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Dear Sisters and Brothers in the Lord,

IT IS A PLEASURE to present and authorize the 2013 edition of the Parish Pastoral Council Guidelines for use in the Archdiocese of Washington. The archdiocesan Parish Pastoral Council Guidelines become effective Tuesday, April 30, 2013.

A Parish Pastoral Council is an important consultative body that comes together under the direction of the pastor to provide him advice and support for the good of the parish community.

These guidelines reflect the experience of the Secretariat for Pastoral Ministry and Social Concerns and its collaboration with parishes over the past three years in the implementation of a pastoral planning process using the Indicators of Vitality as well as consultation with the Priest Council and the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council. They are intended to assist pastors and parish leadership in establishing a new or reviewing a current Parish Pastoral Council to see how it can most effectively function at the service of the parish.

In this graced time, when we as an archdiocesan Church focus on the challenges of the New Evangelization and do so in the context of our own archdiocesan synod, these guidelines provide us an opportunity to reflect on the nature of the Church, our spiritual home, the call to a New Evangelization and the recognition that the parish is the place where most of the faithful experience the saving presence of Christ in the ministry of the Church.

All of us are mindful that the New Evangelization is not one specific action, but rather a way of seeing a whole range of activities carried on by the Church to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ.

To be sure, this work is underway in our parishes. Yet, all of us recognize that there is more to be done. Our efforts at passing on the Gospel call us to look deeper into the vitality of our faith as it is expressed and lived in our parishes and in the homes of the faithful.

The Synod on the New Evangelization affirmed that parishes, gathered in communion with their bishop and under the direction of the pastor, are called to be centers of the life of the Church. It said the bishops gathered in synod reaffirmed that the parish continues to be the primary presence of the Church in neighborhoods, the place and instrument of Christian life, which is able to offer opportunities to dialogue among people, for listening to and announcing the Word of God, for organic catechesis, for training in charity, for prayer, adoration and joyous Eucharistic celebrations.

My hope is that these Parish Pastoral Council Guidelines will assist pastors and parishioners alike in revitalizing and utilizing this consultative structure for a more fervent and vibrant experience of God's love poured out in his Church.

With every good wish, I am

Faithfully in Christ,



Archbishop of Washington

...THE PARISH IS THE PLACE WHERE
MOST OF THE FAITHFUL EXPERIENCE
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THE MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH.

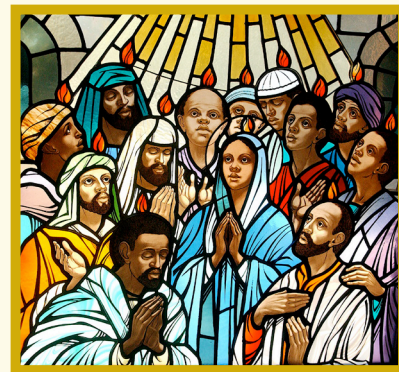
◇ INTRODUCTION ◇

The Church, Our Spiritual Home

CHRIST IS THE WAY. When Jesus first came among us, he offered us a whole new way of living. In the Gospel we learn that we have been invited to be branches connected to the vine of the Lord, to eat the bread of everlasting life and to hear words of truth, words that endure forever. This is the mission of the Church in and through the ministry of the parish. In his pastoral letter on the New Evangelization, *Disciples of the Lord: Sharing the Vision*, Cardinal Wuerl notes that Jesus gives his disciples, the people of God, the commission to evangelize that is, to announce this “Good News” to all the nations.”

In Christ, we discover not only a new way of living, through Jesus we are invited into God’s family. In Him, we become adopted sons and daughters of God. Paul summarizes it so well. “As proof that you are children, God sent the spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying out ‘Abba, Father!’ so, you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God” (*Gal 4:6-7*). The family of God has another name, and that is the Church. In his pastoral letter, *The Church, Our Spiritual Home*, Cardinal Wuerl writes, “The family of God is called his Church. Its members, those baptized into the Church, you and I, form a body with Christ as its head.”

This image of a body with Christ as its head is an important one to help us understand the life and vitality of our Church. In the Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, the Council Fathers chose this biblical theme of the Church as family to speak of the Church as “the people of God.” They emphasized that the Church is “not an abstraction or a mere human institution.” In *The Church, Our Spiritual Home*, the cardinal noted that the new body of Christ is made up of all the members of the family of faith who are blessed with the gifts of the Spirit and united as one body.”



The Church is the home of the Good News. What the Church proclaims about Jesus Christ is true. We can have confidence in our faith that comes to us in and through the Church. Our efforts at the New Evangelization—that is deepening our own faith, gaining confidence in the truth of that faith, and then sharing it with others—must include a clear awareness of the Church and why Jesus established this sacred means to carry out his work, a point the cardinal underscored in his book, *New Evangelization: Passing on the Catholic Faith Today*.

The Catholic Church is the enduring, visible yet spiritual, structured yet Spirit-led, human yet divine presence of Christ in the world today. The new Body of Christ teaches in his name, sanctifies with his grace and leads with his authority. One makes a free will choice to be a member of this Church and this choice should change our lives. In *The Church, Our Spiritual Home*, the cardinal points out that such a decision is itself a gift of God’s grace.

That pastoral letter also emphasized that Jesus established the Church on the Apostles and gave to Saint Peter a unique and enduring authority. Saint Peter and the other Apostles were mortal, but the mission given to them was to be carried out until the end of time (*cf. Mt 28:20*). Christ chose men as Apostles whom he would anoint in the Holy Spirit and guide as they taught and led his Church. They in turn chose successors through the laying on of hands and the imparting of the Spirit to continue this work. It is the Spirit, poured out in the sacrament of holy orders, who is the ultimate source of the bishops’ fidelity to the truth.

Today, as in the past, a temptation exists to treat the Church as if it were incidental to salvation. This theory places the individual’s personal convictions and preferences at the center. The pastoral letter on the Church notes that we do not belong to the Church to set within it our own path to salvation. We are members of the Church because we want to be shaped by its teaching and gift of grace. Christ founded the Church to be the gift to lead us to eternal life, and we redesign that gift at our own peril.



...and we assumed that were on the Web One

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The Vocation and Mission of the Laity

INCORPORATED INTO THE LIFE AND THE MISSION OF JESUS THROUGH BAPTISM, Confirmation and Eucharist, the Laity are full members of the Universal Church. Nourished in the Eucharist, lay women and men are called to go out into the world and carry the message of the Good News; in their homes, on the job and in the world.

