

RECOMMENDATIONS

Priority Recommendations

NATIONAL LEVEL

Governance

1. Strengthen the National Advisory Council

To more fully incorporate the talents and experience of the laity at the national level, the USCCB should strengthen the National Advisory Council (NAC) by:

- Revising its charter to give it the power to initiate, as well as react to, proposals before the USCCB
- Creating a nomination process that identifies experienced leaders of stature from both diverse geographical and functional backgrounds
- Giving it a permanent staff
- Having it meet regularly with the Executive Committee of the USCCB
- Publicly reporting its advice and findings to the USCCB
- Promoting it (letting the world know about it) and publicizing its membership (using the Web).

2. Adopt effective diocesan management standards and practices

Officers of the USCCB should publicly acknowledge to their peers the importance of effective management in achieving the Church's mission and should urge each diocesan ordinary to appoint a chief administrative officer, if none exists, to assist him in this function. The Conference should also urge adoption of an appropriate version of *The Standards of Excellence: An Ethics and Accountability Code for the Nonprofit Sector* (see Appendix C) as the performance benchmark for pastoral and finance councils as well as other Church-affiliated oversight entities.

3. Prepare a comprehensive diocesan self-examination every five years

Diocesan ordinaries should prepare every five years, in conjunction with their *ad limina* presentations, a comprehensive self-examination of the diocese, redefining its goals and the means it employs to reach them through its ministries and operations. To gain some of the benefits the accreditation process provides in higher education, this docu-

ment should serve as the basis for a consultation and report to the ordinary by a team of lay men and women with appropriate managerial experience, complemented by a number of experienced pastors or bishops.

Human Resources

4. **Draw on other institutions to improve the process of selecting bishops**
While recognizing the Holy See's role in the appointment of bishops, the USCCB Committee on Selection of Bishops should, with the assistance of human resource (HR) professionals aware of successful analogs with other institutions that choose leaders, seek to improve the existing process for selecting bishops. These improvements should include a clear definition of qualifications (including managerial capabilities), face-to-face interviews, and well-informed nominations and recommendations from clergy and laity.
5. **Create a Catholic Advanced Management Program**
Create a national Catholic Advanced Management Program (similar to those at Harvard, Wharton, and other schools for business leaders) designed to sharpen the business, management, and communication skills of diocesan leaders, including bishops.
6. **Identify and promote successful HR programs at the diocesan level**
The USCCB should identify, describe, and promote successful HR programs in dioceses across the country as models for others to follow.

Financial Resources

7. **Help dioceses to publish annual financial statements, approved budgets, and strategic plans**
The USCCB should provide dioceses with professional guidance or resources to publish an annual financial statement that is certified and "reader friendly," as well as an approved budget and strategic plan for the coming year just as it provides legal counsel, information, and direction on public policy matters.
8. **Develop an accreditation and reporting system to ensure diocesan compliance with national USCCB standards**
Catholic funding agencies (e.g., the American Board of Catholic Missions), with the assistance of other private and community foundations, should collaborate in developing a system of accreditation and reporting to ensure that dioceses have adopted and are in full compliance with the national budgetary, auditing, and operating standards of the USCCB. An outside professional should be used to help implement this system, which should include the publication of a "report card" on each diocese.
9. **Examine fundraising processes at all levels**
The USCCB should sponsor a study examining fundraising processes of the U.S. Catholic Church at all levels. Emphasis should be placed on (1) a better national coor-

dination of appeals, (2) a more complete accounting (particularly to parishioners) of where funds are going, (3) improved methods of fundraising beyond the traditional collection plate, (4) better ways for Catholic foundations and charitable agencies to work together, and (5) bringing in people with expertise in fundraising.

DIOCESAN LEVEL

Governance

10. Appoint a diocesan chief administrative officer and a Management Council

The diocesan ordinary should appoint a chief administrative officer (if the function does not already exist) with managerial training and experience. The ordinary should then establish a Management Advisory Council of experienced lay professionals to assist him and the chief administrator in the evaluation and improvement of management practices in the diocese. The ordinary should invite such groups as Catholic universities and healthcare organizations, and other institutions with managerial, theological, and cultural resources, to participate on this Council.

11. Help parishes develop a comprehensive self-examination program

Parishes within the diocese should develop a comprehensive self-examination program. This program would enable the diocese to redefine every five years its goals and the means it employs to reach them through its ministries and operations (this self-examination program is described more fully in Recommendation #3).

