

What is a Parish Leader?

A Parish Leader is a professional minister appointed by the diocesan bishop with the responsibility of leading a parish community that does not have a resident priest, in collaboration with a Canonical Pastor. The sacraments will continue to be celebrated on a regular basis at the parish through the ministry of an assigned Sacramental Minister (a priest) or the Canonical Pastor. The Parish Leader nurtures and renews the life of the parish in collaboration with staff and parishioners. A Parish Leader can be a deacon, religious woman or man, or lay woman or man who is specifically trained for this ministry.

Why do we need Parish Leaders?

Our diocese has a rich tradition of priests faithfully serving the spiritual needs of those entrusted to their care. In light of fewer priests serving the Diocese of Youngstown, we face a serious but not insurmountable challenge. We have 38 priests in active ministry over the age of 65; 17 of these men are over the age of 70. The use of Parish Leaders will remove the administrative burden of some priests, especially as the number of priests continues to decline in the near future. The Parish Leader concept is a way to keep parishes vibrant while being more creative in the utilization of our priests.

How will it work?

This alternative form of parish leadership has been used in other dioceses for years. Parish Leaders are not a new form of lay priesthood, but rather an opportunity for faith filled men and women to use their gifts of leadership and administration so that priests can focus on the sacramental and pastoral care of the faithful. Parish Leaders empower parishioners to fulfill their baptismal call of discipleship and ministry and use their gifts at the service of the Church. While not all parishes will utilize this model, the success of Parish Leaders requires cooperation and collaboration from parishes within the region.

For more information, contact:

Pete Schafer
Office of Evangelization and Pastoral Planning
Diocese of Youngstown
144 West Wood Street
Youngstown, OH 44503

Phone: (330) 744-8451 ext. 289
Fax: (330) 742-6448
E-mail: pschafer@youngstowndiocese.org



Parish Leader

Frequently Asked Questions

WHO IS IN CHARGE OF THE PARISH?

According to Canon Law, a priest appointed by the bishop is ultimately responsible for the pastoral and administrative care of the parish. When necessary, the bishop may delegate certain day to day responsibilities to a deacon, religious, or lay person, known as a Parish Leader. The Parish Leader is responsible for the administrative, pastoral, and all other aspects of parish life in collaboration with the Canonical Pastor.

WILL THE SACRAMENTS BE CELEBRATED AT THE PARISH?

Yes, the sacraments will continue to be celebrated on a regular basis through the ministry of a Sacramental Minister (a priest) or the Canonical Pastor. Through collaboration with local priests and parishes, coordinated sacramental schedules in the region will enable our priests to serve the people of God in a more intentional manner.

ARE WE LESS OF A PARISH WITHOUT A RESIDENT PASTOR?

No, Parish Leader led parishes are not second-class! Parishes that are vibrant are actually good soil for this concept. The parish remains a full parish led by a Parish Leader.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE LAITY?

The success of parishes requires the cooperation of all the laity, including parishes led by Parish Leaders. When members of the parish accept ownership and fulfill their role according to their God given talents, a parish remains vibrant, sustainable, and growing. The laity volunteering for more liturgical ministries, pastoral ministries, leadership roles, catechetical ministries, and charitable outreach ministries is critical.

WHAT PARISHES WILL BE CHOSEN FOR PARISH LEADERS?

Parishes will be selected based on the needs of the local church. Therefore, the Parish Leader leadership model can be used at any parish, large or small, urban, suburban or rural.

For more information, contact:

Pete Schafer
Office of Evangelization and Pastoral Planning
Diocese of Youngstown
144 West Wood Street
Youngstown, OH 44503

Phone: (330) 744-8451 ext. 289
Fax: (330) 742-6448
E-mail: pschafer@youngstowndiocese.org