The Laity in Baptism have been entrusted with a three-fold charism for evangelization. As members of the universal priesthood of Christ, men and woman are called to offer the daily activity of their lives to God as a sacrifice of thanksgiving—knowing that every gift comes from God. They are to make daily prayer a practice and live conscious that always and everywhere they are in the presence of God. Secondly, lay women and men are called to be prophetic, to give witness in word and in the manner in which they live to the Christian way of life. Thirdly, as a kingly people, the laity are people of hope. Assured of their inheritance, a share in eternal life with Our Lord in heaven the live confidently that God's kingdom will come, they work to make evident in charity the merciful love of the Lord, building communities where the dignity of the human person and the common good is nurtured.

Lay men and women are also called to give of their time, talent and treasure to the parish and to the local Church. In fact, in the *Decree on the Laity* promulgated at the Second Vatican Council, the Council Fathers wrote, "Their [the laity's] activity within Church communities is so necessary that without it the apostolate of the Pastors is generally unable to achieve its full effectiveness."



The Establishment of Parish Pastoral Councils

Diocesan Pastoral Councils

The Second Vatican Council recommended the structure of diocesan and pastoral councils as one way to establish a working collaboration of Bishop, Pastor and laity. In the Vatican II's "Decree Concerning the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church," it states, "It is greatly desired that in each diocese a pastoral commission will be established over which the diocesan bishop himself will preside and in which specifically chosen clergy, religious and lay people will participate. The duty of this commission will be to investigate and weigh pastoral undertakings and to formulate practical conclusions regarding them."¹ The Archdiocesan Pastoral Council which consists of lay members of the faithful and religious meets four times per year to provide counsel to the Archbishop of Washington.

Parish Pastoral Councils, the Code of Canon Law and Archdiocesan Norms

In the new Code of Canon Law, promulgated by Blessed Pope John Paul II in 1983, it is mandated that every parish have a parish finance council (*Canon 537*). With regard to parish pastoral councils, it is a decision of the local Bishop. If the bishop establishes parish councils, their purpose is to assist in fostering pastoral activity. The Parish Pastoral Council, over which the pastor presides, assists the Pastor in his pastoral planning for the parish with expert opinion and advice for the good of the Church.

In keeping with the organic nature of the parish as an expression of the local church, united to the Bishop, a pastoral council is not a decision-making body rather it possesses a consultative vote only and is governed by the norms established by the diocesan bishop" (*The Code of Canon Law, 511-514*). As such, the establishment and on-going work of

¹ *Christus Dominus*

a pastoral council is normative for parishes in the Archdiocese of Washington.

Responsibilities of Parish Pastoral Councils

The parish pastoral council is a consultative body for the pastor. Through reflection, prayer, planning, motivation and support, the parish pastoral council serves the pastor by helping identify and encourage those ministries or services that are needed for the growth of a living parish community, evaluated and implemented on a regular basis. Thus the pastoral council must carefully

consider the needs of the faithful and search within the community to recommend to the pastor ideas and means that will adequately respond to these needs. This responsibility of the parish pastoral council does not diminish the continued mission and responsibility of the parish as a whole. Each baptized parish member remains responsible in his or her own way for the mission of the parish. In this way, the parish pastoral council is an instrument to help the pastor and the parish better discern, clarify, and communicate its responsibilities for proclaiming the Good News.

The main objective of the parish pastoral council is “to promote pastoral activity that will help the parish achieve its supreme purpose, the salvation of souls.”² The parish council assists the pastor with discerning and achieving the overall good of the parish and its mission. The work is both contemplative and active. With the pastor, the council practices discernment. Through reflection, prayer, planning, setting goals and priorities it responds to the movement of the Holy Spirit in the life of the parish and to the Bishop’s pastoral vision for the archdiocese. In action, council members take leadership in the coordination, motivation, support, and evaluation of pastoral activities in the parish. Concerned with the overall pastoral development of the parish, the pastoral council will often serve as liaisons to the various parish groups or coordinate the implementation of specific initiatives at the request of the pastor.

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THE PARISH AND ITS MISSION.

² *Christus Dominus*

❖ PASTORAL COUNCIL POLICY GUIDELINES ❖

BECAUSE OF THE CONSULTATIVE NATURE OF THE PASTORAL COUNCIL, pastoral council policy is designed to be flexible so as to best serve the needs of the pastor and the parish. Following you will find in standard archdiocesan policy (*in red*) and best practices for the implementation of that policy (*in black*).

Officers of the Council

Pastor

The pastor or parochial administrator is the chair of the council. Since the council is his consultative body, he convenes the council. He recalls the council's goals and guards the vitality and dynamism necessary for its proper functioning.

Executive Committee

The council should propose names to the pastor to serve as an executive committee. The executive committee should consist of three or four members of the council who will meet with the pastor and develop an agenda for meetings.

Secretary

The secretary keeps the minutes of the meetings and prepared the document and reports and implements certain requests and decisions of the meeting. This person need not be a member of the parish pastoral council the secretary may be responsible for the finances of the internal business of the council such as refreshments, retreats, etc.

The Secretary shall be tasked with the responsibility of preparing a synopsis of the meeting tthat will be made available to the parish community.

Ex-Officio Members

1. Parochial vicars are ex-officio members of the pastoral council of the parish to which they have been assigned by the Archbishop.
2. Permanent deacons are ex-officio members of the pastoral council of the parish to which they have been assigned by the Archbishop unless otherwise stated in this policy.
3. "Senior Priests" or "Priests in Residence" shall not be ex-officio members of the pastoral council but should be extended an invitation to participate, as appropriate and at the pastor's discretion.
4. "Transitional Deacons", shall not be ex-officio members of the pastoral council but should be extended an invitation to participate, as appropriate and at the pastor's discretion.

Roles and Responsibilities of Council Members

The pastoral council as an important consulatative body for the pastor should reflect the face of the parish and represent the various pastoral activities that are carried out within the boundaries of the parish. The members of the council should be:

- ❖ representative of the parish,
- ❖ knowledgeable about the faith,
- ❖ committed practicing registered members of the parish,
- ❖ knowledgeable of the various programs, apostolates, and initiatives of the parish
- ❖ committed to the evangelizing mission of the Church.



Also, members should be chosen on the basis of their varied expertise in matters worldly, such as, family life, IT, marketing, teaching, facilitating, development, etc....Regardless of their varied cultures and occupations, members of the council should be the first evangelizers of the parish, that is, always prepared to hear and share the Good News of God's love with their whole lives in thought, word, and deed. Regardless of their varied cultures and occupations, this must be the unitive motivating principle of the entire council.

