

## PARISH LIFE COORDINATOR

### I. INTRODUCTION

There have been many changes in the Catholic Church as a result of Vatican II. One of the areas undergoing rapid change is that of ministry within the Church, both because of the diminishing number of priests available to provide adequate pastoral leadership, and the recognition that all people, ordained and lay, have unique gifts to offer to the rest of God's people. As St. Paul observed (1 Cor. 12:12, 27-28):

The body is one and has many members, but all the members, many though they are, are one body; and so it is with Christ ... You, then, are the body of Christ. Every one of you is a member of it. Furthermore, God has set up in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracle workers, healers, assistants, administrators and those who speak in tongues ...

The need to incorporate the gifts of a variety of people is echoed in the Revised Code of Canon Law, which permits a bishop to entrust the pastoral care of a parish to a deacon, other persons, or a community of persons:

If the diocesan bishop should decide that, due to a dearth of priests, a participation in the exercise of the pastoral care of a parish is to be entrusted to a deacon or to some other person who is not a priest or to a community of persons, he is to appoint some priest endowed with the powers and faculties of a pastor to supervise the pastoral care. (Canon 517 #2)

A commentary on the Code of Canon Law offers this clarification:

The new universal law also permits lay exercise of pastoral care. Because of a lack of priests, the bishop can entrust a parish to a deacon, a layperson, or a lay and religious team, providing a neighboring priest acts as pastor and moderator. (Code, Community, Ministry - p. 55)

In addition, Canon 766 states:

Lay persons can be admitted to preach in a church or oratory if it is necessary in certain circumstances or if it is useful in particular cases according to the prescriptions of the conference of Bishops and with due regard for Canon 767.

On the other hand, since the Revised Code requires that, in order to assume the office of pastor validly, one must be in the sacred order of the presbyterate (Canon 521), there is at least a dual ministry requirement in any parish where a Parish Life Coordinator is installed; the Bishop can entrust the pastoral care of a parish to a "Parish Life Coordinator," but not as pastor per se (that office still requires an ordained priest). Canons 523 and 524 clarify that the Bishop alone has the right to appoint the Parish Life Coordinator, and that it is up to him (after consulting with other clergy and with lay people) to define the extent and scope of the Parish Life Coordinator's authority.

## II. TERMS AND JOB DESCRIPTION - role expectations, etc.

### A. Definition of Terms

**Parish Life Coordinator** - the person who is appointed by the Archbishop to administer the parish(es) in all things but those reserved to ordained priests or deacons. This person would provide for the ordinary day-to-day pastoral, spiritual and administrative care of the parish.

**Sacramental Priest** - the priest appointed by the Archbishop who serves the parish(es) in question in those sacramental and/or liturgical roles reserved to a priest. His role would include providing the sacraments as needed.

**Priest Supervisor** - the priest appointed by the Archbishop to supervise the pastoral care of the parish. He is accountable to the Archbishop and collaborates with the Parish Life Coordinator. He fulfills a consultative role based upon his own experience. Ordinarily, the priest supervisor will be the dean of the deanery in which the parish is located. The priest supervisor enjoys all the powers and faculties of pastor. It is the priest supervisor's responsibility to insure that all of the pastoral responsibilities are fulfilled.

### B. Role Description for the Parish Life Coordinator

In general, the Parish Life Coordinator would:

1. Establish a permanent Catholic presence in a recognized leadership role.
2. Witness to shared responsibility of clergy, lay religious and laity in the Church as encouraged by Vatican II and the new Code of Canon Law.
3. Recognize and utilize the variety of gifts present in a parish.

### C. Accountability

The Parish Life Coordinator is responsible and accountable to the priest supervisor and the Archbishop in managing the pastoral affairs of the parish (Canons 517.2, 1276, 1279, 1282).

### D. Ministries for the Parish Life Coordinator

#### 1. Ministry of Worship

- a. Oversee the planning and coordination of weekly liturgies and preside at or provide leadership for Word services, Liturgy of the Hours or Word and Communion services.
- b. Plan and prepare for funerals, wakes and weddings.
- c. Participate in providing opportunities for spiritual growth in and out of the parish.
- d. Oversee the recruiting, training and scheduling of various liturgical ministers.

#### 2. Ministry of Teaching

- a. Facilitate all sacramental preparations.
- b. Help to develop and implement the Christian Initiation process.
- c. Facilitate religious education programs for the parish community.

### **3. Ministry of Service**

- a. Visit parishioners, especially the sick, shut-ins, persons in distress, and new families.
- b. Be available for personal or spiritual guidance and support, as well as referral to other agencies when this is necessary or desired.
- c. Assist those seeking canonical advice and services from the Marriage Tribunal.
- d. Cooperate with local ministerial and ecumenical groups.
- e. Be involved in community functions as interest, time and energy allow.
- f. Promote social justice and action.

