

2023-2024 PASTORAL ASSOCIATE FORMATION PROGRAM FOR LEADERSHIP

General Information

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Sts. Aquila and Pricilla (l) and Lydia (r)
Pastoral associates of the Apostolic Church, but without the formal title

Formation Overview

The Pastoral Associate Formation Program for Leadership enables participants to develop knowledge and skills for a collaborative role with a pastor in the administrative, operational and pastoral needs of a parish or parish network. The program consists of an eight-month program that starts with a gathering and orientation on October 14, 2023, and ends with a closing event and Mass on June 4, 2024. It includes nine learning modules that meet on seventeen Tuesday evenings in the Pastoral Center and by Zoom, an evening of reflection, mentoring support, a spring practicum (see Module 10, below) and a closing celebration. Special group events are in-person only.

Program Calendar

Our 2023-2024 calendar is available at [2023-2024 program calendar](#) .

Entrance Requirements

Program entrance requirements are intended to promote successful completion of the program. Some credentials are preferred or optional and could be useful in consideration of the participant's vocational goals and the needs of a specific parish or parish network. Keep in mind that successful completion of this program does not guarantee a job with a diocesan entity, but it does provide a diocesan credential for obtaining one.

Required attributes:

1. Three recommendations showing leadership ability and commitment to the people, Church teaching and synodality (that is, a participatory and co-responsible Church). One recommendation is from your home or work pastor (or Parish Life Coordinator) and two are from a peer or friend who knows your talents. All references must be non-family members.
2. Full communion with the Church.
3. Safe Environment credentials or the ability to obtain them. These credentials are required for employment within the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany.
4. Parish or transferrable secular office experience.
5. Medium-level Microsoft Office application skills and access to the internet.

Preferred and optional attributes:

1. *Preferred:* College degree
2. *Optional:* Advanced education in business, theology or both; acquaintance with Parish Data Systems (PDS)

Application and references must be received by October 3rd to be considered for the 2023-2024 program.

Forms are available at [RCDA- Pastoral Associate Formation](#) or by request to: PAFormation@rcda.org ;(518) 453-6670.

Learning Module Descriptions

Module 1-9 presentations are at the Pastoral Center on Tuesday evenings, 6:30-8:00pm, with Zoom participation available, if needed. Non-presentation module weeks (see [2023-2024 program calendar](#)) are primarily reserved for mentoring encounters.

FALL LEARNING MODULES

1. **The Essential Role of the Pastoral Associate, presentations on October 17 & 24, 2023**

The pastoral associate is a servant leader who collaborates with the pastor on the operational management of the parish or parish network. In this way, the pastoral associate supports the pastor's core sacramental and pastoral ministries. Depending on the needs of a parish or parish network, the pastoral associate might oversee human resources, information technology, facility maintenance, finance and front-line pastoral needs.

Servant leadership requires the know-how to cultivate positive working relationships between parish and diocesan employees and volunteers, which we will explore in this module.

Presenter:

Deacon Mike McDonald, with vast leadership experience, deacon at St. Mary's Church Coxsackie

2. **What Makes Us Catholic? Presentations on November 14 & December 5, 2023**

A contemporary *lived and living* Catholicism has distinctive features. This module explores these features through the lens of how they influence – or perhaps *should* influence – the lives of individual Catholics and parish communities. We will reflect on our own Catholic life and probe a deeper understanding of the guiding principles in practical ministry, including faith formation.

Presenters:

David Amico, Director of Lay Ministry and Parish Faith Formation

3. **The Ministerial Workplace, Part 1: Safety First! Presentations on December 12, 2023, & January 9, 2024**

Pastoral associates collaborate with the pastor and staff to create a welcoming and safe environment for everyone, spiritually and physically. Using insights from Pope Francis' *Joy of the Gospel* and other resources, we will first explore the spiritual dimensions of a vibrant workplace and parish community, one that welcomes and provides a safe environment for all. Then we will focus on the practical steps needed to comply with specific diocesan and legal requirements that promote this goal.

Presenters:

Erin Muir, Associate Director of Lay Ministry and Parish Faith Formation

Michael Kane, Director of Real Property

SPRING LEARNING MODULES

4. **The Ministerial Workplace Part 2: Human Resources, presentations on January 16 & 23 (or February 6, 2024)**

A parish is like any other organization in many ways, yet it is not business as usual because the Church's mission is the Mission of Jesus. As such, we recognize that we are all created in God's loving image and redeemed by His Son. We will apply this understanding to the diocesan, legal and practical steps connected to employee and volunteer recruitment, compensation, onboarding, retention, and the blessings and challenges of coordinating staff with different gifts. Case studies will offer insights on how to promote vibrant staff relationships within a parish, parish network and beyond.

Presenter: Joyce Tarantino, ESQ., Director of Human Resources

5. **Recording Grace, one presentation on February 12, 2024**

Recordkeeping is not just another chore; it has a longstanding benefit that offers real-life insights into the wellbeing of a community. As such, recordkeeping enlightens future planning by accessing current successes and vulnerabilities.

This module will explore the value of recordkeeping from a historical and biblical perspective, then the practical steps involved. Each step involves discretion, responsibility, transparency and sensitivity. We will explore old data collections, parish and diocesan archives, parish profiles, USCCB and Vatican reports, the Official Catholic Directory, and the pastoral associate's responsibility at the parish and parish network level.

