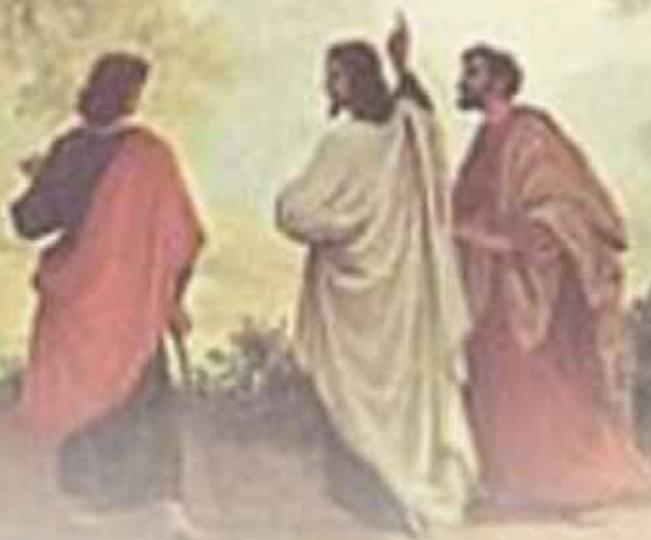




Parish Commissions





OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SAGINAW

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February 12, 2014

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In 2012, the Diocese of Saginaw began the process of *Planning Tomorrow's Parishes*. This process has led to considerable transitions for our parish leaders and parishioners. Each has had his or her own response to change. Some have experienced sorrow, discouragement, even anger. Others have embraced the changes with enthusiasm and hope. All of these responses are to be recognized and honored, realizing that all of us are united in Christ.

The unwavering goal of *Planning Tomorrow's Parishes* is to foster vibrant parish life. One of the keys to attaining this goal is evangelization. While we may all have differing ideas of evangelization, I endorse the following working definition: *Evangelization* is sharing the Gospel of Jesus by our words, deeds and Christian joy, proposing to others a lifetime of discipleship within the Church, so that society is transformed in Christ. Indeed, evangelization both fosters vibrant parish life and is the very mission of parish endeavors.

To further strengthen evangelization throughout the Diocese of Saginaw, I asked diocesan staff to work in four key areas related to evangelization: Faith Formation, Stewardship, Christian Service, and Worship. They were directed to re-evaluate the true purpose of local "parish" commissions in order to ensure that they reflect the overall goal of evangelization. The diocesan staff has reached a turning point in their review and wish to share their evaluation with you.

Regional workshops will be presented in the spring for individuals serving on the various parish commissions. Guided by the parish pastoral council, each parish commission will be encouraged to consider how their programs awaken evangelization and foster discipleship. Through the common lens of evangelization, members of parish commissions ought to inspire outreach to the poor, approach stewardship in a manner which best fits their parish, promote vibrant liturgical participation, and provide effective faith formation experiences. Consistency of approach in each parish commission would make inter-parish collaboration easier and more effective, allowing for a better understanding of their responsibilities and open discussion regarding shared vision and programs.

I recognize all that you are doing to help our parishes prepare for the mission of Christ in the future. Be assured of my prayers and deep gratitude.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Joseph R. Cistone
Bishop of Saginaw



Diocesan Guidelines for PARISH CHRISTIAN SERVICE MINISTRY

Our parish communities are measured by how they serve ‘the least of these’ in our parish and beyond its boundaries – the hungry, the homeless, the sick, those in prison, the stranger (cf. Mt 25:31). Our local families of faith are called to ‘hunger and thirst for justice’ and to be peacemakers in our own communities (cf. Mt 5:6, 9).

**Communities of Salt and Light
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops**

THE CHRISTIAN SERVICE COMMISSION under the general direction of the pastor and parish pastoral council is composed of members who serve to empower the parish community to fulfill the gospel mandate of service and justice. Christian service reflects our belief in the dignity of each person from conception to natural death. As we serve others, we are enriched in Faith as members of the One Body of Christ.

Every baptized Christian is called to fulfill the gospel mandate. It is imperative that the members of the commission know that they are not responsible to *do* the entire social ministry themselves, but, as Disciples of Christ, to *lead, empower, and involve others* in actively accepting the responsibility of baptism.

THE SCOPE OF THE COMMISSIONS WORK

- Supporting people in their family life and work life
- Serving the “least of these” through outreach
- Advocating for justice through legislative action
- Creating community
- Building Solidarity

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES of the Christian Service Commission include:

Leadership: Offering guidance and vision for the parish’s Christian Service ministry in light of the overall vision of evangelization.

Assessment: Developing familiarity with the assets and needs of the parish, the community, and the region; evaluating the spiritual effect of Christian Service on persons.

Planning:	Generating reasonable and achievable goals and time lines.
Coordination:	Facilitating direction and organization for projects.
Education:	Providing opportunities for the parish to become familiar with and respond to the teachings of the Church and the needs of the community.
Collaboration:	Working with other parish commissions and groups to integrate ministry, such as: Stewardship, Liturgy and Religious Education Programs.

