

Celebrating and Counting Councils
In Parishes of the Santa Barbara Pastoral Region
A Report to Bishop Slawomir Szkredka by the
Santa Barbara Regional Pastoral Council

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January 27, 2025

Executive Summary

The Santa Barbara Pastoral Region contains 37 parishes. 32 of those pastors participated in this study, and they reported that their parishes include 17 pastoral and 29 finance councils. Success within councils is defined by the Church's official documents. Councils succeed when pastors consult them, receive good advice, and put the advice into practice. The report consists of three sections.

1. *Success.* The first and largest part of the report describes council success stories. Pastoral councils have recommended initiatives to care for parishioners and to achieve other goals. Finance councils, which are better understood than pastoral councils, have successfully advised pastors regarding the parish budget and the solution of various problems.
2. *Challenges.* The second part of the report describes various challenges that have discouraged pastors from consulting councils. These include the drop in Mass attendance following the COVID pandemic, negative experiences with consultation, and misunderstandings of the nature and purpose of councils. The success of consultative decision-making depends on the one who consults.
3. *Development.* The third part of the report is about the development of councils. Pastors consult and hope for good advice. Council success depends on good relationships between the pastor and the members and mutual trust. It also depends on what he asks the council to study and on how he guides its investigation, reflection, and conclusion.
4. *Consultation.* The study notes that, although the councils are consultative bodies, pastors are reluctant to say that they "consult" or that the members are "consultants." Pastors rarely define consultation in the language of the Church's official documents – the process of investigation, reflection, and the recommendation of decisions. This prevents councils from succeeding, that is, knowing that they have accomplished their threefold purpose and that the pastor has implemented their recommendations.

The Santa Barbara Regional Pastoral Council learned that much depends on the kinds of questions it poses to pastors and on how it poses them. The council has generated several further questions about how other regions that will "Celebrate and Count Councils" could do better than we did.

Introduction

Members of the Santa Barbara Regional Pastoral Council¹ spoke with 32 local pastors and 1 administrator in the summer and fall of 2024 as part of a project called "Celebrating and

¹ Members of the Santa Barbara Regional Pastoral Council who participated as callers in the Counting Councils project were Katharina Carls, Ed Dry, Alisa De los Santos, Mark Fischer, Mari Carmen Garcia, Cynthia Jones

Counting Councils.” 17 pastors have pastoral councils, and 29 have finance councils. Charts One and Two (at the end of this report) indicate the pastors on whom this report is based. They taught the callers a lot about councils. The following report synthesizes what they learned.

“Celebrating and Counting Councils” is a project of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. Archbishop José Gomez invited the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council to undertake the project in all five of the ADLA’s pastoral regions. With the encouragement of Bishop Slawomir Szkredka, the Santa Barbara Pastoral Region took the initiative. Bishop Szkredka’s Regional Pastoral Council developed a script for calling the pastors, as well as an Anecdote Collection Form and a Data Collection Form. Callers were able to ascertain whether pastors consulted their parishioners via pastoral and finance councils and what their experience with the councils had been. Additionally, 14 pastors and/or office managers were able to submit the names and addresses of their council members.

Members of the SBRPC found the study to be a challenge. Planning it, preparing members to call pastors, conducting telephone interviews, typing interview notes, assembling the notes in a single document of “raw data,” selecting notes for inclusion in the final report, and structuring the report – all of this took time. It began on November 19, 2023, when Bishop Szkredka established a committee of the SBRPC to study councils. On February 10, Archbishop Gomez announced to the APC that he would coordinate the announcement of an archdiocesanwide councils project with the other regional bishops. The Santa Barbara committee met eight times on its own via Zoom² before presenting to Bishop Szkredka a first draft of the report in a Zoom meeting on October 15, 2024, and a second draft on December 8, 2024. During the course of the project, the feelings of SBRPC members about the work changed. They went from being unsure and cautious to being confident and satisfied.

One of Bishop Szkredka’s goals is to promote the use of councils in the Santa Barbara Pastoral Region. A presentation of council “success stories” – anecdotes about how pastors have utilized their councils – highlights the benefits they provide. Such a “celebration” of councils may also lead to a wider use of them by pastors.

Councils do what the Church, in its official documents, intends for them. Parish *finance* councils are mandated by Canon Law, which says that they aid in the administration of parish goods.³ The ADLA’s Guidelines for Finance Councils amplify and explain what Canon 537 says. Concerning *pastoral* councils, Archbishop Gómez has called for their establishment in each parish. The work of the pastoral council is governed by canon law.⁴ The ADLA’s

Campbell, Teresa McWilliams, Jessica Odell, Deacon Jess and Eloisa Pasos, Ashley Ramirez, Deacon Jack Redmond, and Carmen Vadillo Garcia.

² The Santa Barbara Regional Pastoral Council research committee met on its own (without Bishop Szkredka) via Zoom on 12/11/23, 4/12/24, 5/23/24, 6/10/24, 6/20/24, 8/3/24, 9/3/24, and 9/24/24.

³ Canon 537 states: “Each parish is to have a finance council which is regulated by universal law as well as by norms issued by the diocesan bishop; in this council the Christian faithful, selected according to the same norms, aid the pastor in the administration of parish goods with due regard for the prescription of can. 532.”

⁴ Canon 536 §1 describes the work of the pastoral council in broad terms: “After the diocesan bishop has listened to the presbyteral council and if he judges it opportune, a pastoral council is to be established in each parish; the pastor

Guidelines for Pastoral Councils explain the meaning of the canon 536. In the following report, the purpose of parish finance and pastoral councils is defined by the Universal Church's official documents and by the ADLA's guidelines.

Part I: Council Success

Successful pastoral and finance councils accomplish the purposes defined by the Church. Canon Law has described those purposes very broadly. The ADLA guidelines make the broad descriptions of Canon Law more specific. The archdiocese says that the finance council helps, among other things, to ensure that the parish has a budget. It also states that the pastoral council has a threefold task. It helps pastors "to investigate and consider matters relating to pastoral activity and to formulate practical conclusions concerning them." Let us begin with pastoral council success stories before turning to finance council success stories.

