

Deoise Chiarraí

Resource Book
for Parish Pastoral Councils
2019- 20

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Introduction

The purpose of this resource book is to support the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC). The PPC is the leadership group through which priests and people work together in furthering the mission of Jesus Christ.

There was a time in Ireland when parish and church were synonymous, but that is no longer the case. Today the term 'faith community' is perhaps a better way to describe those who follow Jesus Christ and are committed to proclaiming the Good News through witness, community, worship and service. The faith community is part of the wider parish community.

The PPC has a vital role to play in sustaining and building up the local faith community and its future wellbeing depends on a fully functioning PPC. This resource book describes the function of the PPC and outlines the roles and responsibilities of its members. It includes guidelines on how to get the most out of PPC meetings and provides discussion topics as well as several prayer resources. The hope is that this resource book will be of assistance to the members in their task of building a strong faith community.

How to use this resource book:

- At the first meeting of the year, spend time reflecting on the purpose of the PPC and the roles and responsibilities of its members to create a shared understanding among all.
- You might like to use the templates for Agenda and Minutes outlined on page 6- 7.
- Consider including one or two of the discussion topics from pages 8-12 on the agenda of each meeting.
- Prayer and reflection are central to the work of the PPC. There are prayer resources available on pages 13-17.

What is the Parish Pastoral Council?

The Parish Pastoral Council has an:

- Advisory role – Advises the priest(s) about the pastoral needs and issues.
- Planning role – Plans for the parish on an ongoing basis, responding to present and future needs.
- Supportive role – Encourages and promotes the work of the various parish groups and ministries.

Roles and responsibilities of the members

Priest

The priest is the official representative of the bishop and is ultimately responsible for all decisions made regarding the parish.

Chairperson

The chairperson is responsible with the priest and secretary for setting the agenda. The chairperson also facilitates the meeting to ensure that it is effective.

Secretary

The secretary is responsible for keeping accurate minutes of the meetings of the PPC and for circulating relevant material to the members.

Members

The members listen to parishioners' needs and concerns and bring these to the awareness of the PPC. They are called to participate in discussion, while being careful not to force personal opinions. They are to notify the secretary in advance, if unable to attend a meeting.

How to organise an effective and efficient meeting?

Attention needs to be given to preparations before, during and after meetings.

Before

Priest, chairperson and secretary prepare the agenda. The agenda of the upcoming meeting and the minutes of the previous meeting are sent out to members in advance.

During the meeting

The chairperson facilitates the group to work through the agenda. Each agenda item should conclude with clarity of what follow up is needed, when that will happen and who is taking responsibility for that task.

After the Meeting

The secretary circulates the minutes, and members carry out agreed actions.

Agenda Template for PPC meeting

- **Date and time:**
- **Venue:**
- **Prayer:** *Led by*
- **Apologies:**
- **Minutes and matters arising**
- **Items for discussion**
 - **Item 1**
 - **Item 2**
 - **Item 3**
 - **Item 4 etc**
- **Updates:** *Information, Notices*
- **Any Other Business:**
- **Date and time of next meeting:**

Template for taking the Minutes of the PPC meeting

Good minutes are concise and to the point and are used to inform people of what happened during the meeting and define the next step planned.

- **Date and time:**

- **Venue:**

- **Prayer:** *Led by*

- **Participants:**
- **Apologies:**

- **Matters arising**

- *Item 1* *Conclusion and follow up*

- *Item 2* *Conclusion and follow up*

- *Item 3* *Conclusion and follow up*

- *Item 4 etc* *Conclusion and follow up*

- **Updates:** *Information, Notices*
- **Any Other Business:**

- **Date and time of next meeting:**

Discussion 1 Parish Administration

Step 1: What is the current reality in our parish?

What are the arrangements for booking Masses? For booking a baptism or a wedding? For arranging a funeral? How does the parish collect its finances? Is our parish eco-friendly in its use of resources? How are the insertions for parish newsletter compiled? What are the ways in which parishioners are informed about parish activities?

