

# Guidelines for the Roles of Parish Leader, Canonical Pastor, and Sacramental Minister In the Diocese of Youngstown

## DEFINITION OF A PARISH LEADER

The Parish Leader is a professional appointed by the diocesan bishop with the responsibility of leading a parish community that does not have a resident pastor, in collaboration with a Canonical Pastor. The 1983 Code of Canon Law recognizes that parish situations exist in which the ministry of a permanent pastor may not be possible due to fewer priests. Canon 517, §2 provides for the pastoral care of a parish to be overseen by a deacon, vowed religious, or lay person. In these situations, there is also a priest appointed with the power and faculties of a pastor who directs the pastoral care of the parish. This priest is known as the Canonical Pastor. The primary relationships of the Parish Leader are with the Canonical Pastor, the Sacramental Minister(s), parish staff, and councils of the parish.

## CANONICAL PASTOR\*

The Parish Leader works under the direction and authority of the Canonical Pastor. As described in Canon 517, §2, the role of the Canonical Pastor can be described as follows:

*"If, because of a lack of priests, the diocesan bishop has decided that participation in the exercise of the pastoral care of a parish is to be entrusted to a deacon, to another person who is not a priest, or to a community of persons, he is to appoint some priest who, provided with the powers and faculties of a pastor, is to direct the pastoral care."*

## SACRAMENTAL MINISTER\*

The Parish Leader also works in close collaboration with the Sacramental Minister(s) to ensure the Sacramental needs of the parishioners are met. The Sacramental Minister(s) would not live on-site, but would be available to celebrate the Sacraments with the community. The Parish Leader in collaboration with the Vicar for Clergy would be responsible for assuring a beneficial Sacramental schedule for the Sacramental Minister(s), the parish, and the greater Catholic community.

## RELATIONSHIP OF THE PARISH LEADER AND CANONICAL PASTOR

The heart of the life of faith and the Christian community is relationship, beginning with one's relationship with God and including the relationship with others, following the command of Jesus: "love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:37-39). Relationships are at the heart of the ministry of Parish Leader, beginning with the relationship between the Parish Leader and Canonical Pastor and the

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\* The appointment of the Canonical Pastor and Sacramental Minister(s) will be made on a case by case basis. One priest could fulfill both offices or two or more priests could fulfill the roles.

relationship between the Parish Leader and Sacramental Minister(s). These relationships are to be built on open, two-way communication and mutual trust. The following guidelines clarify the roles of the Parish Leader, Canonical Pastor, and Sacramental Minister(s) and form the basis of building the working relationship among the priest(s) and Parish Leader who are co-responsible for the parish. Each plays a unique and indispensable role, and together they use their gifts and strengths for the building up of the parish and the greater glory of God.<sup>1</sup>

## ROLE OF A PARISH LEADER

The Parish Leader guides the parish community as it determines its vision and discerns needs. The Parish Leader assures that the ministries of Service, Evangelization, Family Life, Worship and Prayer, Discipleship-Faith Formation/Catechesis, Finances, and Administration are all functioning well. The Parish Leader participates in representing the parish at diocesan and deanery meetings. The Parish Leader facilitates the pastoral care of the parish by empowering the staff and lay volunteers to minister to the spiritual and temporal needs of the parish and greater community.

The Parish Leader:

1. Is appointed by the Diocesan Bishop.
2. Has regular contact with the Canonical Pastor (as determined by the Canonical Pastor and Parish Leader) regarding the care of the parish, via in person meetings, phone conversations, and email.
3. Is responsible and accountable to the Diocesan Bishop and Canonical Pastor in overseeing the administrative and pastoral affairs of the parish. The Vicar for Clergy and Director of the Parish Leader program are also available for support and consultation if issues arise between the Parish Leader and Canonical Pastor.
4. Will work closely with the Sacramental Minister(s), parish staff, deacon(s), and parishioners, fostering a collaborative and supportive atmosphere where co-workers and volunteers work well together. The Vicar for Clergy and Director of the Parish Leader program are available for support and consultation if issues arise between the Parish Leader and the Sacramental Minister, parish staff, or deacon(s).
5. Will clearly explain the roles of the Parish Leader, Canonical Pastor, and Sacramental Minister(s) to the parish and not confuse the role of the Parish Leader and the ministry of the ordained priesthood, especially in the area of the celebration of the Sacraments, which is primary to the Canonical Pastor. Parish Leaders participate in liturgical ministries appropriate to their state in life (ordained deacon or non-ordained), as outlined in the liturgical directory of the Diocese of Youngstown.
6. Specific duties include ensuring that the following ministries are operative within the parish, in collaboration with the Canonical Pastor, staff, especially other parish ministers, deacons, and volunteers, empowering others to use their gifts, as appropriate:

### Ministry of Administration

1. Assists the Canonical Pastor in hiring, supervising, and evaluating parish staff.
2. Participates responsibly in the business management of the parish.

