

ARCHDIOCESE OF LAGOS



PARISH GUIDELINES



PARISH PASTORAL AND LAITY COUNCILS

(REVISED EDITION)

ARCHDIOCESE OF LAGOS



PARISH PASTORAL AND
LAITY COUNCILS

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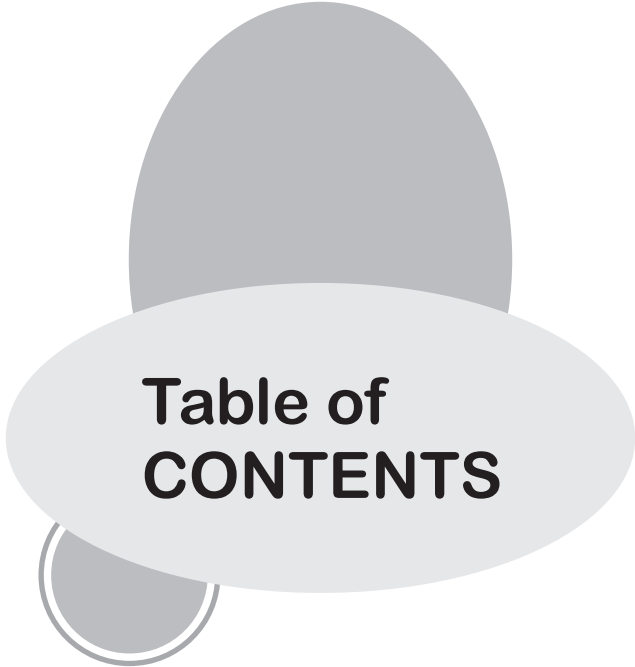


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INTRODUCTION TO THE REVISED EDITION

To fulfill her missionary mandate “Go forth and make Disciples of all Nations” (Matt 28:19), the Church, after the Vatican II Council, has adopted a clarion call for co-responsibility and collaboration among Christ's Faithful; such that all members of the Church-Clergy, Religious and Laity- according to their proper charism and roles collaborate in the task of fulfilling her mission. This co-responsibility and collaboration find concrete expression in the community of God's people otherwise called the Parish. As a privileged place for Catholics seeking to deepen their relationship with God, the Parish therefore becomes a place where: the journey of faith begins and is nourished; faith is renewed, and members grow into communities. The faith of members grows in response to their encounter with God which in turn makes them passionate about the proclamation of the Gospel.

To realize this vision and meet the evangelical demands of our changing religious landscape, there is great need to build spiritually-committed, pastorally-engaged and growth-oriented Parishes wherein everybody is actively involved in the affairs of the parish and even lukewarm parishioners are reintegrated into the living body of Christ. Indeed, as advocated by the Second Vatican Council, the parish should be a product of shared responsibility and effective collaboration between the clergy and lay faithful.

The Parish Councils – Pastoral, Laity and Finance- have been set up with this objective. Their authenticity and effectiveness depend on fidelity to the mission of Christ and the Church. The aim of each council is to make the life and activity of the parish ever more closely conformed to the gospel. It is to this end that the Archdiocese of Lagos has come up with the Second Edition of the Parish Guidelines for Pastoral, Laity and Finance Councils as well as the administration of the parish. The goals of the guidelines remain as enumerated in the First Edition:

- Use strategic methods to set parish priorities,
- Strengthen the functionality of existing parish programs, Structures and organizations,
- Foster collaborative approaches that maximize parish resources and put temporal goods of the Church to more effective use,
- Re-establish an evangelizing perspective for all pastoral ministries and reorient parish activities from maintenance to mission,
- Bridge social and structural divides, and build a community where everyone is welcome and has a sense of belonging,
- And most importantly, build a spiritually-committed and more engaged parish.

As our society evolves and is in the face of new horizon and possibilities, there is the need to continually improve our response as a Community of God's people. Therefore, as promised, this Revised Edition is the fruit of reviews and observations drawn from the experience of living out the Pastoral Guidelines since implementation began in 2015 as well as in consideration of the current situation of things in our Church and world.

Let me at this point acknowledge with gratitude, the efforts of the Priests who have been faithful in implementing the provisions of these Guidelines in their parishes since it came into effects in 2015. Comments from their different pastoral experiences, areas of challenges and points of concern during the implementation thus far have gone a long way to enrich us towards reviewing the Guidelines. We also appreciate and commend the efforts of the Lay Faithful in seeing to the successful running of the Councils in their faithfulness to the Guidelines.

