

Pastoral Council Update

Pastoral Planning & Pastoral
Council Formation
Diocese of Rochester

Volume I, Issue I
September 2011

Revised Diocesan Guidelines for Pastoral Councils

The Diocese of Rochester recently issued revised guidelines for pastoral councils and finance councils as well as new guidelines for parish lay trustees and a parish conflict of interest policy.

The revised pastoral council guidelines went into effect on September 1.

The following are the **same** in the 2000 and 2011 pastoral council guidelines:

- **Every parish in the Diocese of Rochester is to have a pastoral council.**
- **Focus on the mission of the Church** — Parish structures (including the pastoral council) exist to help the community to carry out the mission of the church, namely to proclaim the Gospel, to form community, to worship, and to serve those in need.
- **The need to devote adequate time to council orientation and formation, including prayer and community building as well as to council business**
- **Composition of membership of the council**
 - * reflective of the diversity of the community
 - * 7-15 members
 - * Terms of 3 years, renewable once

- * At least 2/3 from the parish at large; 1/3 can be appointed by the pastor or pastoral administrator.

- **Role of the executive committee** (formerly called an agenda committee)

- * With the pastor/pastoral administrator, develops the council's work plan for the year

- * Prepares the agenda and designs the process for each meeting

- **Role of the pastor/pastoral administrator**

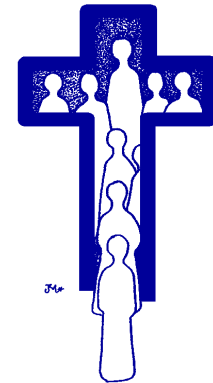
- **Officers and their responsibilities**

The following are **new** in the 2011 guidelines:

- **The purposes of the council are modified**

- * Addition: The council is to work with the pastor/pastoral administrator to develop a common vision for the parish or cluster. Critical to the work of every church is to advocate actively for the poor and powerless and to pay attention to the needs of surrounding neighborhoods and communities.

(continued on page 2)



Welcome to the first
issue of
**Pastoral Council
Update!**

My position in Pastoral Planning has been modified to include Pastoral Council Formation as well as support to pastoral planning processes across the 12 counties of our diocese. I hope to prepare 3-4 issues of the Pastoral Council Update during the coming year. I plan to include an elaboration of parts of the diocesan guidelines for pastoral councils, best practices, plus information on workshops and other resources in areas of parish pastoral priorities (e.g. evangelization, engaging parishioners, creating welcoming parishes, stewardship).

Your ideas are welcome!

Karen Rinefierd

Revised Diocesan Guidelines for Pastoral Councils (continued)

**“The Council’s
primary gift is
practical
wisdom”**

- 2011 diocesan
guidelines

***Is evangelization one
of your parish’s
priorities? Do you
seek more faith-filled
and actively engaged
parishioners?
Inactive Catholics
returning to your
community?***

- ◆ Send pastoral council members, designated parish staff, and interested others to the “E-van-ge-liz...What?” workshop on Saturday, October 22. Details on page 3.
- ◆ The diocesan resource person for evangelization is Mary Dundas, Coordinator of Evangelization and Sacramental Catechesis. She can be reached at mdundas@dor.org or 585-328-3228 x1243 or 800-388-7177 x1243.