THE STRUCTURE AND MEMBERSHIP of the Christian Service Commission will vary, for parishes come in many shapes and sizes. How a commission is structured will be determined by the size and needs of the individual parish. In general, the Christian Service Commission provides direction and coordination for the social ministry efforts of the parish. Some of the groups and services that are typically organized under the umbrella of social ministry include:

Outreach to the poor: food pantries, soup kitchens, giving tree, Thanksgiving baskets, clothing drives, etc.

Emergency Assistance: rent, utilities, prescriptions, etc.

Respect Life activities

BeFriender Ministry

Parish Nurse

Jail Ministry

Visiting the sick/homebound

Funeral luncheons

Cards/letters to shut-ins

Legislative Advocacy

Promoting Fair Trade

Disaster Relief

Raising awareness on global concerns; rural issues, poverty, etc.

- Membership is made up of persons interested in the social mission (service and justice) of the Church and a representative from committees doing the work of service and justice (see above list).
- The structure includes a chairperson. The chair is responsible for communicating with the Pastor or Pastoral Administrator or assigned pastoral support staff.
- The commission relates to the Parish Pastoral Council through a representative or through regular reporting.
- The commission collaborates with representatives from the school, religious education programs, and other commissions (i.e., Worship, Faith Formation, etc.)

THE BENEFITS OF MEETING AS A COMMISSION

When specific ministries share together, they can learn how they impact one another and get a better picture of the whole. For example: a group that meets to address emergency needs may confirm the need for help with prescription coverage. This will help those involved with legislative advocacy understand and evaluate the impact of proposed Medicaid and Medicare legislation.

RECRUITMENT strategies include time and talent surveys, personal invitations, and bulletin announcements. Some personal strategies may include:

- Offering a “mini-retreat” to share people’s experiences or ask other ministries in the parish to share their mission with the participants.
- Ask parishioners to recommend others for a specific ministry like outreach to the poor or legislative advocacy.
- Offer opportunities for varying durations. Some people are not in a position to make long or time consuming commitments.

Describe specific ministry roles. Each ministry should have a brief job description that includes:

- Job title: “Minister to the Sick”, “Legislative Advocate”, etc.
- Specific responsibilities: a list of tasks to be done
- Requirements: skills and/or training needed
- Time commitment: a realistic estimate of hours per week or month

*Whenever possible, match the gifts and life experience of people with the needs of the community.

SUPPORT

Volunteers need to know who they can go to when questions and challenges arise. For some, a person within a specific ministry will provide this kind of supervision. For others, it will be a pastoral staff person.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Each specific ministry periodically reports to the Christian Service Commission, which in turn is accountable to the Parish Pastoral Council.

FORMATION AND TRAINING is a necessary component of ministry. Members of the commission need to be rooted in faith and prayer and have familiarity with Catholic Social Teaching. Prayer and study should be a regular part of the work of the commission. Members should be encouraged to attend diocesan workshops; it is appropriate for the parish to provide funding for such education and formation. Trainings offered at or through the diocese include: BeFriender Ministry, Lay Ministry, Grief Ministry, Christian Service Commission -Getting Started, Moving from Charity to Justice, and Catholic Social Teaching.

BEGINNING A COMMISSION can come from the initiative of the pastor/pastoral administrator, other staff member, or a parish volunteer. The Office of Christian Service can provide resources to help parishes including:

- Consultation
- Parish presentations and workshops
- Evenings of reflection

- Assistance in goal setting
- Training in volunteer ministry

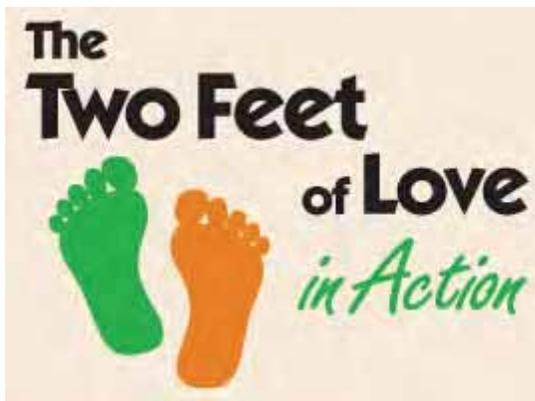
RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

Please contact Terri Grierson in the Office of Christian Service at 989-797-6650 or tgrierson@dioceseofsaginaw.org for more information or to schedule a Christian Service presentation at your parish. For more information about Stewardship and the connection between **Christian Service and Stewardship**, contact Annette O'Brien at 989-797-6679 or aobrien@dioceseofsaginaw.org

To learn more about Catholic Social Teaching and Charity and Justice, visit:

<http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/>

<http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/two-feet-of-love-in-action.cfm>





Diocesan Guidelines for PARISH FAITH FORMATION COMMISSION

Definition of Faith Formation

Faith formation may be defined as the totality of the Church's effort to continue the teaching mission of Jesus Christ, whereby the Faith is presented in an organic and systematic way so as to lead people into a life of ever-deepening discipleship. Discipleship naturally leads to evangelization – the sharing of the Good News with others.