A. Pastoral Council Success Stories

1. Accepting Recommendations

Some pastors expressed council success in terms of accepting recommendations made by the pastoral council. At the pastor's invitation, councils are supposed to investigate some practical aspect of parish life, reflect on it, and recommend their conclusions.

a. Pastoral Care

- *Senior Congregants.* A pastor in deanery 4 noticed that his congregation was aging. He established an Eldercare Committee. The members talked to the heads of various ministries that serve the parish's seniors. The pastoral council learned that the best way to care for homebound elders is to check in on them and visit them. The parish established a "senior social" committee to create events for mobile seniors and a "friendly visitors and callers" ministry for the homebound.
- *Hospitality.* When one deanery 2 pastor arrived at his parish, it was in dire straits, spending far more than its income. "It was burning through \$9,000 in parish savings every month," he said. The finance council, inherited from his predecessor, was imprudently asking him to raise money to cover the deficit, rather than advising him to reduce expenses. The new pastor cut expenses and recruited new finance and pastoral councils. They helped him establish priorities: good liturgy and parish hospitality. He opened a "café" for hospitality after Mass and established a "connection ministry" to help new and returning parishioners get established as community members.
- *Long Term Knowledge.* One deanery 3 pastor noted that most pastors do not have long term knowledge of their communities, but the people on their pastoral councils can be well-equipped to be the knowledge bearers.

presides over it, and through it the Christian faithful along with those who share in the pastoral care of the parish in virtue of their office give their help in fostering pastoral activity." Canon 536 §2 adds: "This pastoral council possesses a consultative vote only and is governed by norms determined by the diocesan bishop." The Vatican II *Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops* first called for pastoral councils. They are "to investigate and consider matters relating to pastoral activity and to formulate practical conclusions concerning them" (no. 27).

b. Parish Projects

- *Paving.* A deanery 1 pastor said that he had accepted the recommendation of the pastoral council about laying new asphalt in the church parking lot.
- *Renovations.* One pastor in deanery 3 accepted the recommendations of the pastoral council to do various renovations in the parish. The council also recommended that the parish establish a new sound system, paid for by funds from Call to Renew.
- *Improvements.* A deanery 4 pastor recalled that, when he had a pastoral council, he accepted the recommendation to upgrade the air conditioning. A deanery 3 pastor reported something similar. After consulting with his councils, he has cut down on the use of the air conditioning. He has increased the budget for the music ministry.

c. Construction.

- *New Building.* One pastor in deanery 2 does not ask his pastoral council to formally “investigate” any particular matter. Council members, he said, discuss their experience of liturgy, of faith formation, of what the parish should offer, of what groups the parish is able to serve. Both the pastoral and finance councils recently discussed the question of where the parish could build an Accessory Dwelling Unit, a kind of “granny flat” or additional meeting space. It is easier to get permits to build an ADU, said the pastor, than other kinds of construction projects.

2. The Parish’s Mission

Two pastors described the work of the parish pastoral council in terms of the parish’s mission. The council “states” or defines the mission, said one. The other said that the council “reviews” the mission.

a. Stating the Mission.

One pastor from deanery 2 said the council helps him to articulate the vision and the mission of the parish and to “get the buy-in to accomplish things,” that is, to arouse enthusiasm to accomplish the mission. Indeed, the pastor said that the parish should be “restrained” by the mission, refusing to spend parish funds on things that do not advance the mission.

b. Reviewing the Mission.

A deanery 1 pastor said that he and his council “review” the parish’s mission statement. That assertion implies that the parish has a mission statement expressing what the congregation believes God is calling the parish to be at this moment. In the pastoral council, the priest compares what the parish says it is called to do with what it does (and on which it spends its money).

c. Visioning.

One pastor in deanery 3 does not ask his pastoral council to “investigate” so much as he invites it to develop a “vision.” Council members, he said, need to see what the future possibilities are, as distinct from an immediate view of here-and-now matters. He gave an example of his pastoral council developing an interest in hospitality. “I did not ask the council to look into hospitality,” he said. “Instead, council members took on hospitality by themselves.”

3. Parish Involvement

a. Committee Structure.

- *Participation.* Through the pastoral council, a deanery 2 pastor has established numerous committees, such as Hospitality, Liturgy, Architecture/Construction, and a 5-year strategic planning group. The committee structure involves parishioners in the parish's ongoing activities and overall planning.
- *Committees.* One deanery 3 pastor not only has a pastoral *council* but also a pastoral *committee*. It is made up of 30 representatives of each pastoral group or ministry. Each group is represented by its coordinator, and the committee meets monthly. Occasionally the two groups, the council and the committee, gather (for a total of 38). The PPC plans parish activities with the pastor.

b. Good Relationships.

- *Synodality.* In deanery 3, one pastor has no pastoral council, but as pastor (he recently moved to another assignment) he did consult his people. Six months ago, he started on Thursdays what he called "community meetings." He would define an agenda that began with *lectio divina* and then discuss what was going on in the parish and what it needed. The format was similar to synod listening sessions, he said. People got to know one another and to develop leadership skills. The Thursday group became ever more confident, he said, because members got to know each other. The outgoing pastor left information about the Thursday sessions for the next priest, and he hopes that the community meetings will continue.
- *Finding a Voice.* A deanery 4 pastor said that his pastoral council members are "voices of the parish with gifts of the Holy Spirit." He said that they work by consensus and majority. The importance of relationships is discussed below in section III.A.
- *Town Hall Meetings.* One pastor in deanery 3 does not have a pastoral council but holds a "town hall meeting" at least once a year. Parish and ministry leaders, plus some school staff and catechists (approximately 30-40) are invited. The pastor likened it to a "state of the union" talk.
- *Input.* A deanery 2 pastor felt that the parishioners will always know more about the lives of their peers than the pastor can know. Therefore, he said, priests need input from lay people, who can broaden a pastor's imagination and "multiply his ministry without multiplying his work."

B. Finance Council Success Stories

1. Budgeting

The first statement in the ADLA guidelines about the function of the parish finance council is this: "The pastor is responsible for all financial decisions and will establish annual operating budgets for the parish and school in consultation with the Finance Council." Most pastors follow the guidelines. Some use the Finance Council to monitor parish expenses. A few use the council to communicate to the parish, and even to develop the budget.

a. Adherence to the Guidelines.

Many pastors stated that they generally adhere to the ADLA guidelines by consulting the Finance Council about the parish budget.

- *Input.* The pastor of a deanery 1 parish said the Finance Council “asks clarifying questions” and gives its “input on items in the budget.” The PFC has frustrated him because members are unwilling to speak to the parish about its financial status. The council leaves the job to him.
- *Checking.* A deanery 2 pastor said that the finance council “checks” the budget.
- *Making v. Reviewing.* In deanery 4, a pastor said that the finance manager “makes” the budget and the other members of the Finance Council “review” it.

b. Monitoring.

Some pastors use technical language and say that the Finance Council assists them by “monitoring” the budget.

- *Development.* A deanery 1 pastor said that his Finance Council “plays a crucial role in helping the pastor develop and monitor the parish budget.”
- *Monitoring, Not Creating.* In deanery 4, a pastor said, “The PFC has helped me monitor the budget, yes, but develop it, no. That’s the work of the Business Manager. PFC members monitor the budget, and they help prepare it in a general sense, but they don’t create it.”

c. Communications.

In some parishes, the Finance Council serves the purpose of promoting transparency and communicating to parishioners about its financial well-being.

- *Transparency.* This point was made by the lay business manager of a deanery 4 parish. At present, the parish does not have a finance council. When it did have one, she said, the council “would review the budget and approve it before the parish’s quarterly report to the dean.” Approving the budget, she implied, was never contentious. When her parish had a finance council, the members “didn’t question” what was put in it, she said. The budget was “more beneficial” to the council members than to the pastor. “They learned what it costs to run the parish.”
- *Information.* At a deanery 2 parish, the Finance Council meets quarterly and produces financial reports, which are reviewed by the pastor and are made available to the parishioners.
- *Parish School.* The finance council of a deanery 3 parish does not oversee the accounts of the parish elementary school, but the parish business manager lets the pastor know about the school’s economic situation.

d. Budget Development.

