

# St. Brendan's Parish, Muirhouse, Motherwell

## ***The pastoral conversion of the Parish community in the service of the evangelising mission of the Church***

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**Review [Part 6] prepared by the lay supervisor of the social media of the Parish and revised and approved by Fr. Ness**

### **Bodies of Ecclesial Co-responsibility**

#### **a. The Parish Finance Council**

The Parish Priest must be assisted by collaborators to administrate the goods of the Church in order to help others with evangelising zeal and a missionary spirit. **Every parish must have a Finance Council, presided over by the Parish Priest and formed of at least three parishioners.** *We have a Council - priest and three parishioners.*

Unless otherwise directed by the Bishop, it will be for the Parish Priest to determine the number of members of this Council, relative to the size of the Parish, and whether these should be appointed by him, or elected somehow by the Parish community. **[Fr. Ness asked for nominations. He received one and invited two parishioners to make up the four person membership]**

The members of this Council, not necessarily belonging to the Parish itself, must be of proven good reputation, and expert in financial and legal questions, so as to render an effective and competent service, in such a way that the Council is not established as a mere formality. Unless the diocesan Bishop has decided otherwise, nothing prevents the same person from being a member of the Finance Council of multiple Parishes, whenever circumstances require.

**The Finance Council fulfils a role of particular importance in the growth of a culture of co-responsibility, of administrative transparency, and of service to the needs of the Church.** *[We are preparing a second interim financial report to cover the period 1<sup>st</sup> May to 31<sup>st</sup> July.]*

The Finance Council will publish the annual financial report with detailed indications of income and expenditure. From the annual report, the community as a whole may be aware that these goods belong to the Parish, not the Parish Priest; that he is the steward of them; how they are administered; what the financial situation of the Parish is and what resources are effectively at its disposal.

#### **b. The Parish Pastoral Council**

Pastoral Councils are highly recommended although it is left to the Bishop to decide whether they should be established. In some cases it may be that it is preferable to establish a single Pastoral Council for several Parishes.

*The Pastoral Council is theologically significant in that it allows every member of the faithful to share responsibility for the mission of the Church. Far from being simply a bureaucratic organ, the Pastoral Council highlights the centrality of the faithful to the evangelising mission, in virtue of the fact that every member of the faithful has received the gifts of the Spirit through Baptism and Confirmation.*

St Paul VI said, "It is the function of the pastoral council to investigate everything pertaining to pastoral activities, to weigh them carefully and to set forth practical conclusions concerning them so as to promote conformity of the life and actions of the People of God with the Gospel".

The Pastoral Council is a consultative body whose composition, election, and objectives are defined by the diocesan Bishop. It must effectively represent its community (priests, deacons, religious and

laity) and provide a specific setting in which the faithful are able to exercise their right and duty to express their own thought concerning the good of the Parish community to the priests and to communicate it to other members of the faithful.

**The Parish Pastoral Council “possesses a consultative vote only”, in the sense that its proposals must be accepted favourably by the Parish Priest to become operative.** The Parish Priest is then bound to consider the indications of the Pastoral Council attentively, especially if they express themselves unanimously, in a process of common discernment. **An effective and fruitful Pastoral Council will avoid two extremes: on one hand, that of the Parish Priest presenting to the Pastoral Council decisions already made, or without the required information beforehand, on the other hand, that of the Council in which the Parish Priest is only one of the members, effectively deprived of his role as Pastor and Leader of the community.**

The Pastoral Council should consist for the most part of those who have effective responsibility in the pastoral life of the Parish, or who are concretely engaged in it, in order to avoid the meetings becoming an exchange of abstract ideas that do not take into account the real life of the community.

### **c. Other forms of co-responsibility in pastoral care**

When a parish cannot be erected for a community of the faithful, the diocesan Bishop will provide for their pastoral care in another way, for example by establishing pastoral centres, dependent on the local Parish, as “mission stations” with a suitable Church and activities that complement those of the Parish. These centres may be entrusted where possible to a Curate or to one or more permanent deacons who would administrate them together with the centre’s families, under the responsibility of the Parish Priests. Pastoral centres can become missionary outposts, especially in Parishes with an extensive territory, in a way that ensures moments of prayer and Eucharistic adoration, catechesis and other activities for the benefit of the faithful. Such missions could extend their charitable activities by enlisting the collaboration of religious and laity, and all persons of good will.

### **Offerings for the Celebration of the Sacraments**

Offerings given for the celebration of Holy Mass and other Sacraments must be given freely and not regarded as a fee or tax on the Sacraments. Offerings for Holy Mass contribute to the good of the Church and support its ministers and works.

For their part, priests must offer virtuous examples in their use of money, in a sober lifestyle and transparent management of parish goods. In any event, “It is recommended earnestly to priests that they celebrate Mass for the intention of the Christian faithful, especially the needy

## **Conclusion**

This instruction takes into account the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, considered in the light of recent doctrinal authority, and also considers recent changes in society as a focus for the topic of renewal of the Parish in a missionary sense. The Parish is still the place where we have a living relationship with Christ and our brothers and sisters in the faith, but taking into account changes in today’s culture it must also explore new ways to perform its primary function of being a force of evangelisation.

The purpose of this document is to underline the urgency of renewal of parishes, and to suggest how this can be done in terms of the existing standards and procedures prescribed in canon law.

*Pope Francis invites us to invoke “Mary, Mother of Evangelisation”, so that, “the Virgin Mother may help us to say our own “yes”, conscious of the urgent need to make the Good News of Jesus resound in our time.*

