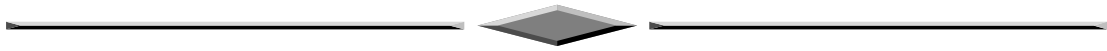
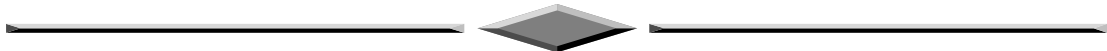


# Diocese of Little Rock



# A MODEL PARISH



*The Model Parish establishes a set of assumptions  
on which to evaluate parish life and strategize for the future.  
It is to be used in concert with the Parish Self-Study.*

*Caveats and Definitions*  
*Pastoral Planning Process*  
*Diocese of Little Rock*

**CAVEATS**

**PURPOSE OF PLANNING DOCUMENTS:** The purpose of the Model Parish and Model Curia documents is not to pass judgment on any parish, pastor or office of the Curia, but rather to reach a consensus regarding our usually unspoken assumptions of what the model parish and model curia would look like, if there ever were one. In this way, we will be working with the same set of assumptions and priorities regarding desirable goals as we strategize for the future.

**FOCUS ON PASTORAL PLANNING:** There is far more that could be said about each item discussed, both theologically and pastorally. In order to keep the documents to a manageable length, we have limited ourselves to elements that bear on the issue of pastoral planning. The summary on the last page is intended as a handy overview of the assumptions underlying the entire document.

**DEFINITIONS**

**CANON LAW:** The internal legislation of the Roman Catholic Church. It is based on principles derived from Scripture, Theology, and the lived Tradition of the Church. It addresses primarily the rights and duties of individuals and groups within the Church, and its goal is to help bring about balance, harmony, and order among the Faith. Specific instructions are provided in Canon Law for the government of the church, for the proper administration of the sacraments, and for teaching and preaching.

**CATECHIST:** A religious education teacher. The catechist participates in the formation and instruction of Christians.

**COLLABORATION:** “Working together” on all levels of a joint effort to achieve common goals. Collaboration differs from COOPERATION in that cooperation is a shared effort to achieve goals about which consultation is not sought from those cooperating. Collaboration, by contrast, begins with shared input in the discernment of goals and shared decisionmaking regarding strategies to achieve these goals.

**CURIA:** The offices of a diocese mandated by Canon Law and/or established by the bishop in his administration of the diocese and which serve as a resource for clergy and laity in continuing the work of Christ.

**ECCLESIOLOGY:** The study of the nature, the meaning, the mission and the structure of the Catholic Church.

**ECUMENISM:** The work of building bridges of understanding with other Christian denominations and groups. In the case of our relationship with non-Christian religious groups, this effort is called INTERFAITH relations.

**EVANGELIZATION:** The act of bringing the Gospel to those who do not believe in Christ or who are not actively living their Christian faith. Evangelization also refers to the subsequent on-going conversion of the members of the Church. It is to be distinguished from PROSELYTISM, which is the effort to convert active Christians from other denominations.

**HOMILY:** A talk given during public worship by an ordained bishop, priest or deacon in which he applies the readings of the Liturgy of the Word to contemporary issues. A homily is to be distinguished from a SERMON. A sermon starts with the preacher's idea and then uses the Bible to prove it. A homily, by contrast, starts with the biblical readings of worship, from which the homilist then derives an appropriate message for the edification of the congregation.

**REGIONAL DEANS:** One priest in each region of a diocese, appointed by the bishop, to whom the bishop has delegated specified responsibilities for the priests and parishes of his region.

**TRIBUNAL:** The judicial body within a diocese responsible for the exercise of ecclesial justice as mandated by Church law. The primary task of the Tribunal is to process and render judgments in marriage annulment cases.

**VICAR GENERAL:** A priest chosen by the bishop who assists the bishop in the governance of the diocese and to whom Universal Church Law delegates executive authority for this purpose.

