

Other ways of Pastoral Planning

- ‘Appreciative Inquiry’ is a methodology that searches for the best practices already present in a parish – *where is there energy and life in the parish? Why is this so?* Once this is identified, the parish focuses on developing further what it does best and seeks ways to apply that energy throughout the life of the parish.
- A methodology related to this sees a shift from ‘needs based’ planning to ‘gifts based’ planning. Instead of focusing on the needs of the parish and how they can be met, the council works at unleashing people’s gifts in the service of the kingdom, confident that the variety and fullness of gifts in the parish are more than enough to deal with the parish’s issues. Important needs will still be named and planned for, but in the context of ‘a thousand flowers blooming’ rather than strict adherence to a master plan for all. By focusing on the gifts rather than the needs the parish may come to see itself as a gifted parish rather than a needy parish.

Pastoral Planning and Pope John Paul II

In his letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, Pope John Paul II places “pastoral planning under the heading of holiness [which] is a choice filled with consequences. “ (31) He has much more advice about pastoral planning including “If we have truly contemplated the face of Christ, dear Brothers and Sisters, our pastoral planning will necessarily be inspired by the ‘new commandment’ which he gave us: ‘Love one another, as I have loved you’ (Jn 13:34).” (42)

Michael Brady

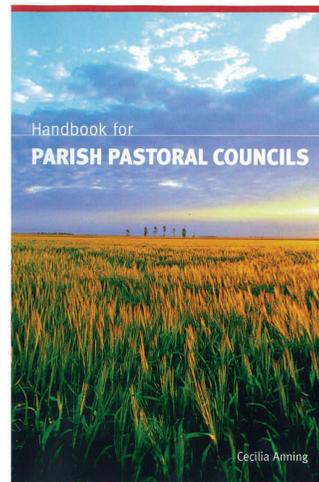
**For further information
see website:**

Parish Pastoral Councils
in Australia
www.ppc.catholic.org.au/ppc

**An initiative of the
Australian Catholic Bishops Conference**

Helpful resource:

Anning, C. (2007) 3rd edition
Handbook for Parish Pastoral Councils



*For details of contents, reviews and
online ordering see:*
www.bne.catholic.net.au/opc/manual.html

Parish Pastoral Councils



Pastoral Planning

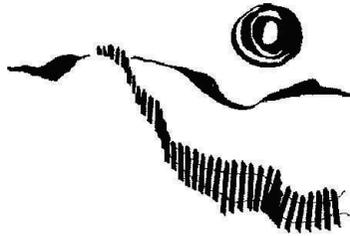
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Pastoral Planning

Parish Pastoral Councils undertake pastoral planning for their parish.

Pastoral Planning differs from many other forms of planning because the principles that shape it and the goals it aims towards are clearly based on the gospel.

While in many forms of planning the principles of efficiency, economy and determination are highly prized, this is not always so with pastoral planning. In pastoral planning the path taken to reach the goal is as important as the goal itself, sometimes more so.



Spirituality of Communion

To understand the processes of pastoral planning it helps to understand that pastoral planning in these times grows out of a spirituality of communion.

Through this spirituality we understand that all of us in the parish are in communion with Christ, and through Christ in communion with one another.

Together we make up the body of Christ, and what touches one of us touches all of us.

We each have different gifts, roles and functions within the body of Christ and this is part of our strength.

We believe that each person in this communion

is loved fully by God, and so - in Christ - we truly love each other as brothers and sisters.

We value the contribution of each person and are grateful for their commitment to the parish.

Pastoral Planning Processes

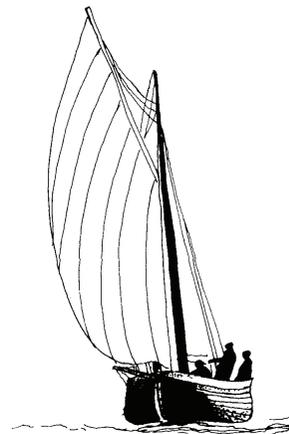
The main processes of pastoral planning are:

Communication - if we are all part of the body of Christ then communication that is clear and timely needs to be part of the parish culture and exercised at all levels. A culture of secrecy will often cripple community and shatter communion.

Consultation - because the Holy Spirit moves in the lives of all God's people, it is necessary to consult meaningfully during the planning process; the purpose of this is to guide leadership towards a more effective decision than it would otherwise have made.

Collaboration - means to work together, and is quite different to delegation. It speaks of partnership and shared commitment, trust and being able to rely on one another.

These processes are shaped by the parish living a spirituality of communion.



How to do Pastoral Planning

There are different methods of pastoral planning and a widely used one has these five simple steps which are taken over a period of some time:

1. Lead the parish to articulate its vision for itself. This takes time and discussion, and is quite different to getting the parish to accept someone else's vision. The key question is 'What is God calling this parish community to be?' (not 'What is God calling this parish to do?' - that comes later). The statement is often very short and easily remembered by all parishioners.
2. Honestly name the current reality of the parish - not just the negatives, not just the positives - perhaps create a parish profile.
3. Allow time for some critical analysis together - e.g. discuss 'Why is the parish the way it is and not as we believe it is called to be?'
4. Plan - 'What practical and achievable goals will help the parish move from its current reality towards its vision? Who has to do what and by when to achieve these goals?'
5. Pray together often as a parish for what we're doing and trying to achieve, and evaluate how it's going at set intervals.



"Pastoral planning is the action of the church organising itself for mission."