As we did in the First Edition, in developing these Guidelines, great care was taken to ensure they align with the Teaching of the Church, the provisions of the Canon Law, stipulations of the Second Vatican

Council, and recommendations of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria on matters pertaining thereto. More so, these Revised Parish Guidelines are in no way a radical departure from the first edition but a revised and improved continuity with the former.

It is our sincere hope that in the years ahead, the continued implementation of these Revised Guidelines will “enable the proclamation of Christ to reach people, mold communities, and have a deep and incisive influence in bringing Gospel values to bear in society and culture” (Pope John Paul II, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 29). Also, it is our prayer that they will further assist in fostering mutual relationship between the Clergy and the Laity. Working together, Clergy and Lay leaders will continually seek new and creative methods to live fully the Christian Mission in the context of our contemporary society.

Indeed, all of us can look toward the future with the hope that the Guidelines will spur parishes to attain greater vitality and vibrancy. To bring this hope to fruition, I encourage all Parish Priests/Priest-in-Charge to remain committed to the implementation of these Guidelines to address the varied aspects of parish life. I also encourage the Lay faithful to continue to lend their gifts and talents to the building up of the parishes as communities of prayer and worship, communities of faith and service.

While we are grateful for the sincere and widespread acceptance of the First Edition, I earnestly exhort the Parish Priests and Priest-in-Charge of Parishes, with the help of the Religious and Lay faithful, to consolidate on the gains of the implementation of the First Edition. I entrust this Second Edition to the pastoral zeal of Parish Priests/Priest-in-Charge in the hope that its application may produce abundant fruit for the growth of the parishes and our Archdiocese as a whole.

We look forward to the years ahead with trusting optimism, but without underestimating the problems we face. Indeed, as the years

pass by and in the light of new issues, these guidelines remain work in progress to continually address contemporary concerns with the unchanging truths of the Gospel.

In keeping with my pastoral responsibilities, as the Chief Shepherd of the Archdiocese of Lagos, I hereby approve “The Parish Guidelines – Second Edition” to be effective in all the Parishes, Quasi-Parishes, Out-Stations and Chaplaincies in the Archdiocese of Lagos beginning with the 2020 Liturgical Year.

As the Chief Shepherd, I willingly offer you my support, spiritual solicitude and assurance of prayers. We entrust the implementation of this Second Edition to the Maternal care of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of the Church. Through her intercession, may these Guidelines bear lasting fruit in our lives and our Archdiocese.



+Alfred Adewale Martins

Archbishop of Lagos

24th November 2019

Solemnity of Christ the Universal King.

The Goals of the Parish Pastoral and Laity Councils Guidelines

The main goal of the Lagos Archdiocesan Parish Pastoral Council Guidelines is to enable and empower parish pastoral councils to be effective pastoral leaders that discern parish pastoral needs, set pastoral priorities and empower parishioners to participate in the mission of Christ by creating and maintaining engaged parishes.

Every parish in the Archdiocese of Lagos is hereby enjoined to work for growth in the number of spiritually-committed parishioners by advancing in their ability to meet the needs of parishioners.

It is hoped that an increasing number of parishioners will be encouraged and supported to contribute to parish life and the mission of the church without impairing their ability to balance and manage the personal, family, work and social aspects of their lives.

Vision of a Spiritually Committed Parishioner

A spiritually-committed parishioner is one who will honestly and freely agree to the following statements:

- My faith is involved in every aspect of my life.
- Because of my faith, I have meaning and purpose in life
- My faith gives me an inner peace
- I am a person who is spiritually committed.
- I spend time in worship or prayer every day.
- Because of my faith, I have forgiven people who have hurt me very deeply.
- My faith has called me to develop my given talents.
- I will take unpopular stands to defend my faith.
- I speak words of kindness to those in need of encouragement.

Vision of an Engaged Parish

Spiritually-committed parishioners enjoy higher levels of life satisfaction, evangelize more, give more of their financial resources and also serve or respond to needs more promptly and freely. Parishioners of engaged parishes are more likely to agree to all of the following statements about their parish¹:

- As a member of parish, I know what is expected of me.
- In my parish, my spiritual needs are met.
- In my parish, I regularly have the opportunity to do what I do best.
- In the last month, I have received recognition or praise from someone in my parish.
- The spiritual leaders seem to care about me as a person.
- There is someone in my parish that encourages my spiritual development.
- As a member of my parish, my opinions seem to count.
- The purpose and mission of my parish make me feel that my participation is important.
- The other members of my parish are committed to spiritual growth.
- Apart from family members, I have a best friend in my parish
- In last six months, someone in my parish has talked to me about my spiritual growth.
- In my congregation/parish, I have opportunities to learn and grow.

