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Introduction

WHY A PASTORAL PLAN?

When we want to do something, we make a plan.

When the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit summoned creation into being, God had a plan.

"For he has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will, according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth."

Ephesians 1:9-10

At every moment God invites us to play a part in the unfolding of that plan.

My plans for you are peace and not disaster, a future full of hope.

Jeremiah 29:11

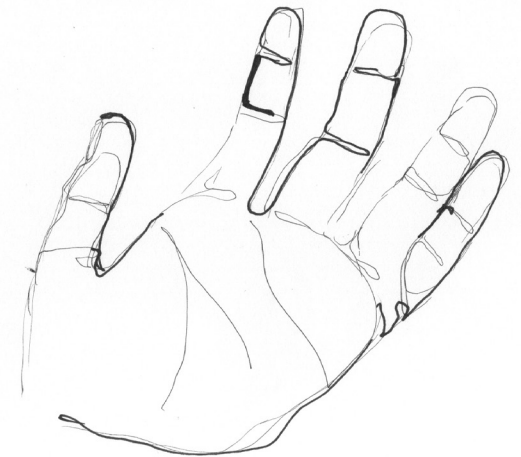
To be pastoral is to look after other people rather than yourself, to look out for them before looking at your own wants; to look for the lost, bandage the wounded, carry the weak,

"We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves; let each of us please his neighbour for his good, to edify him."

Romans 15:1

assist those who have lost their way, care for the strong, ensure food for the journey, avoid what is harmful, deal with danger and provide for the future.

A Pastoral Plan for the Church does all of this and more, both within the Church community and for the people, society and world around us. A Pastoral Plan helps and guides us all as we listen and respond to the leading of the Spirit, as we enter into the Father's plan for our Church and our world; as we are missionary disciples of Jesus in the present and as we let the Spirit guide us into the future.



"I myself will search for my sheep ... I will seek the lost and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the crippled and I will strengthen the weak and the fat and the strong I will watch over; I will feed them in justice."

Ezekiel 34:11, 15-16

INVITATION TO ALL CATHOLICS

We invite each Catholic, and all Catholic Communities within our Conference area, in their own context, to study, discuss and decide how to implement this Pastoral Plan.

Study sessions should be arranged in all Parishes, groups and movements.

Implementation of this Pastoral Plan will be ongoing, monitored and evaluated.

The Council for Evangelisation will regularly review and evaluate how our Pastoral Plan is being received and implemented.

A "NEW" PASTORAL PLAN?

About 30 years ago, in 1989, the Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference (SACBC) adopted and began to implement the first Pastoral Plan, which was called Community Serving Humanity. Many of you will remember this Plan.

In 2010 the Bishops decided that the Catholic Church in Southern Africa needed to create a new Pastoral Plan.

The Bishops identified eight priorities for the life and mission of the Church in Southern Africa.

They asked the then Department for **EVANGELISATION** of the SACBC to lead the process.

A team coordinated by Mgr. Barney McAleer conducted two widespread consultations, in parishes and other organisations within the Church. This team gathered the concerns and ideas of all who took part in the consultation. From this, six areas of mission emerged.

This Consultation was conducted in three phases, between 2011 and 2015, and the third phase included Lenten Reflections

After much input, reflection, discussion and prayer, the Bishops approved a Vision Statement and Mission Statement for the Pastoral Plan.

At a meeting of the Council for **EVANGELISATION** in May 2017, a task team was appointed to study all this material and compose a first draft of the proposed new Pastoral Plan to be presented to the Plenary of the SACBC held in August 2017.

This **CONCEPT** Pastoral Plan is the work of the Drafting Committee after considering the in-put of the Bishops in their Plenary of August 2017, and the comments of the Council for Evangelisation in the November 2017 and January 2018 meetings. It has been authorised by the Bishops in Plenary of January 2018 to be released for study and comment by Priests and Religious and Laity through the different organs of the dioceses.

The intention of the Bishops is that Dioceses begin to look at their own programmes and pastoral plans in the light of this Concept Pastoral Plan.

Our Vision and Mission

Our Pastoral Plan invites communities to be and become an

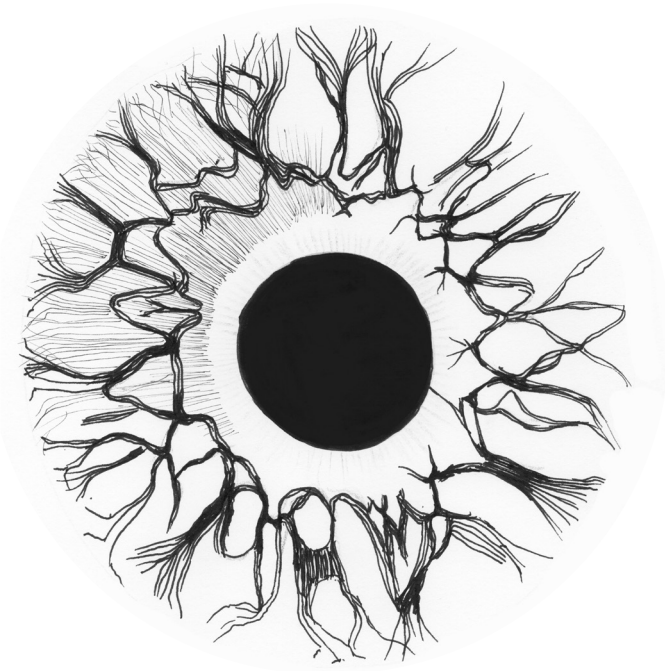
EVANGELISING COMMUNITY

SERVING GOD, HUMANITY

AND ALL CREATION.

