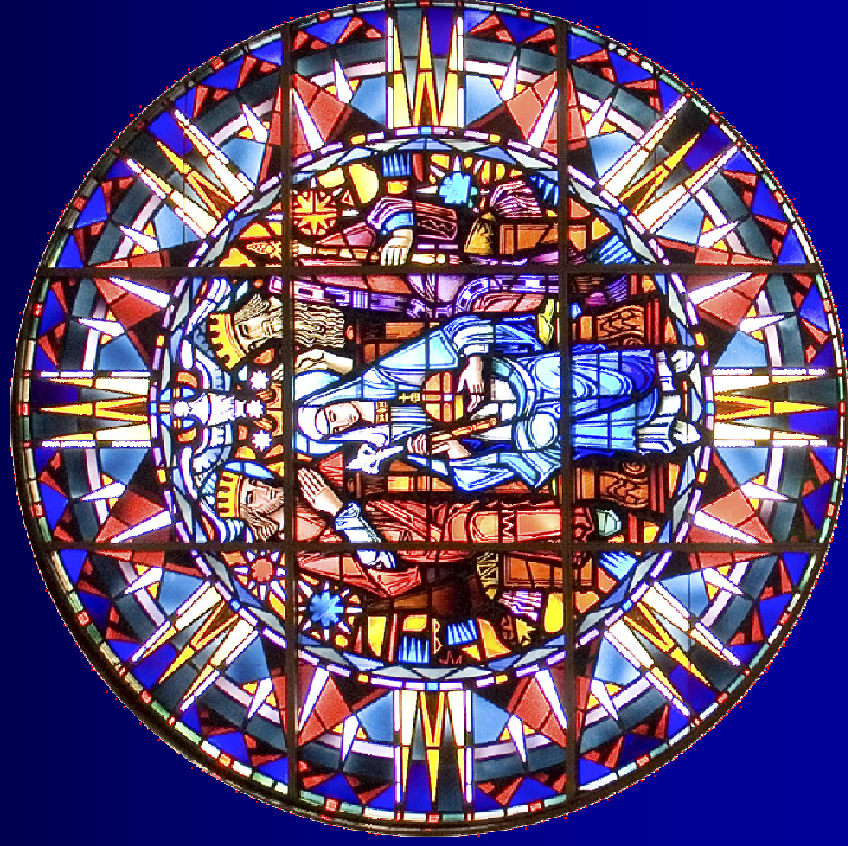


# Foundational Principles of Parish Pastoral Councils

April 11-12, 2008



# Foundational Principles of Parish Pastoral Councils

April 11-12, 2008

1. The value of consultation
2. Planning & consultation – two sides of a coin

(and why the prime work of the pastoral council should be the creator and keeper of the parish pastoral plan)

3. Planning models – simple to complex
4. Pastoral council norms & guidelines

# What the Church teaches about consultation

## Vatican II

- Constitution on the Church, 1964 (#8, 37)
- Decree on Bishops *Christus Dominus*, 1965 (#27)
- Implementation of *Christus Dominus*, 1966 (#16)

## Immediate Postconciliar Period

- The Directory on Bishops, 1973 (#204)
- The Circular Letter – Sacred Congregation for the Clergy, “Private Letter on ‘Pastoral Councils,’” 1973 (#1, 2, 8, 9)

# More Church teachings about consultation

## Canon Law, 1983

- The Obligations and Rights of All the Christian Faithful  
(Can. 208, 212 §1 §2 §3)
- The Pastoral Council (Can. 511)
- Parishes, Pastors and Parochial Vicars  
(Can. 536 §1 §2, Can. 537)

In accord with the knowledge, competence and preeminence which they (the Christian faithful) possess, they have the right and even at times a duty to manifest to the sacred pastors their opinion on matters which pertain to the good of the Church, and they have a right to make their opinion known to the other Christian faithful . . .  
(Can. 212 §3)