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1. See John Paul II, *The Church in America (Ecclesia in America)* (Washington, DC: USCCB, 1999), no.

3. Assists the Canonical Pastor with the annual financial and sacramental report to the diocese according to diocesan guidelines.
4. Assists the Canonical Pastor in the management of the parish budget, finances, and coordinates the parish financial and parish pastoral council in accord with diocesan policies and procedures.
5. Participates in representing the parish at diocesan and deanery gatherings.
6. Maintains parish documents and sacramental records, personnel files and legal documents in a safe place.
7. Facilitates effective communication with parishioners and develop social media communication that would best serve the parish.

### **Ministry of the Word**

1. Oversees faith formation in collaboration with appropriate personnel regarding catechesis, service, and justice issues.
2. Oversees evangelization efforts reaching out to inactive Catholics, as well as new members via the RCIA program.
3. Provides for renewal and spiritual growth opportunities such as missions, retreats, and various study programs that would enrich the parish community.
4. If there is no deacon available and if trained as a Lay Leader of Prayer, conducts Vigil and Committal services in accord with the Order of Christian Burial. It is not common practice to do both the Vigil and Committal without doing a Funeral Liturgy (with or without Mass).
5. If trained as a Lay Leader of Prayer, presides at liturgical services, such as Liturgy of the Word outside of Mass, as appropriate.

### **Ministry of Sacraments**

1. Coordinates the preparation and celebration of sacraments in collaboration with the Canonical Pastor, Sacramental Minister(s), and/or Vicar for Clergy.
2. Shares in planning/evaluating of Sunday liturgies/homilies/children's and other special liturgies, seasonal liturgies, Lenten mission/renewal.
3. Recruits, trains, organizes, and schedules liturgical ministers. Shares in planning for individual and communal celebration of the Sacrament of Penance in collaboration with the Canonical Pastor and/or Sacramental Minister(s).
4. Participates in the coordination of individual reception of the Rite of Anointing and communal celebrations of the anointing of the sick in collaboration with the Canonical Pastor and/or Sacramental Minister(s).
5. If trained, prepares couples for the Sacrament of Matrimony beginning with pre-marital investigation and subsequent preparation needs.
6. Be present at regular parish liturgies.

### **Ministry of Pastoral Care**

1. Provides a personal presence to the parish, especially at worship and other parish events.
2. Promotes hospitality especially among parish staff and parishioners as a whole.
3. Assists families with moral issues, personal decisions, and, if necessary, make appropriate professional referrals.

4. Be especially attentive to the needs of the sick, needy, imprisoned, dying, and bereaved.
5. Helps the community become more aware of social action related to peace and justice.
6. Works with community groups and foster ecumenism.
7. Working closely with the parish safe environment coordinator, ensures compliance of the diocesan guidelines regarding safe environment for all, especially children.
8. Assists in the ministry to divorced or remarried persons and others whose irregular situation places them on the margins of the community, and assist with tribunal marriage cases.

<b>ROLE OF CANONICAL PASTOR</b>
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The Canonical Pastor, who has the powers and faculties to direct the pastoral care of the parish:

1. Is appointed by the Diocesan Bishop.
2. Has regular contact with the Parish Leader (as determined by the Canonical Pastor and Parish Leader) regarding the care of the parish, via in person meetings, phone conversations, and email. The Vicar for Clergy and Director of the Parish Leader program are available for support and consultation if issues arise between the Parish Leader and Canonical Pastor.
3. Is available to the Parish Leader for information, advice, and moral support as needed.
4. Represents the parish in juridical and canonical affairs in collaboration with the Parish Leader (signing deeds, bills or sale, promissory notes).
5. Reviews annual parish report and budget.
6. Reports yearly, along with the Parish Leader, to the Diocesan Bishop or his representative regarding the administrative and pastoral care of the parish.
7. Celebrates weekend Masses at least twice a year at the parish.
8. Meets at least once a year with the parish pastoral council and the finance council. The Canonical Pastor may delegate the Parish Leader as his representative for other meetings.
9. Fulfills the duties of the Sacramental Minister, if no other priest is assigned for these duties.

<b>ROLE OF SACRAMENTAL MINISTER</b>
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The Sacramental Minister:

1. Is assigned by the Bishop according to the needs of the parish and the schedule of the sacramental minister.
2. May or may not be the Canonical Pastor.
3. Develops a good working relationship with the Parish Leader and is a part of the life of the parish community wherever appropriate.
4. Celebrates weekend liturgies with the parish community.
5. Is available for Confession, weekday Mass, anointing of the sick, funerals, weddings, and baptisms when possible according to the Sacramental Minister's schedule in collaboration with the Parish Leader and Vicar for Clergy.
6. Meets with Parish Leader and/or Liturgy Committee regarding the celebration of special or seasonal liturgies, and works closely with the Parish Leader to understand the parish sacramental needs and style.