



ONE BODY, ONE MISSION

Parish Pastoral Councils and *The Church Alive!*

How do Parish Pastoral Councils serve the Church?

Parish pastoral councils are central to Bishop Zubik's vision of *The Church Alive!* Based on years of research, consultation and pastoral practice, the Diocese of Pittsburgh has established guidelines for parish pastoral councils. Our parish is committed to implementing those guidelines to advance the mission of Christ and His Church.

Pastoral planning is the core responsibility of parish pastoral councils. This activity moves the parish forward into God's design for our future as we become *The Church Alive!*

This week, we will discuss how parish pastoral councils not only serve the parish but also the Church as a whole.

Parish Pastoral Councils ...

Focus on the mission of Christ

It is the task of the parish pastoral council to keep before the faithful of the parish our common baptismal commitment to make Jesus' mission the very mission of the parish. With confidence in the gifts of the Spirit residing in all the baptized, parish pastoral councils craft a pastoral vision in response to the needs of the parishioners and the signs of the times. Then, parishioners are invited to work as one to bring that vision to fulfillment.

See the "big picture" of *The Church Alive!*

Parish pastoral councils educate themselves not only about the demographic trends of the parish, but also about changes in the larger community. When change occurs in the parish and population trends shift, the pastoral council may determine new priorities and needs as it moves through the planning cycle. By seeing the "big picture," the parish can do more together than any one group or person can do alone.

Promote healing and reconciliation

As parish pastoral councils plan for the future of the parish, they seek to foster healing and reconciliation amidst the challenges and changes in parish life. These tasks require pastoral sensitivity, an openness to hear people's stories and a willingness to acknowledge the past. Pastoral councils depend on maintaining right relationships among everyone in the parish and on seeking healing where there has been tension or division in the community.

Affirm the unity of the Church

Parish pastoral councils can connect parishes to achieve important tasks and enhance the pastoral life in a broader area. With sister parishes in a district or the vicariate, or even with parishes across town, parish pastoral councils study their respective geographic areas, learn each other's strengths, assess the pastoral needs of their communities and plan how to become a stronger presence of Christ to the world.

More information on parish pastoral councils can be found on the diocesan website at www.diopitt.org.