Let us ask God to inspire us to be generous and courageous
enough to choose that

*We, the Church, the family of God in Southern Africa,
commit to work together with others for the good of all,
by responding to the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth,
through Worship, Proclamation of the Word of God,
Formation, Advocacy, Human Development
and Care of Creation*



Our Vision

explained

EVANGELISING

COMMUNITY

SERVING

GOD,

HUMANITY

& ALL CREATION

“Look I am doing something new!”

Isaiah 43:19

To **EVANGELISE** is to do what Jesus did and what Jesus is still doing. It is announcing something new, important and life changing, such as telling good news, bringing the truth about the Father who loves us all, bringing hope, creating joy, being a channel of the grace and power of God to change us and our world, opening ourselves to the Holy Spirit, and uniting ourselves with the Son.

It is assuring everyone there is life on the other side of death;
that suffering can bring transformation;
that we are immensely loved;
that love is stronger than evil;
that forgiveness and reconciliation bring inner peace;
that heaven is real!

There are many ways to evangelise.

New ways arise all the time to meet new needs and new situations.

Spirit is ever creative, forever prompting responses to new situations.

A **COMMUNITY** is a group of people who belong to each other, share life and care for one another. A community has a purpose. Every community which does good, participates in the love, life and action of the The Holy Trinity.

Our Vision

explained

EVANGELISING

COMMUNITY

SERVING

GOD,

HUMANITY

& ALL CREATION

I chose you! Follow me! Listen!

John 15:16; Mark 1:17 & John 21:22; John 10:27

An **EVANGELISING COMMUNITY** is a community of missionary disciples of Jesus, busy with God's work. An *evangelised* person or community has heard the Good News about Jesus and tries to live as his disciples. An *evangelising* community tells the Good News about Jesus to others. It keeps on trying to do good all the time for its own members, for others, and for our common home, our planet Earth.

An **EVANGELISING COMMUNITY** is always busy serving God, humanity and all creation.

The Father is still working on His plan! Creation is God's project!

GOD We already know about God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
HUMANITY All of us human beings without any exception whatsoever.
ALL CREATION The whole created universe.

For each one it means that part of creation we live in; which we move about in; where we have an impact on the environment.

Our Vision

explained

WE, THE CHURCH, THE FAMILY
OF GOD IN SOUTHERN AFRICA,
COMMIT TO WORK TOGETHER WITH
OTHERS FOR THE GOOD OF ALL, BY
RESPONDING TO THE CRY OF THE
POOR AND THE CRY OF THE EARTH,
THROUGH WORSHIP, PROCLAMATION
OF THE WORD OF GOD, FORMATION,
ADVOCACY, HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
AND CARE OF CREATION.

THE FAMILY OF GOD is us, brothers and sisters of Jesus, the first-born Son; sons and daughters of the Father; a family, not by human genes and DNA, but by faith, baptism and the Holy Spirit and sharing at the table with Jesus.

TO WORK TOGETHER: Not working alone; a community of communities.

TO WORK TOGETHER WITH OTHERS: With those who belong to any faith or none. With anybody!

FOR THE GOOD OF ALL: Like God, we exclude no one. We include each one. Sometimes we call this 'the common good'.

We hear and respond to the **CRY OF THE POOR**. Many of us who hear or read this are poor. Many of us are not. Many families and people among us and around us are poor, marginalised, even helpless or destitute.¹ How can we who are poor respond? How can we who are not poor respond?

We hear and respond to '**THE CRY OF THE EARTH**': our planet and the environment, our common home which is being damaged.²

We listen and respond to **GOD'S WORD** and participate in the Eucharist and other sacraments, this is the heart and soul of the life of the Church. By this the Church is created and sustained; Jesus pours himself, the Spirit, his life, grace, truth, mercy and power into the Church.

¹ cf. *Laudato si* #49

² *Laudato si* Chapter 1

Our Vision

explained

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ADVOCACY, HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
AND CARE OF CREATION.



Through **ADVOCACY** we raise our voices along with and on behalf of those of us who have little or no power or voice; assisting, lobbying, representing, standing up for what is right, acting in solidarity.

By **HUMAN DEVELOPMENT** we mean helping ourselves and each other to develop our full potential as individuals and as community; physically, emotionally, intellectually, culturally, morally, vocationally, spiritually and in every way that humanises us. This includes discovering and developing personal charisms and talents.

CARE OF CREATION means us looking after the soil, our water, our air, the plants, the animals, our dwelling places, our buildings, our resources, our sources of energy - the heritage of our children's children and all the coming generations.

WHAT DO WE NEED TO MAKE THIS PASTORAL PLAN REAL?

- If we commit ourselves to be a Church with this vision and this mission, we will need:
- **FOCAL AREAS** where we can devote our energies and resources
There are 8 Focal Areas, outlined on pages 9 to 20
- **SPECIFIC GOALS** to keep us focused and responsible
Generally, these are set at the local level.
- **WAYS TO WORK** towards these goals
There are some practical suggestions on pages 21 onwards
- **KNOWLEDGE** of existing resources **AND ACCESS** to these
- **INSPIRATION, IMAGINATION** and **CREATIVITY** to create new ways and find new resources

- **SELF-UNDERSTANDING** which promotes the values of one's own culture and allows one to dialogue honestly and openly in an inter-cultural environment
- **FORMATION FOR EVERYONE.**
We should all gradually become missionary disciples in every area of our everyday life.
- **READINESS TO REACH OUT TO EVERYONE.**
Young and elderly, sick and healthy, local and foreigner, Christians and those of other faiths; rich and poor, employed and jobless, well off and struggling, victims and perpetrators.
- **VIBRANT AND RENEWED PARISHES** incorporating and collaborating with **DIFFERENT GROUPINGS.**

THE PARISH IS THE CENTRE OF PASTORAL CARE

“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.”