**P**ARISH. “Wherever two or three are gathered in my name, I shall be there with them.”<sup>1</sup> The promise of intimate union with Jesus Christ unites the Faithful Baptized to Christ, to all other believers throughout the world, and to the saints in glory. For Catholics, Church becomes the local community and the universal community of believers.<sup>2</sup>

This community of believers bears witness to the Death and Resurrection of Christ by their lives of service and sacrifice. The community, formed by the Holy Spirit on Pentecost is made holy by the presence of that Spirit and fulfills its mission to complete God’s work on this earth. The Paschal Mystery to which the church bears witness is inscribed in creation by the Father’s word; incarnated in the Son’s life, death and resurrection; and animated by the eternal outpouring of the Spirit. It is this mystery which gives life to the Church.<sup>3</sup>

When the church assembles, it is a Eucharistic Community united in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. It is a local community united with the bishop with varied hierarchic and charismatic gifts.<sup>4</sup> As a royal, prophetic, and priestly people the church is united with the Pope as the “visible source and foundation of unity”<sup>5</sup> and with the entire communion of saints in this life and in eternity.

The presence of Christ in the local church is realized in four ways: in all the baptized who gather in his name; in the word of God proclaimed in the assembly; in the person of the priest through whom Christ offers himself to the Father and gathers the assembly; and especially in the sacrament of his body and blood.<sup>6</sup>

Thus empowered by the presence of Christ, the Church evangelizes the world by proclaiming the Gospel and undertaking works of charity.

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 18.20

<sup>2</sup> Catechism of Catholic Church , #752

<sup>3</sup> Lumen Gentium, #5

<sup>4</sup> Lumen Gentium, #4

<sup>5</sup> Lumen Gentium, #23

<sup>6</sup> Sacrosanctum Concilium, #7

## ECCLESIOLOGY

**Catholic:** The model parish understands and appreciates its relationship to the Diocese and the Universal Church.

- It sees itself as integrally united with the Bishop and all of the other parishes of the diocese and indeed of the entire Universal Church. It avoids any tendency toward “congregationalism.”
- It knows its own history as a parish.
- It is willing to cooperate with neighboring parishes and, when appropriate, with neighboring churches of other denominations.

**Clergy:** The parish is part of the Diocese under the guidance and leadership of the Bishop. All priests and deacons receive their faculties and assignments from the Bishop, exercise their ministries under his guidance and leadership, and are answerable to him in matters related to their ministry.

**Laity:** By virtue of Baptism all believers have a shared call to spread the gospel, a shared responsibility for the Church and a common call to holiness.

## PARISH LIFE

**Stewardship:** Every parish calls forth the talents of all parishioners and supports them in offering their gifts to the community in a manner consistent with the Gospel values of service and generosity. The level of stewardship (time, talent and treasure) of the parishioners is an important indicator of the vitality of a parish.

- Parishioners give on an average at least 1 hour of service to God in the parish or in other charitable work each week. This investment of Time and Talent is in addition to ministries exercised during Mass.
- Every member of the church is called to evangelize and the practice of authentic Christian stewardship inevitably leads to Evangelization.

**Evangelization:** The model parish reaches out to the unchurched and alienated. It invites non-Catholics and inactive Catholics to worship, to spiritual and educational programs, to social activities and other facets of parish life.

- The model parish strives to create an environment of welcome for new parishioners and visitors, especially those of different racial and ethnic backgrounds.
- The model parish supports the mission activities of the Universal Church, perhaps adopting a foreign mission to support financially and spiritually.

- All parishioners recognize their call to evangelize by spreading the Good News and by sharing their faith in daily life.
- The model parish produces converts.

**Fellowship:** The model parish hosts social activities and programs to enhance the life of the community and the families and individuals that comprise it.

- Examples: The Knights of Columbus, Knights of Peter Claver, Altar Society, Adult Sport Teams, Mom's Group, etc.
- Care is taken to create a sense of belonging that includes all, including single parent families and those living alone.
- Men's, Women's and Mixed Groups include people from all parts of the parish and are not dominated by specific groups.

**Youth and Young Adults:** The leadership of the model parish recognizes, supports and motivates ministry to, with, by and for children, youth and young adults. This ministry draws young people to responsible participation in the life, mission and work of the faith community. The parish ministers in a comprehensive manner (total personal and spiritual growth) to foster the development of faith.

