

# Information

## For the Development of Parish Pastoral Councils

### Making the Parish Plan a Reality: Characteristics Found in Vital Parishes

A vital role of the parish pastoral council is to keep the parish focused on its own mission. The parish pastoral council does this by creating a pastoral plan for the parish and involving parishioners in accomplishing it. The parish pastoral plan is a concrete agenda, detailing the way the parish intends to live out its mission in the coming years. But, it is important for all parishioners to not only know of the parish plan and be engaged in its implementation, but also to be acquainted with the mission of the parish itself. The parish pastoral council also has the role of keeping the mission of the parish in front of the parishioners. The parish mission statement is a great learning tool and guide for future effort. It should clearly state who we are, what we are committed to, and what the goals of the parish are.

In the Summer of 2003, a booklet entitled Characteristics Found in Vital Parishes was sent to every pastor. These characteristics flow directly from the mission of the parish. Each of the seven areas in which the booklet is divided correspond to areas found in almost every parish mission statement. Each parish is called to the work of evangelization, worship, teaching and formation, community, and service. Each parish could not function properly if it were not supported by stewardship of its members and by competent and supportive leadership at all levels. These areas of parish life are not new, but only help to describe specific

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### Sunday Mass Attendance

On a typical weekend, about 375,000 people attend Mass in the parishes of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Parishioners attend one of the 1,252 Masses that are celebrated on an average weekend. Most of the Masses are celebrated in English. Twenty-three parishes celebrate Masses in Spanish and 32 Masses are celebrated in one of 17 other languages.

Seventy-five percent of the parishes offer four Masses or more on Sundays and the Saturday vigil. Most offer 4 or 5 Masses.

#### Frequency of Sunday Mass

<u>No. of Masses</u>	<u>No. of Parishes</u>	<u>Percentage of Archdiocese</u>
1	11	3.9%
2	19	6.7%
3	40	14.1%
4	86	30.3%
5	76	26.8%
6	26	9.2%
7	15	5.3%
8	6	2.1%
9	4	1.4%
11	1	0.4%

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Volume 3 Number 2  
Fall 2003

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# Expanding

## “The Pepsi Generation”

A recent Pepsi commercial features a teenage boy in the middle of a mosh pit at a concert discovering his father “rocking out” nearby. The Pepsi generation is not just about youth anymore, it has become multi-generational. The people at Pepsi say this is great for business because it increases their potential target market.

By 2025, as baby boomers age and life expectancy continues to increase, the number of seniors in the U.S. will double to more than 70 million people. In states with older populations to begin with, like Florida and Pennsylvania, the share of the population who are older will be quite large. This will present some serious challenges for parishes in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia as they try to balance their resources of time, talent and treasure to address the changing pastoral needs of this growing group of seniors and.. the education and formation needs of the children, youth, and younger adults who are the future of the Church. It might be easy to fall into the trap of assuming that the parish has to choose between the interests of different groups, to either operate a parish school or have a visiting nurse program. But as St. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians, 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.” The parish is a body with many parts each part of which depends on the other parts. “If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part is honored, all the parts share its joy.” (1 Corinthians, 26)

As companies are changing the message of their products to include younger and older people, parish communities can take a lead in building connections between generations so that addressing the needs of each group becomes the interest of everyone. Young and old have responsibilities not only to provide for the religious education of children and adults throughout their lives, but also to provide service and opportunities to be of service particularly to older parishioners and shut-ins. Parishioners who know one another are uniquely able to replace members of extended families who live at a distance. Most companies today are very aware of the proportion of their market who are in different age groups. If you want to find out what the age break down is in your parish, go to the “Parish Info” section of the Archdiocesan web site at [archdiocese-phl.org/parishes](http://archdiocese-phl.org/parishes), choose a parish and select U.S. Census Report 3 - Age and Age Cohorts (PDF).

The Archdiocesan Web Site  
[www.archphila.org](http://www.archphila.org)



Have you seen it?  
Check it out!

It's all there:  
newsletters, info,  
schedules and key links  
*If you can not see it.....*

call us, maybe we can help 215-587-3545

### Sunday Mass cont...

On average, about 300 people attend each Mass and 1,325 people attend in each parish. Because of the distribution of *parishioners* among the parishes, the average Mass attendance ranges from 7,700 (in the parish with the greatest attendance) to 71 (in the parish with the least attendance). Average attendance at an individual Mass ranges from 1,100 to 26.

