

# Pastoral Council Update



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## Importance of attitude in times of transition

Change is always difficult, even when it is a happy change. What role can the Pastoral Council play in times of transition which may include change of pastor, declining numbers, rearranging of resources or clustering, over which they have no say and no control?

The council can set a positive tone right off the bat. A call for change is often initially perceived either as “undesirable” or “a move by the Holy Spirit”. A pastoral council that is prayerfully immersed in its sense of mission is more able to direct a natural fear of change into an excitement of new possibilities. The call to proclaim the Gospel, form community, worship and serve remains the parish goal no matter what the current situation. The first task of the leadership group is to reinforce the conviction that God is lovingly in charge. Lovingly is the key word here. Change is not a punishment, it is part of the journey. The second task is to encourage the parishioners to seek out the graces of the anticipated change. If two parishes are being clustered, what are new possibilities of discipleship? How can weekend liturgy be enriched? Is this an opportunity to revitalize our faith life?

A sense of expectation and hope is contagious. We all know the wisdom of Proverbs 17:22, “A joyful heart is a good medicine, but a broken spirit dries up the bones.” Pastoral Council members’ joyful, hope-filled hearts allow for listening to others’ confusion and anger without being negative or defensive. It invites all God’s people to remember that even the journey itself is a mystery. Consciously choosing to trust that God is present in the change helps to smooth the rocky paths.

The scriptures are filled with insights about the connection of a positive outlook to a sense of peace, and the ability to recognize grace. In the Letter to the Philippians, St. Paul exhorts us to train our minds to ponder those things that bring hope. As leaders in the parish, our approach to new challenges will influence the rest

of the parish. Here is a good verse to get us started.

“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.” Philippians 4:8

## Themes highlighted in parishes around the Diocese this Lenten season.



“Eucharist and You: An Extraordinary Encounter Through Symbols/Relationships/Social Justice”, *Southeast Rochester Catholic Community*

“Cross Culture: the cross we wear, the cross we bear”. Interfaith Lenten Breakfast Series. *Our Lady of Peace, Geneva*

“Spiritual practice differences”. Five local churches-share their own spiritual practices while hosting gathering in their worship site. *St. Joseph the Worker, Clyde, NY*

“Getting to know our Neighbors”. Reaching out to share about ministries with local religious and social service neighbors. *Lady of Lourdes/St. Anne’s, Rochester*

“Living the Eucharist”, *St. Francis Xavier Cabrini, Rochester*

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### Pastoral Council Liaison Contact information

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<http://www.dor.org/index.cfm/pastoral-services/>

## Parish Events around the Diocese

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“Brown Bag Lunch with the Saints”, *St. Joseph, Penfield*

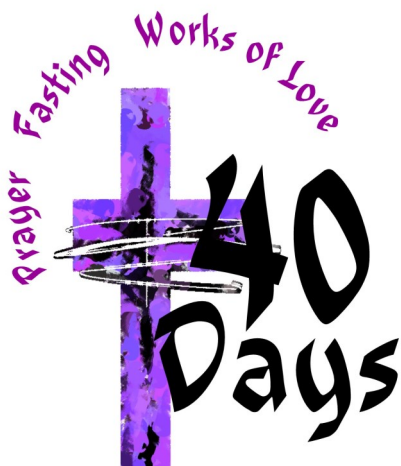
“The Call of Lent: Back to the Basics”, *St. John of Rochester, Fairport*

“The Gift of the Eucharist” “From Wall Street to St. Joseph’s House of Hospitality”, “Taize Prayer” and “Lenten reflections”, *St. Rita, Webster*

### Recent Parish Events

*St. Francis Xavier Cabrini*, Rochester, hosted their first Women’s Breakfast for both the Hispanic and Anglo communities. 73 women enjoyed the cooking of five great male cooks. They hope to repeat this on a regular basis.

The annual ‘Giving Tree’ at *Our Lady of Peace*, Geneva provided gifts for 155 children and adults during the Christmas season including children of the Latino community, residents in the Geneva General Hospital nursing home, an assisted living center (Seneca Terrace) and children of the ABCD Migrant Day Care.



### Pastoral Council Chair Highlight:

**Anna Ventura**, Pastoral Council Chair



I have been a parishioner of Our Lady of Peace Parish for many years, serving as Eucharistic Minister, lector and member of the Liturgy Committee and Parish Council. Through this service, I have come to know so many wonderful people who have shared their knowledge and faith with me.

This is my third year on Parish Council and my first year as Pastoral Council Chair. What a privilege it has been! We are blessed to have Father Tom Mull, our pastor and Father Mike Mayer, our Parochial Vicar, as well as dedicated and enthusiastic committee members who have taken on additional roles as committee liaisons.

It is through these committee liaisons that Council members learn of the role that each committee plays in the life of our parish. Whether it’s our Martha Ministry Committee, which graciously prepares meals for special occasions, our Buildings & Grounds Committee, which reviews and prioritizes projects for both churches and St. Francis-St. Stephen’s School, or our Spirituality Committee as they explore various ways in which *we all* can live out our Baptismal promise through prayer and action, each committee is an integral part of our Parish.

As my final year on Council draws near, I look forward to retirement next year (after 32 years with Arc of Seneca Cayuga) that will enable me to spend more time with my family, especially my grandchildren, Miles and Jack.

In closing, I would encourage you to encourage others to say ‘yes’ if asked to be on your Parish Council. I believe many who have been approached might feel that it’s a huge time commitment or that they will be burdened with various tasks. This is not the case at all. As we all know, when you say ‘yes’ to service on Council, you say ‘yes’ to Jesus and only wonderful things can come from that.

### Looking for Interfaith Liaisons

If you know of a parishioner who would be a great point person in your parish for interfaith activities you please let Betsy McDermott know at [betsy.mcdermott@dor.org](mailto:betsy.mcdermott@dor.org).

### Pastoral Council Prayers

Opening and Closing prayers for the pastoral councils are sent via emails to the Chairs quarterly, but they can also be accessed on the DOR website at: <http://www.dor.org/index.cfm/pastoral-services/pastoral-councils/> or go to **dor.org**, to **Pastoral Services** to **Pastoral Councils** to **Resources**.