Evangelii Gaudium #28

The parish is not just how the Church divides up the world, it is also the people who live their daily lives together in their shared belief. These small, geographical units enable the entire world to encounter Jesus Christ as believed, celebrated, and lived through the ministry of a community of believers.

The parish is a home, a family, a community of communities.

United with other parishes within a diocese, the parish is the centre to which the youth and the adults come to receive the gift of love which is then shared and given to others.

In looking at the parish, it is important to think about the place of each person in receiving and giving the good news - the Bishop and the diocese, the parish priest and the laity.

The parish creates a space for the people in it to give of their time, talents and expertise, for the benefit of others, without feeling like they do not belong or are outsiders. The parish focusses on encouraging and forming members so that they reach out to others, even beyond the parish, with the Good News. It is a place of sanctuary, where the thirsty rest on their journey to drink from the wells of life, and it acts as a ‘field hospital’ where people can go for healing.

Small Christian Communities, Parish Associations and Sodalities create a balance in the parish, by offering people chances to learn to know each other, and to find support from and give support to one another. Their commitment to the pastoral plan is invaluable.³

The parish priest leads the parish. He is the vicar of the Bishop. There may also be an assistant priest or deacon, and there should be a Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) and a Parish Finance Committee (PFC) who assist the parish priest.

The Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) is made up of people who have been elected to represent the members of their parish, their wards and their sodalities. There are also a number of co-opted members appointed for their expertise and knowledge of the parish. The constitution of the PPC will determine the number and how this is done.

The PPC should always be consultative, as its purpose is to promote the vision of the parish - where all those in it work together, according to the vision and mission of this pastoral plan. The PPC also coordinates the local parish with the vision and policies of the Diocese.

Each Diocese needs a pastoral centre or some similar structure for the formation of the members of the parishes in catechesis, liturgy, marriage and family, as well as the ongoing faith formation. The promotion of a **“deeper vision of the parish is essential to fostering and coordinating the evangelising role of each member”**.⁴

“I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ”

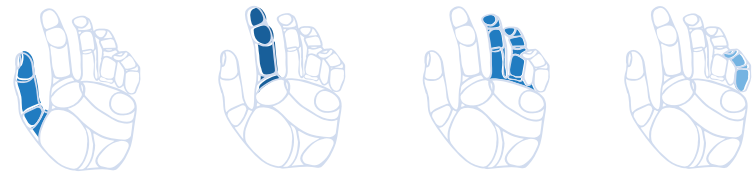
Evangelii Gaudium #3

³ Refer *Africae Munus* #131
⁴ *Evangelii Gaudium* #28

Focal Areas



EVANGELISATION (Area 1) is at the centre, and connects all the different areas



The **COMMUNITY**, Areas 2 to 5 focus on the people in the parishes interacting with this pastoral plan - the laity, the ordained, the family and the youth. These four areas branch off from Area 1, and are underpinned by Areas 6, 7 and 8



SERVICE, Areas 6, 7 and 8 look at the underlying principles in this Pastoral Plan - a commitment to Justice and Peace, another to Healing and Reconciliation, and finally one to the Care of Creation.



Evangelisation

I CARE BECAUSE I AM LIVING THE GOOD NEWS



The spirit of the Lord has been given to me,
for he has anointed me.
He has sent me to bring the good news to the
poor,
to proclaim liberty to captives
and to the blind new sight,
to set the downtrodden free,
to proclaim the Lord's year of favour

Luke 4:18-21

Our own experience of faith, of growing in it and of sharing it with others, begins with hearing about Jesus and coming to know him personally. This personal relationship with Jesus is fundamental to the pastoral plan, and all other areas flow from it.

You are part of this experience of faith, deepening your friendship with Jesus through personal prayer and prayer together, helping others to know Jesus and to love him, and developing your own conscience in a lived experience of the love for Jesus.

Priests and pastoral agents are part of this too, and their commitment flows from this fundamental experience of the love of Jesus. They provide a catechesis which flows from this love, and which fosters and deepens this relationship with Jesus in you and in all the faithful.

We can all, by becoming missionary disciples, make a difference on the socio-political, economic and cultural dimensions of persons and society.

“The first step is personal dialogue, when the other person speaks and shares his or her joys, hopes and concerns for loved ones, or so many other heartfelt needs”.⁵

It is the task of the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) to find members who could be key agents in spreading the Good News about Jesus.

There are a few essential resources for the PPC to study and implement, including Sacred Scripture and the living Tradition of the Church, the Liturgy as lived and practised, Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Compendium of Social Doctrine of the Church.

“Stand, therefore, having girded your loins with truth,
and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,
and having shod your feet with the equipment of the Gospel of peace,
besides all these, taking the shield of faith, with which you can quench
all the flaming darts of the evil one.
And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is
the word of God.
Pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication”

Ephesians 6:14-18

5 *Evangelii Gaudium* #128



WHAT CAN OUR COMMUNITY DO?

It is the task of the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) to find members who could be key agents in spreading the Good News about Jesus. There are a few essential resources for the PPC to study and implement, including Sacred Scripture and the living Tradition of the Church, the Liturgy as lived and practised, Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Compendium of Social Doctrine of the Church.

DO WE PRAY TOGETHER?

HOW CAN WE DO THIS MORE?

**HOW DO WE SHOW THAT WE ARE LIVING THE
GOOD NEWS?**

**HOW CAN WE HELP OTHERS TO KNOW JESUS AND
LOVE HIM?**

Laiety formation and empowerment

THE LAITY CONNECT THE CHURCH TO THE WORLD,
AND LIVE THE GOOD NEWS IN IT



There is variety of gifts but always the same Spirit;
there are all sorts of service to be done, but always to the same Lord;
working in all sorts of different ways in different people,
it is the same God who is working in all of them.
The particular way in which the Spirit is given to each person is for a good purpose.

