



*Standards for Excellence:  
An Ethics and Accountability Code  
for Catholic Parishes*

**CATHOLIC  
DIOCESE  
OF  
GARY, IN**

**DALE J. MELCZEK, BISHOP**

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## Adaptations for the Diocese of Gary

### **Mission Statement of the Diocese of Gary**

**As members of the Body of Christ, the people of the Roman Catholic Community of the Diocese of Gary, diverse but united through Baptism and empowered by the Holy Spirit, nourished by Word and Sacrament, are called to continue the mission of Jesus by being a Sign and instrument of God's kingdom of truth, peace, justice and love.**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Lumen Gentium, (the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Vat. II), speaks of the Church as the “people of God”, called to proclaim, embody and serve the coming Kingdom of God. It provides for us a vision in which the ordained and laity collaborate together to fulfill the Mission of Christ in this time and place. It is in the parish that the Mission of Christ continues. Therefore, the parish must have the ability to support ministry programs and provide parish structures in which the gifts of time, talent and treasure can best be used.

Our parishes must comply with the Church's own canon law, as well as, local, state and federal laws. Standards for Excellence provides for our parishes benchmarks that will enable the parish to enhance their programs, governance, human resources and financial management. The booklet found in the notebook outlines eight areas and fifty-five Standards that will assist the parishes in strengthening their ministries and operations. Each parish is expected to commit to these Standards, and to work toward implementing them. Some Standards have been adapted to reflect diocesan policies that are already in existence, or to provide a consistent church language.

This study guide is meant to help clarify each of the Standards and the adaptations as needed for our diocese.

## Mission Statement and Ministry Program

This section of the Standards focuses on the parish mission, programming and evaluation of programs.

### Adaptations for Standards #1 thru # 5:

- #1:**        **The parish will have a mission statement that;**
- Has been developed by the Parish Pastoral Council, and accepted by the community.
  - That reflects the diocesan mission statement.
- #2:**        The parish will evaluate the mission statement and programs every three years.
- #3 & 4:**    The parish will specifically evaluate the cost effectiveness of all programs.

## Governance and Advisory Bodies

In this section the Standards focus on the necessity of a parish having strong governance and advisory boards. Canon Law requires that a parish have a Finance Council. Parish Pastoral Councils were mandated by Bishop Melczek in September of 1992.

### Adaptations for Standards # 6 thru #20:

- #6:**        This Standard reviews the pastor's role, which is supported in canons 519 and 532 of the Code of Canon Law.
- #7 thru 9:** The Finance Council will establish policies for effective management of the parish.
- The Finance Council will assist in preparing the annual budget, regularly assess the financial performance, and assure that the parish conforms to diocesan policies.
- # 11:**      Employees are not to be voting members of a Parish Pastoral Council or a Parish Finance Council.
- #12:**      Finance Councils should have at least 7 adult members, who are unrelated. Parish Pastoral Councils should have at least 12 members, none of whom are staff.  
              A youth should be included on the Parish Pastoral Council.

- #13:** Membership on the Finance Council should be three years and can be renewed for a second term. Membership on the Parish Pastoral Council is a three year term and the member can discern for an additional term. See Pastoral Council manual.
- #18:** Finance Councils will meet a minimum of 4 times a year. Parish Pastoral Councils will meet a minimum of 10 times a year.

### **Conflict of Interest**

The Standards in this section emphasizes everyone in the parish, whether clergy or laity, paid or volunteer must always act in the best interest of the parish.

#### **Adaptations for Standards #21 & #22:**

- #21 & 22:** This standard speaks to having a written conflict of interest policy. A template has been included in the implementation packet.

All priests, staff, volunteers must be given a copy of the conflict of interest policy and they must sign it.

### **Human Resources**

In this section the Standards state that the parish relationship to the ministerial personnel, whether laity or clergy, paid or unpaid, is essential to achieving the parish mission.

#### **Adaptations for Standards #23 thru #28**

- #23:** Each parish must send a copy of its personnel policy to the Diocesan Office for Human Resources.
- #25:** Employees will be provided with a copy of the **Charter for the Protection of Children and Youth** and should acknowledge the receipt of the Charter in writing.