Consider the Composition of the Council

- ✧ Women and men of different age groups and civil status (married, single, widowed, young adult, senior citizen, etc.);
- ✧ People from different walks of life and different racial, ethnic, cultural and social conditions;
- ✧ People from different geographic sectors of the parish;
- ✧ Representatives from the religious men and women residing in the parish;

Role of Parish/School Employees

1. Lay Employees of the parish (either full-time or part-time) should not serve on the parish pastoral council.
2. Lay Employees of the parish school (either full-time or part-time) should not serve on the parish pastoral council.
3. Lay Employees of a school, (either full or part time) that participates in a regional school agreement, shall be allowed to serve on the a parish pastoral council providing said council is not under the jurisdiction of the regional school's canonical administrator.
4. Permanent Deacons employed by the parish (either part-time or full-time) in a position covered by the *Archdiocesan Employee Policies and Procedures* should not serve on the parish pastoral council.
5. Permanent Deacons employed by the parish school (either part-time or full-time) in a position covered by the *Archdiocesan Employee Policies and Procedures* should not serve on the parish pastoral council.
6. Permanent Deacons employed by a school that participates in a regional school agreement, in a position covered by the *Archdiocesan Employee Policies and Procedures*, wherein the canonical administrator of the school is also the pastor of the parish at which the permanent deacon has received his parish assignment from the Bishop should not serve on the parish pastoral council.

Size of the Council

Consultation and consensus building requires adequate time for prayerful reflection and discussion with every member sharing in the discussion. A rightful need for adequate consultation and efficiency suggests that a council not be fewer than six member and not exceed 15 members including the pastor.

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Selection of Members

The selection of council members can happen in a number of ways. The following methods of selection help to find people who are truly qualified.

Appointed Council

Once a year the council will identify the areas of concern for the coming year and the gifts and skills needed to address those concerns. The pastor and members of the council will develop a list of candidates from among parishioners. The pastor may choose to have the parish nominate members as well.

- ✧ The pastor will speak with each candidate and if suitable and free to serve on the council will appoint new members to the council
- ✧ The new council members will be presented to the parish at a vigil or Sunday Mass and their names published in the parish bulletin.

Selection of Representative by Parish Organizations:

Members of various parish organizations or heads of ministry may be appointed to represent the parish or may be elected from within their apostolate (with the approval of the Pastor) to represent the parish.

- ✧ As members of certain groups, they can share particular experiences with the parish as a whole through their membership on the pastoral council. These members would not be delegates of the various committees or organizations in the strict sense.
- ✧ The new council members will be presented to the parish at a vigil or Sunday Mass and their names published in the parish bulletin.

Election of Members

Once a year the present council will identify the areas of concern for the coming year and the gifts and skills needed to address those concerns. The pastor and members of the council may develop a list of candidates from among parishioners and the pastor will choose nominees for a ballot. The pastor may choose to open nominations to the entire parish. The ballot must always be approved by the pastor prior to being announced to the parish community.

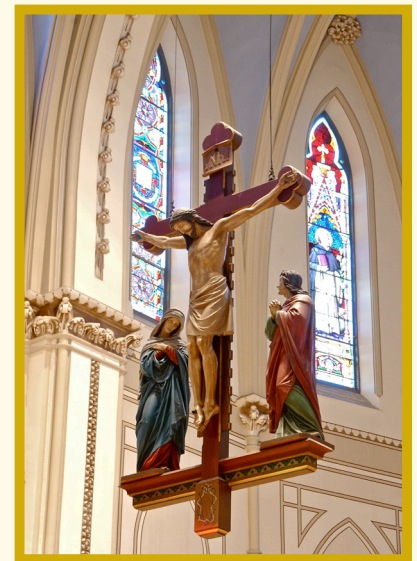
Ways in which elections may take place:

- ✧ A slate of nominees is named by pastor. Nominees are placed before the parish for a vote
- ✧ An election will be announced and the parish will be given an opportunity to select members from the ballot.

Length of Service

The term of office for each council member, shall be for a period of three years, renewable once. Thus a member could be on the council for six consecutive years with the possibility of returning to the council after an absence of at least one year.

- ✧ The pastor may appoint ex-officio members from among the parish staff. They are to be appointed annually or re-appointed annually. If elections are to be held, ex-officio members are not part of the slate.
- ✧ So as to maintain stability and efficiency, it is best that not more than one-third of the members be replaced within a one-year period.
- ✧ A person who is called to fill a vacancy on the council shall serve the unexpired term and may be re-elected once, independently of how long the previous member had already served on the council.



Vacancy

Where a vacancy arises because of resignation or some other reason, the pastor should appoint a replacement in a timely manner. The pastor may consult with staff and various organizations and should strive to maintain a representative balance on the council.

Change of Pastor

When there is a change of pastor in the parish, the parish council is dissolved. The new pastor may choose to reinstate the former parish council or proceed with the process of forming a new council.

Frequency of Meetings

As President of the council, the Pastor determines how often the council shall meet. It is recommended that the council meet not less than three times in a year and not more than 10 times in a year.

- ◇ Best practices indicate that meetings be scheduled well in advance and on a regular basis. This establishes not only the sense of community and purpose, but also the council's shared responsibility for the work of the parish.
- ◇ Standing meetings on a monthly basis, not to exceed 10 meetings per year, or 6 meetings, one held every other month, would seem sufficient and would respect the time commitments of the clergy and laity involved.



Pastoral Council Procedure

Since the purpose of the parish pastoral council is to serve as a consultative body to the pastor and promote the mission of the parish and therefore the entire Church, the meetings should be conducted in the spirit of joy expressed in a parish family and above all else in the context of prayer and discernment.

Working with an Agenda

The Pastor and the Executive Committee establish the agenda.

- ◇ It is a good practice to meet two weeks in advance of the meeting to establish the Agenda, including old business and new business and to ensure that if a guest is to be invited to the meeting that the invitation is made.
- ◇ After the agenda is set, the Secretary shall distribute minutes and the approved agenda to the council members. The agenda should be distributed to the members at least a week in advance of the meeting so that Council members will have time to prepare for work of the meeting.

The Nature of Consultation

The kind of consultation that is solicited from the members of the Council remains the pastor's prerogative. The purpose of a Parish Pastoral Council is to assist the Pastor in his pastoral planning for the parish with expert opinion and advice for the good of the mission of the Church. The Pastor may also invite council members to take a lead on the implementation of goals and priorities.

Since the council meeting is not an end in itself, rather to discern and plan for the ministry of the parish, the following are some guidelines to help the council better understand their role in consultation and to establish some best practices for carrying out this important collaboration.

The following are a few examples of the kinds of consultation that best serve the Pastor:

- ✧ The parish council should reflect on and discuss items brought to them by the pastor.
- ✧ The Parish Pastoral Council offers their view of how the Holy Spirit is active in the parish.
- ✧ Reporting to the Pastor about the events and works of the various apostolates in the parish is one very important function of the Council.
- ✧ Taking responsibility for groups of parishioners as communicators and representatives of the parish's ministry is yet another type of counsel that can be offered. Council members may be assigned as representatives to parish groups, such as a representative of the Knights, Sodality, Lady's of Charity, Youth Group and CYO, the ORE, etc. In this way, the members serve as vehicles for communicating the work of the council to and soliciting input and ideas from the particular group to which they are assigned.
- ✧ The Pastor may desire a council that also implements the plans of the parish in service to the New Evangelization.

