible the furtherance of the ministry and mission of a parish. Those who do the pastoral planning must study the property and facilities of the parish to make sure that they can adequately serve the parish needs.

The Archdiocese: Committed to Supporting Parishes

■ **Assignment of Pastors**

The Archdiocese is committed to assigning a suitable pastor to each parish insofar as possible. In addition to its effort to promote vocations to the priesthood, the Archdiocese will continue to work with religious orders to use priests that they may have available for assignment in parishes.

■ **The Training of Deacons and Lay Ministers**

The Archdiocese is committed to the training and formation of deacons and lay pastoral ministers. There is a steadily growing corps of deacons, and the Archdiocese is fortunate to have a large number of experienced lay ministers, many with advanced degrees, working in the parishes.

■ **Sacramental Ministry**

As a result of the increased workload upon pastors, parishes may want to examine the Sunday Mass schedule to see whether it would be possible to reduce the number of Masses scheduled on a weekend. The Code of Canon Law (Canon 905) states that priests should celebrate Mass only once during a day, but it allows the local bishop to permit priests to celebrate two daily Masses or on Sundays or holy days even three Masses (but no more) if there is a serious pastoral need. If a parish priest cannot be present for Sunday Liturgy, the parish must make every effort to secure the help of another priest.

The Eucharist must be the center of the life of the parish.

■ **Administrative Responsibilities**

The Code of Canon Law makes the pastor the administrator of the temporal affairs of the parish in addition to his responsibility for the care of souls. However, it requires that each parish have a Finance Council to assist him in this work. The pastor may delegate some of his administrative responsibilities to others. The Archdiocese supports the efforts of many parishes to alleviate the administrative responsibilities of pastors so that they can devote more time to sacramental ministry and pastoral care. These efforts include the hiring of business managers or administrative assistants, as well as the use of qualified volunteers from the parish.

■ **Pastoral Councils**

The Code of Canon Law also gives the pastor over-all responsibility for the pastoral care of a parish. It permits the bishop to require parishes to have Pastoral Councils to assist the pastor in planning for this pastoral care. Parish Pastoral Councils are mandated in this diocese. An effective pastoral council can be a great assistance to a pastor. The pastor shares his responsibility to provide leadership and care with the pastoral staff of the parish and with lay volunteers.

Under our present system, pastors have ultimate responsibility for parochial schools. However, the actual running of the school should be done by the principal within the budget and policies set by the parish and approved by the pastor. The amount of time a priest can devote to school activities will depend on the scope of his overall pastoral responsibilities.

■ **Collaboration by Vicariates and Amongst Parishes**

The Archdiocese works to facilitate the collaboration of parishes within vicariates as well as between parishes. The Archbishop appoints a Vicar to oversee pastoral initiatives on the vicariate level. Much collaboration occurs within vicariates. Priests cover for each other, assist with communal penance services and exchange pulpits. Many parishes share programs and in some instances staff.

CONCLUSION

It is the hope of the Archdiocese that this planning guide will facilitate the task of pastoral planning. It is further hoped that the information developed by parishes and their plans for pastoral care and outreach will continue to enable the Archdiocese to fulfill its evangelizing mission throughout western Oregon.

APPENDIX A

Missions

Several parishes of the Archdiocese have missions. Usually they were established because the size of the parish made it difficult for people to participate in the life of the main parish. Sometimes they were established in anticipation of growth which has not yet taken place. These missions are centers of pastoral care which provide a part, or in some instances, the full range of pastoral services and activities for a portion of a parish. The latter are what the Code of Canon Law terms quasi-parishes. They are able to fulfill the basic mission of a parish as described in this document. Frequently they have a priest assigned as the administrator. They may have Pastoral and Finance Councils, and the other structures and organizations needed to carry out the mission of a parish. These missions may have their own bank accounts and do their own administration.

Some missions provide only part of the pastoral services and activities of a full parish. For example a mission might have Sunday Eucharist but rely on the parish for religious education, or it might have some religious education but no sacramental preparation. These missions do not have enough resources to sustain all of the pastoral activity necessary to be a parish. They may have their own bank account to pay for the specific expenses of the mission. However, they have an obligation to pay their fair share of the general parish expenses. These missions do not have Pastoral or Finance Councils. However they may have committees which fulfill some of the functions of these councils for the mission. These committees are advisory to the pastor of the parish, and must work closely with him. Often they have representation on the Parish Pastoral Council.

Missions which are quasi-parishes are expected to engage in pastoral planning. This planning should involve some collaboration with the Pastoral Council of the parish. This is particularly important when they do not have their own priest administrator, and are the responsibility of the pastor of the main parish.

Missions which provide only some of the pastoral care should not do pastoral planning apart from the pastoral council of their parish. However pastoral councils must make sure that these missions are adequately represented in the planning process.

Some missions which are quasi-parishes may grow to the extent that they should become parishes. Canon Law reserves this decision to the bishop after he has consulted the Presbyteral Council. In other cases because of changed circumstances it may no longer be useful to continue a mission. If a mission is closed the savings and property revert to the parish. Only the Archbishop may establish or close missions (Canon 516).

APPENDIX B

Area Vicariates

To provide for better pastoral care and to promote common pastoral activity, the parishes of the Archdiocese are joined together in Area Vicariates. At the current time there are nineteen. They are listed in the Oregon Catholic Directory. The Archbishop may change the Area Vicariates according to the needs of pastoral activity after he has consulted with the Presbyteral Council. In accordance with the Second Vatican Council, the Area Vicariate is established to coordinate and facilitate common pastoral initiatives in the same territory or social region. With the help of the Area Vicar, the clergy, religious men and women, lay ministers and parish leaders in the Area can work together as a vital unit of the Archdiocese.

Canon Law specifies that the Area Vicar must be a priest appointed by the Archbishop. The Area Vicar must work or reside within the Vicariate. He serves for a three year term unless he resigns or is transferred out of the Vicariate, and may be reappointed. The Area Vicariate nominates a priest – or more than one priest, for the Archbishop's appointment. The clergy of the Vicariate determine the method by which the nominee(s) is selected, which may include the consultation of other people in the Vicariate, or their participation in an election. In addition to his first responsibility to promote and coordinate common pastoral activities in the Vicariate, the Vicar has other duties which are enumerated in the Clergy Personnel Manual.

Each Vicariate may organize itself in the manner best suited to promote common pastoral activity. The clergy of the Vicariate are expected to meet periodically, since some of the representation on the Presbyteral Council is by Vicariate. Many Vicariates hold regular meetings that include staff members of the parishes and people from other diocesan institutions within the Vicariates.

Different Vicariates have sponsored a variety of pastoral work. Some have hired staff (e.g. coordinator of youth ministry) to minister on a Vicariate level. Others have joined to support a ministry going on in one parish which benefits the whole area. Several have sponsored Vicariate workshops to train liturgical ministers or provide in-service for other volunteers. Most vicariates coordinate Penance Services during Lent and Advent, and publicize each other's activities.

