



BEACONS  *of* **LIGHT**

Pastoral Planning for Our Third Century

FAMILIES OF PARISHES UNIFIED PASTORAL COUNCIL

Guidelines For Implementation

This document has been edited to reflect the unification of the parish pastoral councils into a Family Pastoral Council. The content of the 1996 publication has been retained intact whenever possible.



GUIDELINE 1

The pastoral council is a consultative body that assists the pastor in matters of pastoral activity, and it deliberates on matters of importance to the Family of Parishes.



Pastoral councils were first established in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati in 1966. The Second Vatican Ecumenical Council and the Sixth Synod of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati (1971) envisioned the work of the pastoral council to be parish renewal. Therefore, the purpose of the pastoral council is to promote the spiritual growth of the Family of Parishes community, and to plan ways for the Family of Parishes to carry out the mission of the Church.

The responsibility for the mission of the Church is a shared responsibility. The clergy and lay members of the Christian faithful have respective roles and support each other in a spirit of co-responsibility. To help fulfill that purpose in the context of a faith community, the documents of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council and the 1983 Code of Canon Law call for a structure that will assist the pastor in his pastoral ministry, which is the pastoral council. The name ‘pastoral council’ is recommended for three reasons:

1. It reflects more accurately in name its chief task of assisting the pastor “in fostering pastoral action”¹⁸;
2. It helps to clarify how distinct the role of the pastoral council is compared to the role and the work of the parish finance committee. The pastoral council is charged with assisting the pastor in parish renewal and pastoring; while the finance committee is responsible “to help the parish priest in the administration of the goods of the parish.”¹⁹ Such notwithstanding, however, the archdiocesan *Document on Temporal Affairs*, as particular law for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, does indicate a consultative responsibility of the pastoral council as it pertains to some specifically circumscribed matters of a financial nature.²⁰
3. The pastoral council is not a governing board, nor does it make decisions like boards of trustees, civic and/or business council. In fact, deliberations entered into, or decisions taken by a pastoral council, which has not been presided over by the pastor or which has assembled contrary to his wishes, are invalid, and hence null and void.²¹ Members of the pastoral council who bring such expectations to their participation on a pastoral council may experience conflict about its role. The title of “pastoral council” can have a significant effect in orienting both the community of the Family of Parishes and potential pastoral council members to the more proper and effective purpose of the pastoral council.



SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- The pastor and the pastoral council might dedicate a Saturday morning or an evening to set aside the regular business of the council and discuss this revised publication of *Called to be Church: A Guide for Pastoral Councils*. This discussion might appropriately afford the occasion to announce the Family Council to parishioners.
- The pastor might ask the pastoral council to read a document, article or a book. Members of the pastoral council might gather together to discuss the assigned reading. Moreover, individual council members might be responsible to present different sections or chapters of the assigned reading and to lead a discussion on it.

*“Without council plans go wrong,
but with many advisors they succeed.”²²*

PROVERBS 25:22



GUIDELINE 2

The pastoral council works in a spirit of prayer and discernment as a sign and witness to the Family of Parishes.



The task of providing spiritual direction and guidance for today's Family of Parishes is a difficult one. The pastoral council best assists the pastor in this work when it gives attention to the quality of its own prayer and spiritual development.

The work of the pastoral council is best achieved through well-led meetings that are both efficient and orderly. Yet, the deliberations of the pastoral council are done in the context of a faith community, and for the purpose of advising the pastor on pastoral matters. As such, the pastoral council is challenged to conduct itself in a spirit of prayerful discernment, dialogue, and consensusbuilding. To that end, members are charged with discerning what the Holy Spirit might be calling the Family of Parishes to do at a given time. They will become more effective when they develop into an effective work group. In such a group, the quality of relationships, a common sense of purpose, effective meeting procedures, and the skills of dialogue and prayerful reflection are valued by the pastor and by the members of the parish pastoral council.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- A pastoral council may meet once or twice a year for an evening or a day of prayer and formation. During such a time, council business should be put aside so that members can spend time in prayer, reflection (on a church document or a pastoral issue), and in building an effective team of members;
- Pastoral councils typically utilize an opening and a closing prayer. A reading from the Sacred Scriptures, the Liturgy of the Hours, or some meditations might be used periodically as an opportunity for faith formation. The pastoral council might also consider suspending its deliberations or its attempt to address a serious or controversial matter, so that members might have the opportunity to engage in prayer and to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit regarding the particular matter.



