

# The New Code of Canon Law Parish Council in the Revised Code

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The parish council may be defined as an institution in which lay representatives and the ministerial staff of a parish work jointly to build the parish as a living Christian community. Another development of the Church since the Second Vatican Council, the concept of the parish council fits well into the Revised Code of Canon Law (1983), for it is a structure that flows from its basic premises. At the point at which it defines some of the rights and obligations of the people of God, the Code states: "Flowing from their rebirth in Christ, there is a genuine equality and action among all Christ's faithful. Because of this equality they all contribute, each according to his or her condition and office, to the building up of the Body of Christ" (Canon 208).

Since the entire membership of the Church participates in a communion of service, it seems appropriate that all in the community have an opportunity to share the responsibility for achieving its mission as the people of God. Through careful reflection, planning and action, the parish council hopes to examine the needs of the local community and take whatever steps are necessary to fulfill those needs.

The Revised Code succinctly summarizes the vocation of this group: "In this council, Christ's faithful, together with those who by virtue of their office are engaged in pastoral care of the parish, give their help in fostering pastoral action" (Canon 536). This council is proposed as a planning council. Its purpose, as articulated in past conciliar decrees, is to study the life and activities of the people of God — to be in touch with the hopes and dreams of their parish family — and to suggest concrete means of bringing the gospel message to reality.

An American canonist has clearly defined what a parish council is *not*: "The job of the parish council . . . is not to decide whether the American flag will be in

or out of the sanctuary or whether coleslaw will be served at the parish dinner. The job of the parish council is to deal with the mission of the Church long-range and short-range goals and objectives — and to design those procedures and processes by which the pastoral work of the Church is to be accomplished."

The parish council's role, therefore, is one of the consultative planning group, assisting in planning the mission of the Church. Not everyone within the community is gifted in this regard. Careful and prayerful discernment will always be required when candidates are selected for this position. Since a large part of the work of this council consists of influencing the people it serves toward pursuing goals that contribute to the building of the Kingdom of God, perspective members should be willing to accept a challenge to model in council the gospel community that the parish is called to be.

The pastor's presence and leadership is indispensable for the proper functioning of the council. The Revised Code mentions that the pastor "presides over the parish council" (Canon 536.1). The recently published American Commentary on the Revised Code compares this "presiding" in council to the pastor's presiding at Eucharist, with God's people performing their own unique ministry under the pastor's leadership. The commentary goes on to explain that the pastor's presiding role within the council would not preclude an elected member from conducting regular meetings; in fact, such a procedure might be preferred.

The new codification of Church law does not go into great detail about the functioning of the parish council. Each local bishop is given by law the responsibility for establishing the councils, which would outline, in general, operating procedures that will help each local council remain consistent and faithful to the Church's tradition and teaching in exercising the ministry of Christian leadership.

## Parishes on campus

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nison, Wes's wife and an unofficial member of the chaplains' team. "We've had to tell people in the beginning of Mass, 'This is a real Catholic Mass.'"

Chaplains also have to cultivate awareness and flexibility toward students' needs and struggles — from career choices and conflicts with roommates and professors to issues like drinking, sexuality and drug use. Pressure also looms large as a fact of campus life — pressure from peers, professors and family.

"Sometimes you really need people and a place to bounce these things around," Labaki said. "For us, worship or ministry may be saying 'Let's kick a ball around' when we're under a lot of pressure."

"It's a big help to know you have someplace to go where people are coming from the same background," Burns added.

Understanding, however, doesn't guarantee constant and complete sympathy. "Father Charlie and Wes challenge us if we're goofing off," Burns said.

Father Manning, in turn, describes his parishioners as a demanding congregation. "You can't give them candy. They are movers and shakers — they're not easily satisfied," he observed.

"We do our very best in homilies to challenge them, but sometimes they don't like it . . . They don't necessarily want to deal with the reality of things," he added.

One of those realities is the parish's budget. The university rents both the Newman Center and House to the parish community, although they are located outside the campus boundaries.

