

# *The Parish Pastoral Team*

Diocese of  
Edmundston

## The Parish Pastoral Team (PPT)

Before talking about the parish pastoral team, it is important to recall the mission of the Church

### **1. *What is the Church's Mission??***

The Church perpetuates the mission of Jesus. The Church is sent out into the world today as both sign and instrument of the Reign of God.

Concretely speaking, the mission of the Church is carried out through the four (4) major dimensions called the four dimensions of Christian life, which we read about in the Acts of the Apostles: "They (the first Christians) devoted themselves to the apostles' instruction and the communal life, to the breaking of bread and the prayers... Those who believed shared all things in common; they would sell their property and goods, dividing everything on the basis of each one's needs"

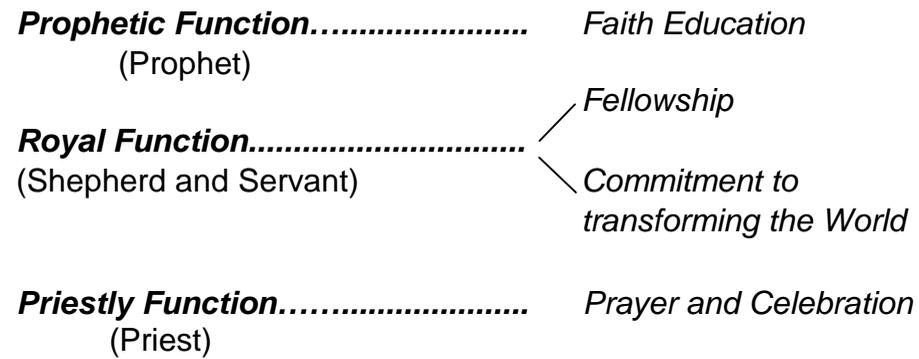
Acts 2:42.44

These dimensions illustrate the triple function of Christ, the Priest, Prophet, and King to whom we are all associated in baptism.

### Abbreviations used:

- PPT – Parish Pastoral Team
- PPC – Parish Pastoral Council
- PEAC – Parish Economic Affairs Committee

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These three functions summarize the mission of the Christian community.

In our document on parish pastoral teams, you will find explanations of these dimensions at the end of this document.

## 2. What is the Parish Pastoral Team?

The Parish Pastoral Team is a group of people commissioned or mandated by the bishop for the pastoral charge of several parishes that are grouped together into a pastoral unit. The team serves the parish community. The team helps the Christian community to better carry out its mission, and to witness to the Gospel.

The establishment of a parish pastoral team is a consequence of the Church’s new (1983) legislation (canon 517, § 2 of the Code of Canon Law): “If the diocesan bishop should decide that due to a dearth of priests a participation in the exercise of 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.”

## 3. Composition of the Parish Pastoral Team

The parish pastoral team is composed of four (4) to eight (8) persons or more according to the size of the parish(es). Besides these people there are one or more priests one of whom is called the “moderator” and the others are known as “collaborators,” pastoral agents, and other lay persons who are involved in the proper unfolding of pastoral activities, to carry out the mission of Jesus and witness to the Gospel. One person is appointed team facilitator. To each person on the team is given a particular area of mission: faith education, fellowship, commitment, prayer and celebration. While being responsible for one dimension only, members are aware that in reality these responsibilities are interdependent. For example, faith education also involves learning to pray. Collaboration among members of the team is therefore necessary.

## 4. Responsibilities of the Parish Pastoral Team

### a) Coordinating the Pastoral Team

This is a function of the team moderator, or a person named by him. The facilitator/coordinator’s responsibility is to call the team together, to ensure its good functioning, to distribute responsibilities and work, and foster harmony and efficiency in the team.

### b) Responsibility for Faith Education

The person in charge of this dimension coordinates family- and parish-based religious education and other faith education activities for children, youth, and adults.

### c) Responsibility for Promoting Fellowship

The person in charge ensures that a spirit of sharing, mutual help, joy, and fellowship pervade the communities.