- Pastoral council members might rotate the responsibility of leading and ending the meeting with a prepared prayer, reflection, or a brief prayer service.
- While it is customary for some parishes to utilize an election process to determine membership, it would be appropriate to incorporate some form of spiritual discernment for determining membership.
- A pastoral council may use some method for seeking consensus on what it recommends to the pastor. All members must necessarily understand the process used for arriving at consensus.

*“Commit your work to the LORD,
and your plans will be established.”*

PROVERBS 16:3



GUIDELINE 3

Pastoral planning for the Family of Parishes is the principal activity of the pastoral council.



Pastoral planning focuses on those things that pertain to a pastor's care for parishioners. It involves the act of envisioning the kind of Family of Parishes that best serves the needs of its members, as well as the larger community. Typically a pastoral council identifies goals and objectives, and it recommends plans to achieve them. Since the area of study and deliberation is the faith and the spiritual lives of the parishioners, time is often allocated for adult faith formation, i.e. theological reflection on what the Church teaches about its own mission. Pastoral planning for the family of parishes is a structured process that includes five main components:

1. Developing and articulating a vision of where the Family of Parishes should be going. While this is the focus of Phase 2 of Beacons of Light, an initial discussion of vision is appropriate during Phase 1;
2. Identifying pastoral priorities or goals that address the needs of the Family of Parishes, addressing the principles and parameters of Beacons of Light;
3. Proposing concrete strategies, actions, and programs that achieve the pastoral goals; and,
4. Determining the personnel, the financial, and the physical resources that are needed.

Each year, the pastoral council identifies a set of pastoral priorities for the year. This plan ideally unites the pastoral council and other parish entities in a shared vision of how the Family of Parishes strives to carry out its mission to the parish and to the community that it serves.

As previously indicated, the Sixth Synod of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati (1971) called each pastoral council to assist the pastor in promoting the spiritual renewal of the parish. Parish renewal, as with personal conversion, is always about change and "newness." Pastoral planning works at identifying what that "newness" might look like for the larger faith community.



SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Pastoral planning is based on the standard steps utilized in the art and the science of strategic planning. A Family of Parishes that engages in pastoral planning for the first time will usually follow these or similar steps in the process:

1. *Affirm* or identify the **PURPOSE** of the Family of Parishes. This is a brief statement that captures the purpose and the values that are important to the parish community. There are common elements that constitute the mission of all Catholic parishes;
2. A *reading* or an **ASSESSMENT** of the needs of the Family of Parishes, as well as of the problems, challenges, and issues in the community environment in which the Family of Parishes serves. This assessment may take place through the use of a needs assessment or some form of listening to the members of the wider faith community. A survey, an assembly (a.k.a. a town hall meeting or an open forum), small group discussions, phone calls to a randomly selected group of parishioners, or some combination of the above are alternative methods for gathering the perceptions, the needs, the concerns, the hopes, and the fears of parishioners;
3. *Developing* a sense or direction or a **VISION** of the future. Things change in all parishes. Some Families of Parishes experience significant demographic changes over time. Some priorities are achieved successfully, while other needs are recognized. The arrival of new resources, new skills or expertise among pastoral staff members and volunteers make it possible to address ministerial needs in a renewed way;
4. Once the general direction and the objectives are determined by the pastoral council, the work of *developing* specific **ACTION STEPS** and a **RESOURCE ANALYSIS** is done by other entities in the Family of Parishes. The pastor and the members of the pastoral staff develop the concrete programs and the plans for implementing the general directions discerned by the pastor and the pastoral council. Various entities that represent the major pastoral priorities of the Family of Parishes (such as the worship committee, education committee, religious formation, youth ministry, etc.) develop plans to recommend to the pastor or to pastoral staff members. The parish finance council(s) also develops recommendations concerning the personnel, the physical, and the financial resources that are needed to carry out the pastoral plan.