In surveys conducted in every parish in the mid 1990's, most parishioners (87%) reported that they lived within the territorial boundaries of the parish they attended most frequently. This compares to the Notre Dame study of U. S. parishes in the 1980's that revealed that only 15% of active Catholics attended a church other than the neighborhood parish.

### Promote Breaking the Cycle of Poverty in Your Parish!

During the summer of 2003 bike riders journeyed across our country to raise the awareness of our people to the cycle of poverty and ways Christians can remedy it. Catholic parishes can take special moments during the prayers of the faithful of the Mass to focus on particular works of their parish and archdiocese to bring about change for the poor.

#### Think About It

In our Archdiocese, one in six children live in poverty. One in ten adults over 65 live in poverty, many of them isolated. Yet all of these people live within the boundaries of one of our parishes (Source: Poverty data, U.S. Census).

You can find out how many people live in poverty in your community by going to the “Parish Info” section of the Archdiocesan web site at: [archdiocese-phl.org/parishes](http://archdiocese-phl.org/parishes), choose a parish and select U.S. Census Report 5 – Poverty and Income (PDF).

### QUESTION BOX ?

What's the average household income for households in the five counties of the Archdiocese?

To Find out, Go to the Archdiocesan Office of Research and Planning Maps & Reports page:

[http://archphila.org/pastplan/INDEX/MandR\\_index.html](http://archphila.org/pastplan/INDEX/MandR_index.html)

“Archdiocese” under Reports by Geography and U.S. Census Report 5 – Poverty and Income

*How about in your parish?*

Click on “Parish Info” on the Archdiocesan web site at:

[www.archphila.org/parishes/index.htm](http://www.archphila.org/parishes/index.htm)

choose a parish and click on U.S. Census Report 5 – Poverty and Income.

Do you have a question for the newsletter? Send it to the editor at: [orp@adphila.org](mailto:orp@adphila.org)

## Most Cluster Implementers Stay the Course

Thirty cluster implementation committees or 73% of the 41 parish clusters have elected to continue to work on their current plan or develop their plan. Only 11 cluster committees considered their work complete.

Cluster Pastoral Plans are rooted in the plans of individual parishes. Information and insights that the parish receives through ongoing parish planning are used to develop and revise the Cluster Pastoral Plan, a tool for helping parishes cooperate together to be more effective in their ministry, service and programs.

Between October, 2002 and June, 2003, the Parish Pastoral Councils and each Cluster Implementation Committee were asked by the Regional Vicars to conduct an informal evaluation of the Cluster Pastoral Plan. As part of this informal evaluation, each Cluster Implementation Committee, in consultation with the Parish Pastoral Councils of the parishes of the cluster, was asked to determine the current status of the cluster plan.

Each Cluster Implementation Committee answered the following questions:

1. What actions have been taken to carry out the Cluster Pastoral Plan?
2. What actions still need to be taken to meet the goals of the Cluster Pastoral Plan?
3. To what degree has the vision of the Cluster Pastoral Plan been implemented?
4. Were any new needs discovered or new actions taken during the implementation of the Cluster Pastoral Plan?
5. What obstacles, if any, stood in the way of the implementation of the Cluster Pastoral Plan?

The results of these informal evaluations are posted for each cluster on the Archdiocesan web site at [archdiocese-phl.org/pastplan/cluster.htm](http://archdiocese-phl.org/pastplan/cluster.htm). Seventeen or almost half, determined that their plan implementation was not complete but that new data did not indicate a need for a revised cluster plan, and that they wanted to continue to work on their current plan. Almost as many clusters (13 clusters) elected to develop their plans because implementation was either complete or the plan was no longer applicable to their changing situation. New information indicated that the plan needed to be developed. Eleven clusters felt that implementation was complete and that the passage of time and new information did not necessitate doing anything more at this time. In these 11 clusters on "hold", the regional vicars and the cluster implementation committees will continue to meet periodically to reassess their situation.

### ....Vital Parishes cont.

actions called for in every parish's mission. Each parish is unique and the way in which the mission of Christ is carried out in the local parish will be different. The Characteristics Found in Vital Parishes is meant as a guide to assist in the parish pastoral council's work of inquiry and evaluation, but it is not meant as a concrete list of what each parish should look like.