Faith formation involves both catechetical instruction and the forming of others in a life of prayer, worship, witness, and service (especially to the poorest among us). This essential task of faith formation is a shared mission both in parish life as well as in our Catholic schools – and it is a mission also shared by Catholic families. Everyone is included in this universal endeavor of renewing our faith and rejuvenating our Christian ideals.

Definition of Two Key Terms: Discipleship and Evangelization

Discipleship is a lifelong, vital relationship with Jesus in faith, such that we grow each day in knowing, loving, and serving the Lord, and one another.

Evangelization is sharing the Gospel of Jesus by our words, deeds and Christian joy, proposing to others a lifetime of discipleship within the Church, so that society is transformed in Christ.

A Common Language

When speaking of faith formation, it is helpful to arrive at a common language and have consistency in our use of terms. This allows us to be more unified. At the same time, striving for a common language is not meant to imply the need for a “cookie cutter” approach to faith formation. A diversity of circumstances exists from parish to parish, and since every parish has unique gifts, each is called to carry out faith formation in the way that best meets the needs of its people.

Some terminology linked to faith formation is outdated. One such term is “CCD” (named after the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine). In its place, some parishes have adopted the term “Parish Religious Education Program.” However this term is also less than ideal.

Faith formation has the advantage of emphasizing the goal of forming persons in a lifetime of

discipleship. Discipleship necessarily entails a process, not just a class that starts and ends. When the term “Religious Education” is used, there is a risk that “knowing the Lord” is reduced to merely knowing information about him. But to know the Lord is also to come into an authentic and vital relationship with him. In this earthly life, there is no “graduation date” for a disciple of the Lord; there is never a point where a disciple of the Lord can say: “I have arrived . . . I can no longer grow in loving, knowing and serving the Lord.” Faith formation implies a movement from head to heart to hands to voice: that is, from catechetical instruction to meaningful prayer and worship, to service, and to evangelization. The process can appear to be linear, but it is not. There is always a need to return to, and keep growing in, each area of the Faith.

Discipleship: To Connect – To Grow – To Worship – To Serve

Before Christ ascended to his Father after his resurrection, He gave the apostles a final command – to make disciples of all nations . . . The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch but in communion, in intimacy, with Jesus Christ. (Blessed John Paul II, *Catechesi Tradendae*, 1, 5)

Discipleship centers on daily encounters with Jesus Christ. In everything that happens in a parish – from training lectors to service projects to commission meetings – we should strive to include time for a meaningful “Jesus encounter” as a way of helping us to grow as disciples. For example, just a few minutes devoted to *Lectio Divina* or an Ignatian meditation at the start of a gathering or activity can bear much fruit.

The four elements of the RCIA provide a rich model for fostering discipleship:

1. CONNECT . . . with others by forming community
2. GROW . . . in our knowledge of the Lord, of Scripture and Tradition, and of the teachings of the Church
3. WORSHIP . . . by understanding and taking part in the liturgical life of the Church
4. SERVE . . . by carrying out Christian service, especially to the needy, and by being good stewards of our time, talent and treasure

When the goal of fostering discipleship is embraced, all areas of parish life are impacted.

Evangelization: To Witness to the Joy within Us

The Church "exists in order to evangelize, that is to say, in order to preach and teach, to be the channel of the gift of grace, to reconcile sinners with God, and to perpetuate Christ's sacrifice in the Mass, which is the memorial of His death and glorious resurrection.” (Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 14)

Discipleship should naturally blossom into **evangelization**, which means bringing Christ’s Good News to others by our authentic Christian WITNESS. To witness means we not only continue in our own

ongoing process of conversion, but we also seek to invite and attract others by words and actions to a lifelong journey of discipleship within the context of the faith community that is the Church. The evangelizing mission of the Church is meant to be carried out by all of the faithful – not only by clergy, members of religious communities, or an evangelization committee.

It is the responsibility of the pastor or pastoral administrator, as well as the Parish Pastoral Council, to ensure that all of the parish's commissions and activities fulfill this mission to evangelize.

Purpose of the Parish Faith Formation Commission

The Parish Faith Formation Commission serves as a standing commission of the Parish Pastoral Council. The commission receives its direction from the pastor or pastoral administrator, as well as from the Parish Pastoral Council. In addition to providing advice and consultation regarding the various aspects of faith formation, the Parish Faith Formation Commission is responsible for faith formation being carried out in a way that is in harmony with the vision and expectations of the Catholic Church, the Diocese of Saginaw, and the pastor or pastoral administrator. In larger parishes, individual ministries such as Youth Ministry, Young Adult Ministry, etc. sometimes have their own committees. In these cases, the committees are subsidiary to the Parish Faith Formation Commission.

