



# Pastoral Council Update

Pastoral Planning & Pastoral  
Council Formation  
Diocese of Rochester

Volume I, Issue 2  
February 2012

## An Opportunity for Learning and Networking: Diocesan Evangelization and Stewardship Day

Do the pastoral priorities of your parish or cluster include any of the following:

- **Forming** young and old as **disciples** of Christ?
- Helping your parishioners to embrace **stewardship** and use their gifts of time, talent and treasure on behalf of the mission of the church?
- **Reaching out** to inactive Catholics or those who have never heard the Good News?
- Becoming a more **welcoming** church community?

Come to this year's Evangelization and Stewardship Day:

**Saturday, April 28, 2012**  
**St. Catherine of Siena Church**  
**26 Mendon-Ionia Road**  
**Mendon**

After prayer and opening remarks by Bishop Clark, Sr. Donna L. Ciangio, OP, D. Min., will offer the keynote: "Welcome and Engagement: the Dynamic Duo of Discipleship."

Fr. Ed Palumbos and parishioners from Church of the Assumption in Fairport will share their insights and experience working with parishioners to share their gifts of treasure.

Sr. Donna brings both practical strate-

gies and a theological foundation for your parish's work in engaging parishioners in the life of the church—becoming enthusiastic followers of Christ whose faith spills out in generosity and in reaching out to others.

A Dominican sister of Caldwell, NJ, Sr. Donna holds a doctorate from Drew University. As the director of Church Leadership Consultation, she works to promote parish vitality, pastoral direction, leadership development, faith formation, and small Christian communities in planning with parishes and dioceses. Her articles have appeared in Today's Parish, Liguorian, CHURCH Magazine, and in publications from Crossroads, Paulist Press, St. Anthony Messenger Press and Ave Maria Press. Her latest publication is Open Our Hearts: A Small Group Guide for an Active Lent (Years A, B, C).

Evangelization and Stewardship Day 2012 is sponsored by the diocesan Offices of Evangelization & Catechesis, Parish Support Ministries, and Stewardship & Communications

See the attached brochure for registration information or contact Karen Rinefierd: krinefierd@dor.org, 585-328-3228 x1255 or 800-388-7177 x1255.



Can't make it to  
Mendon?  
Sr. Donna's keynote  
will be repeated in  
Geneva

The keynote "Welcome and Engagement: The Dynamic Duo of Discipleship" will be repeated on Saturday, April 28th at 1:00 pm in the Our Lady of Peace Parish Center, 130 Exchange St., Geneva.

This opportunity will be provided as a convenience and at no charge for those unable to attend the Evangelization and Stewardship Day in the morning. Registration is required. Please contact Karen Rinefierd: krinefierd@dor.org 585-328-3228 x1255 or 800-388-7177 x1255.

## The Parish's Two Consultative Bodies: The Pastoral Council and the Finance Council

According to church law and diocesan guidelines, each parish has 2 groups consultative to the pastor/pastoral administrator: a pastoral council and a finance council. When members of each group and parishioners at large understand and respect the particular role of each, the parish functions smoothly. If not, there may be conflicts or one group may usurp the functions of the other.

### The Pastoral Council

#### **Purposes:**

- To develop a common vision and purpose, actively advocate for the poor and the powerless, and to extend Christian commitment to the surrounding neighborhoods and communities
- To orchestrate a statement of mission for the parish community and become the reference point for activity in the parish
- To provide recommendations for parish priorities, directions and policies through pastoral planning for worship, evangelization, outreach, stewardship, etc.
- To promote communication, understanding, and collaboration among parish organizations and between the parish, the bishop, the diocese and the universal Church.

#### **Membership:**

- 7-15 members—at least 2/3 from the parish-at-large; 1/3 may be appointed by the pastor/pastoral administrator
- Inclusive of the demographic realities of the community
- One trustee is an ex-officio member

### The Finance Council

#### **Purposes:**

Advises the Pastor/Pastoral Administrator regarding stewardship of parish financial resources including:

- Assists in the preparation, presentation and review of an annual budget
- Conducts self-administered audits of internal controls and diocesan policies and procedures
- Offers advice regarding the results of regular inspections of all parish facilities, recommends repairs or replacements, and develops a plan of anticipated capital expenses to keep parish facilities in good working order
- Provides long-range planning for the financial and physical needs of the parish
- Provides and monitors an investment strategy for long-term parish funds
- Gives consultation to the pastor/pastoral administrator on financial matters that require the bishop's approval (acquisition, alienation, leasing, construction and renovation).