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL GUIDELINES

1) Overview

“A parish exists for evangelization.” According to Pope Paul VI (Evangelii Nuntiandi, 18), evangelization means bringing the Good News of Jesus into every human situation and seeking to convert individuals and society by the divine power of the Gospel itself.

The parish community is charged with growing in faith, sharing its faith and transforming the world in faith. Effective parishes are mission – driven as they exist for the mission of Christ. In parishes, the people of God gather at the Lord's Table to be formed into the body of Christ. The resulting transformation ought to compel us to be 'Other Christs' in the world as we reach out to those in greatest need of God's care.

A parish is a communion of individuals and families. The parish community is thus in communion with other parish communities in the diocese and with other dioceses of the world. Ideally, it is in the parish that the Gospel is proclaimed, the sacrifice of the Mass is offered, and the sacraments celebrated. Ideally, it is in the company of fellow Catholics that we discern and live out our vocation. It is in the parish that the beginning and end of our earthly life is celebrated. Each parish is a community of faith with its own particular identity, regional character and cultural heritage. The evangelising purpose of each parish is universal but each parish has its own unique charism.

The Parish Pastoral Council is the body charged with assisting the parish priest to achieve its evangelising purpose within the context of its own unique identity, geographical character and cultural heritage.

2) The Purpose and Functions of Parish Pastoral Councils

The three-fold task of PPCs is to investigate and weigh pastoral undertakings and formulate practical conclusions regarding them. In order words, study parish pastoral realities, consider them and make recommendations. These are the steps involved in parish pastoral planning.

Parish pastoral planning involves considering the unique characteristics of the parish, the specific pastoral needs of its parishioners, its human and temporal resources in order to plan and recommend ways to accomplish the mission of Christ.

- a. The PPC is a strategic organ that keeps the parish focused on its divine purpose – to love God, love God's people, do God's will and lead others to God.
- b. The PPC is responsible for ensuring that its plans result in the spiritual growth of its parishioners. The PPC is therefore primarily responsible for planning for parish engagement, evaluating the impact of its plans and reviewing its plans as needed.
- c. The PPC is also responsible for investigating pastoral issues that may arise outside of its pastoral planning and evaluation processes in as far as they impact on parish engagements.
- d. Another body (The PLC) better serves the coordination of ministries, organizations, associations and societies. This frees up the PPC to focus on this all-important task and to ensure that the right quality and quantity of membership for effectiveness is maintained. To be effective there are implications on its composition and limits on its functions in

order to keep the overall good of the parish in view rather than on sectional interests.

- e. The responsibility for implementing pastoral plans lies with specific pastoral committees.
- f. The members of the PPC assist the parish priest in the work of pastoral planning thereby participating in the pastor's ministry.

3) The Representative Role of the Parish Pastoral Council

- a. The pastoral council plans and recommends in the interest of the entire parish. This includes all ethnic groups, cultures, gender, geographic locations and ages. It includes those who attend Mass occasionally, as well as the core supporters of the parish; those who have been parishioners for a long time and those that are new comers; those who are born Catholics and those that are new converts to the faith; those who belong to parish groups and those who do not. In all matters, the parish pastoral council is charged with considering the good of the parish as a whole as it seeks to fulfil the Mission of Christ.
- \b. Representative in relation to the PPC means ensuring that the views and situations of all the groups in the Church are taken into consideration. The councillors should seek and gather information from a representative sample of parishioners in parish pastoral planning and decision-making. Care should be taken to protect and maintain the privacy and confidentiality of such information.
- c. To accomplish this, the profile of its membership ought to represent the demographics of the parish community. The

PPC is not a *body of representatives*. This means that unlike legislative groups, a member of a parish pastoral council does not represent any particular interest group (that can find itself in competition with others within the parish). This makes voting, complex procedural rules (parliamentary procedure) and other conflict-reducing methods of decision-making irrelevant. The pastoral council is a place to seek consensus on the vital issues affecting the parish community.

- d. The pastoral council enables its members and the entire parish community to share in the mission and ministry of Christ. Effective pastoral councils are a forum for dialogue and places for building a faith community. It is important that council members understand their role at the parish level, as well as the need to communicate with similar structures at the Deanery and Archdiocesan levels.

4) The Consultative Role of Parish Pastoral Councils

Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people... (Acts 2:43-47)

This is an inspiring picture of the character and mission of the church at its best - energized, intentional and united in identity, purpose and direction. This is the goal of engaged parishes:

- a. The mission entrusted to us by Christ is achieved through a collaborative ministry of the clergy, laity and religious as through baptism we all have a share in Christ's mission –

priest, prophet and king.

