

**ARCHDIOCESE OF HALIFAX-YARMOUTH  
PARISH LEADERSHIP TEAM**

**JANUARY 14, 2021**

**Preamble**

Leadership is an essential part of the cultural change required to become a more missionary Church. Both clergy and laity will need to develop the necessary skills, competencies, and attitudes. In some cases, a conversion of thinking will be required as the Church adopts a stance of co-responsibility for the mission of the Church. Every pastor needs a team, a special group of leaders who are collectively committed to helping him bring more people to Christ and his Church. The parish leadership team is a group of three to five key people, lay and ordained, who support the pastor in making and executing important decisions and providing a circle of trust-based accountability. This group meets frequently to make the day-to-day decisions that are needed to bring about missionary renewal in the parish.

**Article 1: The Mission of The Church**

A parish leadership team is to function according to the following guidelines and with the understanding of the missionary nature of the parish.

The very nature of the parish is to be missionary. The life of the parish does not rest on the shoulders of a few volunteers, but on all the baptized, whose gifts are essential to the parish's mission. When people are able to share their God-given gifts and respond to their baptismal vocation, they offer themselves more fully to the task at hand. In this regard, the faithful of the parish community should as much as possible be involved in creating a missionary plan for their parish (CCCB Episcopal Commission for Doctrine, *The Missionary Dynamic of the Parish Today*, 2014, no. 22).

Moreover, the Church has noted that the People of God play a role in the missionary renewal of the parish.

In a particular way, the lay faithful, who have a specific secular character, “seek the Kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God”. They “can also feel themselves called, or be called, to work with their pastors in the service of the ecclesial community for its growth and life, by exercising a great variety of ministries according to the grace and charisms which the Lord is pleased to give them” (Congregation for the Clergy, Instruction, *The pastoral conversion of the Parish community in the service of the evangelising mission of the Church*, June 29, 2020, n. 85).

All of this can be best accomplished through the pastoral and financial councils working in collaboration with the pastor and the parish leadership team.

## **Article 2: Role of the Pastor**

While the pastor is the leader of the parish accountable to the diocesan bishop, no one person possesses all the strengths and skills necessary to lead a parish. Therefore, the Pastor must have the ability to rely on a group of leaders who will help him with the implementation of strategic and operational decisions. Selecting the best team members, with whom the pastor can build a relationship of trust and mutuality, is fundamental to its healthy functioning.

The Pastor must avoid the following actions as he creates his Leadership Team:

- a) trying to be too inclusive and putting too many people on the team;
- b) not wanting to hurt someone's feelings and thus, putting the person on the team when the person really should not be on it;
- c) having a difficult person on the team because of a particular functional role alone;
- d) putting people on the team who are not committed to excellence and the mission of the parish;
- e) putting people on the team who have been in the parish for a long time, simply to satisfy long term parishioners;
- f) failing to make it clear to team members that they will be held to high standards;
- g) allowing team members to present themselves to the parish as power brokers rather than servants ("Forming Your Leadership Team," in *Amazing Parish*).

## **Article 3: Role and Function of the Parish Leadership Team**

The parish leadership team supports the pastor in the operation of the parish by helping him to make and execute the best possible decisions. The team is an operating body where each member is actively involved in making and executing the day-to-day decisions that are needed to bring about missionary renewal in the parish. Each member, by virtue of his or her baptism and charisms, surrounds the pastor with the necessary skills and wisdom to carry out the mission entrusted to him.

The Parish Leadership Team focuses its attention on:

- Immediate decision making in order to advance the mission of the parish
- Short term planning in keeping with the broader plan for the parish
- Ordering the works of the parish to realize the parish pastoral plan

## **Article 4: Relationship to Other Leadership Structures of the Parish**

The pastor convokes the leadership team and is responsible for decisions and actions ultimately taken. The parish priest ought to have the grace and wisdom necessary to trust and hear those around him and to heed their counsel. The deliberations of the leadership team are guided by:

- The missionary mandate of the pastor who, appointed by the diocesan bishop, is the *de facto* leader of the community.
- The plan of the Pastoral Council which, in collaboration with the pastor, discerns the areas of priority for the parish community
- The budgetary constraints provided by the Finance Council, which assists the pastor in administering the temporal affairs of the parish

Thus, the parish leadership team collaborates with the pastor to assist him in prioritizing and executing the plans brought to his attention by the Pastoral Council and Finance Council. The parish leadership team should meet in a combined gathering of the Pastoral Council and Finance Council at least four times per year in order to share with one another and discern any changes in the parish pastoral plans.

#### **Article 5: Membership on the Parish Leadership Team**

1. Leadership teams include three to five people who will form a team to assist the pastor. This number allows enough diversity to contribute to the necessary discussions and enough people to share the responsibility of implementing particular decisions.
2. Team members shall have the following characteristics:
  - a) a commitment to the mission and vision of evangelization;
  - b) gifts and skills that are complementary to the pastor. Tools such as StrengthsFinders or another tool can be used to help the group discern its diverse strengths and skills. While most leaders are not well-rounded persons, with all the gifts needed to lead, parish leadership teams may be a well-rounded team;
  - c) a level of understanding and wisdom to be able to function as a member of a team with vulnerability-based trust as the core dynamic;
  - d) the ability to engage in two kinds of communication: advocacy (making suggestions and lobbying for ideas) and inquiry (asking questions and probing for better understanding of other people's ideas);
  - e) the ability to engage in productive conflict, that is, able to embrace differing ideas and views, in an effort to move the team and the parish toward its goals and mission;
  - f) the ability to commit to group decisions and be ready to implement these decisions;
  - g) the ability to lovingly hold one another accountable for results and behaviors;
  - h) the ability to have the collective focus on the goals of the whole parish;
  - i) the ability and desire of making the appropriate investment of time and energy needed for the demanding task of being a member of a Leadership Team.
3. As a healthy team functions over time, necessary evaluation shall take place at regular intervals, for a team has no immediate guarantee that the right members are present when the team initially forms. Thus, it is recommended that members be invited to serve for a six month period, after which, a review shall take place. Continued membership on the team should be discerned every six months.
4. The team must be flexible and may need to change shape as the needs of the pastor and the parish evolve.

5. The members must be ready to commit to ongoing education regarding the Leadership Team, including focusing on topics such as effective team meetings, building trust as a team, praying as a team, etc.
6. Leadership Team members shall serve a recommended two-year term, renewable.
7. All team members shall ensure that they are in good standing with the Archdiocesan Responsible Ministry Policy.

**Article 6: Meetings/Agenda**

1. The leadership team meets on a weekly basis.
2. Meetings shall be a few hours in length as the team works through the issues facing the pastor and the parish, including the archdiocesan priorities of mission, formation and community.
3. Additionally, leadership team members are asked to participate in regular sessions with all the pastors and leadership teams from across the Archdiocese. Travel expenses, if necessary, shall be reimbursed by the parish at the diocesan rate of reimbursement.