#### **Membership:**

- 5-7 members—appointed by pastor/pastoral administrator
- Expertise in accounting, business, administration, law and financial management
- Inclusive of the demographic realities of the community as much as possible
- One trustee is an ex-officio member

*“While the Finance Council has significant responsibility for the stewardship of parish financial resources, it is the role of the pastor (or pastoral administrator) and the Pastoral Council to discern the directions and priorities that will advance the mission and life of the parish.”*

*Parish Finance Council Guidelines, Diocese of Rochester  
August 2011*

*“Care must be taken to integrate the Finance Council into the consultative structure of the parish, receiving input from and providing assistance to the Parish Pastoral Council as requested; while offering advice to the pastor (or pastoral administrator) as requested or required. It is strongly encouraged that minutes of each council meeting be shared with members of the other council.”*

*Parish Finance Council Guidelines, Diocese of Rochester*

## Pastoral Council Communication with Parishioners: Best Practices

*To be an effective consultative group for the pastor/pastoral administrator, pastoral council members need to maintain regular, effective, two-way communication with parishioners.*

*Here are some practices employed in parishes and clusters throughout the diocese—hopefully, some will help you improve your own efforts:*

**Pictures of Pastoral Council Members Posted in Churches and on the Parish Website** — In order to communicate, parishioners need to recognize members of the council!

**Nametags for Pastoral Council Members at Masses and/or other Parish Events**

**Visibility at Coffee Hours** — Does your parish have a regular coffee hour after one or more Masses? One local parish ensures that at least one pastoral council member is present monthly for its coffee hours. These times are intentionally scheduled for the weekend prior to the monthly council meeting. Council members wear nametags, and parishioners are encouraged to share their questions, ideas, and concerns. These are then brought to the pastoral council meeting.

**Pastoral Council Agendas in the Bulletin and on the Website** — A way to inform parishioners about the topics being discussed at the council meetings.

**A Regular Council Column in the Bulletin** — Share an abbreviated version of your minutes, tell parishioners the pastoral priorities and goals that

are the year’s focus, invite their involvement in particular ministries or initiatives.

**Open Forum at Council Meetings** — While an open forum time has to be carefully arranged with a clear process and time parameters, if you provide a time and a method for parishioners to share their suggestions and bring issues to the attention of the council, you build their engagement and involvement with the parish.

**Town Meetings** — An annual gathering with parishioners can give the pastor/pastoral administrator an opportunity to offer a “State of the Parish” address as well as give council members an opportunity to get input from parishioners on specific questions the parish faces. It’s important, though, to plan carefully so that minor complaints do not overwhelm and discourage all present.

**Parishioner Surveys** — These need to be constructed carefully and with some expertise. A survey of parishioners—done in pews or on-line—can be a valuable component in assessing the needs of the parish, gaining parishioner input on particular directions being considered, and building involvement in the parish’s ministries.

**Annual Report** — Beyond an annual financial report to the community—coordinated by the Finance Council and parish administrative staff—the pastoral council can coordinate the development of a report focused on progress in addressing the parish’s goals as well as the successes and challenges facing each area of ministry.

## The Pastoral Council and the Parish Conflict of Interest Policy

*According to the diocesan guidelines for pastoral councils, each pastoral council member must be aware of and comply with the Parish Conflict of Interest Policy.*

**What do I have to do?** Each trustee, member of the pastoral council, finance council, or any committee with delegated power annually needs to sign a statement affirming that the person:

1. has received a copy of the Parish Conflict of Interest Policy;
2. has read the policy, understands it, and agrees to comply by it;
3. understands that the parish is a religious organization which, to maintain its federal tax exempt status, must engage primarily in activities that accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes;
4. discloses any potential conflicts of interest in writing.

**Why?** The purpose of the Policy is to protect the interest of the Parish when considering entry into a transaction or arrangement that could benefit the private interest of a trustee or volunteer of the parish.

**What if I have questions or concerns?** Talk with your pastor/pastoral administrator or business manager.

The Pastoral Council Update is prepared by Karen Rinefierd, Liaison for Pastoral Planning and Pastoral Council Formation in the Diocese of Rochester, for the use of pastoral leaders and pastoral councils.

Please direct all communication, including your ideas and suggestions, to:

krinefierd@dor.org

585-328-3228 x1255  
800-388-7177 x1255

1150 Buffalo Road  
Rochester, NY 14624

## Article to Check Out

“Seismic shifts reshape US Catholicism” :

- how and why the Church is changing in the north and east in contrast to changes in the west
- Generational differences in Catholic practice

<http://ncronline.org/news/faith-parish/seismic-shifts-reshape-us-catholicism>

## New Evangelization Website Launched

<http://spiritualpilgrim.dor.org/>

**The Spiritual Pilgrim: a Catholic Invitation to Faith** is an evangelization website created by the Dept. of Evangelization and Catechesis of the Diocese of Rochester. It is an invitation for people who are already searching the internet for a faith connection, longing for a spiritual home, or just wanting to know more about Catholicism. The site offers seekers a place to explore the way Catholics find Jesus in the Gospels, in the community, and in the teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church.

The purpose of **“The Spiritual Pilgrim”** is to answer some initial questions, then to connect the inquirer with a **person in a parish** for further conversation.

- Email the link to someone you think would find it helpful.
- Post the link or the videos on your personal Facebook page.
- “Like” the website.