Responsibilities of the Parish Faith Formation Commission also include the assessment of current strengths and needs within the parish with regard to faith formation; research and planning; assistance with the formation of programs and services; assistance in coordination with parish mission, goals and priorities; and coordination with other parish commissions such as Worship and Christian Service.

Especially in those places that have undergone or will be undergoing mergers, the Parish Faith Formation Commission can effectively model, in a positive and concrete way, the benefit of working together for the good of the parish.

Typical Areas of Focus

The work of the Parish Faith Formation Commission touches on many areas within the life of the parish. Leaders should carry out periodic assessments to identify priorities and focus on a manageable agenda. Areas that fall under this commission and its subsidiary structures could include:

Sacramental Catechesis (in collaboration with the Worship Commission): Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance & Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Matrimony and Holy Orders.

Children's Catechesis: Parish catechetical programs; in-home settings.

Parish Youth Ministry: To empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today; to draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the Catholic faith community; to foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person. (*Renewing the Vision*, USCCB)

Young Adults: Outreach to college students, home or away, and young adults transitioning from school to an independent way of life.

Adult Faith Formation: Parish programs; faith formation through existing parish organizations; small faith communities; Scripture study groups; faith study gatherings based on such resources as the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the *YouCat*, *The United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*, the documents of Vatican II, and other Church documents.

Family Formation: Whole family or whole community catechesis (examples include intergenerational experiences such as summer “faith camps” for the family); parent formation, since parents are the primary teachers of the Faith; family to family networks; family ritual, prayer and celebration.

Formation in Prayer: Growth in our lives of prayer is a crucial aspect of discipleship: “Lord, teach us to pray” (Lk 11:1). Offering opportunities to learn various ways of praying, such as the Liturgy of the Hours, *Lectio Divina*, Ignatian Meditation, etc.

Vocations: Fostering openness to the priestly, religious, married, and generous single life, while helping people understand how each way of life complements and supports the others.

Catechesis for the Developmentally Disabled: Examples include SPRED (Special Religious Development), a program which designs faith formation specifically to meet the spiritual needs of children and adults with developmental disabilities, or other types of inclusion ministries.

RCIA: Offering support and consultation to the parish’s RCIA leadership committee in their efforts to form disciples.

Multi-Cultural Formation: As disciples of Christ, in whom, “there is neither Jew nor Greek” (Gal 3:28), we are called to value the gifts of people from all cultures and find ways to foster awareness of – and celebrate – cultural diversity within the Church.

Ecumenical and interreligious collaboration: Working with the Christian Service Commission and the Worship Commission to carry out initiatives with members of other local Churches and ecclesial communities, as well as with non-Christians. The pastor or pastoral administrator should be consulted from the outset to help ensure that ecumenical and interreligious collaboration is carried out in accord with the guidelines of the Church. The diocesan ecumenical and interreligious officer is also available to offer guidance and support.

Membership

Persons who are fully initiated Catholics and registered as parishioners are eligible for membership. Balanced representation from various segments of a parish's population is desirable: individuals of both genders and from different cultural backgrounds; both married and single persons; longstanding parishioners as well as newcomers (new parishioners can often offer fresh, valuable perspectives); individuals from a variety of age groups, with the minimum being those of high school age.

In those parishes undergoing mergers, the Parish Faith Formation Commission should include members

from the churches designated as the parish church, the additional use church, and the occasional use church.

Important qualities of a commission member include: a lived discipleship; a solid understanding and sincere practice of the Catholic Faith; an enthusiasm to share the teachings of the Catholic Faith with others by word and deed; and an active engagement in, and concern about, the life of the parish. Members should be given terms of service no greater than three years (though they are renewable). The terms of service should be staggered.

The parish's faith formation director (or the equivalent) and RCIA coordinator typically serve as liaisons to the Parish Faith Formation Commission.

Where appropriate (such as at parishes that have a Catholic School attached, or whose children attend a nearby Catholic School), either the principal of that school or her/his delegate may also be invited to serve as a liaison to the Parish Faith Formation Commission, so that parishes and schools can find ways to foster a rich sense of unity and mutual support.

Meetings

The Parish Faith Formation Commission is well served by dedicating a portion of its meeting time for the purposes of shared learning and dialogue on things that pertain to faith formation. Agendas should begin with a meaningful encounter with the Lord in prayer, followed by an opportunity to grow in faith and understanding, such as meditatively reading the upcoming Sunday gospel along the lines of *Lectio Divina*, sharing on a point from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, or studying a section from a Church document on faith formation or evangelization. After prayer and study, then the meeting should proceed with a reasonable list of topics to be addressed.

The number of meetings held by the Parish Faith Formation Commission varies according to parish size and the matters that call for attention. Many commissions meet monthly or bimonthly.

