

## **PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL STATUTES**

**INTRODUCTION:** The Presbyteral Council, representative of the presbyterate, assists the Bishop in his governance of the Diocese, in order that the pastoral welfare of the people of God be promoted as effectively as possible in accordance with current Canon Law (canon 495). Priests of the Diocese of Lafayette are free to communicate with any Presbyteral Council member.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

There are four (4) categories of Presbyteral Council membership:

- a. One Dean from each Deanery, who are ex officio members.
- b. Two (2) priests elected from each Deanery in which they reside. If during the term of membership, an elected member changes Deanery of residence, he remains on the Council until the completion of his term.
- c. Appointed members are named by the Bishop to ensure broad representation of the presbyterate as a whole: religious clergy, large/small parishes, minorities or ethnic groups, and/or retired priests. The number of appointed members is determined by the Bishop.
- d. The Vicar General, the Chancellor (if a priest), and Vicar for Clergy are ex-officio members.

### **ELIGIBILITY FOR MEMBERSHIP AND VOTING**

#### **Canon 498**

**§1.** The following have the right to both active and passive vote in constituting the Presbyteral Council:

- 1° all secular priests incardinated in the Diocese;
- 2° secular priests not incardinated in the Diocese, and priests who are members of an institute of consecrated life or a society of apostolic life, who live in the Diocese and exercise some office for the good of the Diocese.

**§2.** To the extent statutes provide for it, the same right of election can be extended to other priests who have a domicile or quasi-domicile in the diocese.

### **ELECTIONS**

1. Elections take place by mail ballot sent by the Executive Assistant of the Vicar General.
2. Elections are to be completed in time for the November Presbyteral Council meeting.
3. All priests eligible to vote receive a ballot and list of eligible candidates from their Deanery. Due to lack of availability, incardinated priests residing outside of the Diocese of Lafayette will ordinarily not be listed as a candidate eligible for election.

4. Priests appointed to diocesan-wide positions who do not belong to a specific Deanery shall vote in the Central Deanery.
5. In the event of a tie, another ballot is mailed. If the second balloting produces a tie, the Bishop will then choose by lots.
6. The term of office of elected and appointed Presbyteral Council members is three (3) years.

### **LOSS OF MEMBERSHIP**

1. One ceases to be a member of the Presbyteral Council by resignation from the Council or when his term expires or when he ceases from the office by reason of which he is an *ex officio* member of the Presbyteral Council.
2. In the case of three (3) consecutive unexcused absences on the part of any elected or appointed Presbyteral Council member, membership on the Council ceases. Before informing the member of his termination, the Chair will consult the Bishop.

### **UNCOMPLETED TERM**

The Bishop will name a replacement to finish the term of any elected or appointed member whose membership ceases before the expiration of his term.

### **PRESIDER**

The Bishop presides over the Presbyteral Council in person. The Presbyteral Council shall not meet unless the Bishop is present.

### **OFFICERS OF THE COUNCIL**

1. Officers are chosen from among the membership, elected at the first meeting of the calendar year. These are the Chair, a Vice-Chair and a Secretary.
2. The Chair of the Presbyteral Council:
  - a. Is elected by the members of the Presbyteral Council for a term of one (1) year.
  - b. Assists the Bishop in preparing the agenda for the meetings of the Presbyteral Council.
  - c. Moderates the meetings on behalf of the Bishop and at his direction.
  - d. Shall represent the Presbyteral Council at the meetings of the New Orleans Provincial Council.
3. The Vice-Chair of the Presbyteral Council:
  - a. Is elected by the members of the Presbyteral Council for a term of one (1) year.
  - b. Assumes the duties of the Chair upon his absence or at his request.
  - c. Assists the Chair as directed by him.
  - d. Assists the Bishop in preparing meeting agendas.
  - e. Shall represent the Presbyteral Council at the meetings of the New Orleans Provincial Council in the absence of the Chair.