Then there are salaries and such other ex-

penses as copying, office supplies and liturgical supplies.

Nearly half the parish's budget is subsidized by the diocese, but the other half depends on fund raising and collections.

"There are times when we have to hold back bills," Father Manning acknowledged. "It's very tight."

Twice a year, parishioners are challenged to support the community financially, with generally good results, according to Father Manning.

"When money is a concern, we deal with that, but it's not our primary goal," Labaki said.

Students have also developed an unusual twist to the "Dear Mom and Dad, please send money" letter. They do a semi-annual mailing to parents, asking for their support for the campus parish.

Besides support, the parents have responded with their own reactions to the parish. "They seem to like what they've seen," Lynn Kennison said.

Apparently, so have students. A growing number are expressing interest in ministry as a career, Father Manning said. As a result, the parish has developed an internship program primarily for juniors and seniors to test that desire with experience.

"The object is to increase their awareness of the possibilities in ministry," Labaki said. "It's something that happens in the parish anyway. We're just taking it one more step as a way to confirm that interest and keep it alive."

Despite his high approval rating, Father Manning can't forget those whom the parish doesn't involve beyond Sunday Mass.

"I see hordes of students coming to Mass and just leaving. I'm not satisfied with 'They've been brought up that way,'" he said. "I feel sorry for kids who think the Catholic Church exists only because of their Sunday Mass obligation. They're really missing out."

## Information about AIDS offered by local Red Cross

A new video documentary that explains what is known about AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) has been produced by the American Red Cross. Called "Beyond Fear," the hour-long video is available to community groups and organizations along with free presentations offered by the Red Cross AIDS Speakers Bureau.

"Facts You Should Know About AIDS," a brochure produced by the United Way of Greater Rochester, Inc., and the American Red Cross, Rochester-Monroe County Chapter, is also available to the public. To request a presentation or free copies of the brochure, call (716)461-9800, ext. 226.

## Ecuadoran

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that statement. But he added that "in some situations, there just isn't any other way out. I am obliged to understand that, even though I don't believe in violence," he said.

He also noted there is a clear distinction between collectivism and base communities, which he has helped to establish throughout Latin America. "They (base communities) are formed for a different purpose — a more human, more spiritual kind of sharing," he said. "The sharing is not imposed from above."

Bishop Proano said he began to understand the non-violent process in 1972, but added that "the conviction of my heart has been since childhood, in the preparation I received."

He cited the Second Vatican Council as the greatest single influence in his own gradual

conversion to non-violence. Later, he helped to organize the Medellin Conference in Colombia, which was said to have been "the point of no return" for the Church in Latin America.

Although he said the Latin American Church deserves credit for having passed that point, it has also failed in some areas, including religious education.

"Not only (Catholic-educated) former students, but governments that call themselves Christian are responsible for tortures, for putting people in jail, for the disappearances and the deaths," the bishop said. "Yes, we have somewhat failed because the education has been strictly intellectual. Christian education must place not only in our heads but in our hearts."

Although Bishop Proano was forced to communicate with his Rochester audiences through an interpreter, he left them with this thought: "Even if we can't understand each other's words, we can understand the desires of each others' hearts for a better world."

## Free transportation available to Aurora S/D/W/R sessions

Nearly 400 people have already registered for the 11th annual Conference for the Separated, Divorced, Widowed and Remarried, which is scheduled for the weekend of June 6, 7 and 8 at Wells College in Aurora, N.Y.