Roles and Relationships

Like the Parish Pastoral Council itself, the Parish Faith Formation Commission has an advisory and consultative relationship with the pastor or pastoral administrator, as well as with the person designated by the pastor or pastoral administrator to directly oversee faith formation in the parish. The commission often may meet in the presence of one or more delegates from the parish staff, and various parish catechetical leaders (e.g., those who lead youth and young adult ministries).

As needed, the Parish Faith Formation Commission likewise sends one or more representatives to the Parish Pastoral Council. The task for these persons is not only to report and represent the work of the commission, but to learn and convey back to the commission the issues, works and concerns of the Parish Pastoral Council and its other commissions.

The Parish Faith Formation Commission carries out its responsibilities in a spirit of collaboration with the pastor or pastoral administrator, the parish's faith formation director (or the equivalent), the parish staff, the Parish Pastoral Council, and the wider parish community. The commission also has a

collaborative relationship with other parish commissions.

Finally, members of the Parish Faith Formation Commission are to be mindful of reaching out to parishioners and listening to their input, recognizing how much it means to parishioners when they have a sense that they can share their concerns and ideas, and that they are valued.

Please note: the diocesan Formation offices are ready to assist you and your parish with any needs



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Diocesan Guidelines for PARISH STEWARDSHIP COMMISSION



"Disciples who practice stewardship recognize God as the origin of life, the giver of freedom, the source of all they have and are and will be. They are deeply aware of the truth that, "The Lord's are the earth and its fullness; the world and those who dwell in it." (Psalms 24:1) They know themselves to be recipients and caretakers of Gods many gifts. They are grateful for what they have received and eager to cultivate their gifts out of love for God and one another." (Stewardship: A Disciple's Response, USCCB Pastoral Letter 1992)

"The most successful evangelization taking place today is in parishes, which have worked long and hard to help people understand the true concept of stewardship and giftedness, and which provide an atmosphere where everyone feels welcome and needed." (*A Future Full of Hope; Pastoral Letter to the People of the Diocese of Saginaw*, October 7, 2011)

Purpose of the Commission

The Parish Stewardship Commission serves as a standing Commission of the Parish Pastoral Council. This Commission is advisory and consultative to the pastor or pastoral administrator and designee. This Commission collaborates with all other commissions and committees of the parish to ensure the ongoing life-long education, formation, conversion and facilitation of stewardship as a way of life within the lives of individual parishioners and the parish as a whole.

The ministries foundational to the Stewardship Commissions are those that fall under the Four Pillars of stewardship, namely hospitality, prayer, formation, and service.

- A. **Hospitality** – Every parish should ensure that all parishioners of the parish sense and recognize that they are invited, encouraged, and provided with the opportunity to be involved in the parish, thus feeling welcomed, served, and appreciated. **[elements: hospitality, greeter, and welcome ministry]**Hospitality flows from awareness of the fundamental value of each person and the privilege to serve another.
- B. **Prayer** – In connection with other commissions and committees of the parish, provide and facilitate a variety of personal and communal prayer opportunities and related education within the parish since it is through prayer and living the Mass that we recognize, receive, accept, and share God's grace and giftedness in love of God and neighbor. Stewardship is an invitation to a change of heart, to transform what is **my gift to our spiritual legacy**. This conversion can only occur through prayer.
- C. **Formation** – Ongoing prayer, education, and communication are necessary to foster and strengthen the stewardship conversion process. This formation process should seek to weave the language and practice of stewardship into every fabric of the parish. **[elements: stewardship education, annual renewal processes, annual parish-wide leadership retreats/opportunities]**
- D. **Service** – Parishioners are invited and have the opportunity to serve and be served, giving, receiving, and sharing their God-given giftedness. It is through service at the parish or broader community level that a Christian steward is provided the opportunity to respond, in action, to his/her call to discipleship individually and/or collectively as a parish community. **[elements: Ministry Fairs, time and talent and treasure commitments, gift discernment programs]** In

service, each realizes that charity is not an option; rather charity is God's love poured out for the sake of others.

Membership of the Stewardship Commission

The Stewardship Commission should be parishioners who possess the following traits: familiar with the principle of Christian Stewardship; persons of faith, with deep appreciation for Scripture and prayer; committed to the parish; have the ability to envision where stewardship can take the parish; have strong people skills; well organized and committed to serving on the commission; possess strong communication skills, creativity, computer and technology skills; dependable and flexible; seek to implement accountability within the parish community; and have the ability to identify and call forth those in the parish with the talents necessary to build parish programs and ministries.

While it is impossible to find one person with all of these skills and talents, it is important to form a Commission that collectively possesses as many of these talents as possible.

The Commission should reflect the size and diversity of the parish community. It should be large enough to facilitate the annual and ongoing activities necessary to maintain an active stewardship formation and education process within the parish.

In most parishes, the Stewardship Commission is made up of eight to twelve parishioners and includes pastor or pastoral administrator or designee as a resource. Merged parishes should insure representation from all parishes forming the new parish community.

A chairperson and secretary are necessary for each Parish Stewardship Commission.