There are a variety of ways, pastors say, that finance councils help them establish and monitor the parish budget.

- *Supervision.* One deanery 4 pastor said that his Finance Council does indeed “develop and oversee the parish budget.” This includes (1) developing a plan of action to address, resolve, and correct any financial issues as they arise; (2)

- conducting long-range financial planning concerning funding operational and capital needs in the parish; (3) paying attention to finance trends; and (4) reviewing parish expenditures
- *Interpretation.* In one deanery 2 parish, the pastor relies on his finance council to interpret complicated budget problems. The parish leases a building to a private school, which operates a Christian preschool-to-grade-6 academy on the site. The school provides the parish with a stable income.
 - *Reconciliation.* In another deanery 2 parish, the pastor said that the finance council helps “reconcile” the budget (making sure that the parish spends no more than what it has) and “re-adjusting” the budget (increasing or decreasing spending, depending on parish income).
 - *Recommendations.* A deanery 4 pastor said that he has followed the budget recommendations of the Finance Council.

2. Problem-Solving

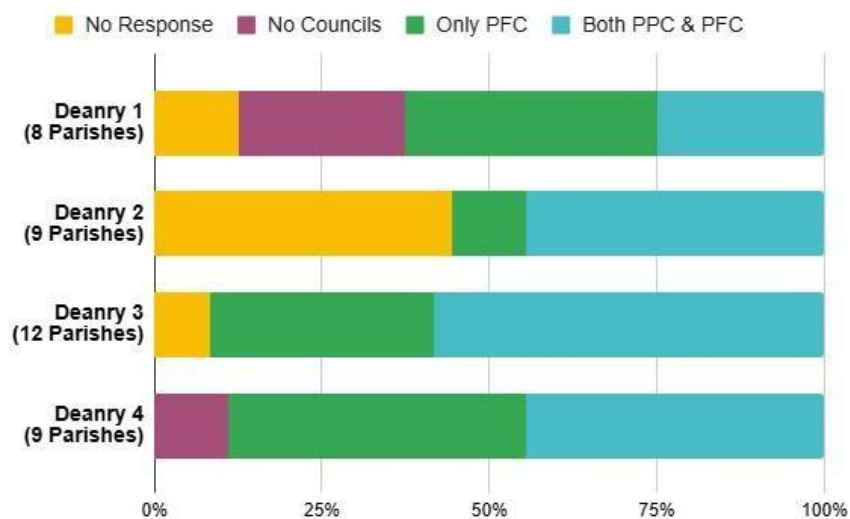
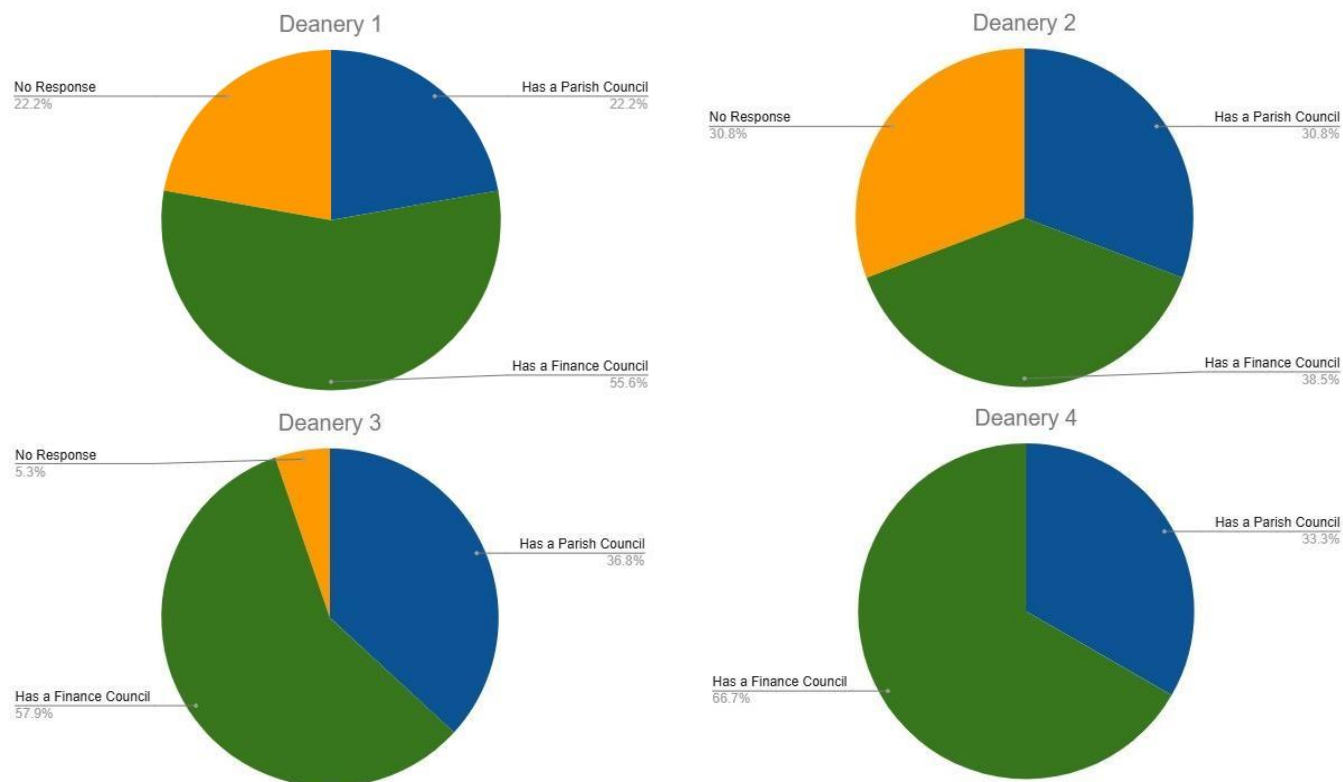
Several pastors said that their finance councils have helped them solve financial problems or negotiate to the parish’s advantage.

- *Complex Relationships.* In one deanery 4 parish, the pastor said that his finance council not only works on the parish budget, but also works on the preschool budget, because the preschool has trouble meeting its expenses.
- *Negotiating.* In deanery 2, a pastor said that his finance council is advising him on leasing part of the parish’s bell tower to Dish Network for cellular communications.
- *Hard Lessons.* A deanery 4 pastor regretted a time when he did not take the advice of the finance council. By not heeding the council’s advice, he said, “An \$18,000 project became a \$50,000 project.” The cost more than doubled.
- *Answering Questions.* In another deanery 4 parish, the pastor said that the finance council usually does not make recommendations. Instead, he goes to the council when he has a question.