Successful consultation happens when the efforts of the members are used to aid in the implementation of the parish's pastoral plan. This means that, although parishioners may be wearing many hats, the one being worn for the council is that of consulter and in some cases leading and a coordinating implementation.

Consensus as an Expression of Communion

How proposals for the pastor's consideration are to be put forward in the Parish Pastoral Council may differ depending on the nature of the consultation the pastor desires. He may request a vote, or an expression of unanimity. The ability to come to consensus is one sign of a healthy vital parish. Consensus, however, does not mean unanimity and it certainly is not cornerstone of parish life. Consensus means agreement or accord. It is where we derive our word consent. Consensus means a uniting of wills for the same purpose.

Consensus has room in it for a robust difference of opinions. Members may differ in their opinion about a plan or decision but they unite their will with the rest of the council because they know it is for the good of the parish. Consensus as a sign of communion, which is initiated by Christ's gift of sacrificial love, means that the individual members of the council will strive to make the will of the council their own will even if they do not fully understand or, in some ways, may still have reservations about the decision.

Accountability and Transparency

A synopsis of the meeting should be made available to the parish either in the bulletin or on the parish website. Discretion is important and the synopsis need not be overly detailed.

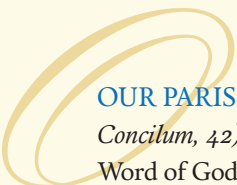
THE ABILITY TO COME TO
CONSENSUS IS ONE SIGN OF
A HEALTHY VITAL PARISH.

◇ APPENDIX ◇

The Indicators of Vitality and the New Evangelization

“It is not therefore a matter of inventing a ‘new program.’ The program already exists: it is the plan found in the Gospel and in the living Tradition, it is the same as ever. Ultimately, it has its center in Christ himself, who is to be known, loved and imitated, so that in him we may live the life of the Trinity, and with him transform history until its fulfillment in the heavenly Jerusalem. This is a program which does not change with shifts of times and cultures, even though it takes account of time and culture for the sake of true dialogue and effective communication. This program for all times is our program for the Third Millennium.”

—*Novo Millennio Ineunte* 29



OUR PARISHES ARE THE PLACE that the “church lives in the midst of her sons and daughters (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 42). Parishes that welcome people to an experience of the Risen Christ and with great vitality proclaim the Word of God, celebrate the sacraments and exercise the ministry of charity express the Church’s deepest nature (*Deus caritas est*, 25). Through the lens of the New Evangelization, our parishes are asked to examine their ministries in light of our understanding of how important it is for each of us to tell the story, share the excitement and be that leaven where faith has gone flat and that salt with the faith has lost its zest. In this way the New Evangelization is not just another program or even one program among many. The New Evangelization is the lens through which we look at everything that we are doing.

Through this lens we also see that for a parish to be an agent of the New Evangelization, it does not mean finding the right program. Rather, it is discovering how to increase its evangelizing capacity across all the parish ministries and programs.

A Parish Self-Assessment Tool

Increasing a parish’s capacity for evangelization begins with assessing an individual parish’s strengths and opportunities for growth. A parish self-assessment allows the pastor and parish leadership, together with the faithful, to plan for the future while also identifying and addressing more immediate needs. The Indicators of Vitality is an assessment tool that is designed to assist the parish in a parish-rooted discernment based on identifiable, objective norms in these areas:

Worship: the heart of parish life is the celebration of the Eucharist. From the Eucharist flows all of the worship, prayer and faith formation of the parish. This indicator examines the vitality of the parish’s liturgical life.

Education: Forming the lay faithful for mission depends on a variety of educational programs. Assessing the parish’s ability to provide education and faith formation to parishioners of all ages is the focus of this indicator.

Community: Building community begins with welcoming. Vitality is found in a parish’s ability to make all members feel at home and to open-wide the doors of the parish to welcome inactive Catholics and all who seek a relationship with the Lord.

Service: This dimension of parish life assesses the ways in which the parish calls parishioners to serve all those in need. It evaluates the parish’s commitment bring the Gospel to bear on the issues of the day in a way that supports the mission of the church.

Administration/Stewardship: the ability to carry out the mission of the church depends on strong leadership. In this area, staffing, management of parish resources and decision-making processes are evaluated.

Indicators of Vitality Survey Questions

The Indicators of Vitality survey is designed to allow parishioners with all different levels of participation in parish life to complete a survey. The questions are intended to assess core components of ministry in each area. Questions can be easily adapted to fit a parish's situation and need. Surveys are easily adapted to an electronic format as well as hardcopy. Survey templates have been translated into Spanish, French and Vietnamese.

FIVE CORE AREAS OF PARISH MINISTRY	SCALE
Area 1: WORSHIP	1 = Practically none/to a very small degree
Area 2: WORD (Formation, Education)	2 = Not very/not very much
Area 3: COMMUNITY (Parish)	3 = Moderately
Area 4: SERVICE (Broader Community)	4 = Very/To a high degree
Area 5: ADMINISTRATION (Temporalities/Stewardship)	5 = Extremely/To a very high degree
	N/A = Don't know

<div>1</div> <div>Area 1: WORSHIP</div>	SCALE #	INDICATORS OF VITALITY (The degree to which:)
		1. Congregation participates
		2. Congregation sings
		3. Homilies are of good quality
		4. Feast days are celebrated
		5. Diverse forms of Catholic spirituality are expressed
		6. Sacraments are brought to shut-ins and the sick
		7. RCIA is implemented with involvement of the entire parish
		8. Different options for individual confession
		9. Celebration of baptisms, weddings and funerals involve the parish community
		10. Weekend Mass schedule promotes quality liturgy, builds community and reflects diversity
		11. Weekday Masses scheduled according to needs of people and time constraints of priests
		12. Parish promotes vocation awareness

<div>2</div> <div>Area 2: WORD (Formation, Education)</div>	SCALE #	INDICATORS OF VITALITY (The degree to which:)
		1. Existence of sacramental preparation programs
		2. Provide for and support initial/ongoing training-formation for catechists
		3. Existence of religious instruction programs for adults, families, children and youth
		4. Programs that strengthens marriage and family
		5. Youth ministry program for adolescents / young adults
		6. Encourage and support parents as the primary religious educators of their children
		7. Qualified director, coordinator or minister of religious education
		8. Variety of opportunities for adult learning (bible study, speakers, etc.)
		9. Catechesis provided for special needs parishioners
		10. The parish sponsors its own Catholic school or supports a regional Catholic school
		11. Parishioners share in and support baptism and marriage preparation programs
		12. Support lay leaders/volunteers with regular and ongoing in-service programs