# Recent Church teachings about consultation

- **Synod Propositions – Synod of Bishops, 1987**  
(proposition 10, p. 502)
- **Christifideles Laici, 1987**  
(no. 25, p. 573; no. 27, p. 574)
- **Ecclesia in Asia, 1999**  
(paragraph 25, p. 372)
- **Novo Millennio Ineunte, 2001**  
(number 29, p. 499; number 44, p. 503)
- **Address to the American Bishops of New Jersey and Pennsylvania on their “Ad Limina” visit, 2004**  
(Sept 2004, [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va))

# Elements of consultation

**“ . . . we need to make our own the ancient pastoral wisdom which, without prejudice to their authority, encouraged pastors to listen more widely to the entire people of God.”**

**(Novo Millennio Ineunte, no. 44)**

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# Elements of consultation

1. make our own
  2. ancient pastoral wisdom
  3. without prejudice to their authority
  4. encouraged pastors to listen more widely
  5. entire People of God
- 



# The Church is not a democracy but...

“Within a sound ecclesiology of communion, a commitment to creating better structures of participation, consultation and shared responsibility should not be misunderstood as a concession to a secular ‘democratic’ model of governance, but as an *intrinsic requirement of the exercise of episcopal authority* and a necessary means of strengthening that authority.”

(Address to the American Bishops of Region 3, Sept 2004, as reported on [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va))



What do pastors seek through consultation?

Information

Wisdom

Consensus

---

What else?

What are the impediments to consultation?

Fear

Lack of skills

Hubris / false humility

What else?

# Consultation with the laity should lead to an ongoing pastoral plan

Effective planning requires proper consultation

Good consultation leads to mission, ministry, and good plans



# Why do we plan?

- To recognize the reality in front of us
- To anticipate the future
- To help create the future in the image of our values

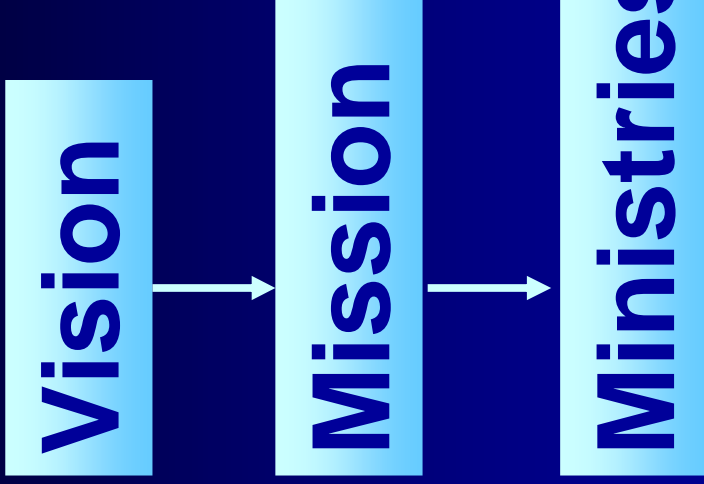
The future is as much a result of our efforts  
as it is independent of our efforts.

When pastoral planning is a normal part of the life of the parish . . .

... it is a hope-filled tool that can be used in good times, and challenging ones, to identify new needs in the parish, modify ministries, create or reform committees and work groups, enhance the clarity of communication, and involve everyone.

Dr. Robert Miller  
Archdiocese of Philadelphia  
From Today's Parish, 2004

# A simple planning model



A desired condition that does not currently exist, a mental image of the desired state, what “ought to be.” Without a clear vision there is no direction.

The call to close the gap in substantive and meaningful ways between what ought to be and what is. A mission is specific, detailed, strategic.

Along with programs, what we do to carry out our mission, i.e. how mission translates into action.

**If we do not know where we are going, any road will take us there.**

# The cyclic nature of planning

— 3-5 year cycle  
- - - 1 year cycle

**Study trends and projections**

Identify issues

**Step 1: Goals**

“Where do we want to be in 3-5 years?”