### **4. Ministry of Administration**

- a. Oversee finances and help prepare the budget as well as annual financial reports.
- b. Provide leadership for Parish Pastoral Council and parish committees in accord with the Archdiocesan Parish Pastoral Council Guidelines.
- c. Represent or promote representation from the parish at diocesan or other functions.
- d. Keep parish and sacramental records updated, and keep them and other necessary legal documents in a safe place.
- e. Be alert to and ensure that property maintenance needs are attended to and notify appropriate committees of needs.
- f. Maintain corporation records and submit requests for proxies, signed by the Parish Life Coordinator, the priest supervisor and parish directors, as needed for corporation-related matters.
- g. Provide for weekly parish bulletins.
- h. Maintain job descriptions, participate in interviews and issue contracts for staff.
- i. Recruit, screen and motivate/support volunteers.
- j. Facilitate the relationships between staff members, volunteers, council, committee and board members.
- k. Do performance reviews for personnel and key volunteers.
- l. Assist staff, volunteers, council, committee and board members in determining their roles in the parish.
- m. Facilitate conflict resolution among parish staff, parishioners, council, committee and board members when needed.

### **5. Other**

- a. The Parish Life Coordinator is expected to perform any other duties and responsibilities as directed by the Ordinary and other duties determined in cooperation with the Parish Pastoral Council and the priest supervisor.
- b. The Parish Life Coordinator is accountable to the priest supervisor and the Archbishop or his delegate for overseeing the life, the goods, and the sacramental life of the parish.

## **III. QUALIFICATIONS**

### **A. Professional/Educational Background**

A Masters degree or its equivalent in theology, religious education, religious studies, or any similar program related to parish ministry, with experience and demonstrated

competency in parish work and pastoral skills. The amount and type of parish experience will be an important factor in assessing the candidate's suitability for the position in question.

**B. Personal**

1. A baptized, confirmed, practicing Catholic.
2. If married, validly so.
3. Collaborative leadership ability.
4. Christian compassion - sensitive to others.
5. Self-motivating, organized, responsible.
6. Good physical and psychological health.
7. Spiritual development and active prayer life.
8. Healthy communication and conflict resolution skills.

**C. Commitment to Church**

A Parish Life Coordinator must be faithful to the mission, teaching and discipline of the universal Church as presented in the Code of Canon Law and to the laws, customs and practices of the Archdiocese of Dubuque.

**D. Other**

A person who does not have all of the above education and experience may be considered. A determination of the candidate's qualifications is the responsibility of the Archbishop.

**IV. RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES & PLACEMENT**

**A. Recruitment**

Those interested in and qualified for the office of Parish Life Coordinator should request an application packet from the Office of Leadership Development and Pastoral Planning at the Archdiocesan Center. Applications and accompanying documents will be kept on file and will be considered when an opening occurs.

**B. Placement**

1. When it is known that a priest may not be available to serve as resident pastor of a parish or parishes, the following steps will be initiated:
  - a. The various options of clustering and merging, and the possibility of appointing a Parish Life Coordinator and priest supervisor and/or sacramental priest shall be explored with that parish as methods of continuing to provide for the spiritual and physical well-being of the parish.
  - b. If the model of Parish Life Coordinator is chosen, the parish council shall be informed of the duties and responsibilities of the coordinator, the lines of accountability, and the working relationship between the Parish Life Coordinator, the parish pastoral council, the sacramental priest and/or the priest supervisor.
  - c. The Episcopal Vicar shall request the Office of Leadership Development and Pastoral Planning to provide possible candidates for consideration and direct

the office to obtain letters of recommendation, approval of religious superiors (in the case of a religious) and other personnel records for those candidates chosen to be considered.

2. The Archbishop or his delegate will interview the recommended candidate.
3. The term of appointment will be decided by the Archbishop. An initial one-year appointment is recommended.

## V. CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

### A. Length of Appointment

The length of appointment of the Parish Life Coordinator is negotiated between the Archbishop and the Parish Life Coordinator, usually for a three-year term.

### B. Salary and Benefits

A contract is to be negotiated and signed with the Archbishop.

1. Just financial compensation and fringe benefits are to be negotiated with the Archbishop, taking into account the candidate's background and experience and the scope of parish responsibilities.
2. Applicable taxes will be withheld (federal, state, social security).
3. Monies up to or equivalent to that provided for the priests per fiscal year for professional education will be provided by the parish to enable the Parish Life Coordinator to continue his/her professional education.
4. Compensation is paid by the parish(es).