## Financial and Legal Requirements

The Standards state that parishes are to have sound financial management, and they must comply with legal and regulatory requirements, including Canon Law.

### Adaptations for Standards #29 thru #36

- #29:** The parish will operate in accordance with an annual budget that has been prepared by the Parish Finance Council, and approved by the Parish Pastoral Council.
- #30:** Finance statements must be forwarded annually to the Diocesan Financial Office.
- #31:** All parishes will continue to be audited by diocesan internal auditors on a routine basis. The audited accounts are also submitted to the Diocesan Finance Officer routinely.
- #35:** **This paragraph is replaced by the statement below:**
- The parishes and other Church organizations will follow the recommendation and mandate of the Diocesan Insurance Program.

### Openness:

Parishes are private entities that operate in the name of the Church in service to their members with support from the faithful. Parishes should provide the faithful with information about their mission, ministry program, activities and finances. They should also be accessible and responsive to their members. **(Adapted)**

### Adaptation for Standards # 37 thru #55

- #37:** **Delete:** Line 2 after faithful delete “and the public.”  
**Delete:** Line 4 “corporate board where one exists.”
- #39:** The parish should have a “representative” who is responsible to assure that parish is complying with both the letter and the spirit of federal and state laws.
- #40:** Fundraising should demonstrate that it is making steady progress toward achieving its goal. The Parish Finance Council will annually evaluate parish fund raising performance.
- #46:** The parish cannot sell, rent or exchange mailing lists.



# National Leadership Roundtable on Church Management

## Standards for Excellence Program

### Self Assessment Checklist

## I. Mission and Program

Y if the parish has met the Standard,

X if the parish has not met the Standard, and

O if the parish may be meeting the Standard or is partially in compliance

\_\_\_ A. **Mission**

\_\_\_ B. **Parish Organizational Evaluation**

\_\_\_ C. **Ministry Program Evaluation**

\_\_\_ Formal evaluation program

\_\_\_ Program efficiency and effectiveness (Including cost and outcomes)

\_\_\_ Input from participants/recipients

\_\_\_ D. **Ministry Program Service**

\_\_\_ confidentiality policy

\_\_\_ measures satisfaction of program participants/recipients

\_\_\_ grievance procedures in place for program participants/recipients

**Comments on Areas for Improvement or Areas of Excellence:**

## II. Governance and Advisory Bodies

A. **Advisory Bodies' Responsibilities**

\_\_\_ (1) Parish pastoral councils engage in on going planning for the parish.

\_\_\_ (2) Parish pastoral, and finance councils have policies for effective management of the parish.

\_\_\_ (3) Parish finance council approval of diocesan budget and assessment of diocesan financial performance in relation to the budget. Finance council review of percentages of the parish's resources spent on ministry programs, administration, and fundraising.

\_\_\_ (4) Parish finance, and pastoral council reviews of the overall salary structure of the parish.

B. **Advisory Bodies' Composition**

\_\_\_ (1) Personally committed council members

\_\_\_ (2) No undue influence of employees serving on councils

\_\_\_ (3) Minimum size of finance council (5) and pastoral council (12)

\_\_\_ (4) Term limits for council members in place

\_\_\_ (5) Pastoral council membership reflects the diversity of the communities served by the parish

\_\_\_ (6) Councils serve without compensation (exception: reimbursement for direct expenses)

C. **Advisory Bodies' Conduct**

\_\_\_ (1) Councils educate, trains and develops members, evaluates its own performance annually

\_\_\_ (2) Written expectations for council members provided

\_\_\_ (3) Number of council meetings at least 11 per year

\_\_\_ (4) Council policies on attendance and participation

\_\_\_ (5) Written meeting minutes distributed

**Comments on Areas for Improvement or Areas of Excellence:**

### **III. Conflict of interest**

**Y** if the parish has met the Standard,

**X** if the parish has not met the Standard, and

**O** if the parish may be meeting the Standard or is partially in compliance

\_\_\_\_\_ **A. Conflict of Interest Policy**  
- see page 11 of the Standards for Excellence booklet for details

\_\_\_\_\_ **B. Conflict of Interest Statements**  
- see page 11 of the Standards for Excellence booklet for details