C. Insights

If parish councils succeed because pastors consult them, accept their recommendations, and put them into practice, then the Santa Barbara Pastoral Region counts many success stories. It is worth noting, however, that success varies from deanery to deanery. This can be seen from Chart 1 (“Counting Councils at a Glance”) at the end of this study. Deanery 4 has more pastoral councils, for example, than Deanery 1, as the following graphs show.

This does not mean, however, that pastoral councils are unsuccessful. It only means that councils are unequally distributed throughout the region.



Part II: Reasons for Not Having Councils

Some pastors do not have councils at this time but plan to begin them in the future. Some parishes once had councils but do not have them now. Pastors explain the absence of councils in a variety of ways. Some who had suspended councils explained their reasons for doing so.

A. Consulting in the Future

Most pastors who do not have pastoral councils acknowledge the importance of consulting their people. Some intend to establish pastoral councils in the future.

1. Establishing New Councils

Some priests are wary of councils because the members may not understand that councils have a consultative-only vote. Other priests consult by turning the council into a sounding board, open forum, or synod-style listening session.

- *Consultative Councils.* A pastor in deanery 1 has neither a pastoral nor a finance council. As he reflected on his plans for forming them, he said that council members “should not be afraid to give their opinion while understanding final decisions are made by the pastor.”
- *Need for Support.* In another deanery 1 parish, the pastor has no pastoral council but does have a finance council. He does not want to “saddle” the next pastor with a pastoral council, he said, unless it is required. He would be willing to have such a council only if the archdiocese would direct the process of choosing and training members to ensure all groups of the parish are represented fairly.
- *Transitions.* One pastor in deanery 2 said that his parish has had several pastoral transitions since COVID and his two councils ceased to meet. Six parishioners have committed to serving on a new pastoral council, he said, and seven to serving on a new finance council, but the councils have not yet met. The same is true for the pastoral council of a deanery 3 parish that was suspended during COVID. The pastor now wants to re-establish the council and ask it to focus on faith formation.
- *Contemporary Reality.* In one deanery 4 parish, the pastor has served for eight years. He “inherited” a pastoral council from his predecessor, but it was disbanded during COVID. It didn’t have a clear purpose, the pastor said, and it did no planning. If he were to reestablish a council, the pastor would like its members to see what the parish reality is today. Today, he said, the parish has fewer younger families. Young people can’t afford to live in the neighborhood. The preschool is in danger of closing. There are only 100 children in faith formation, from children to teenagers. The parish needs to address the reality, he said, of its aging congregation. “Many parishioners,” said the pastor, “are at the end of life. Parish income is dropping. People are moving away and dying.”

2. Getting to Know a Council

- *The Importance of Group Process.* One pastor, who is leaving his deanery 3 parish, said that good relationships are key to council success. “To start a group, you must build relationships and do community organizing,” he said. “Development takes a long time, and you can’t do much in two years.” The pastor quoted Pope Francis’ *Evangelii Gaudium*: “Time is superior to space.” He meant that it takes time to cultivate a relationship. “Start a group process in time and not in space,” said the priest. “It doesn’t matter where you are, the process will continue.” The pastor has moved to a new assignment but believes it will be difficult to erase what the parish started.

- *Trust.* At least two pastors in deaneries 1 and 4 emphasized the importance of building trust in the council.

B. Past Problems with Councils

Some pastors complain that councils spend a great deal of time talking but are unwilling to roll up their sleeves and work. Members may not understand that the council is a consultative body. Pastors without councils often consult with other parish groups.

- *Words without Deeds.* One deanery 1 pastor has a finance council but not a pastoral council. He said it “died with COVID.” The priest is trying “to identify nine couples and two members from the Spanish community” for a new pastoral council. The new council, he hopes, will take on responsibilities and not just come to listen and advise.
- *Action-Oriented.* One pastor in deanery 3 belongs to a religious order and does not have a pastoral council. He knows that such councils are supposed to be consultative, but he feels that Americans prefer to do something, and not simply to discuss/think/investigate. “If you ask them something,” said the pastor, “then they want you to do what you’ve talked about.” Posing a question like “How can we strengthen the spiritual life of the parish?” calls for more than a list of action items, he said, and is difficult for councils.
- *Ineffectiveness.* A deanery 4 pastor does not have a pastoral council. It was disbanded by the previous pastor because it was ineffective. “There were too many voices,” he said, “and all they did was plan social things.”
- *Pretentiousness.* In deanery 4, another pastor said that he preferred the title of “Servant Team” in place of the title Parish Council. The new title (he suggested) didn’t sound so assertive and “high and mighty.”
- *Consultation.* A third pastor in deanery 4 disliked the name “parish pastoral council.” He said he would prefer the term “pastoral advisory council” because the members have a consultative-only say.

C. Alternatives to Councils?

Some pastors suggest that councils are unnecessary because they are ineffective. Pastors have many parish groups whom they can consult, some say, and councils are unnecessary. Others devalue councils because parishioners, in their view, do not want to study, discern, and build consensus. Council members may forget (some pastors say) that their vote is consultative only. But it is hardly evident that alternatives to councils are able to do the work of councils. And no one says that the work of consultation itself – the work of investigation, reflection, and decision-making – is unimportant. Are the pastors who say that they are consulting in fact asking the parish bodies they consult *to do what consultation requires*? Do council members accept the productive tension that arises when they want to accomplish something in the concrete and the pastor requests more time for discernment?

- *Alternatives.* In deanery 2, one pastor has an “implementation team” that meets bimonthly, not a pastoral council. He relies on the team not so much for ideas, he said, but for finding people who can carry out his initiatives.
- *Unnecessary.* One pastor of a deanery 4 parish does not need a pastoral council, he says, because he consults other groups: the Men’s Club Board, the Board of Rectors, the PTO Board, the Women’s Social Club, and the Catholic Federation. All of them, he said, are involved with input and decisions.
- *Leadership Community.* In deanery 3, one pastor suspended his pastoral council in 2024 because the parish is enrolled in “Parish Catalyst.” This non-profit, founded by William E. Simon, Jr., invites Catholic pastors and parish leaders to join “leadership communities” that meet with each other to collaborate and build up the Church. The Catalyst “leadership community” has largely supplanted the role of the pastoral council, said the pastor, and is now initiating and facilitating elements of parish life.

Part III: Organization of Councils

Regarding council membership and the frequency of meetings, pastors throughout the Santa Barbara Region differ widely.

A. Relationships of Trust

Pastors welcome good advice – that is, advice based on a detailed investigation of issues, on thorough reflection, and on conclusions that are prudent. A bishop entrusts a parish to a pastor because he recognizes the pastor’s faith and practical wisdom. He believes in the pastor’s ability to make wise decisions on the parish’s behalf. A pastor is not required to accept the recommendations of his council. But a good pastor recognizes wisdom and common sense when he sees it. He will accept a council’s good counsel as he gets to know and trust the members.