Step 2: Explore various options

- Establish Parish Office with specific opening hours
- Clarify arrangements for baptisms, weddings and funerals
- Create a database of all parishioners – address, email, text
- Establish an effective way of ordering supplies for churches, office etc
- Review the distribution of parish envelopes/newsletter etc
- Do an eco-audit of the parish and the resources we use –
www.ecocongregationireland.com

Step 3: Identify specific actions

- What action will we take?
- Who will do this action?
- When will this action be done?
- How will we know this action worked?

Discussion 2 Becoming a Just Parish

Step 1: What is the current reality in our parish?

Who is marginalised in our community? How does our parish include them, reach out to them? In what way do we, as a parish community, share with those in need? How do we support Trócaire, the Catholic church's agency for development? In what ways do we, as a parish community, challenge injustice?

Step 2: Explore various options

- Invite a member of a local group working with people in marginalised situations to speak e.g. Adapt, Women's Refuge, Rape Crisis Centre, Traveller Movement, St. Vincent de Paul, Human Trafficking, etc
- Invite a member of the Diocesan Justice, Peace and Integration of Creation Committee to meet with the PPC
- Use Trócaire's Parish Resources, www.trocaire.org/resources/parishes
- Promote Season of Creation, Mission month, Days of prayer for emigrants, prisoners etc to highlight our commitment to justice.

Step 3: Identify specific actions

- What action will we take?
- Who will do this action?
- When will this action be done?
- How will we know this action worked?

Discussion 3 Nurturing parish life in a changing reality

Step 1: What is the current reality in our parish?

Are people in our parish aware that fewer priests are now ministering in our diocese? What are the implications of fewer priests for our pastoral area? What does this mean for our parish? How active are the key committees in our parish – PPC, Liturgy Group, Safeguarding Children Committee and Finance Committee? How do we, as a PPC, work with the other parishes on the Area Pastoral Council? What do we share resources with the other parishes in our pastoral area?

Step 2: Explore various options

- Create awareness among parishioners of the reality of fewer priests ministering in the diocese and the implications of this for each parish
- Create awareness among parishioners of their baptismal call and their responsibility as a member of the parish community
- Identify training for each ministry group, annually or biannually - contact pastoral team
- Participate fully in the Area Pastoral Council by submitting items for the agenda and supporting events/training etc organised by Area Pastoral Council

Step 3: Identify specific actions

- What action will we take?
- Who will do this action?
- When will this action be done?
- How will we know this action worked?

Discussion 4 Cherishing the housebound and elderly

Step 1: What is the current reality in our parish?

How do we as a parish connect with the housebound and the elderly? What services are available for them in our parish? Does the parish organise occasions or moments of connection with them?

Step 2: Explore various options

- Encourage neighbourliness and awareness of one another in the community
- Provide and publicise the availability of Radio Mass or Internet Mass
- Train Eucharistic Ministers to bring communion to the elderly and housebound
- Invite parishioners to share the newsletter and other parish activities with the elderly and housebound
- Create moments during the year when the parish celebrates and supports the elderly and housebound e.g. World Day of the sick,

Step 3: Identify specific actions

- What action will we take?
- Who will do this action?
- When will this action be done?
- How will we know this action worked?

Discussion 5 Welcoming those who come to church occasionally

Step 1: What is the current reality in our parish?

Name the occasions when there is an increased attendance at church. How do we welcome and include people on these occasions? How do we plan for these moments? How do we let people know the arrangements for Christmas and Easter, and other occasions?

Step 2: Explore various options

- Create a sense of welcome to all who visit our church – look at how family friendly our church is in terms of toilets, feeding-room, accessibility?
- Promote and publicise the times of masses and other services in the pastoral area
- Provide refreshments and opportunities for people who gather on these occasions
- Use the different occasions to share an uplifting experience of faith and prayer

Step 3: Identify specific actions

- What action will we take?
- Who will do this action?
- When will this action be done?
- How will we know this action worked?

