

Parish Pastoral Council (PPC): The New “Communication” Pillar

What is the role of communication in the church?

Communication within the church keeps people informed, supports people and programs, provides publicity, sensitizes people, provides a forum for expression and concern about issues, and builds a sense of community.

Communication also has the power to build bridges between both individuals and groups, as well as foster an environment of inclusion in society. (Pope Francis, Jan. 22, 2016)

Communication is an essential element for the successful implementation of the Mission of the Parish. The Communication Pillar of the PPC is responsible for providing the parishioners with clear, consistent, and regular news/information specifically concerning the PPC. (Upper Room Guidelines pg. 27)

The “Diocesan Committee for the Renewal and Growth Committee” has been journeying with many parishes across our Diocese since 2016, actively assisting parishes in the forming and/or revitalization of Parish Pastoral Councils. (PPC).

A question consistently heard from existing Councils is:
“How do we get parishioners interested and involved in the PPC?”

On the other hand, we have also heard parishioners say:
“What is a PPC?” “I didn’t know we had one in our parish!”

These comments have led us to the realization that there is an element of *communication* missing between the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) and the parishioners! *Expecting parishioners to come forward with their commitment, time, and talents is like asking them to volunteer and donate to a cause they know nothing about!*

As a result, a new “Communication Pillar” has been added to the Organizational Chart of a PPC as an *essential* element to the success of a PPC and ultimately the success of the parish. (see the newly revised “From the Upper Room to the Ends of the Earth”)

The *goal* is to keep parishioners aware of your PPC; that there are actions being taken on their behalf and also, that help is needed to accomplish the Church’s and your parish’s mission/goals.

Reasons for PPC Communication:

- Parishioners are aware of their PPC, its members, and its purpose
- Parishioners become aware of the Goals and Strategies planned for the parish and work toward a common goal (Action Plan)
- Parishioners understand the work accomplished by the PPC
- Parishioners are informed of decisions made on their behalf
- Parishioners are more willing to join a group if they know what it's about, its purpose and vision
- Communication builds and strengthens community
- Parishioners are aware that their voice is heard and that they contribute to the decisions being made and actions being taken

Implementing the Communication Pillar:

Parish Pastoral Councils (PPC) who have already established a "PPC Communication Pillar" have come up with Eye-catching titles to call attention to this particular section of the bulletin, using headings like:

- DID YOU KNOW?
- "Our PPC Corner"
- "What's happening here?"
- "Forward with Hope!"
- News! News! News!
- Moving together!
- PPC: Prayer, Participation and Community!
- News for the Pews!

As part of their Communication efforts, Councils have posted pictures and names of PPC members at the entrance of the Church & on their websites, along with the title of the Pillar each is responsible for. (A good idea for the Finance Council as well!)

Contact information for PPC members should be available in the weekly bulletin.

Councils have also established a PPC e-mail address to receive comments, questions and suggestions. These answers may be included in the PPC News Corner. This becomes a 2-way communication where parishioners are heard and the PPC keeps informed of the needs, concerns and suggestions from the parishioners.

The dates of upcoming PPC meetings should be published in the PPC section of the bulletin.

A summary of the monthly PPC meeting is included so that parishioners are kept informed of the PPC's existence and activities (full minutes may be on the parish website).

Information from the Upper Room Guidelines document is regularly copied and pasted into the PPC corner of the bulletin. This can be repeated regularly to ensure that all parishioners see it.

The PPC Organizational Chart is included as an *insert* in the bulletin several times throughout the year.

Sections of the PPC Action Plan are regularly presented in the bulletin to keep information flowing as to what is being addressed and accomplished in the parish. Knowledge empowers people for ministry.

Each Pillar/Ministry may include news of activities under its care. (Liturgy, Music, Youth, Hospitality, etc.).

The important thing is to keep parishioners aware of your PPC, that there are actions being taken on their behalf and help is needed to accomplish your mission/goals.

For a few examples of PPC information from parishes, check out other parish bulletins for ideas.

- Pope Francis: *“How necessary Parish Pastoral Councils are! A Bishop cannot guide a Diocese without Parish Pastoral Councils. A Parish Priest cannot guide without Parish Pastoral Councils.”*

DID YOU KNOW? (Examples)

- That our parish has a Parish Pastoral Council (PPC)?
- What is a Parish Pastoral Council (PPC)? (copy & paste from Upper Room Document Guidelines)
- Who are the members of our PPC? (INSERT HERE)
- That members are listed on the front page of our Bulletin?
- That pictures of the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) are displayed at the entrance of our church?

- That PPC members are committed to meet regularly?
- What's happening in our PPC? To assure the continuous exchange of information, our PPC is implementing the Organizational chart outlined in the Diocesan PPC Guidelines. Pillars are the essential elements required for a successful parish. Under each of these are Ministries. Example: Under the Liturgy Pillar, you will find: Lectors, Greeters, Altar Servers, and Communion Ministers. Leaders of Pillars sit at the PPC table (maximum of 12) and are the liaisons between the PPC and the Ministries. Stay tuned as we continue to communicate our progress with the formation of our PPC!
- Did you Know? The Ministry of Care is part of the Service Pillar of our PPC. We are inviting volunteers to Visit Shut In members of our community and to also administer the Eucharist to them. Many individuals are unable to leave their homes to attend Mass. A friendly visit makes a world of difference. If you feel called to serve and brighten someone's day, please join this meaningful ministry. Service pillar leader: (name & contact info)
- News for the Pews!! The PPC Service Pillar also includes Development & Peace, Food Bank and the Hospitality Ministries.

If you are a PPC who has just been formed through the Revitalization process offered by the Diocese, it is especially important to keep the momentum of Communication going as you have done during the process.

The sooner a PPC can put its Organizational Chart together and insert it as a page in the bulletin, the better it is for the whole parish to understand what the PPC looks like and who are the members representing them ready to assist you!

Knowledge empowers people for ministry!

We hope these few ideas help you form your new Communication Pillar. We are always here to assist you!

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