Without trusting relationships between the pastor and council members, there can be no successful consultation. The development of these relationships takes time. Bishop Szkredka of this Santa Barbara region has expressed the value of relationships in which true discernment can take place; this type of discernment requires prayerful listening to the Spirit. That is why the Church asks councils to investigate and reflect before they reach a conclusion. Decisions need to mature. Pastors must discern the abilities of council members. A seasoned council that has proven its reliability can advise on the most complex matter. A pastor needs to test the strengths of a newly-formed council.

- *Learning to Trust.* A deanery 4 pastor said that, in consulting his pastoral council about ministry to the elderly, he relied on the council’s discernment. “It takes trust,” he said, “and a willingness to empower people.”
- *Establishing a Relationship.* Support for relationships with members – that is the advice of one pastor in deanery 1 to other pastors thinking of establishing pastoral councils. Another deanery 1 pastor agrees, saying that the relationships should be collaborative.
- *Selection of Members.* A third pastor in deanery 1 extends personal invitations to potential council members once he has established a relationship with them.

- *Gaining the Community's Trust.* A pastor from deanery 4 said, "It's essential to gain the parish community's trust by listening before acting or creating new councils."
- *Facilitation.* A deanery 3 pastor is concerned that council members may not speak freely. For that reason, he appoints a facilitator (whom he calls a "shepherd") so that he does not have to chair the meetings himself. Pastors can easily overshadow the members, said the pastor. "You want a council whose members are a little independent and come up with things to help."

B. Agendas

An agenda represents a pastor's decision to consult about a particular matter. It indicates that he is asking the council to focus on a given topic. About it he invites the council to investigate and reflect. This implies that other topics are less urgent. While not unimportant, they do not deserve the same effort of study and discernment. Creating an agenda for the council is a fundamental decision. It guides the course of the council meeting. It will focus the council's attention and prevent it from being distracted by less important matters.

The topic may be very general. Pastors may ask, for example, "What are the most important issues our parish faces?" The topic may also be very precise. A pastor may ask, "How can we best serve the homebound members of our congregation?" or "How can we boost Mass attendance?" If success in the council means investigating, reflecting, and reaching a conclusion that the pastor can accept, fashioning an agenda is crucial.

- *Setting the Agenda.* At one deanery 2 parish, the pastor sets the pastoral council agenda with the council chairperson.
- *Disciplined Agenda.* Celebrating the liturgy is the mission and priority of another pastor in deanery 2. Pastors who are considering a pastoral council should be "restrained" by the mission and vision, he said, and not get distracted by other topics, however important.

C. Membership

There is no consensus among pastors about the term of office of councils, and no consensus about the number of members.

1. Term of Office

Among councils in the Santa Barbara Pastoral Region, there are a variety of ways to understand terms of office. Some pastoral council members turn over every three to four years. In some cases, terms were "staggered," that is, only some council members would change in any given year.

- *Term Limits.* In deanery 2, one pastor said that pastoral council members typically serve for three years; however, there have been exceptions where members have served an extra year or two. He thinks 3-4 years of service is very good, with perhaps the Chair serving for two years to "preserve continuity."
- *Staggered Terms.* A deanery 4 business manager said that, when the parish used to have a pastoral council, there were staggered terms of office, with members replaced every four years.

- *No Limit.* A deanery 4 pastor said that his council members have been replaced “when people leave.”

2. Members

The number of members on pastoral and finance councils varies widely, from a high of 12 members to a low of 4 members.

- *Number.* Some pastors have a small number of council members, such as the deanery 1 parish with pastoral and finance councils of 4 members each. A deanery 4 pastor has a finance council with 5-6 members. In two deanery 4 parishes, the pastors have pastoral councils with 8 members. Other parishes have larger councils, such as one parish in deanery 4 with a finance council of 10 members, another parish in deanery 4 with a pastoral council of 11 members, and a parish in deanery 2 whose pastoral council has 12 members.
- *Selection.* Some pastors (such as one in deanery 1 and another in deanery 3) try to recruit couples as council members.
- *Difference.* A deanery 3 pastor noted the value of forming a bond with people before inviting them to be on the council, and of having people with differing opinions. “They don’t have to always agree with you, but they do have to share your vision.” Differences of opinions are best in his estimation, as long as they know how to accomplish the work.
- *Nominations.* In one deanery 3 church, the pastor built a pastoral council from scratch when he arrived. He asked the entire parish community to nominate parishioners, who in turn felt valued by the nomination. He reviewed nominations and called the members to personally invite them to the council.
- *Two in One.* One deanery 3 pastor said that his congregation is so small, the pastoral and finance councils have the same members.

D. Frequency of Meetings

Some councils meet every month. Others meet infrequently, sometimes no more than three times per year.

1. Less-than-Monthly Meetings.

- *Quarterly Meetings.* A deanery 4 pastor said that his pastoral council meets quarterly. In another parish of that deanery, a business manager recalled that, when the parish used to have a pastoral council, it would meet quarterly as well.
- One pastor of a deanery 4 parish said that his pastoral and finance councils meet five times per year.

2. Monthly (or Almost-Monthly) Meetings.

- In another deanery 4 parish, the pastor said that his pastoral council meets 9-10 times per year. His finance council meets monthly but rarely for longer than one hour.

Conclusion: The Importance of Consultation

Pastors have related numerous council success stories. Pastoral councils, they said, express and review the parish mission, recommend conclusions that pastors accept, and

involve many parishioners (outside the council) through committees (Part I.A). Finance councils, the pastors told interviewers, help the pastor budget for the parish and solve financial problems that arise (Part I.B). To be sure, a few parishes do not have finance councils. An even larger number do not have pastoral councils. Every pastor, however, appreciates the importance of consultation, and many are hoping to revive councils that stopped functioning during the COVID epidemic (Part II). Among pastors, there seems to be no “one size fits all” approach to consultation. Membership fluctuates and meetings vary in frequency and focus. But pastors will accept recommendations from trusted parishioners who have thoroughly considered a matter (Part III). Pastors have a duty to maintain their congregations, and consulting through councils helps pastors to make good decisions.

A. The Meaning of Consultation

Few pastors, however, say that they “consult” their councils. This is surprising, given the fact that “consultation” is the word that best describes the conciliar role. The Church’s official documents are unanimous in stating that all councils are consultative. Regarding pastoral councils, the official documents consistently say that consultation involves three activities: investigation, reflection, and the recommendation of conclusions.⁵ But the practice of Santa Barbara regional pastors occasionally varies from what the official documents say.

The pastor of one deanery 2 parish, for example, does not ask his pastoral council to formally investigate any particular matter. Instead, he invites the members to discuss their experience of the parish and bring their personal background and expertise to bear. Discussions based on experience are important, we note, but they are not investigations.

To give another example, the pastor of a deanery 3 parish explains the absence of a pastoral council in his parish by suggesting that parishioners are impatient with reflection. They prefer action, he said. They want to “do something,” rather than “to discuss/think/investigate.” Although some people have no patience with discernment, councils are supposed to investigate and reflect.

