



ONE BODY, ONE MISSION

Parish Pastoral Councils and *The Church Alive!*

What are Parish Pastoral Councils?

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 offer some background on parish pastoral councils.

Parish Pastoral Councils ...

Affirm the call received in Baptism

The Second Vatican Council reaffirmed the baptismal call of the laity to participate in the Church. Documents such as *The Church in the Modern World* and *On the Apostolate of the Laity* point to the essential role of lay persons. In this spirit, the Nineteenth Diocesan Synod of Pittsburgh in 2000 called for the establishment of a parish pastoral council in every parish in the diocese.

Are prayerful

The members of parish pastoral councils are persons of prayer. They see the value of private prayer for their own personal growth in holiness as well as the value of communal prayer for growth in Christ's community.

Are pastoral

Parish pastoral councils strive to discern the movement of the Holy Spirit among God's people in the parish by investigating pastoral activities affecting the lives of parishioners and by formulating, on behalf of the parish, practical conclusions regarding those activities.

Are representative

Parish pastoral council members represent not one particular group or issue, but all areas of parish life: old and young; men and women; laity, clergy and religious; and people with divergent viewpoints, ethnicities and cultural backgrounds.

Are discerning

Under the authority of the pastor, parish pastoral councils serve at the heart of the parish in coming to know God's will for the parish. Through prayer, reflection on Scripture and study of the teaching of the Church, council members reflect on the parish's mission and plan ways to initiate or strengthen whatever is needed to fulfill that mission.

Are a vital part of *The Church Alive!*

Collaborating with the parish finance council, parish staff, parish organizations and parishioners, the pastor and parish pastoral council lead the parish to envision a fuller manifestation of the Kingdom and invite parishioners into both the vision and its accomplishment.

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