ON-GOING PASTORAL PLANNING

Pastoral councils that have established a pastoral plan, and that have gone through these or similar steps, typically engage in ongoing pastoral planning in the following way:

- Each year, the pastoral council evaluates how successful the Family of Parishes has been in carrying out the pastoral plan. This assessment typically takes place at the end of one pastoral council's term;
- Each year, typically at the beginning of a new pastoral council's term, the pastoral council either reaffirms the previously identified goals for the year, or it readjusts the pastoral goals to meet changing needs or circumstances in the Family of Parishes;
- In planning the overall agenda for the council year; the pastoral council may devote time to a planning retreat, to determine the issues and the priorities that need to be addressed, and to estimate when such issues and priorities will be address; and,
- Families of Parishes may engage in the periodic involvement of the parishioners to solicit feedback with respect to how the Family of Parishes is meeting the needs of the wider faith community. An annual assembly, phone calls to parishioners, and informal conversations at parish events are some of the ways that members of pastoral councils keep in touch with the people of the Family of Parishes.

“Where there is no prophecy, The people cast off the restraint, but blessed is he who keeps the law.”

PROVERBS 29:18



GUIDELINE 4

The pastoral council is the primary means by which the voices of the parishioners are represented.



The pastoral council is the vehicle to ensure that parishioners have a voice in how the Family of Parishes serves them. In its most effective form, it is the place where the pastor can share his concerns, discuss difficult pastoral issues, test new ideas and initiatives for the Family of Parishes, and get practical advice from a group of parishioners who live in and represent the larger and wider faith community. Through the pastoral council, the pastor and a group of parish leaders, united in a common purpose and a common set of values, engage in dialogue and search for wisdom to identify that which is best for the Family of Parishes community.

Since neither the pastor nor the individual members of the pastoral council are all-knowing regarding the expectations of the parishioners, the pastoral council provides a forum for all ideas to be heard. It is through active listening and through the exchange of ideas that diverse views of the wider parish community become refined to reflect the needs and the concerns of the Family of Parishes as a whole.

Pastors also find that this structured mechanism for interchange and dialogue is helpful in promoting their own personal growth and in their development as the servant leader of the wider faith community. Representing the many views of the parishioners, the pastoral council can support the pastor, as well as to challenge him to consider various perspectives on any given issue.

To maintain the ongoing communication between the leadership of the Family and the Family of Parishes community, it is important that the parish pastoral council give appropriate attention to the following:

1. Publishing some form of pastoral council minutes, summary, or report of the meeting, and making them available to the entire parish after each council meeting; and,
2. Providing periodic opportunities for parishioners to provide input to the pastoral council.



SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- The bulletin and the website can be used to inform the parishioners of the meetings of the pastoral council. Simultaneously, these outlets can remind the parishioners of the ways for making their ideas and feelings on pastoral issues known. This can be accomplished by calling a member of the pastoral council, writing a letter, or, in some cases, speaking at council meetings. Some pastoral councils periodically include such an opportunity as an agenda item at a regular council meeting;
- When an issue comes before the pastoral council, it may choose to solicit feedback from the parishioners by means of listening sessions, an open meeting, surveys, or informal conversations with parishioners, in order to get a basic understanding of the perspectives of the parishioners;
- An annual pastoral assembly or a report can be used to evaluate and review the successes of the year, and to discern future needs of the Family, in order to improve the overall planning process; and,
- Some Families of Parishes have pastoral council members routinely contact a certain number of parishioners before each meeting. A standard set of questions developed by the pastor and/or the parish pastoral council are typically utilized to solicit input.

“Let our officials stand for the whole assembly.”

EZRA 10:14



GUIDELINE 5

All councils, commissions, and committees work in a spirit of mutual cooperation for the good of the Family of Parishes.



The pastoral council's function is a ministry of service. The pastoral council assists the pastor in helping all parishioners participate fully in the life and in the mission of the Family of Parishes. It seeks to foster a sense of unity by calling all parish entities to work together for the good of the entire Family of Parishes.

How the various commissions, committees, and ministries relate to the pastoral council will vary among different Families of Parishes. Nonetheless, each Family of Parishes will develop its own guidelines in accordance with the following:

1. The universal law of the Church requires that each parish have a finance committee.²³ The purposes of the finance committee is to assist the pastor in the administration of the temporal goods, in order to carry out the mission of the parish. Its function is distinct from the pastoral council. The pastor consults the pastoral council on pastoral matters, on the development of a pastoral plan, and for the identification of pastoral priorities, and goals. In contrast, the parish finance committee advises the pastor and the pastoral council regarding the financial implications of their respective policy decisions, *cf.* the revised archdiocesan *Document on Temporal Affairs*.²⁴
2. The pastor, in consultation with the pastoral council, determines the pastoral priorities for the Family of Parishes. A major pastoral priority shall be represented by a commission. Ordinarily, such a commission represents one or more of the following areas of parish ministry:

