



HOPE IN THE FUTURE



SHARED LEADERSHIP TEAMS

“The parish is not an outdated institution; precisely because it possesses great flexibility, it can assume quite different contours depending on the openness and missionary creativity of the pastor and the community. While certainly not the only institution which evangelizes, if the parish proves capable of self-renewal and constant adaptively, it continues to be “the Church living in the midst of the homes of her sons and daughters”. This presumes that it really is in contact with the homes and the lives of its people, and does not become a useless structure out of touch with people or a self-absorbed group made up of a chosen few. The parish is the presence of the Church in a given territory, an environment for hearing God’s word, for growth in the Christian life, for dialogue, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship and celebration. In all its activities the parish encourages and trains its members to be evangelizers. It is a community of communities, a sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey, and a centre of constant missionary outreach. We must admit, though, that the call to review and renew our parishes has not yet sufficed to bring them nearer to people, to make them environments of living communion and participation, and to make them completely mission-oriented.”

Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium 28

“At the Second Vatican Council and successive popes have taught, the Church is not a corporation but a communio of the Spirit; its discipline does not come from coercion, fear, threat or persecution, but from the love of Christ, his mission, his people and his truth. This love means that leadership is always marked by respect for others, their charisms and their dignity, it always begins by presuming their good faith. Ultimately, only leadership like this can be a source of grace to the community, gathering its gifts for the service of the whole Body of Christ and struggle against evil.”

James Harvey SJ

Key to Stage 2 of Hope in the Future is the shared leadership of the parish. Each parish is asked to set up a model which works best for them so the priest and laity can work together in the building up of the Missionary Parish.

Here are three shared leadership models which have worked well in a range of different parishes. It might be that your parish chooses their own or a combination of these models.

Your parish may start by holding a planning and vision session with an open invitation to the whole parish to allow all voices to be heard.

This will enable:

- Parishes to outline their hopes, fears and expectations.
- To place the new models in some contexts.
- Visualise what collaborative parish leadership looks like.
- Explore the different models available.
- Definition of parish goals – long and short term goals for the parish.

How does the Hope in the Future Team link in with this?

This will depend on your parish setting and what (if any) shared leadership model is already in place. The Hope in the Future Team may become the Shared Leadership Team if there currently isn't one. Alternatively the Hope in the Future may run separately from the Shared Leadership Team with a specific emphasis on mission and evangelisation but a representative from the Hope in the Future Team should also be on the Shared Leadership Team as a channel of communication between the two groups.

How do Lay Leaders link in with this?

Similarly the Lay Leaders may become the Parish Shared Leadership Team along with the parish priest if there is no other model in place. Alternatively they could make up part of the Shared Leadership Team.

Model 1 – Parish Pastoral Council

How is the group recruited?

The parish priest can decide upon the appropriate method of selecting members that is suited to their own particular situation. Some of these options include:

- Elections by the parish community
- Nomination and discernment
- Selection of representatives from parish organisations
- Selection by the Parish Priest in consultation with the present council members

How do the meetings run?

The parish priest convokes the meeting. The chairperson prepares the agenda and facilitates the meeting but does not have executive powers in the parish. The agenda for each meeting will be finalised by the secretary, chairperson and the president of the Council and should be circulated to Council members in advance of the meeting, together with any notes or other relevant material required. Minutes of the meeting will be circulated at an agreed time after the meeting has taken place. A period of time should be set on the agenda for prayer and reflection.

How many people are in the group and what are their roles?

Between 9 to 12 members. There must be a president (parish priest), chairperson (elected by the council) and secretary (responsible for circulating minutes and agendas). Additional committees may be set up to focus on liturgy, pastoral works and social events and fundraising.

How often do they meet and for how long?

Some parishes may wish to meet monthly while others may choose less frequent meetings. The minimum requirement for meeting is four times a year. Meetings can be between 1 and 2 hours.

What are the group's responsibilities?

- Proclaiming the Word of God and developing faith formation, especially for the young.
- Fostering the sacramental, liturgical and prayer life of the parish.
- Supporting marriage and family life.
- Enabling the lay faithful to carry out their particular vocation of shaping society in accordance with the Gospel.
- Strengthening commitment to social justice and caring for the poor and marginalised.
- Encourage leadership in initiatives reaching out to young people and engaging them in their journey of faith.
- Look to ways of welcoming new members into their communities and ensure that people of different nationalities and culture find their place in the liturgy and parish life.
- Address creatively the particular social challenges of the parish and ensure that the parish community is sensitive to the needs of all.
- Prayerfully discovering the needs of the parish and involving everyone in a response.
- Enabling the baptised to discover their call as Disciples of Christ.

- Providing the necessary structures that will marry the needs of the parish with the many gifts and resources of the community.
- Ensuring that all voices within the parish, the diocese and the wider community are heard and respected.
- Reviewing the life and activities of the parish so that these are seen to foster the Mission of the Church.
- Safeguarding

How long should people remain in the group?

All members of the Parish Pastoral Council are to have terms of office. Ideally the term should be no shorter than two years and no more than four years initially, with the possibility of reappointment for one or more terms, according to the needs of each parish. If this is the case then it needs to be stated how many times the person may be reappointed the period of time in between appointments also needs to be stated. The parish might consider having staggered terms to maintain a minimum of stability and efficiency.

Model 2 - Parish Advisory and Co-ordination Team

How is the group recruited?

One way is to have a parish census and ask in the census which area of parish life you feel drawn to contribute to and would you be prepared to be a coordinator for this particular area if chosen. Then the parish priest, with help of two or three parishioners looks at the responses and chooses people based on the forms and other information and factors e.g. Representative balance from different parts and backgrounds within the parish. Another way is to call a series of meetings and bring together all involved in different areas of parish life and then discern in a similar way. It is not an elected body.

How do the meetings run?

Once every two months there is a whole group meeting chaired by one of the parishioners. After opening prayer, apologies, and opening comments from parish priest, each person gives some feedback on their particular area of responsibility with opportunity for discussion. Other items are discussed that affect the whole parish e.g. Amalgamation. The other month each member of the group has a half hour meeting with the parish priest to discuss that area of parish, share ideas, thoughts of how best to support and develop. Very important and often productive meetings. Generally lines of communication are kept open so emails and post can be redirected to the right person to deal with.

How many people are in the group and what are their roles?

Around twelve covering different areas of parish life:

- Liturgy
- Music
- Prayer
- Outreach
- Pastoral
- Young people
- Children
- Finance
- Building
- Social
- Hope in the Future
- Churches Together / inter faith dialogue
- Safeguarding (advisory)

How often do they meet and for how long?

Whole group meetings once every two months lasting two hours.
Individual meetings half an hour each every other month.

What are the group's responsibilities?

To co-ordinate the people and activities in their particular area of parish life.

How long can people remain in the group?

Preferably after two years there should be a swap over year and then people replace themselves.

Model 3 - Parish Leadership Team

How is the group recruited?

Personal knowledge of the parish with three main areas of responsibility – safeguarding (advisory), formation, administration & finance.

How do the meetings run?

Lay leaders collaborate with the parish priest in key areas of the parish as well as discussion on wider whole parish issues.

How many people are in the group and what are their roles?

Six lay people plus the parish clergy.

How often do they meet and for how long?

Every six weeks for two hours.

What are the group's responsibilities?

- Finance & Administration
- Safeguarding
- Outreach (youth, referee's, homeless ect)
- Formation (catechises, sacramental programmes ect)
- Liturgy (reader's & Eucharistic ministers training & rotas, music, liturgical calendar)
- Social Events
- Communications (website, newsletter)

How long can people remain in the group?

Two years