- b. Consultation enables the active participation of all the baptized in this mission. It is through consultation that we ensure participation, unity and vitality. Consultation is an important way for the Church to practice subsidiarity – enabling creative leadership and achieving renewal from within.
- c. The clergy, religious and laity are called to lead together as co-workers in the Lord's vineyard, sharing in a ministry rooted in service to God and their neighbours.
- d. The role of the PPC is consultative, giving the members the freedom to reflect and consider all possibilities and even come to wrong decisions but it is the parish priest who must weigh all the factors, ultimately decide and be accountable for the outcome.
- e. A pastoral council is never convened without the parish priest that seeks its consultation and cannot act effectively in contradiction to the pastor. A PPC cannot be separated from the pastor any more than a body can be separated from its head.
- f. The PPC is a consultative body whose work is ***mission-driven, data-informed, and discernment-derived***. Instead of presenting voted-upon decisions to the parish priest, the members of the pastoral council use moments of encounter and dialogue with each other and with the parish priest to present their individual and council reflections as carefully considered viable options, accompanied by assessments of each of those options.

5) Core Pastoral Areas for Parish Pastoral Council Consultation

- a. Annual discernment of parish pastoral needs
- b. Annual review of parish vision and mission statements
- c. Review of parish pastoral policies
- d. Setting of annual parish priorities
- e. Issues relating to enhancing the worship life of the parish
- f. Issues relating to enhancing the faith formation and education of parishioners
- g. Issues relating to parish community building
- h. Issues relating to reaching out to parishioners and others in need of support and care in all areas – personal, social or economic
- I. Issues responding to the Social Teachings of the Church

6) Responsibilities of Councillors:

- a. Commit to stay with the parish planning process until its completion.
- b. Prayerfully discern the needs of the parish community.
- c. Evaluate past accomplishments and develop future priorities.
- d. Work through all significant decisions in a spirit of consensus, providing facilitation at focus groups or parish assemblies when appropriate.

- e. Develop goals that respect the cultural identity of the people and that respond to pastoral needs and call the parish to its missionary purpose.
- f. Communicate the progress and results of the process to the congregation.
- g. Attend to relevant developments at the Deanery and Archdiocesan levels (typically through the relevant executives or officers).
- h. Listen carefully for the reception and reaction of parishioners at every opportunity and communicate that to the executive committee.
- i. Enlist the involvement of all parishioners in implementing parish priorities in ways that unify the various subgroups of the parish (whether age, interest or culture).
- j. Oversee implementation and evaluation of the pastoral plan that is adopted in a way that unifies the parish.

7) Membership

- a. The members of the PPC should be able to study, reflect and make recommendations on pastoral matters, in order to accomplish the task of the council.
- b. The members of the PPC should be outstanding in faith, good morals and prudent.
- c. Considering the particular function of the PPC, membership ought to be by selection and appointment of competent,

- talented, committed and qualified parishioners in order to provide the appropriate pastoral leadership necessary for growing engaged parishes.
- d. The competences required in the council are strategic planning, facilitating change, familiarity with the people and needs of the parish, decision-making based on careful study and research of issues rather than from personal opinions.
- e. Membership is subject to the approval of the parish priest.
- f. Other qualifications include:
 - i. Be baptised and practicing Catholics who are registered and supportive of the parish and are also communicants.
 - ii. Active in the practice of the Catholic faith;
 - iii. Supportive of Church teachings
 - iv. Open to prayer, study and dialogue
 - v. Committed to the success of the parish
 - vi. Have working knowledge of the parish
 - vii. Possession of time and energy,
 - viii. Ability to listen to people with diverse views,
 - ix. Desire to grow in spirit, openness to study
 - x. Reliability, willingness to empower others for action,
 - vii. Desire to work collaboratively.

8) Selection of Members

- a. The membership of the PPC shall consist of the Parish Priest's appointees, selection from the congregation through discernment process, and pastoral committees, PLC and PFC representatives.

