

Information for Parishioners Regarding Pastoral Planning

What is Pastoral Planning?

Pastoral Planning is a prayerful and participative process through which a group of parishes work together to develop a plan for future ministry in their area of the diocese. They work to establish priorities and goals to create a vision and to accomplish the mission of the Church.

What is a Pastoral Care Area?

A Pastoral Care Area (PCA) is a group of parishes reflecting geographic relationships within the diocese. All parishes belong to a PCA. A PCA includes various combinations of parishes: single parishes, linked parishes, merged and clustered parishes. They may also include other ministries of the diocese within their geographic area e.g., campus ministries, hospitals, and nursing homes. Parishes in a PCA work together collaboratively to achieve the highest quality of pastoral programs, mutual clergy/staff support and shares resources to move forward the mission of the Church.

What are PCA Planning Groups?

PCA Planning Groups are composed of parish trustees (2), pastoral council leaders (2), and the pastor/administrator/parish life director/pastoral coordinator of each parish in a PCA. The purpose of each planning group is to build relationships and develop specific plans for the PCA. The planning groups are responsible for putting specific plans in place for communication, collaboration and moving forward the Bishop's directives e.g., mass schedule changes.

Each PCA planning group has a facilitator. The facilitator guides the group's agenda and moves forward the diocesan pastoral plan approved by the Bishop.

What are the Styles of Parish Structures in the Diocese?

Single Parishes consist of individual parishes of various sizes entrusted to the care of a pastor or pastoral leader.

(Linkage) Linked Parishes consist of two parishes working together to serve their faith communities with a pastor/administrator/parish life director/pastoral coordinator.

(Cluster) Clustered Parishes consist of three or more parishes collaborating with one pastor/administrator/parish life director/pastoral coordinator.

An Oratory is a designated church building that is used for certain liturgical and other functions with the permission of the Bishop. The care of an oratory is entrusted to a specific pastor. Weekend liturgies are held elsewhere.

(Merger) Merged Parishes exist when two or more parishes become a single parish by consolidation and canonical merger. As a new parish the assets and liabilities are shared.

Official Pastoral Leaders

A **Pastor/Administrator** is a priest appointed by the Bishop to be responsible for a parish, a linkage or a cluster.

A **Parochial Administrator** is a deacon appointed by the Bishop to be responsible for a parish, linkage or cluster. (Canon 517.2)

A **Parochial Vicar** is a priest who assists the pastor or administrator in the care of a parish, linkage or cluster.

A **Parish Life Director** is a deacon, religious or lay person appointed by the Bishop to lead the day-to-day operations of a parish, linkage or cluster. (Canon 517.2) A canonical pastor is designated by the Bishop to work with the Parish Life Director.

A **Pastoral Associate** is a qualified religious or lay person who is hired by and works with the pastor, administrator or Parish Life Director to carry out the ministry of a parish, linkage or cluster.

A **Pastoral Coordinator** is a person affirmed by the Bishop to coordinate the program, daily life and business of a parish. A canonical pastor is designated by the Bishop to work with the Pastoral Coordinator.

What is the Office of Pastoral Planning in the Diocese of Syracuse?

The **Office of Pastoral Planning** supports the parishes, the PCAs and the PCA Planning Groups to carry out the mission of the diocese in the midst of changing times and circumstances. The office does this by supporting Parish Pastoral Councils and Finance Councils in discerning and expressing their purpose through ongoing pastoral planning. This helps maintain the integrity of the mission of the parish and the diocese.

What is the October Count?

The **October Count** is an annual census of the Mass attendance for each weekend Mass during the month of October throughout the diocese. This provides pastoral councils and the diocese with a useful statistic. It is valuable for pastoral planning.

What are the Consultative Groups that Support the Bishop in his Care of the Diocese?

The **Presbyteral Council** is a representative body of diocesan priests that helps the bishop in the governance of the diocese. This council is mandated by Canon Law. (Canon 495)

The **College of Consultors** serves as a body of advisors to the diocesan bishop, particularly in matters of importance. In the Diocese of Syracuse, the consultors include the vicar general, vicar for priests, vicar for parishes, regional vicars, and the chairperson of the Presbyteral Council. In matters of pastoral planning the College of Consultors reviews recommendations from the Pastoral Care Areas and synchronizes them into a cohesive diocesan-wide plan.

The **Diocesan Pastoral Council (DPC)** works in consultation with the Bishop. This council investigates, ponders and proposes pastoral initiatives for the good of the people of the diocese. Each parish and key diocesan ministries are represented by designated delegates. The DPC meets four times a year.

What are the Groups who Support the Pastor/Administrator/Parish Life Director in the Care of the Parish and its Ministries?

The **Parish Finance Council** is mandated for every parish by Canon Law (Canon 537). This council aids the pastor/administrator/parish life director in the administration of parish assets. It is made up of lay members of the parish with expertise in these matters. They work for the good of the parish and its ministry.

The **Parish Pastoral Council** is mandated by the bishop for each parish in the diocese. This council in conjunction with the pastor/administrator/parish life director, works to foster the pastoral ministry of the parish. They do this by creating a vision and a sense of mission for the whole community.

A **Parish Ministry Council** may be created to support and coordinate parish programs, activities and events. Their work is to collaborate and communicate with parish organizations to support the vision and mission of the parish.