One may have the gift of preaching with wisdom, given him by the Spirit;
another may have the gift of preaching instruction given him by the same Spirit;
and another the gift of faith given by the same Spirit;
another again the gift of healing, through this one Spirit;
one, the power of miracles; another, prophecy;
another the gift of recognising spirits;
another the gift of tongues and another the ability to interpret them.
All these are the work of one and the same Spirit,
who distributes different gifts to different people just as he chooses.

1 Corinthians 12:1-11

The Church is a leaven in the world – where the lay people live and bring the Good News of Jesus. They gather as Church on Sundays and they are then sent out into their daily lives in the world.

“The laity, by their very vocation, seek the Kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God. They live in the world, that is, in each and in all of the secular professions and occupations.

They live in the ordinary circumstances of family and social life, from which the very web of their existence is woven.

They are called there by God, that by exercising their proper function and led by the spirit of the Gospel they may work for the sanctification of the world from within as a leaven.

In this way, they may make Christ known to others, especially by the testimony of a life resplendent in faith, hope and charity.

Therefore, since they are tightly bound up in all types of temporal affairs it is their special task to order and to throw light upon these affairs in such a way that they may come into being and then continually increase according to Christ to the praise of the Creator and the Redeemer.”

Lumen Gentium #31

Lay people, as part of this leaven, need many things. They need understanding and support in their struggle to be Christians wherever they are, formation in ethics and the moral virtues such as honesty and integrity, and education on how to be responsible citizens in civic, social, economic and political life. They need opportunities for study and reflection together on how to tackle the many social ills in their communities, networks of support for each other in witnessing to their Christian faith in word and behaviour, and formation in spirituality and prayer.

“Lay men and women are called, above all, to holiness, a holiness which is to be lived in the world.”

Africae Munus #129

“Don’t be afraid to set your sights higher, to allow yourself to be loved and liberated by God. Do not be afraid to let yourself be guided by the Holy Spirit. Holiness does not make you less human, since it is an encounter between your weakness and the power of God’s grace. For in the words of Leon Bloy, when all is said and done, ‘the only great tragedy in life, is not to become a saint’.”

Gaudete et Exsultate #34

What other needs do lay people have in the Church?

Some of these needs are met through their own initiatives, and others through the Parish, the Diocese, National and International Church Associations and Movements.

The support of the laity in their unique mission in the world is to be a special concern of the Parish Pastoral Council, and this is key to the new vision of the parish as the locus of Pastoral Care.

Similarly, at Diocesan level and National level, the Diocesan Pastoral Council and the Laity Council guide and promote the formation and apostolate of the laity.

“Dear members of the faithful: cultivate your interior life and your relationship with God, so that the Holy Spirit may enlighten you in all circumstances. In order to ensure that the human person and the common good remain effectively at the centre of all human, political, economic or social activity, deepen your union with Christ, so as to know and love him by devoting time to God in prayer and in the reception of the sacraments. Allow yourselves to be enlightened and instructed by God and by his word.”

Africae Munus #129



You can identify possible pastoral programmes that are needed, within the parish or diocese, for forming lay people in their role as evangelisers in the world, as well as those programmes which coordinate the activity of the parish or diocese or local church in becoming the leaven in society, working towards the vision and mission of this Pastoral Plan.

The laity are in the world, and a part of it. They have a responsibility to the world, to build it so that it can be better.

“Today, many decision makers, both political and economic, assume that they owe nothing to anyone other than themselves. They are concerned only with their rights, and they often have great difficulty in taking responsibility for their own and other people’s integral development. Hence it is important to call for a renewed reflection on how rights presuppose duties, if they are not to become mere licence.”

Africae Munus #82

WHAT CAN OUR COMMUNITY DO?

You can identify possible pastoral programmes that are needed, within the parish or diocese, for forming lay people in their role as evangelisers in the world, as well as those programmes which coordinate the activity of the parish or diocese or local church in becoming the leaven in society, working towards the vision and mission of this Pastoral Plan.

HOW IS THE LAITY EMPOWERED TO ‘SANCTIFY THE WORLD’?

WHAT OPPORTUNITIES ARE THERE FOR THE LAITY TO STUDY AND REFLECT ON THEIR CHALLENGES IN OUR COMMUNITIES?

WHAT SUPPORT NETWORKS CAN WE STRENGTHEN?

WHAT OPPORTUNITIES ARE THERE FOR LAITY TO ATTEND SPIRITUAL FORMATION IN OUR COMMUNITIES?

Life and Ministry of Priests & Deacons

PRIESTS AND DEACONS ARE CALLED TO SERVE
AND CARE FOR THE COMMUNITY



I am the good shepherd:
I know my own, and my own know me,
just as the Father knows me
and I know the Father;
and I lay down my life for my sheep.

John 10:14-15

Priests and deacons have a special calling to serve the People of God. It is a calling which begins with a relationship with Jesus, which matures through prayer and personal integration, and which is a calling to selfless service of other people. This ministry requires a sense of being called by Jesus, of willingness to sacrifice like Jesus out of love for the Church, and a strong sense of service in the way of Jesus. All of this is grounded in each person showing integrity, responsibility and professional behaviour of an adult.

“In our world, ordained ministers and other pastoral workers can make present the fragrance of Christ’s closeness and his personal gaze. The Church will have to initiate everyone – priests, religious and laity – into this ‘art of accompaniment’ which teaches us to remove our sandals

before the sacred ground of the other (cf. Ex 3:5). The pace of this accompaniment must be steady and reassuring, reflecting our closeness and our compassionate gaze which also heals, liberates and encourages growth in the Christian life.”

Evangelii Gaudium #169

The relationship that priests and deacons have with Jesus is shown through the way that they live a life of prayer, alone and with others, and that they strive to live an exemplary moral and Christian life; it is seen through their positive relationships with other people, in their deep-rooted habit of service, and the responsibility they hold in personal life, parish and society.