The pastor of another deanery 3 parish, to give a third example, does not ask his council to investigate so much as he invites it to “develop a vision.” He gives his council the freedom to create its own agenda. His example was the council’s development of an interest in hospitality. “I did not ask the council to look into hospitality,” he said. “Instead, council members took on hospitality by themselves.”

It is valuable for council members to discuss their experience, to get involved in parish action, and to develop a vision – but those activities differ from consultation. It is noteworthy that few pastors use the word consult. Wariness about consultation may prevent some pastors from achieving what the Church expects of councils. It also makes it difficult to define their purpose. Are they to investigate, reflect, and reach conclusions – or are they sounding boards, open forums, or mechanisms for parish coordination? Without a clear focus on consultation

⁵ The language of investigate, ponder, and conclude appears in *Ecclesia de mysterio* (1997), *Ecclesia in Asia* (1999), *Novo millennio ineunte* (2001), *The Priest, Pastor and Leader* (2002), *Apostolorum successores* (2004), and “Pastoral Conversation of the Parish Community in the Service of the Evangelising Mission of the Church” (2020). These texts are accessible at <https://www.pastoralcouncils.com/bibliography/vatican-documents/recent-documents/>.

(in which a pastor poses a question and accepts the council's answer), there is no clear criterion for council success.

B. Recommendations

It will take further reflection to translate the findings of this report into recommendations for Bishop Szkredka. Four items, however, deserve comment. We have just discussed the first, namely, the meaning of consultation. This leads to our first recommendation below. In addition to consultation, the Santa Barbara RPC realizes that successful consultation depends on relationships of *trust* between council members and pastors (section III.A of this report). That is the basis for our second recommendation. We also believe that the success of councils depends on a thoughtful *agenda*. Pastors must decide to consult about a particular item and to give the council time to study a matter and reflect on it before recommending a conclusion (section III.B). Finally, every pastoral council requires good leadership, and the presence of a facilitator may allow a pastor to consult freely. Our four recommendations are as follows:

1. *Training in Consultation.* The training of pastors and lay persons for pastoral and finance councils depends on the Church's definition of consultation. A pastor should invite council members to investigate a practical parish matter, reflect on it, and recommend to him their conclusions. When he accepts and implements them, the council succeeds. This report suggests that pastors may benefit from ongoing training in the process of consultation, just as members of pastoral councils may benefit from training in the type of consultation most suited for a council. The recommendations that follow below would be part of this training.
2. *Trust.* A pastor's willingness to accept the recommendations of a council depends on trust. Trust develops slowly, as relationships deepen and a council proves its ability to investigate a matter, reflect on it, and make a good decision. Training for consultation must show how to build trust by defining the conciliar role in the Church's official terms.
3. *Agenda.* Council agendas represent a pastor's decision to consult about a particular matter. By the agenda, the pastor indicates the topic on which he invites the council to focus. Other topics may certainly arise, but the council agenda indicates that some topics are more important than others. Training for consultation should emphasize that the pastor consults because he wants the council to help him make important choices on the parish's behalf. The agenda expresses this fundamental aim.
4. *Facilitator.* Pastors have many competing roles when they interface with a pastoral council: shepherd, business manager, counselor, decision maker, the list goes on. With a trusted facilitator who is neither the pastor nor a member and who has no role other than to create a space for encounter, all members of the council may focus on their work. This frees up the pastor to truly participate and listen, without requiring him to play the role of both participant and the one who consults. This achieves the council's basic goal of study, reflection, and consensus building.

Pastors consult because they want to make wise decisions. They accept recommendations from trusted parishioners who have investigated, reflected, and drawn prudent conclusions.

In addition to the above recommendations to the archdiocese, we have several recommendations for the other regional pastoral councils embarking on this study. We hope that

the following resources, suggestions, and questions for further study prove useful as they investigate the councils in their own regions.

1. *Data Collection Documents.* At the outset of the “Celebrating and Counting Councils” project, the Santa Barbara Regional Council developed three documents to help those who interviewed pastors: a script, a form for collecting anecdotes, and a form for collecting data (i.e., the names and addresses of council members). They are included for reference and use in the Appendices. In light of the experience of calling pastors, the three documents could be improved. They might include questions, for example, about developing relationships (among pastors and council members) and about agendas (what to consult about and how to consult). Moreover, (1) interviews might be conducted face-to-face, (2) the chairs of each council might be interviewed, and (3) the interviewees might be able to edit the interviewer’s notes.
2. *Further Investigations.* When the other four regional councils in the archdiocese undertake the study of parish councils in their regions, they might also broaden the pool of interviewees. To be sure, it was a challenge for the Santa Barbara Region to interview the pastors alone. But other parishioners deserve a say about councils. In the future, regions could interview, not just pastors, but members of existing councils and other parishioners. They could ask them to give their input about councils in the parish and to recommend parishioners who might serve on them.

Chart One: Counting Councils at a Glance

For statistical purposes, the Santa Barbara Pastoral Region has 37 parishes (Our Lady of the Stars in Vandenburg is part of the military vicariate, and Immaculate Conception in New Cuyama has no pastor). Out of 37 pastors, the SBRPC callers spoke with 32. They are highlighted in yellow in the chart below. 17 pastors have pastoral councils and 29 have finance councils. At least one is in the process of starting a new council.

Counting Councils at a Glance: Santa Barbara Pastoral Region (as of 01/14/25)