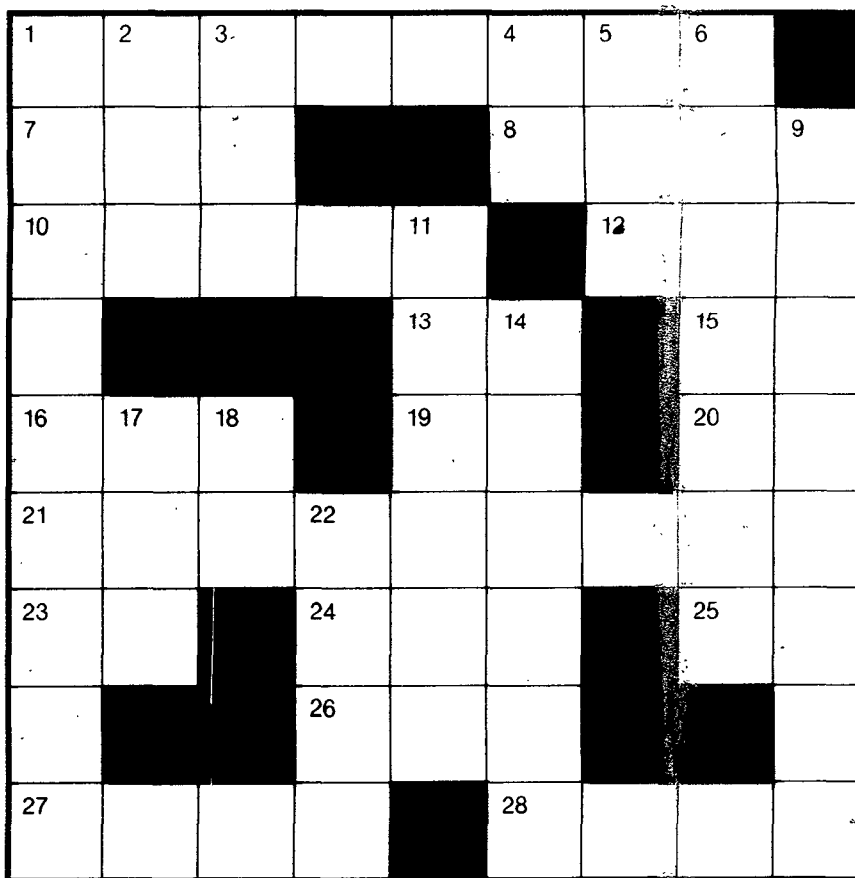
Sponsored by Region II (New York State) of the North American Conference of Separated and Divorced Catholics (NACSDC), the conference is entitled "Come to the Water." It will feature the keynote speaker Father James Young, one of the founders of the conference, as well

as 26 workshops in three sessions.

Free transportation will be available to those who wish to attend only the Saturday session. If enough people are interested, a bus will leave from Corpus Christi Church on Saturday morning. Two workshops on Saturday will also be offered in Spanish. For more information, call Bob Cobbett at (716) 385-6750, ext. 265 (days), or 872-6276 (evenings) or Kathy Rampulla, (607) 739-4502 (evenings).

## The "New" Courier-Crossword . . .

Our new, monthly crossword puzzle! Give it a try and see how well you do. Answers will be printed in next week's issue. Good Luck!



ACROSS

DOWN

- 1. Model for Santa Claus
- 7. Widow of John Lennon
- 8. Expression of dismay
- 10. Type of candle
- 12. Explosive invented by Noble
- 13. Vertical direction
- 15. Heir to senior (abbrev.)
- 16. Sprite or pixie
- 19. Rules whereby the human is governed by the Creator (abbrev.)
- 20. Film company formed by Chaplin, Pickford and Fairbanks (abbrev.)
- 21. Order to which Thomas Aquinas and Catherine of Siena belonged
- 23. Preposition
- 24. River in England
- 25. U.S. militia forces (abbrev.)
- 26. "To . . . is human, to forgive divine."
- 27. Irish saint who set his monks adrift to test their faith.
- 28. What the Magi followed
- 1. Where Father Hesburg and Lou Holtz reside
- 2. "Away . . . Manger"
- 3. Policeman (slang)
- 4. Home of the Lakers (abbrev.)
- 5. The first octave above the treble staff
- 6. . . . . Capistrano, where the swallows return every year
- 9. "I was a . . . . . and you welcomed me" (Matt 25)
- 11. "The . . . . . Stumbles," film in which Dick Van Dyke portrays a priest.
- 14. Workbench tool
- 17. Abraham's nephew who fled Sodom
- 18. Type of radio transmission
- 22. Concept