C. Four (4) weeks vacation (including three weekends away).

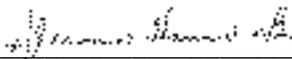
D. One (1) week for retreat.

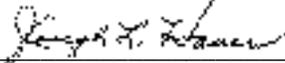
E. Family or community relationships may create a need for additional time away from the parish. This would be negotiated with all persons involved.

### F. Termination

Termination will be dependent upon the terms of the individual contract. In the case of unsatisfactory performance, the priest supervisor shall first be notified by those concerned. The priest supervisor shall first consult with the Parish Life Coordinator. If no solution can be reached, they will discuss the matter with the Episcopal Vicar. If no solution can be reached with the Episcopal Vicar, the Vicar will consult with the Archbishop, whose decision will be final. In the case of a conflict with the priest supervisor, the assumption should not be made that the priest supervisor will remain and the Parish Life Coordinator be replaced.

Promulgated by Most Rev. Jerome Hanus, O.S.B. on this 10th day of December, 1998.

  
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Most Rev. Jerome Hanus, O.S.B.  
Archbishop of Dubuque

Attest:   
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Rev. Joseph L. Hauer  
Chancellor

# Archdiocese Of Dubuque

## Role Description for the Parish Life Coordinator

**In general**, the Parish Life Coordinator would:

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2. Witness to shared responsibility of clergy, lay religious and laity in the Church as encouraged by Vatican II and the new **Code of Canon Law**.
3. Recognize and utilize the variety of gifts present in a parish.

**Specific job responsibilities** for the Parish Life Coordinator might be categorized as follows (paralleling the standing committees of most parish pastoral councils):

1. Proclamation and Teaching (religious formation and evangelization)
2. Prayer and Worship
3. Building community life
4. Outreach and Service (social concerns)
5. Administration

### **Accountability**

The Parish Life Coordinator is responsible and accountable to the Canonical Pastor and the Archbishop in managing the pastoral affairs of the parish (Canons 517.2, 1276, 1279, 1282).

### **MINISTRIES FOR THE Parish Life Coordinator:**

#### **1. Ministry of Worship**

- a. Assist in planning and coordinating weekly liturgies and preside at or provide leadership for Word services, Liturgy of the Hours or Communion services.
- b. Assist in planning and preparation for funerals, wakes and weddings.
- c. Participate in providing opportunities for spiritual growth in and out of the parish.
- d. Oversee the recruiting, training and scheduling of various liturgical ministers.
- e. Weekday Communion services.

#### **2. Ministry of Word**

- a. Facilitate all sacramental preparations.
- b. Help to develop and implement the Christian Initiation process.
- c. Facilitate religious education programs for the parish community.

#### **3. Ministry of Service**

- a. Visit parishioners, especially the sick, shut-ins, persons in distress, and new families.
- b. Be available for personal or spiritual guidance and support, as well as referral to other agencies when this is necessary or desired.
- c. Assist those seeking canonical advice and services from the Marriage Tribunal.
- d. Cooperate with local Ministerial and Ecumenical groups.
- e. Be involved in community functions as interest, time and energy allow.
- f. Social justice/action promotion.

#### **4. Ministry of Administration**

- a. Oversee finances and help prepare the budget as well as annual financial reports.
- b. Provide leadership for Parish Pastoral Council and parish committees in accord with the Archdiocesan Parish Pastoral Council Guidelines.
- c. Represent or promote representation from the parish at diocesan or other functions.
- d. Keep parish and sacramental records updated, and keep them and other necessary legal documents in a safe place.
- e. Be alert to and ensure that property maintenance needs are attended to and notify appropriate committees of needs.
- f. Maintain corporation records and submit proxies, signed by the pastor and parish directors, as needed for corporation-related matters.
- g. Provide for weekly parish bulletins.

#### **5. Ministry of Personnel**

- a. Maintain job descriptions, participate in interviews and prepare contracts for hired staff.
- b. Recruit, screen and motivate/support volunteers.
- c. Facilitate the relationships between staff members, volunteers, council, committee and board members.
- d. Do performance reviews for hired personnel and key volunteers.
- e. Assist staff, volunteers, council, committee and board members in determining their roles in the parish.
- f. Facilitate conflict resolution among parish staff, parishioners, council, committee and board members when needed.

#### **6. Other**

- a. The Parish Life Coordinator would be expected to perform any other duties and responsibilities as directed by the Ordinary, and other duties determined in cooperation with the Parish Pastoral Council and the Canonical Pastor.
- b. The Parish Life Coordinator is ultimately accountable to the Archbishop (or his delegate) for overseeing the life and goods of the parish and the sacramental life of the parish.