

# Forming or Renewing a Parish Pastoral Council

*“It is increasingly clear that in a parish, the two key sources and prime movers are the Pastors or Parish Life Directors, and the Parish Pastoral Council.” Archbishop LeGatt, April 2018*

Whether your parish has a Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) you would like to improve and renew, or whether you have no PPC, a survey of the parish is a good place to begin. The following suggested Plan of Action has already proven successful in some parishes.

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*The primary ingredients are PRAYER AND DISCERNMENT  
Invoke the Holy Spirit in every step!*

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## Step 1: Form an Ad Hoc Committee

*What is an Ad Hoc Committee?*

It is a group of people (4–6, including pastor) gathered together for a short term in order to reach a specific GOAL. In this case, this group would gather to follow the steps outlined here, with the GOAL of renewing their existing PPC or of forming a new PPC.

PARISHES WHO HAVE A PPC:	PARISHES WHO DO NOT HAVE A PPC:
<p>The Pastor or Parish Life Director and the PPC chairperson explain the purpose of the ad hoc committee and invite PPC members to participate. After praying to the Holy Spirit, discerning and discussing, PPC members would invite potential additional members to a meeting. These parishioners may already be involved in the parish and have appropriate talents and experiences. These people will form your Ad Hoc Committee.</p>	<p>After prayer to the Holy Spirit and discernment, the Pastor or Parish Life Director would approach parishioners who have talents and experiences that could help create a survey of the parish and form a PPC. These may be parishioners who are already involved in one way or another. Invite them to a meeting to form the Ad Hoc Committee.</p>

## Step 2: Meetings With the Ad Hoc Committee

- (a) Clarify the GOAL for this committee. It will:
  - Follow a plan of action leading up to a parish survey.
  - Compile feedback from the survey and suggest actions to be taken. This information will be used to inform the new or renewed PPC.
  - Present feedback to parishioners (and PPC).
  
- (b) Decide on a survey date. Give yourselves at least three Sundays before the actual survey to accomplish the various steps that follow.

- (c) Prepare a survey. A survey is a way of getting feedback from all parishioners. We suggest two questions; one about the status quo and the second about the future. Make sure your questions invite the respondents to be positive. For example:
  - a. *What do you like about our parish?*
  - b. *What would you like to see in our parish?*
- (d) Assign someone to be responsible for printing the surveys. \*Make sure that there is plenty of room for comments.

### Step 3: Advertising and Promotion

It is important to build up anticipation for this event with continuous information and by repeating the survey questions various times before the actual date. This gives the parishioners time to think.

- (a) Include information about the upcoming survey in each Sunday bulletin before the scheduled date. Tell parishioners why the parish is doing the survey and how the answers will be used. \*It is important to mention that this survey is anonymous.
- (b) Announce the upcoming survey before each Mass to create anticipation. \*Speaking about the upcoming survey at various times is key to success.
- (c) Involve groups in your parish (Knights of Columbus, prayer groups, catechetics, Catholic Women's League). Ask them to pray for the success of this initiative and to encourage their members to participate.
- (d) Make posters with the date of the survey and the questions. A smaller version of the poster could also be included in the bulletin.
- (e) Have the survey question and all information available on your website if you have one.
- (f) Make prayer cards in the form of bookmarks or magnets for the refrigerator with a prayer for the renewal and growth of your parish. Distribute it to all parishioners and invite them to bring it home and take the time to pray it. See examples in appendix.
- (g) Pray this prayer at every Mass, parish gathering and meeting. The prayer could be projected, or you could have prayer cards available in the pews.

### Step 4: Day of the Survey

- (a) Distribute the survey and pencils to parishioners as they enter for Mass.

- (b) Have the pastor or a member of the ad hoc committee give a last explanation about the survey. You could take five minutes before or after Mass for everyone to complete the survey.
- (c) Make sure to explain how you will gather the responses. Handing them in at collection or at the end of mass would work well.
- (d) You may want to invite parishioners to bring the survey home and hand it in the following week.

### Step 5: Analyze Survey Responses

\*This step should be done as soon as possible after the survey date.

- (a) Meet to organize the responses from each question into categories. (Ex: Liturgical Ministry, Youth Ministry, Ministry of Care, Faith & Spiritual Growth Ministry, Hospitality Ministry, etc.)  
\*A spreadsheet could be used.
- (b) Prepare a short report to share with parishioners (and the PPC). This can be done in the Sunday bulletin, on the website and at mass.

### Step 6: Conclusion

This is the final action of the Ad Hoc Committee.

PARISHES WHO HAVE A PPC:	PARISHES WHO DO NOT HAVE A PPC:
<p>The ad hoc committee hands over the responses to the PPC. This marks the end of the ad hoc committee’s mandate. Members of the ad hoc committee who were already on the PPC remain on the PPC.</p>	<p>Members of the ad hoc committee may remain to form your new PPC. Other new members may be needed. The priorities identified in the survey and the “Upper Room” document will serve as a guide for the PPC’s priorities and guidelines. Start small with two or maybe three ministries and new ones can be added as you go.</p>

Continue to provide information about the PPC to your parishioners. You may copy information from the Upper Room Document found on the website.

If you have any questions, contact the Committee for the Renewal & Growth of Parish Pastoral Councils. All the contact information can be found on the website.

## Appendix 1

### Prayer card example

#### Side one

(Image of your church or the patron saint)



#### Side 2

##### **Prayer for our Parish**

Thank you, Jesus, for we have found a home in the parish of \_\_\_\_\_. It is here that we hope to learn, to grow, to love, to share, and to renew our lives. Send your Holy Spirit as we discern the path that we must take, that will lead us closer to You.

Help us to cherish and to appreciate our brothers and sisters, to offer our gifts and talents when needed, to pray, to look after the sick and the needy, and to welcome the stranger and the outcast. Teach us to be patient, humble, gentle and kind in the relationships that we build. Help us take responsibility for the life of our parish and to labour for the holiness of its members. We ask this in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

***Amen.***