### **SIZE AND LOCATION**

**Size:** The model parish is small enough to allow parishioners to know each other and large enough to be able to provide for its own needs.

- It is desirable to have a single weekend Mass attended by all the parishioners as multiple Masses tend to divide the community. Due to inadequate facilities, or multiple linguistic groups or other pastoral reasons it may be necessary to have multiple Masses.
- Some parishes may need to develop small faith communities or the equivalent in order to create a sense of belonging among all the parishioners.
- Some parishes may have difficulty finding sufficient human and material resources to meet all of the demands of parish life. They might gain needed resources by teaming up with another parish for the benefit of both, sharing key services, including that of the priests.

**Location:** The Church building is well located for the parish that worships there, generally in the geographic center of urban parishes or the principal town of rural parishes.

- The parish area is not to be so large that it takes people an excessive amount of time to reach the Church from their homes.

## ADMINISTRATION AND GOVERNANCE OF THE PARISH

**Parish Ministry in General:** All parish ministers, ordained and non-ordained, salaried and volunteer, offer their particular talents and gifts for building up the community of faith. In turn, the parish is careful to affirm the efforts of its ministers and to nurture their spiritual and their emotional well-being.

- Ministry is offered to all parishioners; provision is made for effective ministry to the linguistic and ethnic groups in the parish.
- The parish budgets adequate funds for effective parish ministries.
- Prudent care is exercised in the hiring and retention of employees as well as the use of volunteers. All Diocesan policies related to employment and the protection of the community are observed carefully.

**Pastor:** The pastor has ultimate responsibility for the spiritual leadership, administration and governance of the parish, which he exercises in collaboration with others in the parish and on the parish staff. Parish members and organizations have a responsibility to work with the pastor and support his ministry in the faith community. In parishes that do not have a resident full-time pastor, the Bishop will make alternate arrangements for leadership as appropriate.

**Other Ordained Ministers:** Associate pastors and deacons collaborate with the pastor and under the leadership of the pastor in the service of the parish and the exercise of the ministries for which they were ordained.

**Lay Ministers:** Lay ministers on the Parish Staff collaborate with the pastor and the rest of the staff in the exercise of their ministry.

- Some examples: Pastoral Associates, Religious Education Directors, Catholic School Principals and Teachers, Business Managers, RCIA Directors, Counselors, Music/Liturgy Directors, Youth Directors, Young Adult Ministers, Ministers to the Elderly, Housekeeper, Cook, Custodial and Maintenance staff, etc.
- Salaried members of the parish staff are paid just wages and benefits.

**Parish Pastoral Council:** The Parish Pastoral Council is the primary advisory body that assists the pastor in the administration of the parish. Its focus includes future planning and the development of a forward-looking vision for the parish. The Parish Pastoral Council meets regularly to advise the pastor on matters related to the administration and governance of the parish.

- The pastor as servant to his people is answerable to the Bishop for his ministry and administration of the parish.

- Though the Parish Pastoral Council's work is advisory, not legislative, the pastor values their expertise, experience and understanding of the parish. For this reason he works collaboratively with his Parish Pastoral Council. As recognized leaders within the parish community, they are responsible to the Bishop, the pastor and the parish they serve.
- Diocesan policies regarding the makeup and responsibilities of the Parish Pastoral Council are to be followed.

**Stewardship of Material Resources:** The model parish is a true community of faith within which stewardship as a way of life is learned and practiced. Sound business practice is a fundamental of good stewardship, and stewardship as it relates to church finances includes high ethical, legal and fiscal standards. Pastors and parish staff are open, consultative, collegial and accountable in the conduct of financial affairs. Parishioners accept responsibility for their parish and contribute generously of their time, talent and treasure.