Dnry	Parish	Pre-fix	Name	Title	Interviewer	Date of Call	PPC	PFC	Anecdotes	Contacts
1	Immaculate Conception in New Cuyama (served by Josephites)	Rev.	Ludovic DeClippel	C	CVG	Mission church/not parish, not in 37 ttl				
	Immaculate Conception in New Cuyama's deacon	Dcn.	Ricardo Berumen	BM	CVG	Unable to Schedule an Interview				
	La Purisima Concepcion Catholic Church	Rev.	Jose Maria Ortiz	A	CJC	9-Jul	Yes	Yes	x	x
	Old Mission Santa Ynes	Rev.	Michael Ronayne	P	KC	23-Jul	No	Yes	x	
DEAN	Queen of Angels Catholic Church	Rev.	Altaire Fernandez	A	CJC	12-Jul	No	No	x	
	Our Lady of Guadalupe in Guadalupe	Rev.	Rafael Lara	P	KC	23-Jul	No	No	x	
	St. John Neumann Catholic Church	Rev.	Rolando Sierra	P	CJC	31-Jul	Yes	Yes	x	x
	St. Louis de Montfort Catholic Church	Rev.	Aidan Rossiter	P	CVG	14-Aug	No	Yes	x	
	Our Lady of the Stars (Vandenburg AFB)	Rev.	Quang Tran	C	CJC	Not counted in our 37 total				
	St. Mary of the Assumption Catholic Church	Rev.	Thomas Cook	P	CVG	8-Aug	No	Yes	x	
2	Holy Cross Catholic Church	Rev.	Egren Gomez	A	MFF	15-Jul	Yes	Yes	x	
	Our Lady of Guadalupe, Santa Barbara	Rev.	Pedro Lopez	P	KC	Unable to Schedule an Interview				
DEAN	Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church	Rev.	Lawrence Seyer	P	ED & TM	15-Jul	Yes	Yes	x	x
	Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church	Rev.	John O'Brien	P	MCG	Unable to Schedule an Interview				
	San Roque Catholic Church	Rev.	Bruce Correio	P	MFF	4-Sep	Yes	Yes	x	x
	Santa Barbara Mission	Rev.	Dan Lackie	P	MCG		Yes	Yes		x
	St. Joseph Catholic Church	Msgr.	Richard Martini	P	ED	12-Aug	No	Yes	x	
	St. Mark University Parish	Rev.	Ryan Thornton	A	MCG	Unable to Schedule an Interview				
	St. Raphael Catholic Church	Rev.	Rolando Clarin	P	MCG	Unable to Schedule an Interview				
3	Mary Star of the Sea	Rev.	Felix Daganta	P	JO	27-Jun	Yes	Yes	x	x
	Our Lady of Guadalupe, Santa Paula	Rev.	Thomas Dome	A	JO	Unable to Schedule an Interview				
	Our Lady of Guadalupe, Oxnard	Rev.	Manuel Vazquez	A	MFF	18-Jul	Yes	Yes	x	
DEAN	Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Church	Rev.	Leon Hutton	P	MFF	21-Nov.	Yes	Yes	x	
	Sacred Heart Catholic Church	Rev.	Aloysius Ezeonyeka	P	JO	16-Oct	Yes	Yes	x	x
	San Buenaventura Mission Basilica Catholic Church	Rev.	Thomas Elewaut	P	ADLS	10-Jan	Yes	Yes	x	
	Santa Clara Catholic Church	Rev.	John Love	P	ED	20-Aug	Yes	Yes	x	
	St. Anthony Catholic Church	Rev.	Joshua Diener	A	AR	25-Sep	No	Yes	x	x
	St. Francis Catholic Church	Rev.	Fr. Ramon Pons	A	JO	27-Jun	No	Yes	x	
	San Salvador	Rev.	Bernard Gatlin	A	MFF	2-Nov	Yes	Yes	x	x
	St. Sebastian Catholic Church	Rev.	Pasquale Vuoso	P	ADLS	26-Sep	No	Yes	x	x
	St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church	Rev.	Kirk Davis	P	ADLS	10-Jan	No	Yes	x	
4	Holy Cross Catholic Church	Msgr.	Joseph Hernandez	P	MFF	30-Jul	No	No	x	
	St. Jude Catholic Church	Rev.	James Stehly	P	J&EP	11-Jul	Yes	Yes	x	
	St. Julie Billiart Catholic Church	Rev.	Ian-Vincent Hagan	A	MFF	28-Jun	Yes	Yes	x	x
	St. Junipero Serra Catholic Church	Rev.	Patrick Mullen	P	CJC	23-Jul	Yes	Yes	x	x
DEAN	St. Mary Magdalen Catholic Church	Rev.	Preston Passos	P	JO	24-Jun	No	Yes	x	x
	St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic Church	Msgr.	Paul Albee	P	MFF	1-Aug	No	Yes	x	
	St. Paschal Baylon Catholic Church	Rev.	Michael Rocha	P	JR	8-Jul	No	Yes	x	x
	St. Peter Claver Catholic Church	Rev.	Riz Carranza	P	JR	3-Jul	Yes	Yes	x	x
	St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church	Rev.	Joseph Shea	P	MFF	2-Aug	No	Yes	x	

P - Pastor

A - Administrator

BM - Business Manager

C - Chaplain

Katharina Carls (KC)

Ed Dry (ED)

Alisa De los Santos (ADLS)

Mark Fischer (MFF)

Mari Carmen Garcia (MCG)

Cynthia Jones-Campbell (CJC)

Teresa McWilliams (TM)

Jessica Odell (JO)

Jess and Eloisa Pasos (J&EP)

Ashley Ramirez (AR)

Jack Redmond (JR)

Carmen Vadillo Garcia (CVG)

Chart Two: Councils in the Santa Barbara Region

32 “Anecdote Collection Forms” – that is, records made by SBRPC interviewers after speaking with pastors – have been collected. These forms enable us to see some trends.

Parish Pastoral and Parish Finance Councils in the Santa Barbara Region (At time of interviews)

Dnry	Name of Parish	Parish Pastoral Council			Parish Finance Council		
		Total # Members	Also on Staff	Date of Last Meeting	Total # Members	Also on Staff	Date of Last Meeting or How Often
1	La Purisima Concepcion Catholic Church	8	0	7/10/2023	6	0	?
	Old Mission Santa Ines	None			?	?	?
	Queen of Angels	None			None		
	Our Lady of Guadalupe	6	?	?	7	?	?
	St. John Neumann Catholic Church	4	0	7/27/23	4	0	?
	St. Louis de Montfort Catholic Church	None			5+	?	?
	St. Mary of the Assumption	None			?	?	?
2	Holy Cross	6	?	June 2023	4	?	May 2023
	Our Lady of Guadalupe	Unable to Schedule an Interview					
	Our Lady of Mount Carmel	12	0	6/10/2024	5	?	Quarterly
	Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church	Unable to Schedule an Interview					
	San Roque Catholic Church	5	2	5/21/2024	5	1	4/30/2024
	Santa Barbara Mission	7	?	?	4	?	?
	St. Joseph	None			7	?	Quarterly
	St. Mark University Parish	Unable to Schedule an Interview					
	St. Raphael Catholic Church	Unable to Schedule an Interview					
3	Mary Star of the Sea	5	0	6/6/2024	7	0	Biannually
	Our Lady of Guadalupe, Santa Paula	Unable to Schedule an Interview					
	Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, Oxnard	8	?	?	3	0	3x a year
	Our Lady of the Assumption	12	?	11/18/2024	6	2	Oct 2024
	Sacred Heart	10	0	10/1/2024	8	?	Evry 2 mnths
	San Buenaventura Mission Basilica	16	?	Jan 2024	3	?	Biannually
	Santa Clara	12	?	Monthly	5	?	Quarterly
	St. Anthony	None			5	1	?
	St. Francis	None			4	?	When Called
	San Salvador	5	0	Oct 2024	Same Council as PPC		
	St. Sebastian	None			3	?	Quarterly
	St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church	None			8	?	?
4	Holy Cross	None			None		
	St. Jude Catholic Church	10	?	?	7	?	?
	St. Julie Billiart Catholic Church	15	4	5/2/2024	7	2	?
	St. Junipero Serra Catholic Church	8	1	6/5/2024	8	0	6/19/2024
	St. Mary Magdalen Catholic Church	None			8	1	?
	St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic Church	None			5	?	Monthly
	St. Paschal Baylon Catholic Church	None			10	3	?
	St. Peter Claver Catholic Church	8	2	6/13/2024	7	1	5/22/2024
	St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church	None			4	?	?
Average:		9			6		

Appendix 1: Script for Telephoning Pastors

Presentation of Credentials

Hello, _____, this is _____. I'm a member of the Santa Barbara Regional Pastoral Council. Would Fr. (insert pastor's name here) have a few moments to talk with me about councils at your parish or can we make a phone appointment for later?

