

## Guidelines in the provision of Pastoral Care

Our focus needs to move from the parish to the pastoral area. Since the concept of parish is so deeply engrained in our culture this will take time. The following may help in this process:

- a. The frequent use of the name of the pastoral area;
  - b. The creation of a pastoral area council composed of people nominated by the parish pastoral council and the priests, under retirement age, ministering in the pastoral area. The pastoral area council should meet quarterly to deal with matters which affect all the parishes in the area. Such matters would include liturgy, sacramental preparation and the ongoing formation of parish ministers (word, eucharist, music);
  - c. The pooling of resources through the creation of a single pastoral area office, the publication of a shared parish newsletter, organising shared sacramental preparation and shared pilgrimages and other celebrations;
  - d. Encouraging people to participate in liturgies in Churches other than their own.
- 2- People should leave our Sunday liturgies with a desire to return next week:
- a. Time, energy and money needs to be invested in liturgy;
  - b. Frequent, poorly prepared and attended liturgies are rarely prayerful or inspiring;
  - c. We should work to ensure that ministers of word, eucharist and music are involved in Sunday (incl vigil) Masses;
  - d. It is no longer possible to have a Sunday (or vigil) Mass in every Church in our diocese every week;
  - e. The priests assigned to each pastoral area (in consultation with the pastoral area and parish pastoral councils) need to construct a Mass rota which respects the following principles
    - i. Priests under the age of retirement should be scheduled to celebrate no more than three Sunday (or vigil) Masses;
    - ii. Priests over retirement age should only be scheduled to celebrate one Sunday (or vigil) Mass
    - iii. Each priest should celebrate the Sunday (including vigil) Masses in a parish in the pastoral area other than the one where he is resident, at least once a month
    - iv. Masses celebrated by the same priest should have an interval of 90 minutes between their starting times.
    - v. The celebration of marriages and funerals outside of Mass may, in some circumstances, be appropriate
- 3- The time and energy of priests and committed lay people should be used to best effect. The following principles should help in that regard;
- a. The Vicar Forane in each pastoral area is responsible for the leadership of the pastoral care of the group of parishes in an inclusive and imaginative fashion;
  - b. Priests in each pastoral area should meet weekly to review the previous week and to plan the following week and other forthcoming events, to discuss administration and to arrange free time and holidays;
  - c. Administration is the responsibility of priests under retirement age;
  - d. To provide continuity a priest under retirement age should be designated to attend Pastoral Council, liturgy and Finance meetings in each parish in the area;
  - e. The meetings should as often as possible prioritise Mission over Maintenance;
  - f. A priest should be appointed as chaplain to each Catholic school in the pastoral area;
  - g. We should work towards having only one pastoral council in each parish;
  - h. The scheduling of baptisms and funerals should be inspired by the pastoral needs of the people and the reasonable availability of priests;
  - i. Each priest should have a designated day off each week.