How can our community respond to a vocation to the ordained ministry?

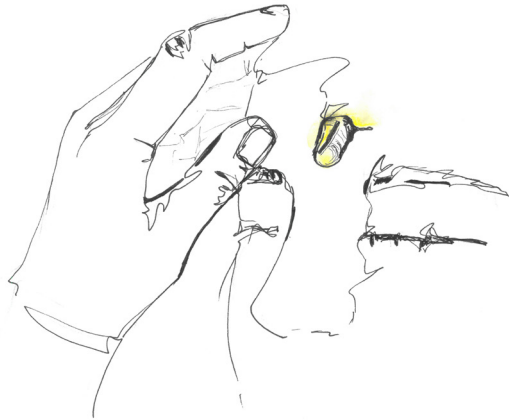
Parishes and Dioceses can organise programmes for nurturing a spirit of service and commitment which would assist young people in discerning a vocation to the Priestly and Religious life. At the heart of these programmes would be sharing the Good News with others, and it is important that intellectual formation and personal growth accompany growth in faith and wisdom.

There are some key elements in formation and on-going formation of those who might be called, including growing familiarity with sacred Scripture, the word of God which you read and hear, daily meditation upon the Word of God, appreciation of the sacraments and liturgy, increasing knowledge of the Catechism and the

teaching of the Church, particularly the social teaching.⁶ Priests and deacons have an indispensable task in the formation of future clergy.

“By devoting yourselves to those whom the Lord entrusts to you for their formation in Christian virtues and their growth in holiness, you not only win them to the cause of Christ but also make them [activists in] a renewed African society. Given the complex situations that you encounter, I ask you to deepen your life of prayer and your ongoing intellectual and spiritual formation. ... You will then be capable of forming the members of the Christian community for whom you are immediately responsible, so that they can become authentic disciples and witnesses of Christ.”

Africae Munus #109



6 Cf. *Africae Munus* #109

WHAT CAN OUR COMMUNITY DO?

The relationship that priests and deacons have with Jesus is shown through the way that they live a life of prayer, alone and with others, and that they strive to live an exemplary moral and Christian life; it is seen through their positive relationships with other people, in their deep-rooted habit of service, and the responsibility they hold in personal life, parish and society.

HOW CAN OUR COMMUNITY SUPPORT THOSE WHO ARE CALLED TO MINISTRY?

WHAT SHOULD A PRIEST OR DEACON DO TO SUSTAIN HIS VOCATION AND MINISTRY?

HOW CAN OUR COMMUNITY PROMOTE VOCATIONS TO THE ORDAINED MINISTRY?

WHAT OPPORTUNITIES ARE THERE FOR DISCERNMENT OF PRIESTS AND DEACONS?

Marriage and Family

THE FAMILY IS THE HEART OF PASTORAL CARE,
BECAUSE ITS BASIS IS LOVE



He then went down with them and came to Nazareth and lived under their authority. His mother stored up all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom, in stature, and in favour with God and men.

Luke 2:51-52

“The mystery of the Christian family can be fully understood only in the light of the Father’s infinite love revealed in Christ, who gave himself up for our sake and who continues to dwell in our midst, the living Christ who is at the heart of so many love stories.”

Amoris Laetitia #59

“Such a love, bringing together the human and divine, leads the partners to a free and mutual self-giving, experienced in tenderness and action, and permeating their entire lives.”

Gaudium et Spes #49

The experience of the joy of love begins with the initial encounter with each other as a couple and matures like the wine of Cana which was of the best quality. A family which has the experience of Jesus at its centre becomes a source of joy and strength for others. In this way the family brings the Good News to other families and becomes the perfume of the Holy Spirit in society.

“Marriage is likewise a friendship marked by passion, but a passion always directed to an ever more and stable and intense union. This is because ‘marriage was not instituted solely for the procreation of children’ but also that mutual love ‘might be properly expressed, that it should grow and mature’.”

Amoris Laetitia #125

“Indeed, the grace of the sacrament of marriage is intended before all else ‘to perfect the couple’s love’”

Amoris Laetitia #89

Reflecting on the ‘lyrical passage of St Paul’, (I Corinthians 13:4-7) the Pope leads couples in reflecting on the ways in which love shows itself:

Love is patient
Love is at the service of others
Love is generous
Love forgives
Love rejoices with others

Love is not jealous
Love is not boastful



MARRIAGE & FAMILY

Love is not rude
Love is not irritable or resentful

Love bears all things
Love believes all things
Love hopes all things
Love endures all things

To help families grow, the Parish Pastoral Council and the Diocese attend to specific needs⁷. They walk with families from the beginning, and help in the nurturing and education of children. They provide the family with the formation it needs to be part of the mission of evangelisation, to other families as well as to the Church and society at large. They also provide formation for those who are part of the parish ministry of marriage preparation.

As part of catechesis, they answer the need of those wishing to be confirmed as they bear witness to Christ and the Gospel, and they also help to prepare parishioners for dating, engagement and marriage.

The parish can help parents and families in their everyday struggles as well as in special situations - single parents, divorce, widows, widowers and orphans. Those needing help with responsibilities in their extended family, as well as the expectations of culture and tradition, can also find that help in the parish and the diocese. Families where children have special needs should also receive the help they need.

A key part of pastoral care and the family is what happens when families are hurting and broken, when they are burdened with care for the sick and aged, and where marriages have been broken through divorce. The parish is where they can find support and solace., and the Parish Pastoral Council needs to identify and work with organisations and church movements which support family life.

Together, families, the clergy and religious play an important role in the formation and strengthening of family life.

⁷ These are listed in full in Chapter 9 of *Amoris Laetitia*

“This is what the Lord asks of me, to act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with my God.”

Micah 6:8

WHAT CAN OUR COMMUNITY DO?