4. The Secretary of the Presbyteral Council:
  - a. Is elected by the members of the Presbyteral Council for a term of one (1) year.
  - b. Oversees the election of members of the Presbyteral Council.
  - c. Assists the Bishop in preparing meeting agendas.
  - d. Shall represent the Presbyteral Council at the meetings of the New Orleans Provincial Council in the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair.

## **MEETINGS**

1. The Presbyteral Council will meet every other month.
2. The Executive Assistant of the Vicar General records the minutes, distributes them to the presbyterate, and appropriately archives them.
3. The Bishop or the Chair, with the Bishop's consent, may call for special meetings of the Presbyteral Council at any time.
4. Standing and *ad hoc* committees of the Presbyteral Council may be established as needed.

## **COLLEGE OF CONSULTORS**

1. Members of the College of Consultors are freely appointed by the Bishop and drawn from the membership of the Presbyteral Council (canon 502§1).
2. The College of Consultors is constituted for a period of five (5) years. At the end of five years, the Bishop is to reconstitute the College.
3. One ceases to be a member of the College of Consultors by resignation from the College or when the College is reconstituted according to the norm of law. Ceasing to be a member of the Presbyteral Council does not automatically entail loss of membership in the College of Consultors.

## **AMENDMENTS AND BY-LAWS**

1. Amendments to these statutes and their effective date shall be made by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Presbyteral Council.
2. By-laws not in conflict with these statutes may be adopted by the affirmative vote of the majority of the Presbyteral Council.
3. All amendments and by-laws must have the approval of the Bishop.
4. The Executive Assistant of the Vicar General shall keep copies of these statutes, all pertinent by-laws, and appropriately archive them.

## **PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL BY LAWS**

### **PRIESTS WELFARE COMMITTEE**

#### **ROLE AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

1. The Priests Welfare Committee will be a standing Committee of the Presbyteral Council.
2. The Welfare Committee will develop recommendations as regards priests' salaries, benefits, retirement, and well-being.
3. The Welfare Committee's primary constituency is the incardinated priests of the Diocese of Lafayette.
4. All proposals of the Welfare Committee will be submitted to the Presbyteral Council which will make its recommendations to the Bishop.

#### **MEMBERSHIP AND OFFICERS**

1. All members shall be appointed by the Bishop. Membership shall include at least five (5) priests, and whenever possible one should be retired. The Vicar for Priests, Diocesan Financial Officer, and lay persons may be called upon to serve as consultants.
2. The chairman of the Welfare Committee shall be appointed by Bishop for a period of two years.
3. The Chairman of the Welfare Committee shall schedule meetings, prepare the agenda, chair all meetings, and make at least two reports to the Council each year. He may cancel meetings, as well as call special meetings, when deemed necessary by him.
4. The Executive Committee of the Presbyteral Council, after consulting with the Welfare Committee, will recommend to the bishop whom to appoint to the Welfare Committee.
5. Members will be appointed for terms of four years and whenever possible some will have staggered terms.
6. Members may be reappointed.
7. The officers shall be the chairman, vice-chairman, and secretary. The vice-chairman and secretary will be elected by the members of the Welfare Committee for a term of two (2) years.
8. The Welfare Committee will meet at least twice a year.

## TERMINATION

1. In the case of three (3) consecutive unexcused absences, membership shall cease. Before informing the member of his termination, the chairman will consult the Bishop.

## UNCOMPLETED TERMS

1. Any Welfare Committee member who cannot complete his term is replaced for the unexpired portion of his term at the next regular meeting.

This policy is effective immediately and abrogates and replaces in its entirety the former policy titled Council of Priests Constitution (Policy 101) dated June 16, 2016.

  
Most Reverend J. Douglas Deshotel, D.D.  
Bishop of Lafayette

Revised: April 20, 2023

  
Mrs. Maureen K. Fontenot, PHR, SHRM-CP  
Chancellor/Notary