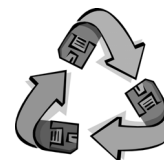
As the parish pastoral councils begin to review the Characteristics Found in Vital Parishes, using it as a guide to inquire into the life of the parish, it may be helpful to have a copy of your parish mission statement and current pastoral plan on hand. As you look over each, consider the expectations as they are listed, the current parish plan and the parish mission statement. This process may be helpful as parish pastoral councils seek to connect the mission statement and pastoral plan to the concrete actions of parish life.

- Additional copies of The Characteristics Found in Vital Parishes are available by contacting Bob Choiniere, Coordinator for the Development of Parish Pastoral Councils, at 215-587-3694.

What can I do

to help

save time and money?



**That's a no brainer!  
Just send me an e-mail and say  
"Hey Ron I'd like to save a tree!"**

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to you  
[orp@adphila.org](mailto:orp@adphila.org)  
Ron Lill Ed.**

# Who am I ?

Have you ever been asked about yourself, only to respond by describing *what* you do? We seldom talk about *who* we are. It is easier for us to talk about *what* we do in our world of work. We are pastors, teachers, homemakers, sales persons, secretaries, counselors, laborers, engineers – some part time and others full time.

How comfortable are you talking about your role as a Christian? When we are baptized, we hear the words, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." Rather than *what* or *who*, the baptismal service reminds us of *whose* we are. When we remember we belong to God, we connect to a whole history of marvelous ways our God has helped and guided us through life.

When we gather together in times of prayer, we have the opportunity to share ourselves and our stories with our fellow Christians in a way which goes beyond simply what we do, but moves deeper to ask who we are and what is important to us. This can seem daunt-

ing and uncomfortable for those of us who have practiced only forms of private prayer for most of our lives. Sharing our faith with others makes us vulnerable, but this form of prayer also opens us up to the gifts of being in community. It is rare in our world that we have an opportunity to talk about who we are and to share our experience of being a child of God. By sharing our experiences we come to know the power of community, we find strength in the company of fellow disciples who share the same struggles and concerns as we do.

When we gather as a community of disciples we miss a powerful opportunity to deepen our faith and assist each other on our journeys if we do not take the time to pray together and put our experiences into dialogue with the Word of God. As we grow more accustomed to this type of prayer, it soon becomes a natural part of the life of any parish group. In fact, when the prayer is absent it seems that the meeting is more scattered and less cohesive. In

the end, shared prayer provides a time for individuals to share their experiences of faith, demonstrates the centrality of prayer in the life of the Christian community, and helps to focus all members on the larger mission that we all share - proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all people through the witness of our lives. By creating a space where we can share our faith with one another, we are reminded of who we are and whose we are; we come to know ourselves in new ways by sharing our experiences with our fellow disciples.

A sample prayer using a basic form of faith sharing is found on the parish pastoral council Web site at [archdiocese-phl.org/pastplan/prayer01.htm](http://archdiocese-phl.org/pastplan/prayer01.htm). It is our hope to publish more of these sample prayers to assist parish pastoral councils in developing the prayer life of the council. If you have any recommendations for future prayer services please contact Robert Choiniere at 215-587-3694

## They Want Me ? on Parish Pastoral Council!



So, you have been selected to serve as a member of the parish pastoral council. Congratulations, right? Membership on the parish pastoral council is a privilege as is any service as we are called to by our faith community, but taking on this call to service could be like walking into the great unknown.

Unlike other work that is more concrete and task-oriented, the Parish Pastoral Council is charged with praying, visioning and dreaming, reflecting and advising, consulting and synthesizing. This is an important and vital role within the parish, but it is not always tangible and the results of your work may not be immediately seen. So, just when the frustration hits you, remember the words of the Cheshire Cat as he was trying to set Alice straight, "If you don't care where you want to go, then it doesn't matter how you get there." The fact is, we do have somewhere to go. We have a

mission and a call to discipleship. The members of the Parish Pastoral Council play a vital role in setting the course and pace of the parish's faith journey so that, as a community, we head to the place where we want to go and not wander aimlessly. Membership on the Parish Pastoral Council requires a great deal of patience, a willingness to listen to the needs of the community, and a deep faith in the Spirit leading us into the future. To be chosen by your fellow parishioners to serve the community in this way is a sign of their faith in your insight and an acknowledgement of your ability, and it is this faith that will carry you through your tenure as a parish pastoral council member.

*-More help about the purpose and function of the Parish Pastoral Council can be found on the Archdiocesan web site:*  
<http://archphila.org/pastplan/INDEX/PPCindex.html>