12. Actively promote diocesan best practices and adopt standards for excellence

Spotlight existing best practices in the diocese for others to adopt in the areas of (1) planning, (2) personnel evaluation, (3) pastoral and finance councils, (4) training, and (5) financial information and budgets. Powerful success models (e.g., Harvard Business School's published case study on the Roman Catholic Diocese of San Jose, California) should be developed, rewarded, and publicized. An appropriate version of *The Standards for Excellence: An Ethics and Accountability Code for the Nonprofit Sector* (see Appendix C) should also be adopted as the performance benchmark for pastoral and finance councils and other church affiliated oversight entities.

Human Resources

13. Create a strong performance review program for all staff members

Because the selection, deployment, and direction of personnel are among the most fundamental managerial responsibilities, it is essential to create a strong performance review program at the diocesan level for priests, brothers, sisters, lay ministers, and auxiliary bishops. This program should incorporate (1) job descriptions, (2) agreed-upon goals, (3) formal, 360-degree feedback as part of an annual review, and (4) constructive coaching.

14. Provide centralized recruiting for the parishes

The diocese should provide centralized, highly professional personnel recruiting, and offer it as a service to all the parishes. This should include recruitment at colleges and universities.

15. Provide an effective program of mentoring and formation for lay ministers

The diocese should implement a formal program of mentoring and formation for lay ministers that is theologically sound and pastorally effective. Best practices in other dioceses should be proposed as models, and USCCB committee materials should be created and disseminated to ensure consistency among dioceses.

Financial Resources**16. Publish an annual financial statement, approved budget, and strategic plan**

To ensure greater transparency, the diocese should publish a certified “reader friendly” annual financial statement, as well as an approved budget and strategic plan for the coming year. The bishops should provide ongoing forums for Catholic parishioners where financial issues and decisions of the dioceses and parishes can be discussed.

17. Comply with the Church’s national financial standards

The diocese should comply with the Church’s national financial standards. This is not now the case; excellent guidelines are often adopted by the bishops nationally, then ignored at home.

18. Publicize and promote best practices in financial reporting

Best practices in financial reporting should be publicized among dioceses. Diocesan finance councils should encourage professional and consistent reporting by parishes.

PARISH LEVEL

Governance**19. Appoint a chief administrative officer in larger parishes**

Especially in very large, complex parishes, a chief administrative officer with managerial training and experience should be appointed to assist the pastor in managerial functions.

20. Create ongoing educational outreach to encourage laity involvement

Pastors should actively encourage laity to become involved in the Church’s institutional life by creating an ongoing educational outreach program designed to familiarize members of the parish with the Church’s management and decision-making structures, internal life, and opportunities for involvement.

21. Develop a parish five-year strategic plan

Parishes should develop a five-year strategic plan that includes an intensive self-examination to review all parts of the parish's ministry and operations (this program is described more fully in Recommendation #3).

Human Resources**22. Implement an effective performance review program for all parish staff**

An effective performance review program for priests, brothers, sisters, and lay ministers should be implemented in parishes (this program is described more fully in Recommendation #13).

23. Encourage broad collaboration among parishes

Parishes should collaborate broadly with each other by sharing, for example, administrators, youth ministers, and other resources. A clustering of resources can be particularly useful as an alternative to parish closings and as financial limitations and clergy shortages become more acute.

24. Strengthen the Church's paradigm of leadership

The Catholic Church's paradigm of leadership should be strengthened by (1) changing the expectation that all priests must become pastors, (2) assigning lay and religious ministers on the basis of talent and ability to meet the needs of the parish, and (3) actively seeking candidates for lay minister beyond a purely volunteer pool of applicants.

Financial Resources**25. Publish annual financial audits and budgets**

Parishes should adhere to a policy of transparency and publish annual financial audits and budgets in their entirety.

26. Improve the selection process for parish finance council members

Select conflict-free financially experienced parishioners as parish finance council members and seek their assistance in training and developing additional members.

27. Hold an annual open forum to discuss financial planning and fundraising

Parishes should provide an annual open forum for parishioners where financial planning and methods of fundraising can be discussed.

Recommendations for the Longer Term

NATIONAL LEVEL

Governance

1. Participate in a national dialogue to share experiences in dealing with cultural and organizational change

The USCCB or individual bishops should encourage, endorse, and participate in a national dialogue among prominent Catholic lay and religious leaders who have significant experience in leading and managing influential institutions of substantial scale from both inside the Catholic Church and in the secular and nonprofit worlds. These leaders should represent the broad philosophical perspectives found within the Catholic Church, and they should be from a variety of locations across the United States to ensure geographical diversity. The purpose of the dialogue would be to share relevant experiences in dealing with the difficult issues of cultural and organizational change. Similar periodic regional meetings should also be considered.

