

## **GUIDELINES CONCERNING THE MINISTRY OF PASTORAL ASSOCIATE IN THE DIOCESE OF OAKLAND**

### **I. UNDERSTANDING OF THE PASTORAL ASSOCIATE**

A Pastoral Associate is a professional minister who shares with the pastor, the parish life director or on-site pastoral team in the overall care of the parish. He or she is a member of the parish staff and is accountable to the pastor or parish life director. The ministry of the pastoral associate is comprehensive, relating to all aspects of parish life, with designated responsibilities, i.e., liturgy, faith formation, RCIA, spiritual direction, administration, pastoral care, social justice or other. The designated responsibilities of the pastoral associate are dependent upon the needs of the parish and the gifts of the pastoral associate as well as the gifts of the other members of the parish staff.

Rooted and centered in the baptismal gift and the grace of Jesus' call to discipleship, the Pastoral Associate is committed to service to the church. He or she promotes gospel values and growth in holiness, values collaboration and mutuality in mission and ministry, and recognizes the necessity for professional preparation and ongoing formation.

### **II. JOB DESCRIPTION FOR THE PASTORAL ASSOCIATE**

Because the ministry of the pastoral associate is both comprehensive (relating to all aspects of parish life) and specific (to the needs of the particular parish and the gifts of the individual pastoral associate) any negotiation of a job description must begin with a common understanding of expectations of all pastoral associates in the Diocese of Oakland and conclude with the responsibilities and tasks particular to that parish and individual. This document deals only with those common expectations.

#### **A. Ministry of Administration**

*The pastoral associate:*

1. Collaborates closely with the pastor, under his supervision, and with other members of the parish staff, and, on occasion, represents the pastor.
2. Collaborates in the overall process of parish administration, including needs assessment, pastoral planning, decision-making, implementation, financial management, building maintenance, etc.
3. Administers/supervises designated parish programs and their staff.
4. Acts as director of one or more of the parish ministries and assists in the formation of new ministries as needed.

5. Attends all parish staff meetings and relates to deanery and diocesan structures.
6. Works closely with the parish pastoral council.
7. Participates in civic and ecumenical activities.

**B. Ministry of Spiritual Life and Worship**

*The pastoral associate:*

1. Collaborates with other parish staff in the preparation of parish sacramental celebrations and rites.
2. May lead communal prayer services, including vigils, final commendation and committal services, and ecumenical celebrations.
3. Preaches when pastorally and canonically appropriate.
4. Is a visible participant in Sunday masses, parish events and programs.
5. May represent the pastor when requested.

**C. Ministry of Education**

*The pastoral associate:*

1. Fosters the faith growth of all members of the parish.
2. Contributes to the initial formation and ongoing development of parish ministers and groups.
3. Assists in the formation of the entire community in understanding the parish mission.
4. Collaborates with other parish staff in providing child, youth and adult religious formation.
5. Shares in the responsibility for the communication of Church teaching and Canon Law.

**D. Ministry of Pastoral Services**

*The pastoral associate:*

1. Assists the pastor in fostering a sense of community within the parish in which all members feel a sense of belonging to each other, the parish and the larger church.
2. Participates in the pastoral care of individuals suffering from illness, grief, family crises or other.
3. Assists the pastor in developing social consciousness among the staff and parishioners, and responding to the needs of and advocating for the poor and victimized in the community and beyond.
4. Affirms family life and aids parent(s) in their roles.
5. Assists couples regarding marriage and annulment procedures as directed by the Diocesan Tribunal Office.

### III. QUALITIES OF THE PASTORAL ASSOCIATE

The pastoral associate shares many of the qualities of all parish ministers.

Because of the generalist nature of this position, the pastoral associate needs to possess adaptability and flexibility. This minister manifests a cooperative spirit and is able to alter specific responsibilities and/or activities. This implies the ability to relate to a wide spectrum of people, a willingness to be interested in a variety of parish activities, and an ability, with ease and grace, to let go of some responsibilities in order to enable other ministers to take over.

The pastoral associate is sensitive to others and is able to help them articulate their experiences in light of our faith. Because of his/her commitment to life long spiritual formation, the pastoral associate possesses the maturity, vulnerability, and flexibility that come from spiritual struggle and spiritual conversion and joy.

### IV. COMPETENCIES AND SKILLS

In addition to the competencies and skills needed by all pastoral ministers, there are several which are particularly important for an effective exercise of this role.

#### A. Knowledge

*The pastoral associate:*

1. Has an in-depth grasp of Church teaching, as well as current biblical and pastoral theology.
2. Is knowledgeable of:
  - Canon Law and Church history
  - Stages of human and faith development
  - The liturgical norms of the Church, including those of the Church of Oakland
  - Principles of organization, management, and team building
  - Principles of communication and pastoral counseling, including referrals, boundaries, and applicable laws.
  - Principles of collaboration
3. Has a well rounded education with an appreciation of the humanities, arts, and literature.
4. Has a sense of the history of the parish, as well as knowledge of its current demographics, constituencies, and complexities.
5. Is informed about the diocesan administrative guidelines and policies.

**B. Administrative Skills**

*The pastoral associate:*

1. Is able to make decisions and assume responsibility for delegated tasks.
2. Can negotiate and manage conflict.
3. Is able to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing.
4. Is skilled in public relations.
5. Is able to work with others in a collaborative style.

**C. Pastoral Skills**

*The pastoral associate:*

1. Can recognize, address, and assist in shaping the parish vision.
2. Recognizes and respects the cultural and ethnic diversity of the parish and diocese.
3. Has good pastoral counseling and listening skills.
4. Is able to preach effectively (when canonically and pastorally appropriate) and lead communal prayer.
5. Is able to develop and administer programs to meet assessed needs.
6. Recognizes the need to continually update himself/herself through study, personal reading, etc. in order to provide appropriate direction to the pastoral groups.
7. Has an ability to integrate ministry with prayer and sacramental life.

**V. FORMATION, TRAINING AND CRITERIA**

*The pastoral associate should:*

1. Have completed in-depth theological and religious studies; a Masters Degree or its equivalent being preferred, with a particular emphasis on the pastoral associate's area of interest and giftedness.
2. Have a variety of ministerial experience; 5 years pastoral ministry being preferred.
3. Have an active faith life. Be an active participant in the work of the Catholic Church and be able to partake in the full sacramental life of the church.