The parish can help parents and families in their everyday struggles as well as in special situations - single parents, divorce, widows, widowers and orphans. Those needing help with responsibilities in their extended family, as well as the expectations of culture and tradition, can also find that help in the parish and the diocese. Families where children have special needs should also receive the help they need. The parish is where all families can find support and solace, and the Parish Pastoral Council needs to identify and work with organisations and church movements which support family life.

IN WHAT WAYS CAN OUR COMMUNITY STRENGTHEN THE INSTITUTION OF MARRIAGE?

HOW CAN OUR COMMUNITY WALK WITH FAMILIES AS THEY GROW AND CHANGE?

WHAT HELP CAN OUR COMMUNITY GIVE TO FAMILIES THAT HAVE CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS?

WHAT IS OUR COMMUNITY'S RESPONSE TO FAMILIES IN SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES?

Youth

HOW DO WE ENCOURAGE YOUNG PEOPLE TO TAKE THEIR RIGHTFUL PLACE IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH?



Remember your creator in the days of your youth

Ecclesiastes 12:1

The Bishops at the Second Synod of Africa reflected on the place of youth on the Continent.

They knew that Youth form over 60% of the Church's membership on the continent.

They said,

“Young people need witnesses and teachers who can walk with them, teaching them to love the Gospel and to share it, especially with their peers, and thus to become authentic and credible messengers.”

“Youth is a time when genuine and irrepressible questions arise about the meaning of life and the direction our own lives should take.

Only God can give the true answer to these questions.

Concern for young people calls for courage and clarity in the message we proclaim;

we need to help young people to gain confidence and familiarity with sacred Scripture, so it can become a compass pointing out the path to follow.

Africae Munus #61

This special period of life has different stages with different needs: from early teens to later teens and young adults. We should meet young people where they are - with their needs made clear through dialogue and discussion among themselves and with others.

What are some the key realities facing young people?

There are different challenges faced by boys (or young men) and girls (or young women), but all young people face the challenge of dealing with peer pressure. In this context of pressure from peers, developing a friendship with Jesus is central, and a sense of belonging is crucial. The young people of the 21st Century have specific things that matter to them, and so youth-to-youth ministry is extremely important.

“The rise and growth of associations and movements mostly made up of young people can be seen as the work of the Holy Spirit, who blazes new trails to meet their expectations and their search for a deep spirituality and a more real sense of belonging.”

Evangelii Gaudium #105

The youth receive and respond to evangelisation, and they are also the first to be called upon to evangelise other youth and share the Good News. Interacting with the youth and accompanying them requires many things, focusing on helping each young person to grow and develop as a whole through good and wholesome relationships with other people. The youth also need formation in faith, and this can happen through the liturgy, catechetics and scriptural formation - but it can also come through individual counselling and through others walking their difficult paths with them.

The role of the parish is to help young people to know and live the Word of God as they respond to the issues of justice around them, and as they face the daily social and political challenges they have inherited from older generations. It is important to explore the way that culture and the Gospel speak to each other, and to discuss their concerns:

WHAT HAPPENS IF I FAIL AT SCHOOL?

WHERE DO I GO AFTER?

HOW DO I GET A JOB?

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN SOMEONE ABUSES ME?

HOW DO I MAKE SURE NO-ONE EXPLOITS ME?

HOW CAN I AVOID ADDICTION?

In the parish, concern for the pastoral care of youth is a priority and while youth-to-youth ministry is recognised as a fundamental pastoral method, the parish or diocese needs to find people who are gifted and qualified to work with the youth and facilitate their training for this ministry.

The whole parish community is called to participate in the parish's or diocese's pastoral outreach to young people.



WHAT CAN OUR COMMUNITY DO?

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HOW CAN WE ANSWER THE QUESTIONS THAT THE YOUTH ARE ASKING?

HOW CAN OUR COMMUNITY SUPPORT THE YOUTH WHERE THEY ARE?

WHAT OPPORTUNITIES ARE THERE IN OUR COMMUNITY FOR YOUTH TO DEVELOP AND GROW IN THEIR FAITH?

Justice, Peace and Non-violence

WE ARE ALL CALLED TO BUILD A BETTER WORLD,
WHERE THERE IS JUSTICE, PEACE AND NON-VIOLENCE



This is what Yahweh asks of you:
only this, to act justly,
to love tenderly and to walk
humbly with your God.

Micah 6:8

Peace is not simply the absence of war, said Pope Paul VI. True development includes all people and is directed to the whole person. Understanding and promoting the Social Teachings of the Church is to be a special focus of the Parish or Diocesan Pastoral Council and of the lay members in particular. Working for peace and promoting justice, cooperating with others at parish or diocesan level, creating structures which promote peace and harmony, resolving conflict are urgent needs which call for action by all the members of the church.

“Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appeared to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of

the Gospel, or, in other words, of the Church’s mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation”

Justice in the World, Synod of Catholic Bishops, 1971. #6

Pope Francis reminds us that “evangelization would not be complete if it did not take account of the unceasing interplay of the Gospel and of man’s concrete life, both personal and social.”

Our mandate is to

“go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation”⁸ for “the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God”⁹.

Here, “the creation” refers to every aspect of human life; consequently, “the mission of proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ has a universal destination. Its mandate of charity encompasses all dimensions of existence, all individuals, all areas of community life, and all peoples. Nothing human can be alien to it”.

Evangelii Gaudium #181

Where do we start, in our search for justice and peace?

We can focus on changing the way people feel and what they do, and by promoting justice and reconciliation in all the groups that we are part of. We can hold non-violence and peace-building at the front of our minds, and can focus on stopping all gender-based violence. When faced with racism, tribalism and xenophobia, we can respond with the love and care that stems from our relationship with Jesus.