**Step 2: Objectives**  
“What should we do in the next year?”

**Step 3: Consult**  
“Does this make sense?”

**Step 6: Evaluate**  
“Did we reach the objectives?”

**Step 7: Refine**  
“Let’s tweak them.”

**Step 5: Implement action plans**  
“Let’s do it!”

**Step 9: Consult again**  
“Does this make more sense?”

**Step 4: Prioritize**  
“What goes first?”

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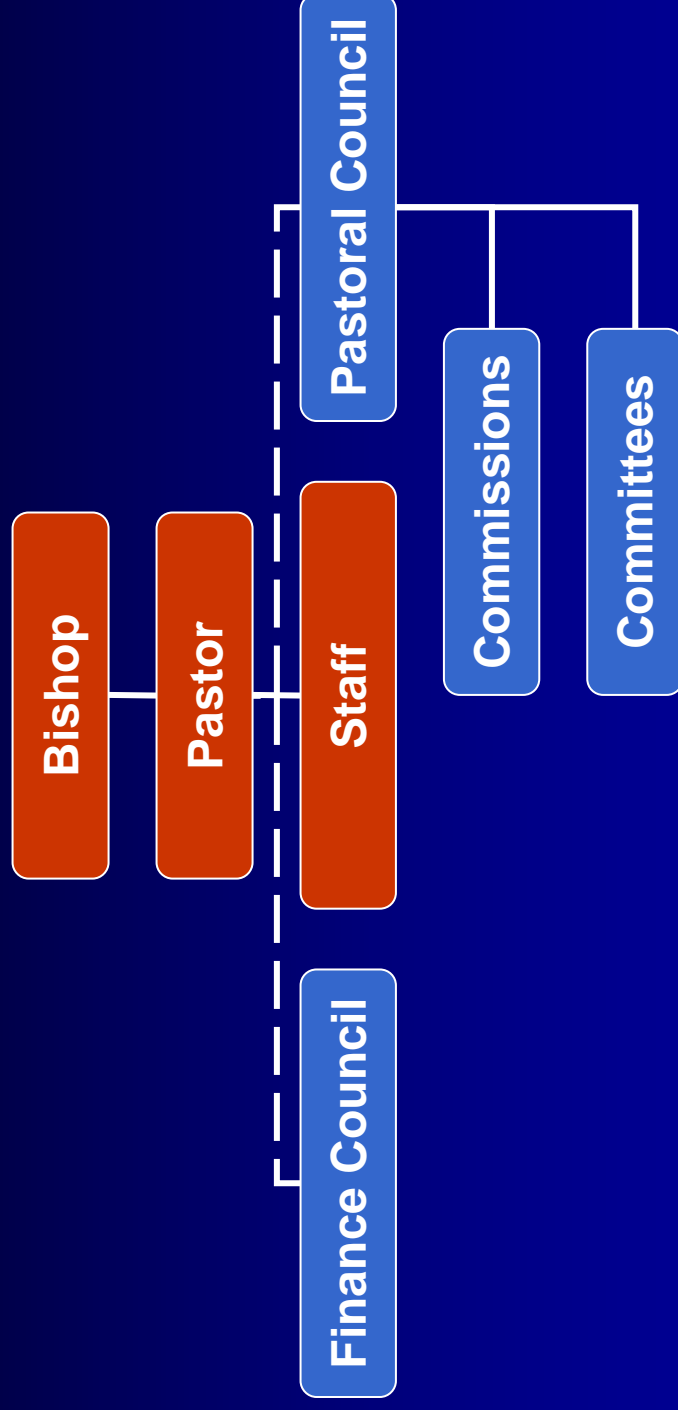
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# Highlights

## Norms for Pastoral Councils



- Pastoral councils are **consultative** in nature
- Pastoral Council & Finance Council are **distinct**
- PC membership is **representative** of parish
- **Pastor presides** over PC meetings
- PC may establish **commissions** or **committees**

