PARISH PRESERVATION ALLIANCE

Forming a Parish Core Group Guide

What Your Parish Needs to Know

The **Parish Preservation Alliance (PPA)** is a nonprofit organization led by volunteers who love the Catholic faith and are committed to helping parishioners understand and exercise their rights under Canon Law when decisions may significantly affect their parish. Within Parish Preservation Alliance, there is a **Diocesan Core Group (DCG)** who are the volunteers who work directly with participating parish groups, helping them organize, prepare, and navigate the process. The **St. Joseph Foundation and canonist Phil Gray** provide independent Canon Law guidance to the Diocesan Core Group on issues raised at the parish level.

Who Is Involved?

- **Parish Preservation Alliance - Diocesan Core Group (DCG):** Helps parish groups get organized, provides training and guidance, answers questions, and seeks additional Canon Law guidance when needed.
- **Parish Core Group (PCG):** A small group of parishioners who help organize the effort within their parish.
- **Coordinator:** Keeps the parish group organized and serves as the main contact with the DCG.
- **Procurator:** A parishioner chosen to act on behalf of those who have given that person written authorization through a Procurator Mandate. This person must be available to send and receive documents and meet deadlines.
- **Runners/Communicators:** Parishioners who help keep fellow parishioners informed, gather important parish information and records, and assist the Parish Core Group with other needed tasks.
- **Independent Canonist:** Philip Gray and the St. Joseph Foundation provides Canon Law knowledge and guidance to the DCG. The canonist does not directly represent the parish or individual parishioners through this effort.

How Parishioners Can Participate

An individual parishioner who believes he or she has been harmed by a Church decision may seek recourse under Canon Law. **The entire parish does not have to participate for someone to act.** Other affected parishioners may join the effort, and broader participation can provide additional information, organization, and support.

Parishioners may act on their own or may authorize the same **Procurator** to act for them. Each person who wants the Procurator to act on his or her behalf must sign an individual **Procurator Mandate**. The Procurator can act only for the parishioners who have given that authorization.

Getting Your Parish Started

A parish interested in participating should:

1. Form a **Parish Core Group**.
2. Choose a **Coordinator and Procurator** and identify parishioners who can assist with communications and other tasks.
3. Register through the PPA website here:
4. Complete the privacy acknowledgement and other introductory requirements.

What Happens Next?

Once parishes sign-up, they will receive the St. Joseph Foundation Parish Packet and be assigned DCG representative to work with. Parishes receive guidance and materials as they move through each step. Not everything is provided at the beginning because some information and materials apply only at certain points in the process.

Materials, forms, and Canon Law guidance provided to a Parish Core Group are intended for that parish's use and **should not be shared publicly or with other parishes**. Other parishes interested in participating should contact the DCG directly.

If your parish encounters an unusual situation or is unsure what to do, **do not guess or try to create your own solution. Contact the DCG for guidance before proceeding so the DCG can contact the Canonist.**

What About Hiring a Canon Lawyer?

Parish teams have successfully pursued appeals in Rome without retaining a canon lawyer. Parishioners always have the right, however, to hire their own canon lawyer if they choose. Private canonical representation is a **separate path** from the DCG-supported process. If parishioners retain a canon lawyer to handle the matter, they would continue with their chosen lawyer and would no longer participate in the DCG-supported program for that matter.

Most Important to Remember

- ❑ **Your parish group leads the effort to protect and preserve your parish.**
- ❑ **The Parish Core Group organizes the work within your parish.**
- ❑ **The Procurator acts on behalf of the parishioners who have authorized him or her to do so.**
- ❑ **Parish Preservation Alliance and the Diocesan Core Group are there to guide and support you.**
- ❑ **The canonist provides Canon Law guidance through the Diocesan Core Group**