

Parish Council Workshop



Roman Catholic Diocese of
Fall River
Southeastern MA • Cape Cod • The Islands

**The Stronger Priests,
Stronger Parishes,
Stronger Church Initiative**
2025-2027



A Time for Fortitude



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Opening Prayer



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**Congratulations on accepting your
role to help our priests and
parishes. We are grateful for your
service to the diocese.**



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Introductions & Agenda



- Goals for Tonight
- Key Points from the Bishop's Stronger Priests, Stronger Parishes, Stronger Church Initiative
- Diocesan Statutes for Pastoral Councils
- Listening/Ideation Sessions
- Our Next Steps



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Goals for Tonight

- Third Pillar of the Bishop's Initiative
 - How can we as lay leadership help our priests?
- NOT to get to everything, but highlight the need and provide a kickstart for further discussion at your parish council
- Share elements of a healthy, well-run Parish Council



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VIDEO



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- Mission: strong, healthy, well-balanced priests = stronger parishes
- What we see:
 - 56 active diocesan priests and 69 parishes
 - Twice as many retiring priests as priests ordained over 5 years
 - 50% of our priests reporting at least one symptom of burnout
 - Not every parish has a functioning Parish and/or Finance Council



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Diocesan Statutes for Pastoral Councils



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A Parish Council is a consultative body, and is intended to be a source of open and responsible dialogue between parishioners and pastors/administrators concerning the discernment and assessment of the pastoral needs of the parish.



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Diocesan Statutes for Pastoral Councils



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- Topics for councils- spirituality of the parish, evangelization, worship, faith formation, youth ministry, community service, stewardship, fellowship, and leadership.
- Membership- elected and appointed, 3 year terms
- Identified chairperson- should be a lay leader of the parish
- A minimum of 3 meetings per year, most meet between 6-8
- Published minutes and members



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Diocesan Pastoral Council

Advisory role to the Bishop

**Currently working on building a bridge between the
Diocese Council Members and Parish Council Members**



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Welcome DPC Members



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Our Parishoners



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Process for brainstorm

Two Rounds

One Question



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Listen...Listen...Listen

FIRST ROUND

Each individual speaks for 2 minutes

Everyone else listens, take 1 minute in between

At the end of the round, stop in silence for 1 minute





Listen...Listen...Listen

SECOND ROUND

Each individual speaks for 2 minutes

Everyone else listens, take 1 minute in between

At the end of the round, stop in silence for 1 minute



Listening Sessions



HOW CAN WE HELP OUR PRIESTS?



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Group Sharing



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HOW CAN WE HELP OUR PRIESTS?



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Group Sharing

DO YOU HAVE IDEAS TO TAKE BACK FOR YOUR PARISH COUNCIL AND PARISH TO CONSIDER?



Call to Action

At your next Parish Council Meeting, review the statutes and ask:

- Are we in compliance with our structure and meeting frequency? What do we need to consider changing?
- Are we having the right level of discussions?
- Are we visible and known to the broader parish community? If not what can we do better?

Consider:

- Talking to your priest(s) re: what keeps them up at night.
- Holding your own listening/ideation sessions to dive deeper into how the parish can potentially assist the priest(s)
- Capturing ideas, reviewing with the priest(s), and taking next steps with committed timelines



Strategic & Pastoral Planning Office Can Help with Your Parish Journey...



Meetings with your Parish Council to support implementation of diocese guidelines

Facilitate Parish Workshops on Mission/Vision or any other topic you would like to address, working with teams like Evangelization or Clergy Support as appropriate

Create a strategic parish plan customized for your community

And more, just ask!



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PLANNING RESOURCES FOR YOU



Office of
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Planning website- <https://fallriverplanning.org/>

Commission Updates

Deanery Profiles

Catholic Directory

Statistics

Reach out!

Laura Carrillo, Director of Strategic & Pastoral Planning
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Closing Prayer



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Thank You!



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