SCALE
1 = Practically none/to a very small degree
2 = Not very/not very much
3 = Moderately
4 = Very/To a high degree
5 = Extremely/To a very high degree
N/A = Don't know

<div>3</div> <div>Area 3: COMMUNITY (Parish)</div>	SCALE #	INDICATORS OF VITALITY <i>(The degree to which:)</i>
		1. Organized welcome program for new members.
		2. Parishioners with disabilities are included in every aspect of parish life and ministry.
		3. Persons of all races are welcome to participate fully in the life and ministry of the parish.
		4. All approved liturgical roles are open to both men and women.
		5. Parishioners understand that they have a responsibility to invite others to the Lord and the believing community.
		6. Train people how to reach out to others and invite others to the Lord and the believing community.
		7. Formal evangelization programs such as "The Light Is On For You.", "Come Home for Christmas/Easter."
		8. Identifies the talents and interests of parishioners.
		9. Parish organizations regularly invite new people to participate in their activities.
		10. Parishioners are encouraged to use their talents for the good of the parish.
		11. Actively involves seniors, adolescents and young adults in parish activities.
		12. Existence of accurate, up-to-date census of the total parish.

<div>4</div> <div>Area 4: SERVICE (Broader Community)</div>	SCALE #	INDICATORS OF VITALITY <i>(The degree to which:)</i>
		1. Someone (e.g., a parish social concerns coordinator) or some group (e.g., St. Vincent de Paul Society) assists parishioners in meeting their material needs.
		2. Parishioners respond when invited to volunteer for various parish service programs.
		3. The parish is sensitive to the needs of families when it schedules ministries, programs and events.
		4. Awareness of Catholic Social teaching is raised through homilies, formal discussion of encyclicals and church documents.
		5. The parish opens its facilities to community groups for meetings (e.g. Alcoholics Anonymous).
		6. The parish sponsors or supports local food banks, blood drives, etc.
		7. The parish reaches out to those who are in institutions (e.g., nursing homes, hospitals, prisons, etc.) within the parish's boundaries.
		8. Parishioners respond generously to Archdiocesan and national appeals for aid to the poor and needy.
		9. Parishioners participate in peace and justice activities, pro-life activities, voter registration drives, letter writing campaigns, parish twinning, missions, etc.
		10. The parish calls attention to important local, state, and federal legislation in light of Catholic Social teaching.

SCALE
1 = Practically none/to a very small degree
2 = Not very/not very much
3 = Moderately
4 = Very/To a high degree
5 = Extremely/To a very high degree
N/A = Don't know

<div>5</div> <div>Area 5: ADMINISTRATION (Temporalities/Stewardship)</div>	SCALE #	INDICATORS OF VITALITY (The degree to which:)
		1. The most knowledgeable people are consulted in making decisions in the parish.
		2. People at various levels in the parish participate in planning and decision-making activities.
		3. The parish is strong in long-range planning and parishioners understand the goals of the parish.
		4. The parish meets its ordinary expenses in a timely manner.
		5. The parish maintains its plants and facilities in good condition.
		6. Parish facilities are adequate for the present and future needs of the parish, its people and its programs.
		7. The parish has active Pastoral and Finance councils which regularly advises the pastor.
		8. Parishioners help care for and maintain parish grounds and facilities.
		9. Parishioners are given opportunities to share in leadership responsibilities by being empowered to use their skills and experiences for the good of the parish.
		10. The parish has sufficient qualified personnel to run its programs and meet the legitimate needs of the parishioners.

The Planning Process

I. Conducting the Self-Assessment

“[O]ur thoughts could run immediately to the action to be undertaken, but that would not be the right impulse to follow. Before making practical plans, we need to promote a spirituality of communion, making it the guiding principle of education wherever individuals and Christians are formed, wherever ministers of the altar, consecrated persons, and pastoral workers are trained, wherever families and communities are being built up.”

—*Novo Millennio Ineunte*

To conduct the parish self-examination:

- ✧ Determine who will participate in the planning process—pastoral and finance council former and current members, key parish leaders that represent all “communities” in the parish, parish staff. Ideally the entire parish will be invited to participate in the process.
- ✧ Pastor and/or Pastoral Council adapt the survey to match parish circumstances and culture.
- ✧ Have participants complete the Indicators of Vitality survey either in small groups or individually.
- ✧ Tabulate the results and identify areas of strength and areas of ministry that people would like to see developed.

2. Prioritize Areas for Development

If working in small groups:

- ✧ Form working groups to identify (a) broad areas of strength that ought to be supported and (b) broad areas in need of development.
- ✧ Ask the group to identify primary priorities per core area and then, to define three to five tentative goals that reflect these priorities.

If working individually:

- ✧ Invite participants to come together to discuss the results.
- ✧ Identify key areas of strength and areas that people would like to see developed.

3. Identify Possible Short and Long Term Goals

Taking as a starting point this broad list of areas that need work, ask the whole group to come to a consensus in identifying the three to five goals that will be the focus of parish ministry over the next two to three years.

- ✧ Identify two or three short-term goals (six months-one year).
- ✧ Identify two or three long-term goals (one-year-three-year).

Note: Step Two and Step Three may be done in a three or four hour workshop allowing time for prayer and discussion.

4. Articulate Specific and Realistic Goals

A goal is the end toward which effort is directed. “Goals assist members in making choices among all the worthwhile projects that could be undertaken” in a given period (*Pickett, p. 71*). To be useful, it needs to be specific, realistic and measurable.

- ✧ *Specific:* What do we want to accomplish? Who is assigned to work towards this goal? In what settings? What is the appropriate time frame?
- ✧ *Realistic:* Is the parish ready and committed? Do we have the necessary team? What resources are needed to achieve it? What obstacles we may find?
- ✧ *Measurable:* How many? How many times? How many people?

Goals specify what the parish wants to accomplish or become in a given time (*Howes, p. 101*). They are articulated in succinct statements that include (1) an active verb, (2) a description of what we will do, and (3) some indication of quantity or quality (*Pickett, idem.*).

In light of the parish self-examination (strengths and weaknesses) and, as a rule, for each of the core pastoral areas, define:

1. One or two ends to be pursued—brief statement
2. Specify the efforts that need to be conducted
 - ✧ Who is assigned (ministries, teams)
 - ✧ Over what period of time

Each of these goals becomes projects for the next months or years. They provide focus. They specify the next step towards a more vital future. Those assigned will determine, as the initial step in the implementation, the specific action steps based on the current situation and, if applicable, on the work that has been done. They will also report regularly to the parish council.

