



Archdiocese of Indianapolis - Catholic Charities
Introduction to
Parish Social Ministry

IV. What a Parish Social Ministry Team IS and IS NOT

PSM IS NOT: PSM is not just a committee for ministries to report on their work. It is not the work of a few people who are responsible for all the direct service provided within the parish. It is not about just “maintaining” the work of a direct service ministry.

PSM IS: PSM is a team whose function is to assist those within the parish to understand that the Catholic Social Mission is an essential part of the faith life of every able Catholic AND that each ministry is important to the life of the parish.

A challenge for each of us is to completely rethink the focus, role and structure of social mission of the parish. It is about moving from just “maintaining” a ministry to formation and growing the ministries.

The function of the PSM team would be more of leaders, organizers and planners. They can still be the doers, but a PSM Team needs to understand their role is not just a come together and report, but to come together to:

- Organize events
- Invite people to participate
- Recruit new people to volunteer
- Orchestrate new ministry ideas and ongoing spiritual formation around social mission
- Create opportunities for all members of the parish to be involved in the social mission of the Church!

The *Communities of Salt and Light* summarizes three key messages that have implications for the responsibilities and structures of the “team”:

1) Our social mission should be **integrated throughout parish life**. As the story of the Last Judgment in Matthew’s Gospel reminds us, in the end we will all (not just the usual suspects on the social concerns committee) be judged by how we have cared for the least among us. This means that the Catholic social mission is an essential part of the faith life of every able Catholic. It must be woven into education programs so that all Catholics learn about Catholic Social Teaching. It must be reflected in the prayer and worship of our faith community. And it must include a wide range of opportunities for members of our parishes to act on the social dimensions of our faith.

(2) Social concerns committees, in their leadership capacity, **should organize the work, not do the work**. The primary role of these leaders is to provide opportunities, to invite and recruit members of

their faith community to become involved in Catholic social mission. For example, the leaders of the parish's program to support a local soup kitchen can do their job well only by creating opportunities and inviting other parishioners to volunteer. This is not to suggest that members of "Coordination Team" should absent themselves from being involved in the doing of the work; rather, in the role of leader/organizer/planner, the critical task at hand is to organize, invite, recruit, orchestrate and create opportunities for the parish—and *all* of its members—to become engaged.

(3) Parish social ministry must include both **efforts to provide direct service or outreach to people in need and efforts to work for justice and peace by shaping the policies, programs, and structures of society.**

(Organizing a Parish Social Ministry Coordination Team – USCCB)