- Communications
- Community Outreach
- Ecumenism
- Education
- Evangelization
- Family life
- Mission Outreach
- Parish Life
- Pro-Life
- Religious Education and Formation
- Social Justice
- Worship
- Youth Ministry



3. Each commission will determine the number of members and the committee structure that is needed to fulfill its purpose. This may vary according to the size of the Family of Parishes. A commission is usually composed of five to fifteen at-large members, including a representative of the pastoral staff, who is chosen by the pastor. At-large members may be elected by the Family of Parishes and/or appointed by the pastor.
4. All commissions are ultimately accountable to the pastor. Each commission, however, will work with, and give council to, a member of the pastoral staff, whose responsibility encompasses the area of ministry that is represented by the commission.
5. Where there is a parish or Family school, an education commission is to be established, as per the Sixth Synod of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati (1971). Because the administration of schools has become increasingly complex and time consuming, it is important that the education commission work closely with the pastor and with the school administrator. The education commission keeps the pastoral council informed about its policy recommendations and activities either through the pastor, the school administrator, or an education commission liaison who sits on the pastoral council.
6. All of the commission's recommended policies and programs should be consistent with the pastoral priorities established by the pastoral council.
7. Committees are established by commissions with the approval of the pastor. Such committees help their respective commissions develop and carry out programs that promote the goals of the Family of Parishes.
8. Each commission will determine how it will communicate effectively with the pastoral council. In order to assist the pastor in fostering the mutual cooperation of the commissions and of the committees, the pastoral council stays informed of each commission's functions and activities.



SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- The commissions are to be composed of representatives from the Family of Parishes. The commission members may be elected by the wider parish community at the same time new pastoral council members are elected. Whether elected or appointed, commission members should have, or be willing to develop, a certain working knowledge about the ministerial scope of their commission. Every effort should be made by the pastoral council to assist the pastor and/or the chairperson of the commission in finding people with the abilities, talents, and interest in serving as a member of the commission;
- Each commission shall have a chairperson who is responsible for the organization, the coordination, and the promotion of the commission's work. The liaison relationship shall be set up with the pastoral council or with the pastor, depending on the Family of Parishes' guidelines; and,
- The Family of Parishes is responsible for the lifelong formation and education of its parishioners. For that reason, there is not to be an advisory structure for the school that is separate from the parish education commission. Rather, there is to be a single education commission that addresses all of the education concerns of the Families of Parishes, *cf.* 'Post Synodal Task force on Education, p. 2.

“For as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.”

ROMANS 12:4-5

GUIDELINE 6

Selection for the pastoral council shall be determined in a manner which allows for the participation of the Family of Parishes community.



The process by which parishioners are selected for the pastoral council is very important. Most parishes throughout the diocese traditionally have had an annual nomination- election process. This process usually produces a good mix of dedicated and effective pastoral council members who will serve their Family of Parishes well. The process also allows for the participation of the wider faith community, and it usually produces a fairly representative group of men and women of diverse ages to provide a voice of the parishioners.

Out of a concern that such an election turns out to be no more than a “popularity contest,” some pastors have experimented with a variety of approaches, which use a combination of methods, such as open nominations, a discernment process, or appointment. Moreover, the pastoral council should “effectively represent the community of which it is an expression in its membership (priests, deacons, religious and laity).”²⁵

Pastoral council membership includes those who have a voice and a consultative vote on matters that are addressed by the council. The pastor, and some or all members of the pastoral staff, may participate in parish pastoral council meetings. Neither the pastor nor any pastoral staff members possesses a vote, because the pastor is ultimately responsible for receiving the recommendations of the pastoral council, and, if appropriate, deciding on the implementation of such recommendations.

Families of Parishes differ in the composition of their respective pastoral councils. Each Family of Parishes must determine the size of its own pastoral council. For example, such a council may include as few as six members and as many as twenty-five members.



SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- The participation of the members of the Family of Parishes may occur at the beginning of the selection process when nominations occur and/or at the end of the process when new pastoral council members are elected;
- The pastor and/or the pastoral council may provide an annual orientation process for candidates, new pastoral council members, and new commission members. This formation program usually includes such considerations as: an overview of all the commissions and ministries; the role and the function of the pastoral council; the consensus method used; how pastoral council meetings are structured; and, so forth;
- Each Family of Parishes may set forth its own local pastoral council guidelines that indicate how members are selected (when, how, and by whom). Generally, the pastor, along with a committee of the pastoral council, will serve as an *ad hoc* selection committee to plan, to conduct, and to oversee the process for the selection of new pastoral council members.

“As each has received a gift, employ it for one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace.”

1 PETER 4:10

GUIDELINE 7

Each Family of Parishes develops its own pastoral council guidelines in accordance with the universal law of the Church and with the policies of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.



Local pastoral council guidelines give direction and clarity to the function and the operation of the pastoral council. Each Family of Parishes should have some form of guidelines for all of its councils and commissions. The guidelines are to be drawn up in accordance with the universal law of the Church and with the policies of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

A SUGGESTED FORMAT

1. Name

- The name of this parish organization shall be the pastoral council of the _____ Family of Parishes.

2. Purpose statement and functions of the pastoral council

- The Family of Parishes' statement of guidelines for the pastoral council shall include a statement of purpose and of functions. The local guidelines are to state how the pastoral council fulfills its consultative purpose through the principle functions of spiritual formation, pastoral planning, representing the members of the family of parishes, pastoral policy development, and communication.

3. Membership

- The guidelines will specify how the membership is constituted, i.e. when, how, and by whom.
 - A. Those who share in the pastoral care of the Family of Parishes by virtue of their office participate in the work of the pastoral council. According to the universal law of the Church, the pastor presides over the council.²⁶ In many Families of Parishes, some or all of the pastoral staff meet with the pastoral council. However, these staff persons serve as resources to the pastoral council by providing their particular expertise.



- B. With regard to core team or commission representatives, some Families of Parishes may choose to utilize the model of the pastoral council that calls for someone from each of the parish's commissions to serve as a member of the pastoral council.
- The Family of Parishes will publish criteria for membership on the pastoral council. In general, the membership of the pastoral council should reflect the demographic make-up of the family of parishes. This representative principle must be balanced with the qualities and the skills desired for members of the parish pastoral council.
 - A. Criteria
 - Being a baptized Roman Catholic, and in good standing with the Church;
 - Being a supporting members of the Family of Parishes, who has received the Sacrament of Confirmation; and,
 - Being an active participant in the life of the Family of Parishes.
 - B. Many Families of Parishes will list additional qualities that are desirable for members of the pastoral council. Such qualities may include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Willing to participate in an orientation and/or formation process;
 - Willing to listen and to respect the ideas of others;
 - Able to consider the needs of the entire Family of Parishes;
 - Willing to give the gift of time to prepare for, and to attend, regular and special meetings;
 - Willing to communicate with members of the Family of Parishes to solicit their ideas and input;
 - Able to serve in a consultative capacity; and,
 - Committed to work in a spirit of prayer, dialogue, consensus-building, and planning.
 - Members of the pastoral council shall have a limited term. Term limits are determined by local guidelines. Ordinarily, terms are for three years, with no more than two terms in succession without an absence of at least one year. Terms of membership are usually staggered so that a certain portion of the membership rotates each year.
 - The size of the pastoral council shall be determined based on the size and the needs of the Family of Parishes. Seven to fifteen members is the usual range for the size of a pastoral council. The size should be small enough to allow for a sense of community among the members, and, at the same time, large enough to reflect a good representation of the Family of Parishes. The size may also be affected by the number of commissions that are operative in the Family of Parishes.



4. Officers

- There shall be an executive committee that is responsible for developing an overall working plan for the year, and for preparing the agenda for each meeting. Ordinarily, the executive committee includes the pastor, the council chairperson, vice-chairperson, and, in some cases, an administrative secretary. The members of the executive structure may vary according to local customs and needs.
- The officers usually meet, or communicate, with each other prior to the scheduled meetings, in order to prepare the meeting agenda. The agenda should be sent to pastoral council members in advance of a meeting. Ordinarily, matters for the agenda are submitted by the pastor and the members of the pastoral council. Any member of the Family of Parishes who wishes to have matters taken up by the pastoral council should contact a member of the council. Attention to such a matter, however, should be discerned to consider if it is within the competency of the pastoral council to discuss, e.g. human resource and personnel matters, etc.
- The administrative secretary usually prepares the agenda and submits it to the pastor, as president, and to the chairperson for approval. Copies of the agenda and the minutes of the previous meeting should also be sent to the members prior to the next meeting. The agenda and the minutes are also made available to members of the parish family. The format of the minutes might include summaries of the major discussions, all recommendations, actions to be taken, and persons or groups delegated to act for the advancement of such recommendations.
- The executive committee works to ensure that the prayer and the study are part of the pastoral council's deliberations. This committee also determines what meeting processes will be utilized,