EXAMPLES OF GOALS			
WORSHIP	Starting on [date], baptisms will be incorporated as part of the regular Sunday Mass.	By [date] the parish will have organized teams of lectors, of extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist and of ushers. Each team will have a coordinator and will have quarterly/ semiannual formation activities. There will be one coordinator for these teams per Mass	Next calendar year the parish will conduct X number of activities specifically oriented to promote vocations to the diaconate, religious life and the priesthood.
FORMATION	By the end of next year the parish will have one team in charge of baptismal preparation and another team in charge of marriage preparation	At the beginning of the next catechetical year we will have in place a formation initiative for the parents who register their children in catechesis.	Next year we will put in place a formation program for quinceañera candidates, their families and gentlemen/maids of honor.
COMMUNITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During the next year the outreach team will identify ethnic groups that live in the territory of the parish, that are known to be predominantly Catholic, and that are not currently served by the parish. During the following year, the parish council will conduct a discussion about what kinds of ministries can be offered to these groups and a decision will be made. During the third year, a special parish-wide outreach initiative will be conducted to engage these groups. 	By the beginning of next year we will have a hospitality team that will greet newcomers and inform them of the various parish ministries. This team needs to be trained to be especially active when the parish celebrates baptisms, first communions, quinceañeras and weddings, as well as during Holy Week and Christmas, and other holy days.	Next year we will conduct our first parish mission to neighborhoods X and Y in the territory of the parish. We will organize and train Z teams of parishioners to visit that neighborhood, inform people about the parish, and invite them to participate in our worship.
SERVICE	Next year we will initiate a new parish tradition: Every quarter we will conduct a parish campaign to gather non-perishable foods for our parish and/or regional pantry.	Once a year the parish will team up with local community groups to offer a health fair with free services for the poor and uninsured.	Beginning next month the parish will use its announcements, parish bulletin and web site to call attention to important local, state and federal legislation in light of Catholic social teaching.
ADMINISTRATION	A year from now the parish council will complete the process of alignment of its operations to the archdiocesan guidelines for parish councils.	Once the liturgical ministry teams are organized, their coordinator(s) will become active members of the Pastoral Council.	A year after the implementation of these goals the pastoral council will lead an examination of what kind of progress has been made.

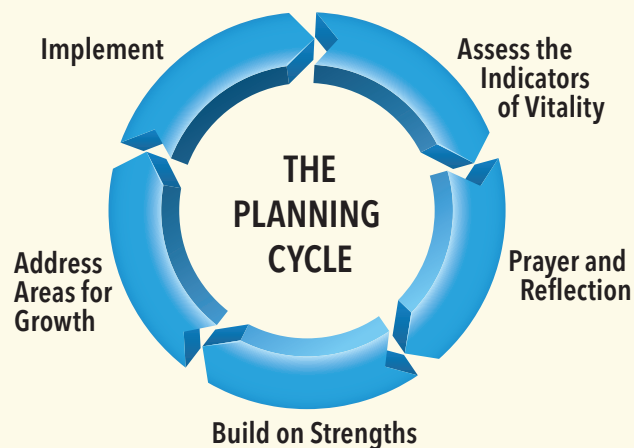
5. Choosing a Process for Building Consensus within the Parish

Once the goals have been defined it is important to communicate them to all parishioners:

- ◇ Invite a larger group of parishioners (either a broader segment of active parishioners or the entire parish) to identify which of the goals they view as the top priorities

Methods for Inviting Parish Consensus

1. Develop a “ballot” on which the goals are listed and ask each person to identify one first choice and one second choice.
2. Make large posters identifying and describing each goal.
 - ◇ Following each weekend liturgy invite parishioners to come and place a color-coded sticker next to their priorities. This generates good conversation and excitement as it is easy to see around what priorities the excitement is building
3. Develop an on-line electronic tool for inviting parishioner participation.
4. Host a parish town hall meeting and report on pastoral council discernment, present goals and ask the group gathered to spend some time in prayer and reflection and then identify priorities (three-hour event).



Prayer and Discernment Resources

LECTIO DIVINA ON THE MEANING OF A CALL

“It is especially necessary that listening to the word of God should become a life-giving encounter, in the ancient and ever valid tradition of lectio divina, which draws from the biblical text the living Word which questions, directs and shapes our lives.”

—Pope John Paul II
Novo Millennio Ineunte, 39

Steps for Lectio Divina

1. Take a Scripture passage on the theme of call, covenant, mission, or some other theme. It is helpful for each person to have their own copy of the passage. (See suggested Scripture passages)
2. Give everyone time to read the passage silently, slowly, reflectively.
3. As you read, underline any word or phrase which particularly strikes you.
4. After everyone has finished reading, ask each person to share with the group the word or phrase which most struck them. (No elaborations at this point—just state the word or phrase.)
5. Next, go around the group and have each person tell why this particular word or phrase struck them—what it was within their own experience that responded to this particular word or phrase.
6. Go around the group again asking each person, or just those who volunteer, to say what significance these insights might have for the group or for themselves.
7. Finally, after a brief period of silent reflection upon what has been shared, ask each person to “gather up” in a prayer of praise, gratitude or petition, the thoughts or sentiments flowing from the shared faith experience.
8. Pray together the closing prayer for vocations

GROUP PRAYER WITH THE SCRIPTURE

This model describes a one-session format.

For the Gathering

- ◇ It would be advantageous to have the group sit in a circle to enhance participation and sharing.
- ◇ Prepare three long strips of paper, each displaying one of the following sentences: “We Have a Story to Tell,” “We Have a Story to Live,” and “We Have a Story to Celebrate.” Finally, depending on the size of the group, prepare one or more sets of sixteen cards, each card containing one of the following quotes:
(1) Mt 5:14-16; (2) Lk 6:47-49; (3) Mk 2:21-22; (4) Mt 13:31-32; (5) Mt 13:33; (6) Mt 13:45-46; (7) Lk 15:1-7; (8) Mt 18:23-35; (9) Mt 20:1-16; (10) Lk 10:30-37; (11) Lk 11:5-13; (12) Mt 21:28-32; (13) Mt 22:2-14; (14) Lk 16:19-31; (15) Lk 18:1-8; (16) Mt 25:14-30.