**Comments on Areas for Improvement or Areas of Excellence:**

### **IV. Human Resources**

**Y** if the parish has met the Standard,

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\_\_\_\_\_ **A. (1) Personnel Policies**  
- see page 12 of Standards booklet for a list of the areas that should be included  
in personnel policies  
- personnel policies should be approved by the bishop and councils

\_\_\_\_\_ **(2) Volunteer Policies**  
- initial assessment and screening  
- assignment to and training for appropriate responsibilities  
- ongoing supervision, evaluation  
- opportunities for advancement

\_\_\_\_\_ **(3) Implementation of Charter for the Protection of Children and Youth**

\_\_\_\_\_ **B. Employee Performance Evaluation**

\_\_\_\_\_ **C. Employee Orientation**

**Comments on Areas for Improvement or Areas of Excellence:**

## V. Financial and Legal Issues

Y if the parish has met the Standard,

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### A. Financial Accountability

- (1) Pastor, Pastoral and finance councils approved budget
- (2) Timely financial reports
- (3) Annual independent audit for diocese
- (4) At least quarterly internal financial statements with material variation between actual and budgeted expenses and revenues identified
- (5) Confidential means to report suspected financial impropriety (whistle blower protection in place)
- (6) Board approved financial policies governing:
  - (a) investment of the assets of the organization,
  - (b) internal control procedures,
  - (c) purchasing practices, and
  - (d) policy on unrestricted current net assets.
  - (e) policy on disposition of assets in case of dissolution.

### B. Legal Compliance and Accountability

- (1) Compliance with canon, federal, state, and local laws.
- (2) Assessment of need for insurance coverage (general liability and Directors and Officers liability insurance)
- (3) Internal review of the parish's compliance with known existing legal, regulatory and financial reporting requirements.

**Comments on Areas for Improvement or Areas of Excellence:**

## VI. Openness

Y if the parish has met the Standard,

X if the parish has not met the Standard, and

O if the parish may be meeting the Standard or is partially in compliance

### A. Annual Report, available upon request including:

- mission
- ministry program activities
- basic audited financial data
- names of council members
- names of parish staff

### B. Public Access

- (1) Opportunity for members of the parish to communicate with parish representative
- (2) Disclosure laws
  - at least one staff person is responsible for the parish complying with disclosure requirements

**Comments on Areas for Improvement or Areas of Excellence:**



## **VII. Fundraising**

### **A. Fundraising Activities**

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) Reasonable fundraising costs over time; parish should realize charitable contributions from fundraising activities that are at least three times the amount spent on fundraising
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2) Accurate and truthful solicitation and promotional materials
- \_\_\_\_\_ (3) Honor the statements made in fundraising appeals
- \_\_\_\_\_ (4) Honoring the restrictions placed on contributions by donors.

### **B. Donor Relationships and Privacy.**

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) Respect the privacy of donors and safeguard confidentiality of donor information
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2) Provide donors the opportunity to remain anonymous
- \_\_\_\_\_ (3) Provide donors an opportunity to have their names removed from any mailing lists which are sold, rented, or exchanged
  
- \_\_\_\_\_ (4) Honor donor requests to curtail repeated mailings or telephone solicitations from in-house lists
- \_\_\_\_\_ (5) Solicitations free from undue influence or excessive pressure

### **C. Acceptance of Gifts**

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) Acceptance of gifts policy

### **D. Employment of Fundraising Personnel**

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) Fundraising personnel compensation
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2) Use of fundraising consultants who are registered with applicable regulatory authorities
- \_\_\_\_\_ (3) Exercise control over any staff, clergy, volunteers, consultants, contractors, other organizations, or businesses who solicit contributions on behalf of the diocese

**Comments on Areas for Improvement or Areas of Excellence:**

## **VIII. Public Affairs and Public Policy**

**Y** if the parish has met the Standard,

**X** if the parish has not met the Standard, and

**O** if the parish may be meeting the Standard or is partially in compliance

### **A. Public Policy Advocacy**

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) Advocacy Policy

### **B. Public Education**

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) Assurance that publicly distributed educational information is factually accurate and provides sufficient context

### **C. Promoting Public Participation**

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) Assurance from parish that activities are strictly nonpartisan and consonant with USCCB guidelines

**Comments on Areas for Improvement or Areas of Excellence:**