- b. Each parish may design and implement a discernment process of selection that involves and educates parishioners on a free, fair, inclusive and Christian process of electing credible, competent and suitable leaders.
- c. This process may begin by an education of the parishioners on the purpose and functions of the PPC, the desired competencies and qualities of ideal members. These should be done over a period of about two to four weeks using Mass announcements, bulletins and other means of communication.
- d. After this period, there may be a call for nominations from the congregation and/ or a constitution of a nominating committee to search for a suitable number of qualified candidates. This process may be over a period of two to four weeks.
- e. All nominated members may then be invited to an information and interactive session where they are further educated on the Parish Pastoral Council and the requirements from members. They may also be given a pastoral matter to discuss in smaller groups prior to discussion in the general group.
- f. Following a period of prayer, participants may be invited to submit names of people they feel will make good councillors from amongst themselves and/or those that feel called to serve are invited to submit their names.
- g. The above depends on the numbers of nominations. Should the numbers be more than the numbers required, prayerful secret ballot voting can take place to arrive at the desired number.

- h. The process could be repeated until an adequate number of councillors is obtained.
 - i. A formal commissioning of the councillors may be arranged at a Sunday Mass.
 - j. Assistant and associate parish priests, representatives of religious groups in the parish are also members of the PPC.
 - k. Outstations shall be represented by the Vice-Chairman and Secretary of the Outstation Committee.

9) Officers

- a. The officers of the Parish Pastoral Council shall be a **Chairman, Vice-Chairperson** and a **Secretary**.
- b. The parish priest is the Chairman of the Parish Pastoral Council.
- c. The parish priest will appoint the Vice-Chairperson and Secretary after the members have gone through a period of discernment.
- d. The parish priest will preside over all meetings or may delegate this function to the Vice-Chairperson.
- e. The Vice-Chairperson works in collaboration with the parish priest and on his directives. This may include selecting the time and location of meetings, preparing the meeting agenda, and any other duties so assigned by the parish priest. The vice – chairperson acts on the consultative

directions of the parish priest.

- f. The **secretary** will be responsible for the recording and distribution of minutes, notifying members of upcoming meetings, maintaining a permanent record of each member's tenure and of business conducted by the PPC and any other duties so assigned by the Chairman.
- g. As needed, the parish priest may appoint a **Deputy vice Chairperson** and an **Assistant Secretary** to act in their absences or on delegated duties.
- h. The vice-chairman meets with the parish priest to prepare the agenda for each meeting.
 - i. At the parish priest's discretion, the vice-chairman or another member of the PPC may moderate the meeting of the PPC.
 - j. In the event of the parish priest's absence from a regularly scheduled meeting of the PPC, the vice-chairman moderates the meeting. In the parish priest's absence, the council may not undertake new business, or business which is not included on the agenda.

10) Composition of the Parish Pastoral Council

The PPC membership is composed as follows:

- a. Parish Pastoral Committees - 12
- b. Parish Laity Council - 2
- c. Parish Priest's Nominees - 5
- d. Parishioner's discerned selections - 4
- e. The vice – chairperson and secretary of each outstation - 2

The exact numbers of the parish priest's nominees and discerned selections will depend on the size and peculiar needs of the parish but the total number should be around 25. The parishioners' discerned selections and representatives of parish pastoral committees, the PLC and the PFC are subject to the approval of the parish priest who will confirm all appointments in writing.

11) The Parish Pastoral Committees

- a. The parish pastoral plans for the purpose of building up the spiritual lives of parishioners will be implemented, that is, organized, directed and controlled - by the relevant assigned parish pastoral committee.
- b. The parish pastoral committees will oversee the implementation of specific areas of the parish pastoral plan while individual parish organizations will be assigned distinct and specific goals derived from the parish pastoral plan for implementation on the basis of their distinct purposes and roles within the parish community.
- c. The Parish Pastoral Committees are – **Liturgical, Devotional, Faith Formation and Education, Community Building, Welfare and Social Action, and Evangelization.**
- d. Individual parish organizations work in union with the other organizations within their parish pastoral committee for the overall achievement of parish pastoral plans and in union with the parish priest.
- e. The Parish Pastoral Committees are made up of the **Vice Chairpersons and Faith Formation Coordinators** of each of the member organizations and have the overall objective

of ensuring that the goals of the specific pastoral area are achieved in an effective and efficient manner. **All parish ministries, organizations, societies, associations will have a Faith Formation Coordinator who works to facilitate the spiritual – commitment and relevant education of its members as well as the conformity of the group's activities to Gospel values and teachings of the Church.**

12) The Composition of Parish Pastoral Committees

a. Liturgical Committee - It is responsible for coordinating the planning, implementation and evaluation of parish liturgies, under the direction of the parish priest. The committee oversees all activities associated with public worship (liturgies). Members of the committee are the designated officers of:

- a. Altar Servers
- b. Lectors
- c. The Choir
- d. The Church Wardens
- e. Altar Decorators
- f. Sacristan
- g. Etc..