SUGGESTED SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

- ◇ Genesis 12:14; 15:6
- ◇ Jeremiah 1:4-10, 17-19; 15:10-21
- ◇ Exodus 3:11-12
- ◇ Amos 7:15
- ◇ Deuteronomy 29:3
- ◇ Mark 1:16-20
- ◇ 1 Samuel 3:1-10
- ◇ Luke 5:1-11; 9:57-60; 12:49-53
- ◇ 1 Kings 19:9-21
- ◇ John 1:35-51
- ◇ Isaiah 6:1-8
- ◇ 2 Timothy 1:6-13
- ◇ Acts 9:1-19; 13:2-3; 16:9-10; 22:6-21; 26:12-19
- ◇ 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Welcome the group and introduce the session by sharing with the participants the purpose of the in-service as it appears above. Explain that this session will include personal and group reflections on Jesus' vision of his mission and on the commitment of the Church to be a visible sign of this mission. The second session will include conversations about the commitment of the Church to be an instrument of Jesus' mission, paying particular attention to its catechetical ministry.

Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

- ✧ Opening song
- ✧ Opening prayer (facilitator)
- ✧ Scripture reading (Lk 4:16-19)
- ✧ A few minutes of silent reflection

For the Facilitator: Sharing of Stories (5 minutes)

Begin by saying that evangelization primarily concerns telling the Good News of Jesus through words and deeds (*Catechism of the Catholic Church [CCC], 2nd ed. [Washington, DC: Libreria Editrice Vaticana–United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2000], no. 3*).

Jesus Shares His Stories (10 minutes)

- ✧ Pick the set of Scripture cards from the center and distribute them, one for each group of three or four participants. Ask them to read the selection and share one thought or image worth remembering.
- ✧ Gather the large group back together and ask several groups to share their findings.
- ✧ Ask: How many of you find that one or more of these parables of Jesus has a great influence in the way you think or conduct yourself? Allow time for this important sharing.

Wrapping Up This Activity (5 minutes)

At this point you may want to make the following observations:

- ✧ Jesus' proclamation of his mission as recorded in Luke 4:18-19—"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord"—is the mission of the Church as well. She is entrusted with bringing this news to all people by telling and retelling it and providing opportunities to encourage the conversion Jesus envisioned.
- ✧ "Evangelizing," says Pope Paul VI in his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, "means bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new: 'Now I am making the whole of creation new'" (*EN, no. 18*).
- ✧ The Church community, blessed with the Spirit of the Lord, is pressed to continuously reflect on and recommit herself to being a visible sign and instrument of intimate relationship with God and union among all peoples (*see Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church [Lumen Gentium] [LG], no. 1, in Vatican Council II: Volume 1: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents, ed. Austin Flannery [Northport, NY: Costello Publishing, 1996]*). *A vibrant Church witnesses to the past and to the future that the Kingdom of God is among us now, in the present (Lk 17:20-21).*
- ✧ Prayers of petition (each one can make one voluntarily)
- ✧ Concluding prayer (facilitator)
- ✧ Concluding song

Evening Prayer

Introduction

O God, come to my assistance.

O Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,

as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end.

Amen. (*Alleluia.*)

Hymn of Abandonment of Blessed Charles de Foucauld

Father,

I abandon myself into your hands; do with me what
you will.

Whatever you may do, I thank you:

I am ready for all, I accept all.

Let only your will be done in me, and in all your creatures.

I wish no more than this, O Lord.

Into your hands I commend my soul;

I offer it to you

with all the love of my heart,

for I love you, Lord,

and so need to give myself,

to surrender myself into your hands,

without reserve,

and with boundless confidence,

for you are my Father.

Psalm 101

The one who walks in the way that is blameless shall minister with me.

I sing of mercy and justice;

to you, LORD, I sing praise.

I study the way of integrity;

when will you come to me?

I act with integrity of heart

within my household.

I do not allow into my presence anything base.

I hate wrongdoing;

I will have no part of it.

May the devious heart keep far from me;

the wicked I will not acknowledge.

Whoever slanders a neighbor in secret

I will reduce to silence.

Haughty eyes and arrogant hearts

I cannot endure.

I look to the faithful of the land

to sit at my side.

Whoever follows the way of integrity

is the one to enter my service.

No one who practices deceit

can remain within my house. No one who speaks

falsely

can last in my presence.

Morning after morning I clear all the wicked from the

land,

to rid the city of the LORD of all doers of evil.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy

Spirit,

as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,

world without end.

Amen. (*Alleluia.*)

*The one who walks in the way that is blameless shall minister
with me.*

Psalm 133

Behold, how good and pleasant it is when Christians dwell in unity!

How good and how pleasant it is,
when brothers dwell together as one!
Like fine oil on the head,
running down upon the beard,
upon the beard of Aaron,
upon the collar of his robe.
Like dew of Hermon coming down
upon the mountains of Zion.

There the LORD has decreed a blessing,
life for evermore!
Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end.
Amen. (*Alleluia.*)

Behold, how good and pleasant it is when Christians dwell in unity!

Canticle of St. Francis of Assisi

Lord, make me a channel of your peace.

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end.

Amen. (*Alleluia.*)

Lord, make me a channel of your peace.

Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:1, 4-31

Now in regard to spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be unaware.

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. To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit. To one is given through the Spirit the expression of wisdom; to another the expression of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit; to another mighty deeds; to another prophecy; to another discernment of spirits; to another varieties of tongues; to another interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit produces all of these, distributing them individually to each person as he wishes.

As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit.

Now the body is not a single part, but many. If a foot should say, "Because I am not a hand I do not belong to the body," it does not for this reason belong any less to the body. Or if an ear should say, "Because I am not an eye I do not belong to the body," it does not for this reason belong any less to the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God placed the

parts, each one of them, in the body as he intended. If they were all one part, where would the body be? But as it is, there are many parts, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, “I do not need you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I do not need you.” Indeed, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are all the more necessary, and those parts of the body that we consider less honorable we surround with greater honor, and our less presentable parts are treated with greater propriety, whereas our more presentable parts do not need this. But God has so constructed the body as to give greater honor to a part that is without it, so that there may be no division in the body, but that the parts may have the same concern for one another. If [one] part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part is honored, all the parts share its joy.

Now you are Christ’s body, and individually parts of it. Some people God has designated in the church to be, first, apostles; second, prophets; third, teachers; then, mighty deeds; then, gifts of healing, assistance, administration, and varieties of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work mighty deeds? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? Strive eagerly for the greatest spiritual gifts.

Canticle: Luke 1:46-55 (Magnificat)

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord;
 my spirit rejoices in God my savior.
 For he has looked upon his handmaid's lowliness;
 behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed.
 The Mighty One has done great things for me,
 and holy is his name.
 His mercy is from age to age
 to those who fear him.
 He has shown might with his arm,
 dispersed the arrogant of mind and heart.
 He has thrown down the rulers from their thrones
 but lifted up the lowly.

The hungry he has filled with good things;
 the rich he has sent away empty.
 He has helped Israel his servant,
 remembering his mercy,
 according to his promise to our fathers,
 to Abraham and to his descendants forever.
 Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy
 Spirit,
 as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
 world without end.
 Amen.