Presenters:

Dorinda Olmer, M.S., Data Coordinator, Office of Pastoral Planning

Amy Brozio-Andrews, Diocesan Archivist

Michael Beaver, Parish Webmaster/Programmer, D.B.A. [Database Administrator] & Tech Support

6. **Canon Law, presentations on March 5 & March 12, 2024**

A basic understanding of canon law is essential for parish leadership because it governs our Church. We will discuss the following major canonical topics:

- Obligations and Rights of All the Christian Faithful and the Lay Christian Faithful
- On Particular Churches, specifically the Diocese and the Authority of the Bishop
- The RCDA Curia: Chancery, Tribunal, Pastoral Planning and other departments
- Parishes, Pastors, and parochial Vicars: Universal and RCDA Particular law requirements
- Sacraments Introduction, including proper registration and record keeping
- Temporal Goods: Acquisition and Administration

Presenters:

Father Matthew H. Frisoni, S.T.L., J.C.L., Judicial Vicar, pastor of St. Paul the Apostle, St. Adalbert and Our Lady of Mt. Carmel churches in Schenectady

Deacon Andrew P. Haskins, J.C.L., Tribunal Judge, deacon at St. John the Evangelist and St. Anthony Church in Schenectady

7. **Finance and Stewardship, presentations on April 9 & April 23, 2024**

Financial and non-financial stewardship is the material fuel of all parish activities. In this module, we will explore the impact of contributions of time, talent and funds, all of which significantly impact community-building efforts. We will also discuss the importance of financial accountability and transparency, and appropriate parish communications on financial matters.

Presenters:

Elizabeth Simcoe, Parish Life Director of St. Vincent De Paul in Albany since 2016; previously served as the Chancellor

Nancy Bielawa, Executive Director of Stewardship & Development for the Diocese of Albany, is a seasoned fundraising professional with more than 25 years of experience in raising millions of dollars for non-profits around the Capital Region.

Veronica Schmitt-Henzler is bookkeeper at St. Vincent de Paul and Mater Christi in Albany and St. Vincent de Paul in Cobleskill

8. Church: People of God and a Place, presentations on April 30 & May 7, 2024

This module explores diocesan resources and other ways to address the needs of the people through greater collaboration inside parish networks. Parish networking is a key objective of our diocese. It involves collaborative parish relationships that still honor the sacred ties between individual parishioners and their worship spaces. Pastoral associates are guided in this effort by an understanding of Church hierarchy, diocesan organization, parish networks and individual parish organization.

Presenter:

Deacon Al Censullo, Pastoral Planning Support Services, deacon at Church of St. Mary, East Greenbush and St. John the Evangelist / St. Joseph, Rensselaer

9. Pastoral Ministry, presentations on May 14 & 21, 2024

Pope St. Paul VI wrote in *Evangelization in the Modern World*: "The laity can also feel called, or in fact be called, to cooperate with their pastors in the service of the ecclesial community, for the sake of its growth and life. This can be done through the exercise of different kinds of ministries according to the grace and charisms the Lord has been pleased to bestow in them."

This module situates the pastoral associate's role within the Church's current understanding of pastoral ministry by the laity. Topics include missionary discipleship, servant leadership, collaboration, leadership in prayer (such as *Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest*), self-care, ongoing formation, evangelization and outreach in parishes and the wider community, responding to opposing views, event planning and advertisement.

Presenter:

David Amico, Director of Lay Ministry and Parish Faith Formation

10. Practicum, full spring semester

Participants will spend time in a parish or charity group under the guidance of a priest, administrator, or parish life coordinator. Alternative mentorship venues will be arranged for those with weekday scheduling conflicts or other needs.

The practicum is arranged with mentors and a pastor or other organizational leader.

Absentee Policy

Given the energetic pace of the program, participants are expected to attend all class sessions and special events. Please arrive on time and plan to stay for the entire class. If you are sick, and feel well enough, you may join presentations via Zoom. However, special events are in-person only.

Absences should be reserved for seriously limiting reasons. Contact your mentor in advance or as soon as possible to report an absence. We will arrange a make-up alternative which will likely involve viewing a recorded presentation, discussing the class with a fellow participant and your mentor, and submitting a learning summary,

such as a journal submission. Your mentor's contact information will be distributed in advance of the first presentation.

Suggested Reading List

A Concise Guide to Canon Law; A Practical Handbook for Pastoral Ministers (2000), Kevin E. McKenna
Best Practices for Parish Stewardship (2008), Charles E. Zech
Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People (2002), USCC
Church Money (2019), Fr. Michael White and Tom Corcoran
Joy of the Gospel (Evangelii Gaudium, 2013), Pope Francis
Redeeming Administration (2013), Ann M. Garrido
Sunday Celebrations in the Absence of a Priest (Rev. Ed. 2012), USCCB
What Makes Us Catholic - Eight Gifts for Life (2002), Thomas H. Groom

Contact Information

For more information, please go to [RCDA- Pastoral Associate Formation](#) or contact Erin Muir at: PAFormation@rcda.org (518) 453-6670.