

Archdiocese Directives on Parish Pastoral Council Commissions

Overview of the Parish Pastoral Council Commissions

As it participates in the mission of Jesus, the Parish accomplishes its work in an organized and systematic way through effective working groups or Commissions. These are: Education, Service, Stewardship, and Worship. A Parish may wish to form additional Commissions at times, according to its needs, develop objectives and implement programs through committee work.

Every effort should be made for effective two-way communication a) between the Parish Pastoral Council and its Commissions, b) among the Commissions themselves, and c) between the Commissions and their respective committees.

Archdiocesan Directives

- A. The following four Commissions must be operative in every Parish: Education, Service, Stewardship, and Worship.
- B. Each Parish committee or organization must relate to one of the Parish Pastoral Council Commissions.
- C. Each Commission must choose, from its own membership, a person to speak for the Commission as a member of the Parish Pastoral Council.
- D. A Parish needs the approval of the Auxiliary Bishop of the Region to modify the Commission structure.

Recommendations

- A. Commissions should be involved in ongoing formation, including prayer, study/reflection/sharing, business, and evaluation.
- B. Each Commission appoints appropriate working committees as needed, with a Spokesperson on the Commission. These committees may be standing or ad hoc.
- C. Commissions include members from the Pastoral Staff and significant groups within the Parish, e.g.; person with disabilities, youth, young adults, seniors, unemployed persons.

Functions of the Parish Pastoral Council Commissions

The Commissions work:

- A. to investigate the needs of their areas of concern in Parish life and to make recommendations to the Parish Pastoral Council on meeting these needs;
- B. to ascertain needs and to understand and implement policies of the Church, e.g.: Parish, Diocesan, National, and Universal
- C. to collaborate with the Pastoral Staff in its areas of concern;
- D. to develop objectives flowing from the Parish Mission Statement and Goals
- E. to provide an annual evaluation of objectives and programs;
- F. to promote and infuse Justice and Peace concepts into their respective areas of concern;
- G. to report regularly to the Parish Pastoral Council on the status of their objectives, planning, and implementation—Council approval is needed for major changes, policies, and actions, e.g.: an addition/deletion of an objective or projected budget overrun;
- H. to propose and to recommend a budget to the Parish Pastoral Council;
- I. to use the consensus method, respecting the principle of subsidiarity;
- J. to choose a Chairperson and to hold regular meetings;
- K. to choose a Spokesperson to the Parish Pastoral Council;
- L. to review and to implement the policies of the Archdiocese of Detroit and to take advantage of Archdiocesan Central Services and programs.
- M. to choose one of its members to become a member of the corresponding Vicariate Pastoral Council Commissions;
- N. to propose policy for the Council's consideration;
- O. to oversee the work of its committees.

Relationship Between Commissions

The Commissions are equal partners. No one of them has greater importance than another. The individual Commissions are not intended to function independently nor in a state of isolation from one another. Instead, they relate to each other on a regular basis through Parish Pastoral Council. They also relate through the coordinating work of the Pastoral Staff. Commissions should communicate directly and collaborate on common projects.

Structure of the Parish Pastoral Council Commissions

Membership of Commissions

The optimal number of members of the Commission is between eight and twelve persons. The appropriate Pastoral Staff persons are to be resources to the Commissions and, as necessary or helpful, its committees.

Spokespersons from the various committees are to be members of the Commission. Spokespersons from local Parish groups and other members of the Parish may be members of the Commissions.

Note: Since the Pastoral Staff serve as resource persons to the Commissions, they do not function as Commission or Committee Chairpersons.

Commission Membership on the Council

The Commission chooses a member as Spokesperson to the Council.

Note: The Commission may wish to choose someone other than the Commission Chairperson as Spokesperson so as not to overwork the Chairperson and thus prevent burn-out and stagnation. More importantly, this will empower others by creating more opportunities for leadership.

Role of the Pastoral Staff

By the very nature of their work, the Pastoral Staff are resource persons to the Commissions. The appropriate Pastoral Staff person should be identified to work cooperatively with their respective Commission(s) and any of the committees. The Pastoral Staff person continually guides, coordinates, and assists the Commission members to implement the objectives flowing from the goals set by the Parish Pastoral Council.

Commission meetings should be scheduled so that it is possible for the Pastoral staff person to attend and participate fully. The Pastoral Staff person's active involvement in Commission work contributes to a sense of collaboration. If the Pastoral Staff person is unable to attend a certain meeting, the Commission Chairperson should keep the Pastoral Staff person apprised of the Commission's work.

Role of the Chairperson

The Chairperson is the key individual in the effective functioning of a Commission. The main responsibility of the Chairperson is to move the meeting smoothly through the agenda. As the Commission's leader, the Chairperson keeps communication flowing among all levels.

In collaboration with the Pastor or appropriate Pastoral staff person, the Chairperson is responsible for establishing the agenda. She/he also notifies members prior to the Commission meetings (usually done in cooperation with the appropriate Staff members). In addition, the Chairperson appoints committees to study or address particular concerns as needed.

Role of the Committee

Commissions carry on their ministries by the formation of committees. Committees bear the responsibility of one specific area of the Commission's concern.

Spokespersons from each committee are present at each Commission meeting so that the total needs of each particular Commission are met.

Role of the Evangelization Committee

The Evangelization Committee is an ad hoc committee that reports directly to the Parish Pastoral Council.

The work of evangelization is the responsibility of the entire leadership of a Parish including the Parish Pastoral Council. In fact it is the mission of every baptized person.

The Evangelization Committee is responsible for planning, organizing, and advocating specific Parish witness ministries designed to reach others for Christ. While the committee itself is usually a small group, its goal is to involve many other members of the Parish in outreach to the active, inactive, and unchurched.