

Relationship Between Diocesan Pastoral Council and Local Vicariate Councils

IT IS ABOUT MORE THAN JUST COOPERATION—Just before his retirement, Pope Benedict XVI invited Catholics to make a shift from mere cooperation (pastor does the mission, and parishioners help) through collaboration (pastor leads and parishioners help) to co-responsibility (we lead together and empower all the Baptized to fulfill the mission of the church). The diocesan pastoral council can be instrumental in encouraging this shift at the vicariate level.

FOCUS ON A STRATEGIC PURPOSE—Vicariate council meetings can take many forms, but in each case, the purpose of these meetings is to foster communication and effective consultation. Councils are most effective when their meetings focus less on doing more things and more on doing the right things. Effective vicariate councils consider the strategic challenges facing the church in their particular region. These councils collect, consider, and deliver valuable information to the Bishop. This happens most effectively when meetings are aligned with vicariate councils meet prior to diocesan council meetings. This alignment presumes that agendas are coordinated.

ALIGN AGENDAS—Ideally a vicariate council meets three weeks prior to the diocesan pastoral council. In the vicariate council meeting, approximately twenty minutes can be allocated in the agenda to consider the topic that is scheduled for the upcoming diocesan pastoral council meeting. It is then possible for the Bishop to ask for the sense of the faithful on a particular matter and get timely, collective and well-considered views from each vicariate.

ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS—Vicariate meetings can be opportunities for strategic thinking when the right questions are asked: What can our parishes do better together than we can do by ourselves?, How can we be a more vibrant Catholic presence?, etc. Vicariate meetings can also be educational and diocesan staff members are available to come and speak on a wide range of topics related to ministry leadership, parish vitality, and faith formation.

AVOID DISTRACTIONS—Too many vicariate councils have been disbanded for lack of meaningful agenda. Vicariate meetings are NOT intended for sharing the content of the parish bulletin! Vicariate representatives to the diocesan pastoral council are expected to be available to help organize and convene vicariate council meetings.

As we go forward and continue to address the challenges of parish leadership, evangelization, and inter-parish cooperation we must be constantly reminded that ***real success will be less about doing more things and more about doing the right things.***

Presbyteral Council



Vicars Forane



Diaconate Council



Etc.

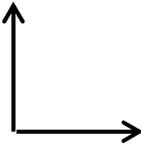


Bishop

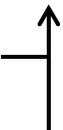


Bishop Council for Laity

Diocesan Pastoral Council
Quarterly Meetings
 Includes: Vicariate Representatives and At-Large Representatives for Priests, Deacons, Women Religious, Asians, Hispanics, Africans, Youth and Young Adults.



Vicars Forane



Vicar Meets with Priests
 Bi-monthly

Possible Agenda
 Fraternal Support, Coordination of Sacraments, Audit of Sacramental Records, Share ideas on common pastoral concerns etc..

Vicar Meets with Lay Leaders
 Quarterly

Possible Agenda
 Consideration of Diocesan Priorities, Promotion of Events, Planning for Future, Catholic Schools and Faith Formation, Outreach to Inactives Equipping Volunteers in Parish Ministry, & Application of Technology



Plenary Vicariate Meeting
 Semi-Annual

Future of Catholic Education
 Vicariate Priorities and Planning (e.g. New Evangelization, Support for Families, RCIA, Marriage Preparation, Youth Ministry and Outreach to Young Adults)



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