- The model parish has adequate financial resources to meet its financial obligations in a timely way, provide for the needs of the parish and offer meaningful help to the poor.
- Parishioners return a minimum of 10% of their pre-tax income to the Lord as a suitable tithe of their treasure. (The rule of thumb is 5% to the parish, 1% to the Diocese and 4% to other charities.)
- Parish finances are administered according to the policies of the Diocese and the provisions of Canon Law.
- A parish Finance Committee meets regularly to advise the pastor on matters related to the fiscal policies and financial administration of the parish.
- There is regular and full disclosure of the financial condition of the parish, income and expenditures, and projection of future financial needs.
- The desire of donors and recipients of charity for confidentiality is presumed and fully respected, unless they indicate otherwise.
- There are internal controls to protect the good name of all who handle parish monies. Collection counters do not also serve as parish bookkeeper or post contributions.

**Other Parish Committees:** In addition to the Parish Pastoral Council and the Finance Council, both of which are mandated by Canon Law and Diocesan policy, the model parish establishes other committees, sub-committees and boards as needed to further the mission of the parish.

- Some examples: Building and Grounds Committee, Stewardship Committee, Education Committee or Board of Education, Liturgy Committee, Social Ministries Committee, Activities Committee, Personnel Committee, Cemetery Board, Landscape Committee, Gardening Committee, Sports Committee, Art



and Environment Committee, Youth Activities Committee, Evangelization Committee, Welcoming Committee, etc.

**Parish Facilities:** Provision is made for the construction and maintenance of parish facilities sufficient for the worship, education and socialization of parishioners and the charitable outreach of the parish.

- Facilities are fully handicap accessible with designated parking, access ramps, audio aids, etc.
- The parish provides ongoing preventive maintenance and repairs of grounds and facilities.
- There is a long-range plan in place to anticipate and provide for the future facilities needed for parish life and ministries.

**Parish Office:** The parish office is staffed and equipped at the level appropriate for the needs of the pastor and the parish.

- Some examples of equipment needed are a computer, (with Parish Data Systems [PDS] or other compatible software), a FAX machine, etc.

**Teamwork:** There is frequent and open communication between the various organizations, councils and committees, and between them and the pastor and parish staff.

## **SACRAMENTAL AND SPIRITUAL LIFE**

**Spirituality:** The development of the spiritual life of the community is the highest priority of the model parish. It promotes a deep understanding and love of Jesus Christ in Sacrament, Scripture and in the life of the community.

- Public worship fully implements the Liturgical Renewal of Vatican II.
- The model parish offers formal and informal special opportunities for spiritual growth, for instance: Communal Penance Rites, Small Faith Communities, Parish Missions, Retreats for groups within the parish and Days of Recollection.

**Baptism:** Baptism is the first Sacrament of initiation into the Church.

- Care is taken to ensure that parents of infants to be baptized live the faith and intend to pass the faith on to their children.
- The model parish has a director of the RCIA to oversee the process of adult catechesis and reception into the Church. Care is taken to distinguish non-

baptized Catechumens from already baptized Candidates and non-catechized adult Catholics.

- RCIA is conducted according to the approved rites and Diocesan policy, and includes stages of Inquiry, Catechumenate and Mystagogy.
- The model parish makes provision for baptism by immersion or submersion, while maintaining the option of baptism by pouring.
- It is desirable that baptism be celebrated during Mass. The baptism of adults generally occurs at the Easter Vigil, but is not restricted to that service.

**Confirmation:** Confirmation, along with Baptism and the Eucharist, completes the initiation of the believer into the Church.

- Adults and children ages 8 and older receive Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation according to provisions of RCIA in a single Rite of Initiation administered by a priest, usually at the Easter Vigil, but not restricted to that time.
- Those baptized Catholic as infants are provided with an approved program leading to their Confirmation as teenagers according to the policy of the Diocese.

**Reconciliation:** The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation is made readily available to parishioners on a regularly scheduled basis, at least weekly, and by means of special communal celebrations, typically during Advent and Lent.

- Because of the need for ongoing conversion in Christian life, the level of participation by parishioners in the Sacrament of Reconciliation is an important indicator of the spiritual vitality of the parish.

**Matrimony:** The model parish offers active ministry to those who have expressed the desire to enter into a Sacramental marriage.