8 Mark 16:15
9 Romans 8:19

We can act against human trafficking and all the pain that goes with it. We can work to confront corruption and injustice in business and the workplace, and continue to strive for everyone to have equal opportunities for jobs and living space. We can also work to end violence and abuse in our homes.

Pope Francis asserts that the Church cannot remain closed within itself:

“The earth is our common home and all of us are brothers and sisters. If indeed ‘the just ordering of society and of the state is a central responsibility of politics’, the Church ‘cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice’. All Christians, their pastors included, are called to show concern for the building of a better world.”

Evangelii Gaudium #183

Speaking of justice, Pope Francis says that when people make just decisions, they build a society that is just but it is especially expressed

“in their pursuit of justice for the poor and the weak. While it is true that the word “justice” can be a synonym for faithfulness to God’s will in every aspect of our life, if we give the word too general a meaning, we forget that it is shown especially in justice towards those who are most vulnerable: “Seek justice, correct oppression; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow’.”

Gaudete et Exsultate #79

The Second Synod of African Bishops stressed the urgency for working with the world in order to make it better:

“The Church in Africa must help to build up society in cooperation with government authorities and public and private institutions that are

engaged in building up the common good. The Church, for her part, is committed to promoting within her own ranks and within society a culture that respects the rule of law.”

Africae Munus #81

About respect for every human life and specifically about abortion Pope Francis writes:

“Absolute respect for every innocent human life also requires the exercise of conscientious objection in relation to procured abortion and euthanasia. Causing death can never be considered a form of medical treatment, even when the intention is solely to comply with the patient’s request.”

Evangelii Gaudium #89

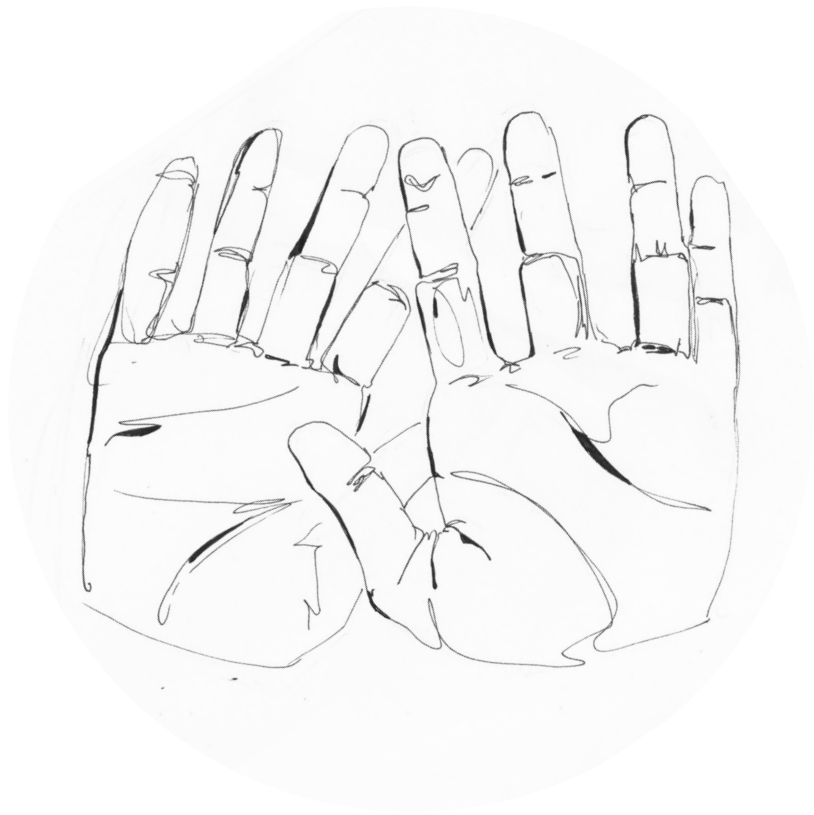
The family has a unique role in equipping young people with the tools for creating peace and fostering reconciliation.

“The family is the best setting for learning and applying the culture of forgiveness, peace and reconciliation.

In healthy family life we experience some of the fundamental elements of peace: the justice and love between brothers and sisters, the role of authority expressed by parents, loving concern for the members who are weaker because of youth, sickness or old age, mutual help in the necessities of life, readiness to accept others and, if necessary, to forgive them.

For this reason, the family is the first and indispensable teacher of peace.”

Africae Munus #43



WHAT CAN OUR COMMUNITY DO?

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**IN WHAT PRACTICAL WAYS CAN WE RESPOND
TO THE INJUSTICE AND VIOLENCE IN OUR
COMMUNITIES?**

**WHAT CAN PROMOTE PEACE IN OUR
COMMUNITY?**

HOW DO WE STRENGTHEN THIS / THESE?

Healing and Reconciliation

HEALING THOSE WHO ARE HURTING, AND BRINGING THEM TO RECONCILE WITH THOSE WHO HURT THEM, IS AN ANCIENT AND CENTRAL MINISTRY



For anyone who is Christ, there is a new creation; the old creation has gone, and the new one is here. It is all God's work. It was God who reconciled us to himself and gave us this work of handing on this reconciliation. In other words, God in Christ was reconciling the world to himself, not holding men's faults against them, and he has entrusted to us the news that they are reconciled. So we are ambassadors for Christ; it is as though God were appealing through us, and the appeal that we make in Christ's name is: be reconciled to God.

2 Cor 5:18-21

A central experience in the first proclamation of the Gospel was an invitation to be reconciled with God and one another, and reconciliation continues to be something crucially important for the Church in South Africa.

In the Africae Munus Synod, the Bishops highlighted this invitation to the whole continent, particularly as we work to heal the wounds of colonialism and racial exploitation.