b. Faith Formation and Education Committee – It coordinates the planning, implementation and evaluation of parish faith formation and education, including family life education for all age groups and families. The committee consists of lay groups directly assisting the parish priest in his pastoral ministry and those other lay groups whose main charism involves assisting individuals to grow in their catholic faith, character, discipleship and apostleship. The members of the committee are the designated officers of:

- i. Association of catechists
- ii. RCIA facilitators
- iii. Family Life Ministry facilitators
- iv. Marriage Preparation facilitators
- v. Catholic Charismatic Renewal
- vi. Catholic Evangelizers
- vii. Schools of Evangelization
- viii. The Renew
- ix. The Focolare
- x. Communion and Liberation
- xi. Catholic Biblical Instructors Union
- xii. Catholic Biblical Movement of Nigeria
- xiii. Neo – Catechumenal Way
- xiv. Man O War
- xv. Couples for Christ
- xvi. Man of Order and Discipline
- xvii. Faith Formation & Education officers of all parish societies, associations and organizations.

c. Devotional Committee - consists of the vice – chairpersons and faith formation and education officers of the members of the societies, associations and groups whose primary charism is prayerful devotions. They include:

- a. Confraternity of Christian Mothers
- b. Confraternity of Christian Fathers
- c. Divine Mercy
- d. Guild of St. Anthony of Padua
- e. St. Jude Society
- f. St. Theresa
- g. Purgatorian Society
- h. The Most Holy Rosary

- i. The Block Rosary Crusade
- j. Legion of Mary
- k. St Anthony of Padua
- l. St Rita
- m. Apostolate of Precious Blood of Jesus
- n. Apostleship of Prayer League of Sacred Heart of Jesus and Immaculate Heart of Mary
- o. Ave Maria
- p. Blessed Tansi Solidarity Movement
- q. Confraternity of Mary Queen of all Hearts
- r. Infant Jesus of Prague
- s. St Pio Prayer Group
- t. St Philomena Society
- u. World Apostolate of Fatima (Blue Army)
- v. Etc.

d. Community Building – consists of the structured efforts to promote the spirit of community in the parish through Small Christian Communities and in communities based on residence, gender, age and profession who come together to solve their common problems in and outside the parish or to contribute their professional expertise to be more effective witnesses of Christ in their corners of the world. This includes consistent and planned efforts to strengthen relationships among parishioners thereby fostering a truly hospitable Christian atmosphere. They are also to reach out to new and inactive members, and involve them in their communities. Members are the designated officers of:

- i. Small Christian Communities Facilitators
- ii. Catholic Men's Organization (CMO)
- iii. Catholic Women's Organization (CWO)
- iv. Catholic Young Adults Association
- v. Catholic Youth Organization of Nigeria (CYON)

- vi. Missionary Childhood Association
- vii. Young Catholic Professionals (YCP)
- viii. The Nurses' Guild
- ix. Catholic Teachers Association
- x. Young Catholic Workers
- xi. Catholic Lawyers Association
- xii. Etc.

e. Welfare and Social Action – coordinates all organizations involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the social justice ministry of the parish, reaching out to the needy, the poor and marginalized within and without the parish community. Members are the designated officers of:

- I. JDPC
- ii. Pastoral Bereavement and Caring Ministry
- iii. Society of St Vincent De Paul \
- iv. Madonna Mercy
- v. The Catholic Workers Volunteer Force
- vi. The Red Cross
- vii. Welfare Officers of all parish societies, associations and organizations.

f. Evangelization – receives its general mandate from the Archdiocesan Evangelization Commission, and coordinates and promotes all parish evangelization activities and initiatives. Its Chairperson and Secretary represent the Committee in the PPC.

13) The Roles of Parish Pastoral Committees

- a. These clusters ensure that member organizations have clearly defined and described vision, mission, programs and activities that are distinct from each other.

- b. For purposes of effectiveness and efficiency, explore areas of collaboration and ensure that there are no duplications of efforts and activities by jointly planning activities such as training, workshops, and seminars, retreats, related to specific areas of pastoral care; worship sessions and sharing resources where possible.
- c. Implement and monitor the progress of pastoral programs and plans aimed at developing the spiritual lives and welfare of members.

14) Tenure

The tenure of PPC members is a single term of 4 (four) years non-renewable, after which the affected members will not be eligible for re-appointment, under any guise, until after one term has elapsed.