#### **d) Responsibility for Commitment to Transforming the World**

The person in charge ensures that the Christian communities develop concern for the poor and the weak, and that the communities are committed to a better world where justice freedom, the dignity of persons, solidarity, and peace reign, according to the requirements of the Gospel.

#### **e) Responsibility for Prayer and Celebration**

The person in charge ensures that in the communities there reign a true life of prayer, and see that community celebrations are truly significant religious events. This person could also be the chair of the liturgy committee, or work in close collaboration with the committee.

#### **Conclusion**

It is important to note that the members of the parish pastoral team must not do everything themselves; however, they shall see that things get done. Their one concern is to foster the participation and co-responsibility of the communities.

#### **5. *Mandate of the Pastoral Team Members***

Members of the team are appointed by the bishop for one (1) to three (3) years. Their term is renewable. Names are recommended to the bishop by the moderator. It is important that the choice of each one is made after consulting the other members of the team, and the parish pastoral council.

To clearly indicate that their service is for the good of the community, members of the parish pastoral team are presented annually to the parish communities at the Sunday masses.

#### **6. *Role of the Parish Pastoral Team***

The parish pastoral team's main role is to facilitate the Christian communities in every dimension of its mission (faith education, fellowship, commitment to transforming the world, prayer and celebration), and to bring the communities to work at bringing about the Reign proclaimed by Jesus Christ.

## **7. Parish Pastoral Team Responsibilities and Tasks**

- See to the elaboration and implementation of the unit's pastoral action plan, in collaboration with the parish pastoral council;
- Implement projects;
- Initiate new projects to help live the Gospel in the light of the world today;
- Stir up enthusiasm as well as implication of community members to carry out the mission task so that a greater number of baptized persons may take part in carrying out the mission;
- Recruit potential parish pastoral team members;
- Help members of the community focus on the Word of God and witness to Jesus Christ;
- Coordinate the work and activities of committed persons, teams, committees and groups within the community;
- Work in close collaboration with each parish pastoral councils (PPCs) and parish economic affairs committees (PEACs);
- Work at creating unity within the communities and the surrounding communities;
- Regularly inform the people regarding the pastoral life of the communities;
- Ensure that those involved in pastoral work have the needed training to carry out their responsibilities.

## **8. Parish Pastoral Team Meetings**

- Pastoral teams must meet frequently enough to be effective. A minimum would be meeting once a month, but it is recommended to meet more often, on a weekly or fortnightly basis.
- The team coordinator convenes and chairs the meeting.
- At the meeting, time shall be made for prayer and sharing on the Word, and a period for evaluation of activities.
- These meetings are also conducive to sharing with one another, to fellowship, to develop ties and a team spirit within the parish pastoral team (PPT).
- Items on the agenda deal mostly with organizing of activities. The team responds to the needs of the communities according to the directions of each parish pastoral council (PPC).

A sample agenda:

- Schedule of pastoral activities
- Organization of family- and parish-based religious education
- Organization of liturgy and other religious celebrations
- Operation of baptism preparation teams and of ministry to the Sick Committee
- Youth ministry
- Upcoming celebrations
- Education campaign for Development and Peace
- Information from the diocese, the zone, and different parish groups and committees
- Etc..., etc..., etc...

## **9. Specific Roles of the Parish Pastoral Team and of the Parish Pastoral Council**

### **a) The Pastoral Team**

The team is composed of people mandated by the Bishop to share in the pastoral charge. The team receives recommendations from the parish pastoral councils and carries out its pastoral priorities. It is a working team to look after the proper execution of parish activities and pastoral services. Along with the priest moderator, members of the team animate the Christian communities in every dimension of their mission.

### **b) The Parish Pastoral Council**

The parish pastoral council is in majority composed of people elected to the position at the annual parish assembly. According to canon law, the PPC has a consultative voice only. As a representative of the entire parish, it is first and foremost an organ of reflection, direction, and consultation. The PPC identifies the pastoral needs, and in communion with the diocesan Church, it evaluates the pastoral services. To the pastoral team it recommends those decisions deemed necessary to carry out the Church's mission in the communities. When asked by the parish pastoral team, it gives its advice on new pastoral initiatives.