- Couples are prepared for marriage according to the policies and procedures of the Diocese of Little Rock.
- The sacrament of Marriage is celebrated according to the approved liturgy of the Church. Care is taken that the music is appropriate for worship and complies with the guidelines of the Office of Worship.
- Pastors ensure that married couples receive support through prayer and marriage enrichment in the years that follow.

**Holy Orders:** The model parish actively and repeatedly invites those with the necessary spiritual and leadership qualities to consider a vocation to the priesthood, diaconate, vowed religious life or other Church-related ministries.

- While all believers are called to holiness, those in Holy Orders especially seek to be men of prayer, their lives fully configured to that of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the model parish nurtures its priests and deacons. It allows them sufficient time for a spiritually, emotionally and physically healthy lifestyle and respects their need for personal time.
- There is a prayer for vocations in the General Intercessions.
- The ability to produce vocations is an indicator of the vitality of a parish.

**Anointing of the Sick:** The model parish engages in active ministry to the sick and aged. Pastors ensure that those seriously ill physically or mentally receive the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick as appropriate, especially prior to surgery and whenever their condition worsens.

- It is desirable to gather periodically the sick and those who are frail due to age for communal anointing services and prayer. Care is taken that those who are capable receive the Eucharist regularly and the Sacrament of Reconciliation as needed.

**Eucharist:** The Eucharist is the center and summit of the liturgical life of the parish. It is celebrated on all weekends and Holy Days, and where possible also on weekdays. It is always celebrated with reverence.

- All parishioners attend Mass every weekend and on Holy Days of Obligation.
- There is no unnecessary duplication of weekend Masses as this tends to divide the community and dissipate its resources.
- Parishioners have ready access to the Blessed Sacrament so that they can spend time in adoration before the Lord, ideally on a 24-hour a day basis.

**Funerals:** In the model parish the dying and bereaved receive comfort, guidance and support from the parish community, especially in connection with the funeral itself.

- The Vigil for the Deceased (Wake) can be led by a trained member of the parish and the model parish has laity prepared to lead the Vigil for the Deceased and Rosaries when asked by the pastor to do so.
- The Funeral Liturgy expresses our faith in Jesus, offers prayers for the deceased and bereaved, and proclaims our belief in the Resurrection. Eulogies and secular songs, when desired, are more appropriate for the Vigil than the Funeral Mass.
- The Rite of Interment is ideally led by a priest or deacon, but can be led by a trained member of the parish if called upon to do so. Whenever possible the coffin is lowered into the grave in the presence of the mourners as part of the Rite of Interment.

- Parishes with cemeteries maintain them with care and thereby honor the memory of those buried there.
- In the model parish the parishioners offer support to the grieving family, bringing food to their home, joining them in prayer, and offering them a funeral dinner. The parish offers ongoing bereavement ministry that addresses the issues of grieving in the months following the funeral.

## **LITURGIES IN GENERAL**

**Music:** Music and song are integral to the celebration of the Eucharist and are especially part of the Eucharist on weekends and Holy Days. The music chosen is appropriate to the liturgy being celebrated and the community at worship.

- In the model parish congregational singing is the norm, and instrumental and vocal music make valuable contributions to worship as well. Choirs and cantors exercise important roles in liturgical ministry.
- The parish witnesses enthusiasm for the faith in their responses and singing at worship.

**Diversity:** In the model parish, worship reflects the diversity of languages and culture found within the community. This includes the language of worship, the music chosen, and the care taken that lay liturgical ministries be exercised by both men and women reflective of all the groups within the parish.

**Art and Environment:** The model parish invests the resources and care necessary to create and maintain a physical environment for worship and that is appropriate to the liturgical season, the liturgies being celebrated, the culture of the worshippers and the nature of the sacred space. This includes the liturgical furnishings and statuary, the vestments and sacred linens, and the floral and other seasonal decorations.

- Care should be taken to create an atmosphere of quiet and decorum to allow for prayer and reflection before worship begins.