15) Relationships

a. Relationship with Parish Finance Council

- i. The responsibility for providing counsel to the pastor concerning the administration of the parish finances, budget, and property is vested in the Parish Finance Council (PFC).
- ii. In order to assure good communication, a standing member of the PFC will be appointed to the PPC by the pastor.
- iii. Each year, the PFC assists the pastor in making a report to the PPC concerning the finances and property of the parish.

b. Relationship with Parish Laity Council

- i. The PLC has the responsibility for promoting and evaluating lay apostolic initiatives in the parish under the guidance and direction of the Lay Apostolate Centre and in collaboration and in union with the parish priest, PPC and PFC.
- ii. The chairperson and secretary of the PLC are members of the PPC and will render reports to the PPC for deliberations as required for parish pastoral planning.

c. Relationship with Parish Pastoral Committees

- i. The PPC will work closely with the parish pastoral committees in its implementation of programs and plans to develop the spiritual and community lives of parishioners and the advancement of the evangelization mission of the parish.
- ii. The PPC needs to be aware of all parish activities; however, it is not within the purview of the PPC to supervise parish activities.
- iii. Parish Pastoral Committee reports should be a standard part of the PPC's agenda so that the work of the committees can be evaluated, supported and developed.

d. Relationship with Parish Administration

The PPC may consider reports and issues from the Parish Administration that threaten growth in the engagement of parishioners, but will direct their solution and advice to the PFC.

16) Quasi – Parishes, Small Parishes and Out Stations

- a. The roles and functions of the Parish Pastoral Council will be delivered by outstation committees and Church Councils in quasi – parishes and by a modified structure in small parishes.
- b. In all three cases, the pastoral ministries and groups will apply, although all the groups may not be represented due to the limited number of parishioners.
- c. Out-station committees will be led by the chairperson, vice – chairperson, secretary as well as a treasurer and a financial secretary until the needs of the outstation warrant a substantive finance committee or council.
- d. Quasi – parishes and small parishes retain the structures outlined above but may be limited to one representative from each pastoral ministry/group and half the numbers of nominated and discerned numbers.

17) Frequency of Meetings

Parish Pastoral Councils may meet monthly, once in two months or quarterly depending on the peculiar needs of each parish, bearing in mind that the quality of membership could be improved upon by fewer meetings and well run meetings.

PARISH LAITY COUNCIL GUIDELINES

1) Overview

The Parish Laity Council is charged by the Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity (Apostolicam Actuositatem) with the goal of intensifying the apostolic activity of the laity by promoting the apostolate and coordinating parish lay initiatives.

While individual groups are responsible for organizing and directing their own activities, the parish laity council is charged with the coordination and promotion of lay apostolic zeal amongst parishioners.

2) The Purpose and Functions of Parish Laity Councils

I. Promotional Role

- a. The Parish Laity Council is responsible for the regular (annual or bi-annual) promotion of all parish lay initiatives with the goal of educating parishioners and getting them more involved in parish life.
- b. Such occasions are also useful for the introduction of new initiatives that are planned by the PPC as needed for the achievement of parish goals.
- c. The PLC will, from time to time, research the needs of the parish and propose the introduction of new lay initiatives to the PPC or to parishioners as approved by the parish priest.

- d. The PLC should also embark on campaigns to recruit members of the laity into programs that help them discover their spiritual gifts and talents thereby empowering them for apostolic work.
- e. The council will research new proposals on parish apostolic initiatives and making recommendations to the PPC on their proper classification in the parish.
- f. Promotion of Apostolate Formation such as instruction in theology, ethics and philosophy, culture, good human relations – human values, living fraternally with others, cooperating with others, striking up friendly conversation with others and leadership skills. This will be achieved by engaging the services of relevant pastoral groups where applicable or by outsourcing. They are to promote such programs and ensuring that their members and those of the PPC participate actively in them.

ii. Coordinating Role

- a. Carrying out research and study in the apostolate field and on specific lay and human problems such as departures from the ethical and religious order in all spheres of life that pose a danger to Christian life.
- b. Discerning the particular and common needs of lay groups with similar areas of apostolate for the purposes of advising and providing resources for the

formation of individuals and leaders for intensified apostolic activities.

- c. Dealing with unexpected crisis, obstacles or interruptions and efficiently getting things back on track and preventing further crises.
- d. Assessing the apostolic developmental needs of the parish and filling the needs.
- e. Developing and implementing an annual calendar of leadership, management and social skills development programmes for equipping the laity to be effective in their individual and group apostolates.