If no, schedule a call with the pastor through the parish secretary. If yes, continue with the script when you get to the pastor.

Hi Fr. _____, thank you for talking with me today. Our regional deacon, Chris Sanders, recently contacted your parish about this regional priority to survey pastors and council members about their experience of pastoral councils. At the request of Bishop Slawomir Szkredka, we want to honor the councils that exist and help get new councils started. Have you had a chance to speak to Deacon Chris or heard about the project at the recent deanery meeting?

Purpose

Our goal is to learn about councils in our region and discover the best practices of pastors and members. We want to celebrate the "successes" of councils that are achieving their purpose. We also would like to hear about any challenges that have arisen. Our aim, however, is to focus on the positive. The Church asks pastors to consult councils, and we want to help. Ultimately, we also want to create a list of council members with their contact information.

Confidentiality

Before we go any further, I want to assure you that the information we are collecting is confidential. It is intended solely for the Archbishop and Regional Bishops. It will not be shared with the public, but only used for approved Archdiocesan purposes.

About the Pastoral Council in General To

begin, let me ask: does your parish have a pastoral council?

YES

- How many members are on it?
- What has been your experience of the pastoral council?
- Pastors ask their councils to study, reflect, and make recommendations about practical matters. How has your pastoral council been of service?
- Has the council made recommendations that the pastor has accepted and put into practice?
- If you knew a pastor who was beginning a pastoral council, what would you advise?
- How often the councils meet?

NO

- What was the date of the last meeting?
- 1. If you do not currently have an active parish pastoral council, what other consultative bodies, formal or informal, do you rely on to make major decisions affecting the parish?
- 2. If your parish has had a council in the past, can you tell me about it?
- 3. What did people say about it?
- 4. Why was it discontinued?
- 5. I'm on a pastoral council, so I can speak with some experience. If your parish would like to start one, how could I help?

Finally, any additional questions you would have liked me to ask?

About the Finance Council in General

Next, let me ask: does your parish have a finance council?

YES

- How many members are on it? What has been your experience of the finance council?
- Finance councils help the pastor develop and monitor the parish budget. How has your parish's finance council been of service?
- Has the finance council made recommendations that the pastor accepted and put into practice?
- If you knew a pastor who was beginning a finance council, what would you advise him?

NO

- If you do not currently have an active parish finance council what other consultative bodies, formal or informal, do you rely on to make major decisions affecting the parish?
- If your parish has never had a finance council, or only had one in the past, can you tell me about that?
- What do people say about it?
- Why was it discontinued?
- If your parish would like to start a finance council, what would help it to do so?

Finally, any additional questions you would have liked me to ask?

Census Questions

This year, Archbishop Gomez invited both finance and pastoral council members to the annual "state of the archdiocese" meeting. The meetings take place in January or February, one in each of the five pastoral regions. Next year, the Archbishop wants to extend personalized invitations to pastoral council members as is done for finance council members. Could you, a councilmember or someone on the parish staff provide us the names and email addresses of each council member?

We have a spreadsheet format we'd like to use for our census. It has a place for the names, emails, mailing addresses, and the telephone numbers of both finance and pastoral council members. Could I send you this spreadsheet and ask you to fill it out? Alternatively, you can share an existing spreadsheet or list with me. You can return/send the spreadsheet to me personally, or to Deacon Chris Sandner if you prefer.

Conclusion

Thank you for helping with this survey! We members of the Santa Barbara Regional Council are grateful for the cooperation of parishes like yours. The Archdiocese has published materials about both [finance](#) and [pastoral](#) councils. Is there any way in which we could assist your parish's councils? Thank you again. When our research on councils is complete, Bishop Szkredka will share the results with you.

IF DOES HAVE PC:

- Are there other members of the pastoral council who I could speak to?
- I would love to sit in on a pastoral council meeting to see an example of how a council functions in our region. Would you be comfortable with that?

IF DOES NOT HAVE PC:

- Earlier in the call, we discussed that you would like [INSERT HERE whatever information, data, materials, followup they requested]. I will be happy to share that with you in a week or two.

Thank you again! I hope we can continue our connection as members of the Santa Barbara Region!

Appendix 2: Anecdote Collection Form

After completing this form, please send it to Deacon Chris Sandner
(DnChris@sbpr.org, (805) 682-0442, 3240 Calle Pinon, Santa Barbara, CA 93105)

Identifying Information

1. Caller:
2. Call Recipient (name and title):
3. Parish:
4. Region and Deanery:
5. Date and Length of Call:

Part 1: Pastoral Council

Type or Answer by Hand If a Pastoral Council Exists:

1. How many members are on it?
2. What has been your experience of the pastoral council?
3. Pastors ask their councils to study, reflect, and make recommendations about practical matters. How has your pastoral council been of service?
4. Has the council made recommendations that the pastor has accepted and put into practice?
5. If you knew a pastor who was beginning a pastoral council, what would you advise?
6. How often the councils meet?
7. What was the date of the last meeting?
8. Any additional questions you would have like me to ask?

Hand-written Answers:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

6.

7.

8.

If There Is No Pastoral Council:

1. If you do not currently have an active parish pastoral council, what other consultative bodies, formal or informal, do you rely on to make major decisions affecting the parish?
2. If your parish has had one in the past, can you tell me about it?
3. What did people say about it?
4. Why was it discontinued?
5. If your parish would like to start one, how could I help? ([See ADLA Guidelines](#))
6. Any additional questions you would have liked me to ask?

Hand-written Answers:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

Part 2: Finance Council If

a Finance Council Exists:

1. How many members are on it?
2. What has been your experience of the finance council?
3. Finance councils help the pastor develop and monitor the parish budget. How has your parish's finance council been of service?
4. Has the finance council made recommendations that the pastor accepted and put into practice?
5. If you knew a pastor who was beginning a finance council, what would you advise him?
6. Any additional questions you would have liked me to ask?

Hand-written Answers:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

If There Is No Finance Council:

1. If you do not currently have an active parish finance council what other consultative bodies, formal or informal, do you rely on to make major decisions affecting the parish?
2. If your parish has never had a finance council, or only had one in the past, can you tell me about that?
3. What do people say about it?
4. Why was it discontinued?
5. If your parish were to start a finance council, how could I help? ([ADLA Guidelines](#))
6. Any additional questions you would have liked me to ask?

Hand-written Answers:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

Appendix 3: Form for Collecting Council Member Rosters

Counting & Celebrating Councils Project 2024			
Church Name:		Address:	

Finance Council									
Do they have Minutes?			Most recent meeting:						
<i>Prefix</i>	<i>1st Name</i>	<i>Last Name</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Phone</i>	<i>Email</i>	<i>Mailing Address - Street</i>	<i>City</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>Zip</i>