Prayers and Intercessions

Since the LORD God of Holiness, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, has called us to be the servants of his servants, we ask
 for the Grace of his guidance.

—Give us your Grace, O Lord.

Help us to represent, truly, our brothers and sisters in the parish, and not simply ourselves.

—Give us your Grace, O Lord.

May the true needs of our parish and the common good of all be our concern.

—Give us your Grace, O Lord.

May your will in these matters become our will.

—Give us your Grace, O Lord.

Help us to remember that all of our efforts are aimed at the spiritual transformation of our parish community.

—Give us your Grace, O Lord.

May the material aspects we discuss not blind us to the primary work of our parish: the holiness of all its members.

—Give us your Grace, O Lord.

In your mercy, give us the gifts of fellowship and understanding, wisdom and perseverance, mutual respect and
 shared vision.

—Give us your Grace, O Lord.

And make our parish into a true temple of your presence, where the Great Commandments of love of God and love of
 neighbor are lived by all in communion.

—Give us your Grace, O Lord.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
 hallowed be thy Name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
 and forgive us our trespasses,
 as we forgive those who trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation,
 but deliver us from evil.

Prayer of St. Ignatius Loyola (*Suscipe*)

Take Lord, receive all my liberty,
 my memory,
 my understanding,
 my entire will,
 all that I have and possess.
Thou hast given all to me.
To thee, O Lord, I return it.
All is thine,
 dispose of it wholly according to thy will.
Give me thy love and thy grace,
 this is sufficient for me.

AMEN.

Resources for Pastoral Planning

Donald Cardinal Wuerl, *Disciples of the Lord Sharing the Vision*
<http://site.adw.org/disciples-of-the-lord-overview>

Indicators of Vitality User Guide, Archdiocese of Washington
<http://site.adw.org/IOV>.

Fr. Frank DeSiano, *Mission America: Challenges and Opportunities for Catholics Today*. Paulist 2001

◇ GLOSSARY ◇

BISHOP (OR DIOCESAN BISHOP): A successor of the Apostles, in union with the Pope in Rome, who has received the fullness of the sacrament of Holy Orders. The diocesan bishop is the shepherd of a diocese/local Church; priests serve as his co-workers.

CHARISM: “A specific gift or grace of the Holy Spirit which directly or indirectly benefits the Church, given in order to help a person live out the Christian life, or to serve the common good in building up the Church.”

CODE OF CANON LAW: Law enacted and promulgated by the Pope for the orderly pastoral administration and government of the Church. The revised Code, effective November 27, 1983, consists of 1,752 canons in seven books (sections).

CONSENSUS: A method of making decisions by which the pastor and pastoral council strive to reach substantial, though not necessarily unanimous, agreement on the overall direction of the pastoral life of the parish.

CONSULTATION: The act of conferring and deliberating in order to come to decisions together. It refers particularly to the relationship between pastor and laity, respecting the pastor’s unique role as the head of the parish according to Canon law.

DISCERNMENT: The formal prayerful process by which a group seeks to discover God’s wisdom in a particularly significant situation or prudential decision.

EUCHARIST: The ritual, sacramental action of thanksgiving to God which constitutes the principal Christian liturgical celebration of and communion in the body and blood of Christ. The Eucharist, or Holy Mass, is at the heart of the Church’s life.

EVANGELIZATION: “Bringing the Good News [of Jesus Christ] into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new.” See also NEW EVANGELIZATION.

FINANCE COUNCIL: A consultative body within the parish that offers expertise in matters of finance and plant management as it pertains to the mission of the parish.

INDICATORS OF VITALITY: A self-assessment tool developed by the Archdiocese of Washington that assists pastors and parishioners in clarifying current needs and strategically planning for full and active participation in the mission of the New Evangelization. A survey distributed to the members of the parish addresses five core areas of parish life: worship, education, community life, service, and administration. It invites parishioners to assess the strengths of parish life and to identify opportunities for growth and development. Furthermore, it is recommended that the parish pastoral council and parish leaders review the results of the survey and propose short (six months-one year) and long-term (not more than two years) goals in response to survey results.

LAITY: The faithful who, having been incorporated into Christ through Baptism, are made part of the people of God, the Church. Laity are distinguished from clergy (bishops, priests, deacons), and those in consecrated life.

LECTIO DIVINA: The reflective and prayerful reading of Sacred Scripture in the context of the Church’s understanding of the Word of God. The beauty of the practice of Lectio Divina (holy reading) is that it develops our ability to listen and “draw from the biblical text a living word which questions, directs and shapes our lives.”

LOCAL CHURCH: Also known as the diocese or archdiocese, the local or particular Church refers to a geographical area in which Catholics gather usually in parishes and are united in faith and the sacraments with their bishop.

MINISTRY: The service or work of the various members of the Church which helps to make it holy with Christ as the source. The kind of work one can do depends upon his state in life (whether priest, deacon, or laity, for example), and it depends upon the gifts/talents of the individual, as well as the needs of the community, but it is always directed to the building up the Body of Christ, which is the Church.

NEW EVANGELIZATION: A re-proposing of the good news of the Gospel and the saving love of Jesus Christ to Catholics and/or non-Catholics who may be far from the Lord’s embrace or alienated from the Church, their spiritual home. More than a program it is the lens through which the church sees everything it is doing. See also EVANGELIZATION.

PARISH: A gathering of the people of God in a community dedicated to the worship of God, and united in faith under a priest as pastor who is appointed by the local bishop.

PASTOR: The priest who is the shepherd of parish and has pastoral and spiritual care of the parish community entrusted to him under the authority of the diocesan bishop. The pastor is given the charge to preside at the parish pastoral and financial council deliberations.

PASTORAL COUNCIL: A consultative council to the pastor of a parish designated primarily to investigate, consider, and recommend pastoral initiatives that further the mission of the parish and help it achieve its supreme purpose, the salvation of souls. Members of the pastoral council should be “Christian faithful outstanding in firm faith, good morals, and prudence.”

SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL (OR VATICAN II):

The most recent of the twenty-one official Church councils in which all the bishops of the world, called together by the Pope, met at the Vatican from 1962-1965. Vatican II published decrees which were consistent with the perennial teaching of the Church, but included considerations for the present day. The decrees, approved by bishops of the Church together with the Pope, have become part of the teaching of the Church.

UNIVERSAL CHURCH: The Church is by her nature universal and particular. Universal governance is the unique ministry of the Bishop of Rome—the Pope—who is the supreme pastor of the universal Church, and in communion with the college of bishops, strengthens the power which bishops possess in the particular churches entrusted to their care. The universal Church is not merely the sum of the various local churches or dioceses.

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