Prayer 1 Autumn Prayer

Gathering Prayer

Leader *Awaken us anew, Lord
to find your hand at work in our lives;
awaken us to your breath breathing in us,
to your gift of sight seeing through us,
to your listening ear,
hearing each one this day with your compassion and love.*

Scripture Reading

John 14:23, 26

Jesus replied, "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

Closing Prayer – Prayer of St Francis

All *Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.*

*Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy;*

*O Divine Master,
grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love.*

*For it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen*

Prayer 2 Praying in November

All *Encircle us, Lord
with all those who have gone before us,
the whole communion of saints.
Encircle us, Lord with your hope and love
for the world.
May we encircle with love all those we meet today.*

Scripture Reading

Rom 8: 31-32, 35, 38-39

What then shall we say to this? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, will he not also give us all things with him?

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Intercessions

Reader We pray for all those who are struggling at the moment.
We remember those who feel lost in darkness or in pain
We bring to mind all who experiencing loss.
We remember those who are mourning the loss of a loved one.
We pray very specially for all our dead,
who encircle us now in the communion of saints.
Lord, hear our prayers for all these people tonight.

All *Surround us, Lord,
this November night
with your communion of saints
– remind us that we are never alone
or can ever be separated from you.
Amen*

Prayer 3 New Year Prayer - Seeing as Jesus sees

Leader *Lord, as we begin this new year and this meeting
we become aware of ourselves here in your presence.*

*Open our hearts to meeting you, Lord,
in your word and in the silence,
in one another and in all our conversations this evening.*

Reflection

Adapted from [Pedro Arrupe, SJ](#)

Reader Lord, teach me your way of looking at people:
as you glanced at Peter after his denial,
as you penetrated the heart of the rich young man
and the hearts of your disciples.

Lord, I would like to meet you as you really are,
since your image changes those
with whom you come into contact.

Remember John the Baptist's first meeting with you?
And the centurion's feeling of unworthiness?
The amazement of those who saw miracles and other wonders?

Lord, how you impressed your disciples,
the rabble in the Garden of Olives,.....
Pilate and his wife
and the centurion at the foot of the cross. . . .

Lord, teach me your way of looking at people.

Leader Let us read through the agenda that we will discuss tonight...
.. .let us see it with the heart and eyes of Jesus.....

All *Lord, teach us your way of looking at people*
- give us openness and insight, courage and love
as we enter into our discussion and reflection
on these agenda items before us.
We make our prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer 4 Lenten Prayer

All *God of blooming deserts,
encourage us to enter the space of this Lenten time,
draw us into the desert of our own lives,
where you alone can destroy our fears
and give us passion and energy for the journey of life.*

Scripture Reading

Matthew 6:16-18

'When you fast, do not look sombre as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Leader We take a moment to reflect on the Lenten journey....what commitment am I making to enrich other, to fast, to pray? We recall the words of Jesus - What light do they shed on our journey?

From dust we came

Leader From dust we came,
to dust we will return

All We belong to God

Leader We gather in penitence,
we gather in confidence

All We belong to God

Leader At the beginning of Lent,
at every moment of our lives

All We belong to God. Amen

Ruth Burgess

Prayer 5 - In Easter days

Leader *Draw us, Lord, into your Easter light*
 – let us bask in the hope your resurrection brings.

Scripture Reading

Mk 1:31-34

Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, "Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you." "Who are my mother and my brothers?" he asked. Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother."

Leader Where Christ walks,
All We will follow.
Leader Where Christ stumbles,
All We will stop.
Leader Where Christ cries,
All We will listen.
Leader Where Christ suffers,
All We will hurt.
Leader Where Christ dies,
All: We will bow our heads in sorrow.
Leader: When Christ rises again in glory,
All We will share his endless joy.
Leader There is no other way;
All He is the only way.

From Stages on the Way – Wild Goose Resources

Concluding Prayer

All *Lord God, in this world*
 where goodness and evil continue to clash with each other,
 instill in us, and in all people,
 discernment to see what is right,
 and courage to do what is right.
We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

www.dioceseofkerry.ie