

CO-RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

of the Parish Pastoral Council

The Parish Pastoral Council and Pastor can work together in building parish co-responsibility and accountability. Effective collaboration and communication provide a means to establish common mission in the parish community. This agenda offers some guidance for discussion and discernment in bringing the principles of co-responsibility and accountability into action here in the Diocese of Sacramento.



REFLECT

There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. [1 Cor. 12:4-6](#)

...A pastoral council is to be established in each parish, over which the pastor presides and in which the Christian faithful, together with those who share in pastoral care by virtue of their office in the parish, assist in fostering pastoral activity. [1983 Code of Canon Law, Can. 536](#)

A great many wonderful things are to be hoped for from this familiar dialogue between the laity and their spiritual leaders: in the laity a strengthened sense of personal responsibility; a renewed enthusiasm; a more ready application of their talents to the projects of their spiritual leaders. The latter, on the other hand, aided by the experience of the laity, can more clearly and more incisively come to decisions regarding both spiritual and temporal matters. In this way, the whole Church, strengthened by each one of its members, may more effectively fulfill its mission for the life of the world. [Lumen Gentium, 37](#)

...It is necessary to improve pastoral structures in such a way that the co-responsibility of all the members of the People of God in their entirety is gradually promoted, with respect for vocations and for the respective roles of the consecrated and of lay people. This demands a change in mindset, particularly concerning lay people. They must no longer be viewed as 'collaborators' of the clergy but truly recognized as 'co-responsible', for the Church's being and action, thereby fostering the consolidation of a mature and committed laity. [Pope Benedict XVI, Address on the Theme: "Church Membership and Pastoral Co-Responsibility", 26 May 2009](#)

The practice of co-responsibility and accountability are not just organizational tools. They are disciplines that enable us to grow in holiness together. They are wise ascetical practices that teach us how to be more hospitable to the gifts, the wisdom, as well as the needs of one another. They are holy habits that keep salt from losing its flavor or a light from being hidden under a bushel basket. [Call to Holiness, Bishop Jaime Soto](#)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What types of formation and training might assist the members of our Parish Pastoral Council in responding to the Call to Holiness?
2. What steps can our Parish Pastoral Council take so that it more effectively communicates the pastoral objectives and initiatives of our community?
3. What steps can our Parish Pastoral Council take to invite, welcome, and show our hospitality to our parish community?
4. How might the Parish Pastoral Council (and our Pastor) more effectively listen to our parish community regarding its pastoral needs?