**Homily:** There is always a homily at Mass on weekends and Holy Days, and generally on weekdays as well.

- The homily applies the readings of the Liturgy to contemporary issues in a way that flows faithfully out of the Scriptures and authentic Church teaching. Care is taken to apply the Gospel in a way that speaks to all in the community.

**Lay Liturgical Ministers:** In the model parish, lay liturgical ministers are well trained and sufficient in number for the needs of the community.

- Eucharistic Ministers, Lectors, Altar Servers, Sacristans and Usher/Greeters exercise their ministries with care and reverence.
- Every effort is made to broaden the base of those participating in liturgical ministries by inviting, welcoming and training new volunteers, including the youth.

**Public Worship Without a Priest:** The faith community gathers daily for prayer. When a priest cannot be present, provisions should be made for weekday Communion services led by a deacon, or in the absence of a deacon, a commissioned Eucharistic Minister. Care is taken not to confuse Communion Services with the Mass.

- Lay members of the parish are prepared to lead the parish in prayer.
- The Liturgy of the Hours is the most important non-Eucharistic liturgy of the Church. Other popular devotions such as the Rosary or Novenas also have an important place in the spiritual life. Non-Eucharistic liturgies are often more appropriate than Communion Services.

**Hospitality:** The model parish strives actively to create an atmosphere of welcome in the liturgical setting and also in all the programs and activities of the parish.

- Special care is taken to welcome newcomers to the community, non-Catholic visitors, the poor, immigrants and members of ethnic and social minorities.

## EDUCATION

**Adult Education:** Education in the faith is a life-long process and effective evangelization requires a believer to be formed by Gospel values and knowledgeable in matters of Catholic doctrinal, moral and social teaching. The model parish offers significant opportunities for the ongoing religious education of the adults of the parish, who in turn have an obligation to share their faith with the young people of the parish.

**Catholic Schools:** Catholic schools are a prominent means by which children of the parish, without prejudice to economic status, are provided with religious and human formation.

- Parishes with parochial schools rightly invest a great amount of the human and material resources of the parish in the school.
- Parishes without a parochial school provide a just subsidy to the neighboring Catholic schools which their parishioners attend.

- Parish schools are administered according to Diocesan policy and under the guidance of the principal, the pastor and the Diocesan Superintendent of Schools.

**Parish Religious Education Programs:** The model parish offers religious education to all the parishioners and especially children who are attending public schools. Special care is taken that children are well prepared to receive the Sacraments.

- Formation within the Church is a communal endeavor. Therefore the children of Home School families are actively involved in the religious education program of the parish.
- Parish Religious Education Programs are administered according to Diocesan policy and under the guidance of the parish Director of Religious Education, the pastor, and the Diocesan Director of Religious Education.

**Director of Religious Education:** The model parish has a director or coordinator of Religious Education. This person works in association with the pastor.

- The DRE coordinates the religious education program of the parish, recruits and forms catechists, and assists parents in providing for the religious formation and sacramental preparation of their children.
- The DRE is fully credentialed and certified by the Diocese, or in the process of working toward appropriate certification.

**Catechists:** Catechists are provided with the training and resources necessary to educate effectively the children entrusted to them.

- Catechists in Catholic schools and Religious Education programs are fully credentialed and certified by the Diocese for this ministry, or in the process of working toward appropriate certification.

**Youth Ministry Coordinator:** The model parish has a coordinator of youth ministry. This person works in association with the pastor.

The Youth Ministry Coordinator, whether paid or volunteer, is mature and educated in Church teaching, and abides by the guidelines for Youth Ministry in the Diocese. The coordinator receives continuing education and formation as a youth coordinator.

## HUMAN CONCERNS

**Parish Works of Charity:** The model parish has a well thought out, active, organized, direct response to the human needs of parishioners, others in the community, and those beyond our borders.

- Examples: an active St. Vincent de Paul Society, food pantry, shelter, soup kitchen, Meals on Wheels, etc.
- The parish provides significant funding for works of charity, ideally 10% of parish receipts.

**Networking:** The model parish collaborates with other parishes and agencies outside the parish whenever feasible to avoid unnecessary duplications of services in caring for the needs of others in the civic community.