2. Develop more effective Church leadership with Hispanics and Asians

The Catholic Church at the national and diocesan levels must do a better job of reaching out to and developing Church leadership within the Hispanic and Asian communities. The Church should consider creating a structural model to accommodate the huge growth of both of these populations.

Human Resources

3. Establish a vigorous training and education program for new bishops

The Church should establish a vigorous training and education program for new bishops, similar to training programs that other professions provide for their leaders. This program would draw on outside resources and focus on strengthening skill sets in general management as well as in financial and personnel management.

4. Establish a U.S. Catholic Career Service

The Church should establish a U.S. Catholic Career Service to attract and develop bright, younger talent. This national initiative would feature well-defined job descriptions and a career pathway able to take individuals from local to national responsibilities. It would also provide ongoing training, mentoring, and support. This effort should be supported with privately financed higher education grants.

5. Establish a Youth Corps

A Youth Corps should be established and promoted to draw service-minded young Catholics into working at the diocesan level.

Financial Resources

6. **Use the latest technology to improve financial reporting**
The latest technology should be employed to increase the ease, consistency, and accuracy of financial reporting. Consider, for example, using the USCCB Web site to deliver online financial management training to the members of diocesan and parish finance councils.
7. **Implement a strategic/financial planning process to identify the future needs of the Church**
A strategic and financial planning process, preferably drawing on the expertise of outside professionals, should be employed at the national level to identify the future needs of the Church, along with the resources and national appeals needed to fund them.
8. **Examine economies of scale in purchasing goods and services**
The USCCB should examine ways the U.S. Church can benefit through economies of scale in purchasing goods and services.

DIOCESAN LEVEL

Governance

9. **Increase trust and empowerment by “managing from the middle”**
Bishops, pastors, and priests should draw on the powerful notion of “managing from the middle” to increase trust and empowerment and to utilize better the skills and talents of people around them, particularly the laity.
10. **Improve the operation of the diocesan pastoral council**
The diocesan pastoral council should be a model of constructive dialogue between its members and the bishop who presides over the group, and council members should be trained to be more effective leaders through instruction in ecclesiology as well as in such practical areas as how to reach consensus and how to run a meeting.
11. **Adopt a proactive service mentality where dioceses view parishes as clients**
The diocese should look at its parishes as clients (for example, the Detroit Archdiocese replaced the word *Chancery* with *Central Services*) to emphasize the role of the diocese in supporting each of its parishes.
12. **Pair needier and wealthier parishes to form a constructive relationship**
Parishes that are wealthier in managerial, financial, and programmatic resources should be paired with needier parishes within the diocese to foster a constructive relationship where the former can counsel and assist the latter.

13. Encourage and help parishes to conduct periodic surveys of parishioners

Parishes within the diocese should be encouraged to conduct a periodic survey of parishioners as a way of collecting data and providing feedback on which to base meaningful change. A central diocesan service should provide the logistical support (i.e., survey preparation, analysis, and tabulation) for this survey.

Human Resources**14. Provide life-long education and training for priests, particularly in leadership**

Priests should be given help to determine their strengths and weaknesses, particularly in the area of leadership, by providing education/training. The process should start at the seminary level by training priests to inspire and providing them with a common vision of how a successful parish works. It should be a life-long educational endeavor, offering feedback and guidance to help priests handle their tough, complex jobs.

15. Engage in broad dialogue before appointing a new pastor

Bishops should hold dialogue sessions with parishioners and parish staff in advance of choosing a new pastor.

Financial Resources**16. Provide parishes with centralized resources for development and fundraising**

The diocese should provide competent centralized resources to assist each parish within its territory in development/fundraising.

17. Examine the cost savings of broader cooperative procurement

The potential cost savings of broader cooperative procurement should be examined at the diocesan level.

18. Provide positive reinforcement through incentive programs

Positive reinforcement should be created for exemplary programmatic, management, and financial performance through reward, acknowledgment, and incentive systems.

PARISH LEVEL

Governance**19. Improve the process for selecting members for parish pastoral councils**

Parish pastoral councils should reflect through their membership the constituencies the parish wants — and urgently needs — to serve, including young adults, ethnic populations, and women.

Human Resources

20. Promote an atmosphere of “welcome”

Programs should be developed to create an atmosphere and attitude of “welcome” by all parish representatives.

21. Develop a process for evaluating homilies and music liturgy

A process for evaluation of homilies and the appropriate range of music liturgy should be developed to attract the broadest range of parish participation.