- * Addition: The pastoral council works with the pastor/pastoral administrator to create a mission statement for the community and to monitor activity directed toward its accomplishment
- * Modification: As in the 2000 guidelines, the council provides recommendations for parish priorities, directions and policies, but the areas for pastoral planning are now explicitly identified: worship, evangelization, outreach, stewardship, etc.
- * Deletion: The role of the council as a sign and witness of unity for the parish community
- * The same: The council promotes communication, understanding, and collaboration within the parish and beyond to the bishop, the diocese, and the universal church.
- **A list of gifts, necessary for pastoral leadership, that council members should possess**
- **A clarification of the role of parish staff** — Parish employees are not members of the council but may serve as staff to the council
- **Practical meeting specifics**
 - * Agendas to be sent out in advance of the meeting
 - * The content of a typical agenda
 - * What should be included in effective minutes
- ◆ **Notice that members must be aware of and comply with the parish conflict of interest policy**
- **Information on what council members should do if they suspect fraud**
- **The relationship of the pastoral council to the finance council, committees, and lay trustees**
 - * Neither the pastoral council nor the finance council is subordinate to the other, but they are both consultative to the pastor/pastoral administrator
 - * It is important that there be good communication between the pastoral council and finance council
 - * All parish or cluster committees should be subordinate to either the pastoral council or finance council which needs to approve the committee’s chair
 - * One lay trustee should serve ex-officio on the pastoral council and the other on the finance council
- **There is no mention of local parish or cluster pastoral council by-laws or covenants**
 - * Be sure that the revised diocesan guidelines are shared with new and prospective pastoral council members.
 - * If your parish/cluster chooses to maintain its own covenant or by-laws, be sure that it conforms to the diocesan guidelines and is reviewed annually

E-van-ge-li-z What?



Join Fr. Frank DeSiano, CSP
of the Paulist Evangelization
Ministries
as he presents a workshop on
The New Evangelization:
Something for Everybody!

Saturday, October 22, 2011
St. Patrick, Victor 9:00 am—11:00 am
OR
1:00 pm—3:00 pm at St. Mary's, Bath

**What
Can
You
Do?
Each
Of
Us
Has
Been
Called!**

These workshops are intended for all pastoral leaders, parish staffs, evangelization teams, and interested parishioners who want to bring "NEW LIFE" to their parish.

\$10.00 per person (online registration)

Registration will open on September 12th

www.dor.org/evg

Sponsored by the Diocese of Rochester
Department of Evangelization and Catechesis
For more information contact Sylvia Mancuso
at 585-328-3228 x1295

Suggestions for Effective Pastoral Council Meetings

Value shared prayer.

- ◆ Begin with a substantial period of prayer and conclude with prayer. You may want to use the opening and closing prayers provided by diocesan Pastoral Planning and Pastoral Council Formation or you may choose to pray the Liturgy of the Hours or develop your own prayer.
- ◆ Remember to pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit as you discern the direction the parish or cluster should take.

Make sure you have a work plan for the year.

- ◆ Is this the year to develop a parish mission or vision statement?
- ◆ How will you set the year's goals or priorities?
- ◆ Will there be a retreat for the council?
- ◆ How will you communicate with parishioners to keep them fully informed and seek their input on important parish issues? A regular bulletin column? Updates on the parish facebook page? An annual town meeting?
- ◆ What education or skill development does the council need?
- ◆ Will you meet with the finance council? Arrange for the two councils to exchange minutes?
- ◆ When and how will you tap the expertise of parish staff members in their specific areas of ministry?

Take the time to craft worthwhile agendas for your meetings and to prepare for the meeting.

- ◆ Ensure that someone is ready to lead prayer and, if appropriate, that there are copies of the prayer for all.
- ◆ Be clear regarding the purpose of each item on the agenda—what are you trying to accomplish? For example, is the item designed to share information or help the pastor/pastoral administrator reach a decision?
- ◆ Select the most appropriate order of discussion so that the most important items are not left to the end of the meeting.
- ◆ Indicate on the agenda the amount of time allocated to each item.
- ◆ Make sure council members have the previous meeting's minutes (with action items and "homework" clearly identified) and the agenda of the following meeting well ahead of time.
- ◆ Remember that all council members should prepare for the meeting—not just the chairperson and the pastor/pastoral administrator.

Save the date!!

Saturday, April 28, 2012

**Welcome and Engagement:
The Dynamic Duo
of Discipleship**

Sr. Donna M. Ciangio, OP, Ph. D