3) Core Areas for Parish Laity Council Operations

- a. Annual evaluation of parish growth in lay apostolate measured by growth in the effectiveness of existing lay groups as well as growth in the numbers of individual and parish apostolic initiatives.
- b. Effective execution of relevant programmes aimed at equipping and strengthening the apostolic capacity of members.
- c. Effective execution of an annual or bi-annual programme aimed at promoting existing and new lay apostolic initiatives as needed in the parishes.

- d. Effective and timely resolution of conflicts amongst lay initiatives.
- e. Growth in the numbers of parishioners assisted to find their callings through effective talents / spiritual gifts discovery and development programmes.
- f. Annual parish engagement surveys.

4) Membership

The Parish Laity Council is an assembly of the chairpersons and secretaries of **all** parish societies, associations, organizations and ministries in the parish.

5) Officers

The officers of the Parish Laity Council shall be:

- a) Chairperson
- b) Vice-Chairperson
- c) Secretary
- d) Assistant Secretary
- e) Treasurer
- f) Financial Secretary – will collate and monitor the financial reports of all members.
- g) Welfare Secretary – collates and coordinates the monthly reporting of the welfare activities of all member groups through their respective welfare officers.
- h) Assistant Welfare officer
- i) The coordinators of each of the Parish Laity Committees

The officers shall be elected from the chairpersons and secretaries of the various societies/organizations. All non – executive members of the PLC will assume membership of the Parish Laity Committees ensuring an equitable distribution. The PLC will render reports to the PPC through the Chairperson and Secretary of the PLC.

6) Tenure

The tenure of PLC members is a single term of four (4) years non-renewable, after which the affected members will not be eligible for re-appointment, under any guise, until after one term has elapsed.

7) Frequency of Meetings

It is recommended that the individual groups meet monthly or more often as needed while the Parish Laity Committees and Parish Laity Council Executives meet quarterly and the Parish Laity Council meets twice a year. Each parish is free to meet more regularly as needed.

8) Suggested Areas for Formation and Development of Laity

- a. Good Meeting Principles and Skills
- b. Consensual Decision Making Process
- c. Christian Ethics
- d. Principles of Christian Conflict Management
- e. Managing Oneself
- f. Developing Interpersonal Skills
- g. Leading the Team
- h. Leading Change
- I. Discernment and Decision - Making
- j. Relevant Topics in Theology

- k. Relevant Topics in Philosophy
- l. Conversational Skills
- m. Social Skills
- n. Problem Solving
- o. Action Planning

9) Relationships

Relationship to Parish Priest

- a. The PLC works collaboratively with the parish priest and all parish councils and organizations.
- b. The PLC takes its general mandate from the Archdiocesan Director of Lay Apostolate but must report to, and take its specific goals from, the PPC in line with the needs of its parish community.

Relationship with Parish Pastoral Council

- a. The Parish Laity Council Chairperson and Secretary represent PLC in the PPC and will report regularly to it.
- b. The PLC will present special evaluation reports and recommendations on an annual basis to the PPC to assist it in its planning role.
- c. The PLC is a member of the PPC and both should have a collaborative working relationship with each other.

Relationship with Parish Pastoral Committees

- a. The parish laity committees and groups will have a close working relationship with the parish pastoral committees.
- b. The PLC needs to be aware of all parish activities; however, it is not within the purview of the PLC to direct parish activities.
- c. The PLC provides advisory and supportive services to the committees and their members, and is a council for all the laity rather than the head of lay groups.
- d. The PLC funds its activities by embarking on fund raising activities and through rates and donations for valuable services provided to the Laity, the Organizations and the Parish.

10) Parish Laity Committees

- a. **Leadership and Social Education Committee** – responsible for annual programme calendar development, organizing and delivering relevant development programmes based on needs. Membership shall be drawn from the council and additional support recruited from the laity, as needed. The Coordinator is nominated/selected from the membership.
- b. **Evaluation Committee** – responsible for the annual evaluations of parish engagement and other evaluations as needed in the parish and for preparing reports to be sent to the PPC through the PLC chairperson. Membership shall be drawn from the council and additional support recruited from the laity, as needed. The Coordinator is nominated/selected from the membership.

- c. **Discernment Committee** – responsible for recruiting and delivering Living Your Strengths and Spiritual Gifts programmes in order to advise parishioners on their best fit in and outside of the parish. Membership shall be drawn from the council and additional support recruited from the laity, as needed. The Coordinator is nominated/selected from the membership.
- d. **Publicity Committee** – handles events targeted at promoting old and new group opportunities for engaging with the parish. Membership shall be drawn from the council and additional support recruited from the laity, as needed. The Coordinator is nominated/selected from the membership.

To the Glory of God