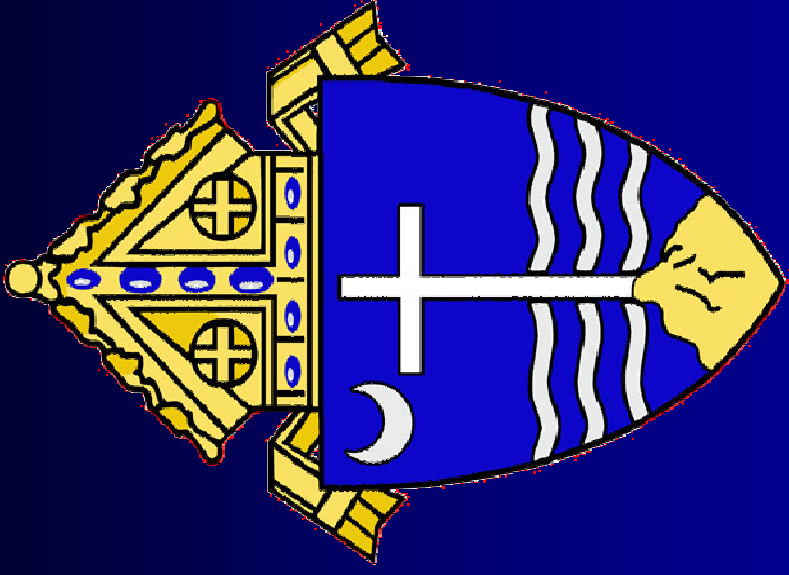
# Relationship of councils to pastor



# Highlights

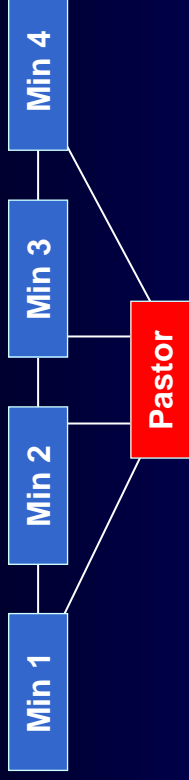
## Guidelines for Pastoral Councils

- Pastoral council **models** 
- **Establishing** a pastoral council
- **Selecting** council members 
- Dynamics of council meetings
- **Continuing education** of council members
- **Spiritual growth** for council members



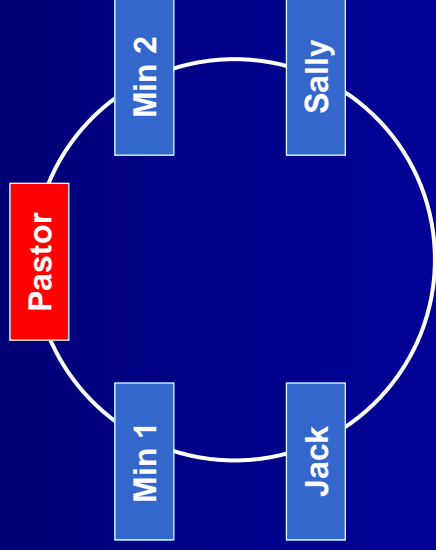
# Three Models of Councils

## Council of Ministries



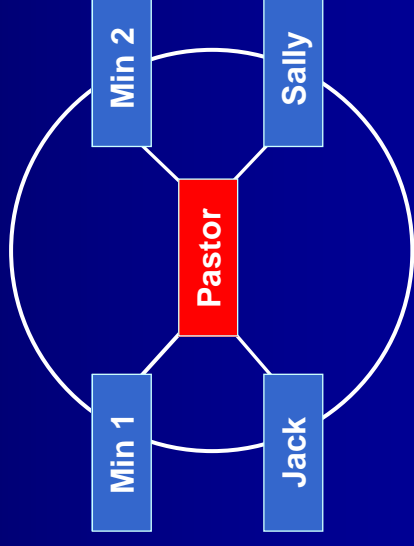
“What is everyone doing?”

## Comprehensive Planning



“Where are we going?”

## Pastoral Instrument



“I would like you to consider . . .”



# Models for Selecting Members

## Shared Wisdom / discernment

- Matches parishioners' gifts to council's needs
- Encourages individuals to find their niche
- A good model for introverts

## Elections

- Produces a perception of honesty
- Pro: the "loyal opposition" may gain a council seat
- Con: the "loyal opposition" may gain a council seat

## Combined