Meetings

An adequate number of meetings will be scheduled to insure the completion of the tasks assigned to this Commission. Many parishes find ten meetings per year to be adequate. It is often helpful to form subcommittees to accomplish specific tasks between meetings which are then reported to and voted on by the full Commission.

Examples of subcommittees include those dedicated to: hospitality/welcoming, technology, communication, annual renewal, Ministry Fairs, accountability, planned giving, and others as needed. Many are short term in nature but are likely to be needed each year. Since it is feasible to have several subcommittees, the commission should create guidelines that spell out how such subcommittees are formed; specifically, the number of Commission members required to serve on the subcommittee versus the number of additional ex officio people that can be added to fulfill the work of the subcommittee.

All Commission meetings will begin with prayer. In addition, at least fifteen minutes of every meeting will be allocated to stewardship education/formation of Commission members which could include study of the 1992 USCCB Pastoral Letter entitled: "Stewardship: A Disciple's Response," viewing videos, review of new books or articles on the topic of stewardship, or any other educational opportunities as they arise.

Duties and Responsibilities

The duties and responsibilities of a Parish Stewardship Commission may vary depending on the size of the parish. However, the following are those important duties and responsibilities essential in facilitating a viable, vibrant, and successful stewardship process.

A CAUTION is offered to all Stewardship Commissions as they review the list that follows. While all of these elements are necessary for creating a comprehensive, sustainable stewardship process for the parish, a new Commission should proceed slowly, adding additional items as they master others.

- A. **Education and Formation** – This process should begin with the Parish’s Stewardship Commission. If the commission is newly formed, an important first step is an educational process for all members, reviewing a document such as the 1992 Bishop’s Pastoral Letter entitled “Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response.” An ongoing commitment to education and review of new materials is important for all Parish Stewardship Commissions. (Idea to keep in mind: the message of stewardship never changes since that message comes from Scripture. HOWEVER, the manner in which we present it to our parishioners AND the way we invite them to make time and talent as well as treasure commitments should change every year or two so that the message does not become old because of the way in which it is presented.) The formal parish education process is predicated upon the Bible (the textbook of stewardship) and the Mass, (the school of stewardship) targeted towards all parish leadership and teachers, and threaded into homilies whenever possible. This education process includes the annual stewardship renewal process which leads to commitments by the parishioners of their possessions and treasure and their skills and talents through time and talent surveys. It also includes year around education and inclusion of stewardship education in all catechesis curriculums.
- B. **Communication** – creating a variety of methods to communicate the message of stewardship, including a regular newsletter (monthly, bimonthly or quarterly) bulletin inserts and quotes, stewardship brochures and commitment cards, creation of a Parish Ministry Directory/Booklet that can be given to new members of the parish, Lay Witness presentations where parishioners tell of their stewardship journey; Welcoming Committee which includes registering new parishioners and holding welcoming receptions for groups of newcomers, preparing a welcoming packet to be presented to the new families, greeters before and after all Masses, sponsoring Ministry Fairs.
- C. **Conducting the Annual Stewardship Educational/Renewal Process** - Preparing materials, identifying and training lay ministry presenters, all other tasks as needed to conduct the annual parish Stewardship Renewal Process, working with leaders of all parish ministries to insure that all parishioners who have volunteered for a ministry are contacted; organizing annual parish stewardship appreciation events; facilitating thank you messages to all who have made a time and talent and/or a treasure commitment as a result of the renewal process.
- D. **Accountability and Planning** - Working with parish staff to create accountability documents such as an annual end-of-year financial and ministry report to be distributed to every member of the parish; work with Pastoral Council to create/update a parish plan that includes goals and objectives that are specific and measurable in facilitating the mission of the parish.

Resources for Formation

The Diocesan Office of Stewardship, Planned Giving, and CSA Marketing has a library of audiovisual and print resources and staff available for consultation by phone, on site, or via e-mail. It can also provide lists of parish websites throughout the country who have well developed websites and stewardship programs. The Office will also make available Stewardship Bulletin messages, summaries of sessions conducted at the International Catholic Stewardship Council's conference, titles of new books and materials dealing with Stewardship.

Study Tools

As indicated in several parts of this document, an ideal document for every Stewardship Commission member to have is a copy of the 1992 United States Catholic Conference of Bishops Pastoral Letter entitled, "Stewardship: A Disciple's Response."

Additional material lists can be requested from the Diocesan Office of Stewardship, Planned Giving, and CSA. (Phone (989-797-6679 or e-mail: aobrien@dioceseofsaginaw.org)

Diocesan Guidelines for PARISH WORSHIP COMMISSION

In our Catholic worship, we both express and foster faith. “Faith grows when it is well expressed in celebration. Good celebrations foster and nourish faith. Poor celebrations may weaken it.” (*Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship*, 5) Therefore, it is with the utmost pastoral concern that pastors, pastoral administrators and parish leaders must prepare liturgies that are in accord with the liturgical books and documents, bear fidelity to the rich heritage of the Church, and enable the “full, active and conscious participation of the assembly”

(Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 14, 42)

PURPOSE AND FUNCTION

The Parish Worship Commission serves as a standing committee of the Parish Pastoral Council. This Commission is advisory and consultative to the parish liturgy coordinator or music minister and pastor/pastoral administrator in matters pertaining to the liturgical life of the parish.