## Appendix A

### **The Pastoral Team Coordinator The Coordinator's Responsibilities**

- Coordinate and ensure quality teamwork
- After consultation, prepare meeting agenda, convene meeting, and chair meeting
- Ensure that the team has prepared a plan of action (objective(s), ways and means, resources, datelines), and that it evaluate its performance
- Ensure that the team is in constant association with the PPC, the PEAC and other parish committees, in carrying out its pastoral activities
- Ensure the proper sharing of responsibilities, respecting the charism and the availability of each team member
- Promote consensus in decision-making
- Develop an atmosphere of fellowship by being attentive to all that is experienced, including the socio-affective component
- Ensure that the team periodically evaluate its performance
- Ensure that ongoing spiritual, theological, and pastoral renewal be available to all on the team
- Ensure participation of the team in zone and diocesan activities, and that it takes advantage of services offered by the diocese
- Facilitate, promote, and support vitality and enthusiasm, in other words, train real leaders.

***The Priest Moderator  
His Role and Responsibilities***

- He has the primary responsibility of the pastoral charge of the parish(es), according to the mandate received.
- He also has the primary responsibility for the administration of these parishes; however, he may delegate this charge to a parish manager.
- His mandate is to exercise jointly with the other members of the PPT the pastoral charge of several parishes with the aim of carrying out his mission according to a specific plan of evangelization and animation.
- He carries out his mandate in communion with the bishop. The priest moderator is the first person answerable to the bishop for decisions of the parish pastoral team.
- He promotes the role of the laity, respecting their duties and obligations as well as the full exercise of their rights as baptized members of the community.
- Through his priestly ordination, those responsibilities specific to him are:
  - ◆ presiding the ministry of the Word, the celebration of sacraments, communion, and the mission of the communities;
  - ◆ being a sign of communion with the bishop and with the communities in his pastoral unit.
- In virtue of his mandate, the moderator carries out a certain number of tasks, especially the following:

***a) In Communion with the Christian Communities***

- ◆ is the primary gatherer of the people, and first pastoral animator
- ◆ presides the celebration of sacraments, and ensures that a duly-mandated person is delegated, if he himself cannot preside
- ◆ participates as much as possible as a resource person in sacramental preparation;
- ◆ presides the ministry of the Word and ensures the quality of the preaching;
- ◆ ensures that the communities have a project of evangelization and pastoral animation;
- ◆ ensures that the communities' priorities and options are in accord with the pastoral policies of the diocesan Church;
- ◆ raises the awareness of the Christian communities to the ecclesial and pastoral dimension of parish financial administration, including mutual help and sharing;
- ◆ participate as much as possible in the communities' important activities and events;
- ◆ be a sign of the active presence of Christ, and give witness to a life of commitment and faith.

***b) With the Parish Pastoral Team***

- ◆ Ensure that the work of the pastoral team promote the overall development of the communities (faith education, fellowship, commitment to transforming the world, prayer, and celebration);
- ◆ ensure that the pastoral team bear together the communities' pastoral concern and that it be open to the totality of the needs of evangelization be capable of co-responsibility and sharing tasks with one another;
- ◆ show willingness to be co-responsible, and to share the pastoral tasks.

**c) With the Parish Pastoral Team and the Parish Economic Affairs Committee**

- ◆ closely collaborate with CPP and PEAC co-chairs;
- ◆ ensure the representation of a pastoral presence at the communities' meetings;
- ◆ support the effort and initiatives connected to the mission, the pastoral project, and pastoral priorities;
- ◆ encourage communication, collaboration and understanding among them and with the pastoral team and with other offices;
- ◆ inform members of the main guidelines, orientation and pastoral priorities of the diocesan Church.

**d) With Other Pastoral units and the Diocese**

- ◆ develop and maintain communication and communion with other parishes;
- ◆ promote and represent the communities at local and diocesan events;
- ◆ promote participation in training sessions offered by the diocesan pastoral ministry office;
- ◆ ensure communication with diocesan services, and pass on information.

**THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF THE MISSION**

Following Christ	The Church Is Given the Mission	Dimension of the Mission (Pastoral Ministry Aspect)
<p>PROPHETIC FUNCTION</p> <p><i>"I have made known to you all that I heard from my Father."</i> Jn 15:15</p>	TO EVANGELISE	<p>FAITH EDUCATION</p> <p>This area groups together the practices that foster the search for meaning in the light of the Gospel. It is concerned with the proclamation of Jesus Christ, with a deepening of the faith and an understanding of the Gospel requirements. It fosters learning of Christian attitudes and practices. Among others, this dimension includes family- and parish-based catechesis, evangelization... It leads to discerning the traces of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in everyday life.</p>
<p>ROYAL FUNCTION (Shepherd &amp; Servant)</p> <p><i>"I pray that all may be one as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, I pray that they may be one in us, that the world may believe that you sent me."</i> Jn 17:21</p>	TO DEVELOP COMMUNITY	<p>FELLOWSHIP</p> <p>This dimension concerns our way of living in community. It calls for living together in a way where each one in the community is welcomed and has his or her place. Special care is given to the weaker and the needy members. Every occasion must be taken to gather together – anniversaries, mourning, and other occasions – in celebration or for service. Fraternity, charity, joy, and sharing must be attitudes to cultivate, for community-building.</p>
<p><i>"The blind recover their sight, cripples walk, lepers are cured, the deaf hear, dead men are raised to life, and the poor have the Good News preached to them."</i> Lk 7:22</p>	TO WORK AT HUMANISING AND LIBERATING THE WORLD	<p>COMMITMENT TO TRANSFORMING THE WORLD</p> <p>This transformation affects all of society's transformation practices in order to bring about a better world according to the Gospel. It aims at the quality of the family in our community. It promotes justice, peace, solidarity, respect, and the dignity of everyone as children of God. It calls on the believers to get involved in social issues such as poverty, violence, etc... it aims not only at changing mentalities but also structures.</p>
<p>PRIESTLY FUNCTION</p> <p>"Then, taking bread and giving thanks... Do this in memory of me." Lk 22 :19</p> <p>"Hen you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name." Lk 11:2</p>	TO CELEBRATE	<p>PRAYER AND CELEBRATION</p> <p>This dimension touches all activities that nourish one's spirituality, develops one's prayer life, helps one encounter God and celebrate Him, either alone or in the company of others. This dimension is about liturgical and sacramental celebrations, celebrations of the Word, prayer meetings; it also affects our day-to-day commitments.</p> <p>"I beg you through the mercy of God to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God, your spiritual worship." Rm 12:1</p>

Concrete Examples
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>FAITH EDUCATION</b></p> <p>Family- and parish-based religious education – catechist training – baptism and sacramental preparation and Profession of Faith – adult faith education – sessions – courses – preaching – parish mission – Gospel sharing – organizations – marriage preparation – youth ministry.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>FELLOWSHIP</b></p> <p>charitable organizations and movements – grief ministry – welcome of newcomers to the parish – social activities – celebrations, get-togethers, and parties – community meals – post-funeral meals – ministry to the sick and shut-ins – anniversaries – volunteer recognition and celebration.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>COMMITMENT TO TRANSFORMING THE WORLD</b></p> <p>Catholic Action – Development and Peace – youth ministry – family ministry – social justice ministry – unions and salary equity – political and community commitment – food drives – clothing depot – Walk for Peace – Committee for Justice and Solidarity – food bank – social action groups.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PRAYER AND CELEBRATION</b></p> <p>Gatherings for prayer (liturgy of the hours services, morning, midday, and evening prayer, ecumenical prayer services...) – prayer groups – liturgy committee (ministers of communion, lectors, altar servers...) – choirs – liturgies of the Word – celebrations of the sacraments – Sunday Eucharists.</p>

This chart has been inspired by that of the Diocese of Nicolet, Québec.

## Conclusion

In his book *Paroisses et ministères*, Father Gilles Routhier writes that “the functioning of the pastoral team and its activities requires a clear distribution of roles from the very outset, a clear-cut description of tasks, and a balanced coordination of action taken.”

An effective parish pastoral team is certainly an essential component of the life of the Christian communities and of its commitment to carrying out the mission of Christ.



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