**Work for Justice:** The model parish educates and forms its members for the works of justice. It undertakes in an organized way to put Church teaching into action in areas of racial justice and human rights.

- Parishioners know the Social Teaching of the Church and apply it in decisions of the parish and in their own personal lives.
- The model parish gives a “Catholic” response to the issues of our times, especially in support of the sanctity of life from the first moment of conception to natural death.
- Decision-making in the model parish emerges out of a preferential option for the poor.
- Efforts are made to promote harmony among those of diverse ethnic, linguistic and cultural backgrounds through personal and collective witness to the values of justice, equality and peace.

**Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy:** In the model parish, efforts and resources are directed to meet the physical and spiritual needs of the sick, the aged, the disabled, the divorced, the widowed, the bereaved and the imprisoned.

- The model parish has a well-organized ministry to the sick and shut-ins, including bringing the Eucharist on a regular basis to those who can receive it.
- The model parish offers to the aged opportunities for socialization and service according to their abilities.
- Parishes containing a prison or jail provide appropriate ministry to the incarcerated and their families.
- The model parish ministers to the bereaved, not only by providing a funeral dinner, but also in the following months by helping them in the long-term adjustment to their new circumstances.

- Assistance and/or ministry is provided to others with special needs, including single parent families, homosexuals, Alcoholics Anonymous Groups, Big Brothers/ Big Sisters, persons living with AIDS, etc.

**Counseling:** The model parish provides help for those with crisis pregnancies, domestic violence situations, families in crisis, troubled marriages, troubled children, the bereaved, etc.

- It connects those having serious problems with appropriate mental health service providers.
- The model parish provides meaningful moral and material support to help unwed mothers bring new life into the world.
- The model parish provides ministry that strengthens family relationships.

**Ecumenism:** The model parish seeks to work with the other religious groups in the community and others of good will to create an environment of harmony and cooperation in matters of shared concern. Among other things, this concerns outreach to the poor and the promotion of social justice and human rights.

- The model parish takes a leading role in civic activities.
- Examples: Ministerial Alliance, Community Food Pantry, Community Shelter, Ecumenical or Interfaith Dialogue, Community Thanksgiving Service and/or Dinner, etc.

## SUMMARY

The model parish is a well-administered local community of the one, holy, catholic, apostolic Church.

**Well-Administered:** The model parish is of appropriate size and location, administered by a resident pastor in collaboration with other ordained and lay ministers and volunteers. It contains all needed consultative bodies and is a good steward of parish finances, facilities and talent.

**One:** The model parish unites persons of diverse racial, ethnic, linguistic and social condition into a single family of faith in which all are valued and the gifts of all are called forth. It gathers parishioners in fellowship, collaborates with other Christians ecumenically and extends a warm welcome to visitors.

**Holy:** The model parish nurtures the spiritual life of all parishioners through its ministry of Word and Sacrament. The Eucharist is the center and summit of its liturgical life. For this reason, the Eucharist is celebrated with reverence, dignity and enthusiasm. The Church building is large enough for the community and contains everything



necessary for the full implementation of the liturgical renewal of Vatican II. The model parish calls parishioners to work for justice and to engage in spiritual and corporal works of mercy. It offers abundant opportunities for spiritual growth and it challenges all to be faithful stewards of their time, talent and treasure.

**Catholic:** The model parish values and nurtures its union with the Bishop and the Universal Church. It teaches the truths of the faith in a parish school and in religious education programs for children and adults. Its teachers are well-trained people of faith. The model parish gives a “Catholic” response to the issues of our times, especially regarding the sanctity of life.

**Apostolic:** The model parish evangelizes the unchurched and reaches out with welcome to the alienated. It nurtures vocations and supports those already engaged in ministry. It gives special attention to those with distinct needs, especially the youth, the aged and newcomers to the community. It encourages a broad participation in lay ministries and contains parishioners prepared to lead the parish in prayer.

A fuller treatment of these and other elements of the model parish can be found in: *The Code of Canon Law, The Catechism of the Catholic Church, The Documents of Vatican II, The General Instruction of the Roman Missal* and documents of the NCCB.