“It is God’s grace that gives us a new heart and reconciles us with him and with one another. Christ re-established humanity in the Father’s love. Reconciliation thus springs from this love; it is born of the Father’s initiative in restoring his relationship with humanity, a relationship broken by human sin. In Jesus Christ, in his life and ministry, but especially in his death and resurrection, the Apostle Paul saw God the Father reconciling the world (all things in heaven and on earth) to himself, discounting the sins of humanity¹⁰.”

Africae Munus #20

Jesus heals, he reconciles, he saves: this was central to his mission and marked the spread of the Gospel after that first announcement on Easter Night:

“Peace be with you”

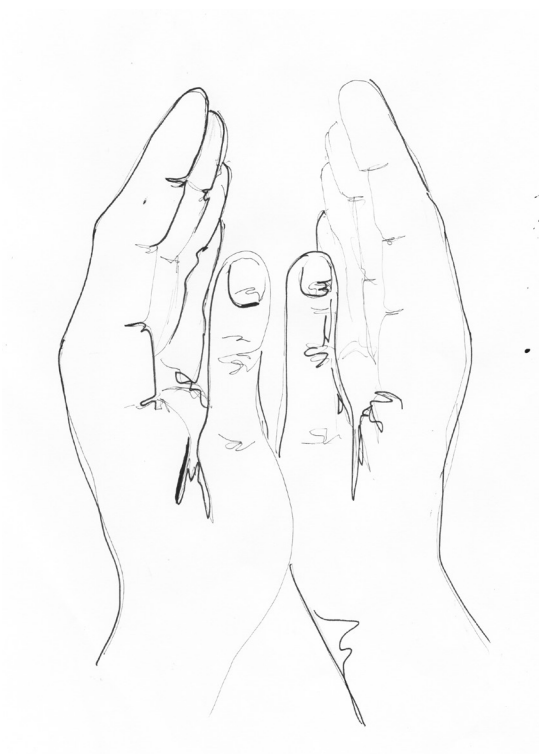
John 20:19

10 cf. 2 Cor 5:19; Rom 5:10; Col 1:21-22

This ministry of reconciliation is entrusted to the Church in a very particular way.

The clergy, religious and laity work for this by promoting personal healing – whether it is physical, emotional or spiritual. We work for healing and reconciliation in inter-personal relationships, in families, parishes and Religious Communities, among the clergy and seminarians. We also strive to bring healing and reconciliation among ethnic and cultural groups, and deliverance from internal and external forces of unfreedom. The ministry of reconciliation is also found in facilitating the return of victims and offenders to the community, and through the ministry of Exorcism.

Parish and Diocesan Pastoral Councils need to respond urgently to this need for reconciliation, establishing programmes for training pastoral workers in this ministry.



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WHAT ARE THE AREAS OF RELATIONSHIP IN OUR COMMUNITY THAT NEED RECONCILIATION?

HOW CAN WE SUPPORT THE PROGRAMMES AND MINISTRY DEALING WITH RECONCILIATION IN OUR COMMUNITY?

Care of Creation and the Environment

WE CANNOT SURVIVE IF WE DO NOT CARE FOR THE EARTH AND ALL OF CREATION



Yahweh, what variety you have created, arranging everything so wisely! Earth is completely full of things you have made:

All creatures depend on you to feed them throughout the year;

You turn your face away, they suffer, You stop your breath, they die and revert to dust

You give breath, fresh life begins, you keep renewing the world.

Psalm 103

“It is our humble conviction that the divine and the human meet in the slightest detail in the seamless garment of God’s creation, in the last speck of dust of our planet.”

Laudato si’ #9

The situation of planet Earth, our home, is of critical importance to us all. The consequences of the exploitation of this planet, of creation, call upon us in the Church to live and practise the Gospel in our care for creation and the environment.

We need to change the way we act, and promote care for the soil in which our food grows, the water that we need for life, and the air that we breathe. We need to care for our environment, and for all plants and animals that live in it. We must strive to use water responsibly, and to be careful of all other resources that are scarce. We should reduce our consumption of things that can only be used once, or else recycle them. Above all we should appreciate and care for the beauty of nature that surrounds us daily.

The Bishops of the Second African Synod stated:

“Some business men and women, governments and financial groups are involved in programmes of exploitation which pollute the environment and cause unprecedented desertification. Serious damage is done to nature, to the forests, to flora and fauna, and countless species risk extinction. All of this threatens the entire ecosystem and consequently the survival of humanity.”

Africae Munus #80

In response to this Pope Benedict urged:

“I call upon the Church in Africa to encourage political leaders to protect such fundamental goods as land and water for the human life of present and future generations and for peace between peoples.”

Africae Munus #80

Catechesis from its earliest stages needs to include material on the gift of creation and our God-given responsibility to care for the environment.

Parish and Diocesan Pastoral Councils need to reflect on how the call to care for creation is part of the Great Commission to bring the Gospel to all creation.

There must be formation of all members and especially pastoral agents in the care of creation. We must also cooperate with the many groups and agencies promoting and working for the care of creation and the environment.

Jesus commanded,

“Go into the whole world and preach the Gospel to all creation”

Mark 16:15



WHAT CAN OUR COMMUNITY DO?

Catechesis from its earliest stages needs to include material on the gift of creation and our God-given responsibility to care for the environment. Parish and Diocesan Pastoral Councils need to reflect on how the call to care for creation is part of the Great Commission to bring the Gospel to all creation. There must be formation of all people in the parish, and especially pastoral agents, in the care of creation. We can also cooperate with the many groups and agencies promoting and working for the care of creation and the environment.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR US TO CARE FOR CREATION?

HOW IS OUR COMMUNITY TAKING CARE OF THE CREATION AROUND US?

WHAT PROGRAMMES, TO PROMOTE THE CARE OF CREATION, SHOULD WE INCLUDE IN OUR CATECHESIS?