Ministries foundational to the liturgical life of the parish include: music; art and environment; liturgy preparation; lectors; Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion; ministers of hospitality, ushers and greeters; sacristans; and servers.

Responsibilities of the Parish Worship Commission include: preparation for liturgies; formation, training, and scheduling of liturgical ministers; formation of the assembly; and the on-going “mystagogical reflection” (evaluation) of parish liturgies.

MEMBERSHIP

The size and make-up of the membership of the Parish Worship Commission will vary from parish to parish. Ideally, membership would include: the parish music minister; the coordinator of art/environment; coordinators of the various liturgical ministries; the pastor/pastoral administrator; and representation from the worshiping community itself. (Especially helpful would be an "at large" representative or two from each of the parish liturgies representing various age groups of the community.)

Members should be parishioners who are faithful in participating in the liturgical life of the parish, able to attend and interested in participating in the meetings and ongoing work of the commission. In addition, those representing the liturgical ministries should have some education and formation in the areas of liturgy, liturgical ministry, the liturgical year, and principles of art and environment and music in Catholic worship. It would be helpful to the work of the Commission if the "at large" representatives were also offered opportunities for such formation.

MEETINGS

The number of meetings of any Parish Worship Commission should be determined at the local parish level, keeping in mind that enough time should be allowed for prayer, ongoing formation, planning (short and long range), evaluation, and other action items that need to be discussed. Sufficient time should be allowed for all to share in discussion and tasks.

There are many approaches to determining and scheduling meetings of Parish Worship Commissions. Some

parishes find it beneficial to have the full membership of the Commission meet on a monthly basis. As Commissions grow into defining a good working style and pattern, a shift to seasonal meetings of the entire group and smaller meetings of subcommittees (such as art and environment, liturgical music, liturgical ministries, etc.) serve the parish well. There is no "right or wrong" approach, but a good approach is one which makes good use of committee members' time and talent, and keeps true to the four-fold focus of: (1) planning, (2) formation of liturgical ministers, (3) formation of the assembly, and (4) evaluation.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The liturgical ministry of the pastor/pastoral administrator is integral to the ministry of the Parish Worship Commission, and vice versa. It is therefore advised that, at least for seasonal planning purposes, the pastor/pastoral administrator attend the commission meeting. And, if the parish is served by a Sacramental Minister, it might be beneficial that the priest-celebrant at parish liturgies also occasionally be present.

In the pastor/pastoral administrator's absence, often the parish liturgical coordinator or music minister acts as the liaison with the Parish Worship Commission. In addition, chairpersons of subcommittees such as liturgical music, art and environment, and liturgical ministries would be accountable to this designated staff person.

TYPICAL ACTIVITIES

Earlier paragraphs have identified a basic fourfold focus or "basic activities" of a Parish Worship Commission, and a description of the various liturgical ministries that might be represented on the Commission.

Underlying all activity of the Parish Worship Commission is, however, a working knowledge and familiarity with the liturgical documents, the ritual texts of the Catholic Church, and basic principles for preparing and evaluating liturgies.

RESOURCES FOR FORMATION

The diocesan Office of Liturgy has many resources, and the staff is available for consultation by phone or on site. In addition, the Office of Liturgy staff and Diocesan Worship Commission offer various workshops and presentations which include an introduction to the liturgy, the liturgical year, and principles for art/environment and liturgical music.

In recent years, little has been written on the structure and purpose of the Parish Worship Commission. Basic texts which every Parish Worship Commission member should own or have access to include: Lectionary for Mass (all volumes), The Roman Missal (3rd Typical Edition), *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (GIRM), *Redemptionis Sacramentum* (Instruction on the Eucharist), Ordo, The Liturgy Documents (Four Volumes), The Rites I and II, Sourcebook for Sundays, Seasons and Weekdays, Workbook for Lectors and Gospel Readers, and the Book of Blessings.

Liturgical actions are not private actions but celebrations of the Church itself, which is the "sacrament of unity" namely, a holy people assembled and ordered under the bishops; therefore liturgical actions pertain to the whole body of the Church and manifest and affect it, but they affect the individual members of the Church in different ways according to the diversity of orders, functions and actual participation.

(The Code of Canon Law 837.1)

Resources:

Periodicals: Pastoral Liturgy (LTP, Chicago, IL); Pastoral Music (NPM, Silver Springs, MD); USCCB Bishops' Committee on Divine Worship Newsletter.

