

Role Description Summary

The Parish Life Director (PLD) is professionally qualified, spiritually, academically and by experience, to serve as a minister. The PLD may be a deacon, lay person or religious who is appointed by the diocesan bishop in accordance with Canon 517.2 to lead and officially administer a parish. The PLD is responsible for the growth and development of a particular parish* (single parish, linked parish or parish cluster) in response to the mandate of the bishop and the call of the community. The PLD serves in conjunction and collaboration with assisting priests, a pastoral staff and a canonically appointed pastor, usually the regional vicar. Ordinarily, the direct supervisor of the PLD is the regional vicar; s/he is directly accountable to him. The PLD is a generalist in the art of pastoral care and parish administration.

The PLD regularly collaborates with the canonical pastor and meets with him at least, monthly, apprising him of any special situations, emergencies, or pressing needs of the parish.

Pastoral Role and Responsibilities

The Parish Life Director:

1. Works with the parish community to develop and live a pastoral vision and mission. This vision includes plans for serving the parish community, as well as, outreach and evangelization to those in the parish's area. S/he works closely and collaboratively with the lay ministry leaders of the parish.
2. Oversees the day-to-day operations and administrative planning for the parish/linkage/cluster. This oversight includes recruitment, training and management of employees and volunteers to enhance living the mission of the parish. The PLD is accountable for the administrative and financial management of the parish, in accordance with diocesan policies; sacramental and community life, the parish census, programs, liturgical ministries (lectors, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion and altar servers), and *Safe Environment* training. The appropriate records for these practical elements of parish life will be maintained under the supervision of the PLD.
3. Collaborates with the parish pastoral council, parish finance council, and collaborates in Pastoral Council Area (PCA) planning.

If a PLD leads multiple parishes, the diocese recommends that a pastoral cluster council for the parishes be utilized. Canonically, the parish finance councils are separate. However, in multiple-parish settings the PLD will periodically convene the finance councils for collaboration to achieve appropriate economies of scale and inter-parochial cooperation.

When serving multiple parishes, the PLD may find the creation of “ministry councils” useful to assist in the pastoral care of the individual parishes. The creation of these “ministry councils” is the decision of the PLD after consultation and in collaboration with the pastoral council.

4. Annually, the PLD as part of the budget development process will facilitate an examination/evaluation of the ways in which the parish is living its mission.
5. In collaboration with the regional vicar and the assisting priests, the PLD is responsible for maintaining clear communication, coordination, and contacts in providing for the full sacramental life of the parish. The PLD offers assistance to parishioners offering pastoral support in illness, hospitalization, bereavement, as well as oversight of faith formation, singles, family and adult ministries, and all sacramental preparation, including matrimony.
6. The PLD is authorized to lead prayer services, communion services, the Liturgy of the Hours, funeral vigil and burial services, as needed. The PLD may address the Sunday worshiping community in accordance with the norms of the diocesan bishop.
7. The PLD will represent the parish in relationship to the larger community; that is, in dealing with neighborhood and local civic groups. S/he represents the parish in relationship to ecumenical and inter-faith matters, working with religious communities, and in the parish pastoral care area, regional and diocesan groups.
8. The PLD provides significant personal presence at parish events, for example presence at weekend Masses, with parishioners at important times in their lives, and significant parish pastoral events.

Professional/Personal Knowledge and Skills Required

The Parish Life Director:

- A. Has an in-depth grasp of Church teaching, Biblical theology and pastoral theology;
- B. Has knowledge of:
 - Canon Law,
 - Church history,
 - The stages of human and faith development, and
 - The principles of organization, management, and team building;

- C. Has a sense of the history of the parish and a keen grasp on its current demographics, constituencies, challenges and complexities;
- D. Is able to gather, motivate, train, unify and evaluate a team of volunteer and employed parish staff;
- E. Is skilled in decision-making, delegation of tasks, negotiation and conflict resolution;
- F. Is aware of community resources and has the ability to refer those in need to appropriate professional resources;
- G. Is able to communicate and has an awareness of marketing, public relations, and public communications skills;
- H. Is aware of the Church's tradition of stewardship and is able to invite and empower people into a collaborative participation in parish life;
- I. Is able to work effectively with the canonical pastor and assisting priests;
- J. Is able to preside effectively, preach as appropriate, lead other parish community gatherings, meetings and training. The attire used at liturgy should be lay professional attire;
- K. Is able to reflect theologically, in an appropriate and objective manner, on his/her spiritual journey, gifts and limits in leadership style; and
- L. Models a balanced life-style, with a healthy distinction between role and identity and can handle criticism constructively.

Formation, Training, Criteria for Readiness

The Parish Life Director:

- a. Is a practicing Catholic in good standing;
- b. Shows evidence of a commitment to his/her on-going formation and personal and professional development;
- c. Holds a Master's Degree in pastoral ministry, theology, religious studies, or its academic equivalent;

- d. Has a minimum of 5 years in pastoral ministry, preferably in a variety of parishes and ministries;
- e. Is committed to participation in diocesan and/or other programs that will enhance and continue his/her professional development in the diocesan context; and
- f. Must be in full compliance with the Diocesan Child and Youth Protection Policy.

* Throughout this document use of the term "parish" is inclusive of the possibility of a single parish, linkage (two parishes) or parish cluster (more than two parishes).