5. Roles and Responsibilities

A. The Role of the Pastor

- The pastor meets with the executive committee responsible for the agenda.
- The pastor presides at all pastoral council meetings, and he actively listens and participates in the discussions and the deliberations. He might delegate to the chairperson the task of chairing the meeting.
- When appropriate, he will assist the deliberations by sharing relevant information or his own perspective on the issue at hand.
- As the pastor, he is the final authorizer of any course of recommended action.

B. The Role of the Chairperson

- Meets, or communicates, with the pastor and the vice-chairperson, in order to organize and to coordinate the agenda, as well as to plan any group processes to be used at the pastoral council meeting.
- Chairs the meetings of the executive committee.



- Normally chairs the regular, as well as any special meetings, of the pastoral council.
- Makes sure that the meeting agenda is sent out a week before the meeting.
- Receives agenda items from pastoral council members, members of the parish pastoral staff, or members of commissions or organizations, and members of the Family of Parishes.
- Participates as an active member in all discussions.
- Assumes the role of the chairperson to stimulate and to involve all members in the discussion, as well as to facilitate the formulation of the pastoral council's goals and means for achieving them.
- Leads the pastoral council in an annual evaluation of its proceedings and its effectiveness.
- Assists in preparing the next chairperson to succeed him or her.

C. The Role of the Vice-Chairperson

- Meets, or communicates, with the pastor and the chairperson to develop the meeting agenda.
- Chairs the council meeting in the absence of the chairperson, or in the event that the chairperson desires to temporarily assign him or her to chair the meeting, in order to participate more fully in the discussion.
- Assists the chairperson in conducting the work of the pastoral council.

D. The Role of the Administrative Secretary

- Responsible for the preparation and for the distribution of the agenda prior the the pastoral council meeting.
- Records the minutes of regular and of special meetings. It is recommended that such minutes be focused on: (1) discussion summaries; (2) resolutions and/or recommendations; and, (3) actions steps to be taken.
- Maintains the roster and the attendance of members.
- Makes necessary physical arrangements for meetings; secures requested information for the pastoral council; regularly updates the documents of the pastoral council; and, ensures the proper distribution of information and of correspondence.
- Maintains file records of the parish pastoral council's history, development, minutes, resolutions, and names of members.
- Serves as directed by the pastoral council in the administration of council matters.
- May be appointed or requested by the pastoral council for whatever term that is discerned by the membership. If the position of the administrative secretary is not held by a council member, then the administrative secretary is not a voting member of the pastoral council.



6. Meetings

- The pastoral council determines its annual calendar of meetings prior to the Fall of each year, or prior to the first meeting, depending on its calendar. Meetings should be held regularly, which, in most cases, is once a month. The executive committee should determine when is the best time to schedule regular meetings. It should also assess when there is no need for a regularly scheduled meeting, and whether a special half-day or weekend session would be better depending on the issue to be considered.
- Local guidelines will designate when members of the Family of Parishes, who are not members of the pastoral council, may attend meetings, and under what rules and proceedings they might participate. Usually all meetings are open unless the pastoral council needs to meet in an executive session.
- Meetings should be run in an efficient and orderly fashion. The executive committee should determine whether *Robert's Rules of Order*, or some abbreviated version, would be helpful for meetings. Some Families of Parishes might find that in using a consensus model of deliberation, parliamentary procedure is unnecessary.

7. Commissions

- The guidelines are to name all of the core teams or commissions, their purpose, their responsibilities, and how they relate to the pastoral council. In many Families of Parishes, the commissions are established by the pastoral council, and they apprise the pastoral council of their activities through a commission representative on the pastoral council, or through a member-at-large who serves as a liaison to the various commissions of the Family. Each commission should have guidelines that are similar to those for the pastoral council.

8. Amendments to Guidelines

- The guidelines are to describe clearly the process for amending said guidelines.

“So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.”

EPHESIANS 2:19-22