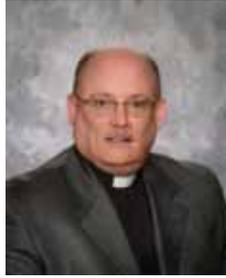
Books: Preparing Parish Liturgies (by Rita Thiron of Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN); The Sacristy Manual, 2nd Edition (by G. Thomas Ryan of LTP, Chicago, IL); Worshipping Well: A Mass Guide for Planners and Participants (by Father Larry Mick of Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN).

Diocesan Website: "We Have Come to Worship Him" (Pastoral Letter on the Implementation of the GIRM 2006); Year of Grace (Liturgical Planning Guide); "Guidelines and Protocols for the Design and Renovation of Churches and Chapels"; Seasonal Penance Liturgies.

Other Websites: NPM.org (National Association of Pastoral Musicians – Planning Calendar); OCP.org (Oregon Catholic Press – Liturgy Planning Guide); liturgy@slu.edu (The Sunday Liturgy at St. Louis University).



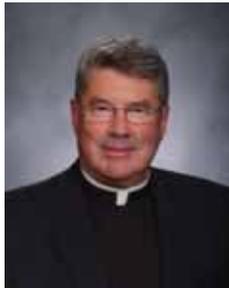
The Office of Liturgy Staff is here at the Diocese of Saginaw to be of service to you, so please feel free to contact us for any clarifications and/or further information (989) 797-6665:



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References to Evangelization from *A Future Full of Hope*

Evangelization must be a part of everything we do and everything we are as a community of faith. Every aspect of parish and diocesan life must be imbued with a spirit of evangelization.

We, as a Diocese, are at our own “threshold” of faith-life. Could there be any greater time for a “new evangelization” – a “re-evangelization” – within the Diocese of Saginaw?

I truly believe that we find ourselves at the threshold of “A Future Full of Hope!” I am convinced that, together, with our eyes fixed on Jesus, we will experience in these coming days the grace and strength to bring a New Evangelization to our beloved Diocese of Saginaw.

Liturgy

Parish life is a key part of evangelization. When people . . . are uplifted by engaging liturgies that show forth the beauty of the Lord, our efforts to go deeper in the knowledge of the Catholic faith will bear much fruit.

In the homily I gave at my Installation Mass . . . I went on to say: “My chief priority will be that of promoting a deeper love and appreciation for the Eucharist In this pastoral letter, I have stated that evangelization, together with Catholic education, is my main priority. So, one might ask: “Has the priority changed?” Not at all! The Eucharist is the foundation, the very essence, of what it means for us to be a Church. All priorities must find their source, meaning and grace in the Eucharist.

Christian Service

Charity is not an option for Christians. Concern for the poor and vulnerable is an integral part of evangelization and fundamental to what it means to be Christian. We are not just asked to give from our excess. We are called to give from what is ours in a way that allows us, in some way, to experience the need of another.

The Church community and her work of evangelization are directly affected not only by the blessings and goods that come from strong married and family life, but also by the struggles and failures which arise from the breakdown of marriage and family.

We are a multi-cultural Church. We must strive to welcome everyone, regardless of color, ethnicity, age, gender, socio-economic status or ability.

Outreach to the migrant community is a priority for the Hispanic Ministry Office.

In our evangelization efforts, we must give particular attention to our black brothers and sisters.

Faith Formation

I believe that Catholic education – from cradle to grave – is critical to our mission as an evangelizing Church. Unless we know our faith and Him whom we serve, Jesus Christ, we cannot live or celebrate faith effectively. Evangelization begins with our own knowledge and understanding of God.

Adolescents are old enough to be true witnesses to Jesus Christ and can willingly spread and defend their faith through spoken word and action. Any diocesan plan for evangelization must include our young people as both recipients and givers. Their enthusiasm and desire to serve are contagious virtues which inspire adults to action and form the foundation for our reason to believe in “a future full of hope.”

. . . I believe, and have often expressed, that lay ministers need to assume a “missionary” mindset and refocus their efforts in order to reach out to those who, for a multitude of reasons, no longer find the Church relevant or essential. These lay ministers must become immersed in the Church’s mission of “re-evangelization.” . . . I would encourage lay ministers to balance the “classroom” setting of evangelization with participation in parish-wide visitation programs.

Stewardship

Evangelization finds great expression in the way Christians exercise good stewardship in their lives.

Charity is not an option for Christians. Concern for the poor and vulnerable is an integral part of evangelization and fundamental to what it means to be Christian. We are not just asked to give from our excess. We are called to give from what is ours in a way that allows us, in some way, to experience the need of another.

Stewardship is about a change of heart. It is a way of life and the work of a lifetime. The Church refers to the four pillars of stewardship: hospitality, prayer, formation, and service. The most successful evangelization taking place today is in parishes, which have worked long and hard to help people understand the true concept of stewardship and giftedness, and which provide an atmosphere where everyone feels welcome and needed.

Parish life is a key part of evangelization. When people feel valued in a parish that offers warm hospitality . . . our efforts to go deeper in the knowledge of the Catholic faith will bear much fruit.