

DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

INTRODUCTION: The Diocesan Pastoral Council is an advisory body of laity, religious, deacons, and priests. It serves as a unifying force in the Diocese. Its role is to explore “under the authority of the Bishop, those things which pertain to pastoral works.” The Diocesan Pastoral Council is to ponder “pastoral concerns in dialogue with the Bishop, and propose practical recommendations and conclusions about them” (Canon 511ff).

The Christian faithful who are appointed to the pastoral Council are to be so selected that the entire portion of the people of God which constitutes the Diocese is truly reflected, with due regard for the diverse regions, social conditions and professions of the Diocese as well as the role which they have in the apostolate, either as individuals or in conjunction with others (Canon 512).

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL

1. The Council reviews, recommends and initiates policies, under the direction of the Bishop.
2. The Council acts as an avenue of communications to and from the Bishop and the people of the Diocese and articulates the thinking and feelings of the people.
3. The Council raises issues and stimulates ideas pertinent to pastoral concerns.
4. The Council reflects on the signs of the times in order to insure quality of planning that is future-oriented and helps to identify priorities in the Diocese.

MEMBERSHIP

1. Eighteen members are selected from three categories:
 - a. Eight members, two from each region, represent the Church in their area.
 - b. Three members represent the clergy and religious in the Diocese.
 - c. Seven members represent groups with particular needs (youth, elderly, and persons with disabilities) and cultural groups.
2. The members selected shall have served in ministries in the parish, region or Diocese, exhibit a great love for the Church and have an ability and willingness to articulate concerns, ideas, and vision to others.

MEMBERSHIP PROCEDURES

1. Council members are appointed for only one term of three years. However, in special circumstances, a member, upon recommendation of the Executive Board and concurrence of the Council, may be re-appointed for an additional year up to another full term. Every year, one third of the DPC members are replaced by new members. Each year a nominating committee of at least three members is appointed in March.
2. For Regional Representatives, the committee elicits suggestions for nominees from Episcopal Vicars and Diocesan Pastoral Council members.
3. For clergy and religious representatives, the committee contacts office directors, the Priests' Council and Diocesan Pastoral Council members for suggestions.
4. For special needs and cultural groups, the committee contacts any office or leadership group working with the respective cultural or special needs group for suggestions for nominees.
5. After surfacing the names, the committee
 - a. Invites the potential nominees to a meeting to reflect on their own gifts in light of the duties and responsibilities of a DPC member;
 - b. Receives the names of all persons accepting nomination;
 - c. Prioritizes the names and presents them to the Bishop for his selection.

PRESIDER

The Bishop or his appointed delegate presides over all meetings.

OFFICERS

There shall be a Chair and Vice-Chair for the Council, elected at the August meeting each year.

1. The Chair of the Council
 - a. Is elected by the members of the Council for a term of one year and can serve only two consecutive terms;
 - b. Chairs meetings of the Council and performs the usual duties of that office;
 - c. Prepares the agenda with the assistance and concurrence of the Bishop.
2. The Vice-Chair of the Council
 - a. Is elected by the members of the Council for a term of one year and can serve only two consecutive terms;
 - b. Assumes the duties of the Chair upon her/his absence when requested;
 - c. Prepares the agenda with the assistance and concurrence of the Bishop;
 - d. Assists the Chair as needed.

3. The secretary of the Council (Secretarial duties are performed by a chancery staff member appointed by the Bishop.)
 - a. Keeps minutes of all Council meetings;
 - b. Provides the Council members, the Bishop, and the Priests' Council with minutes of all Council proceedings;
 - c. Mails agendas, minutes, and other needed information at least one week before the scheduled meeting;
 - d. Takes responsibility for any correspondence of the Council as directed;
 - e. Takes responsibility for room reservation, set up, and clean up;
 - f. Provides refreshments.

EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Executive Board shall include the Bishop, Chair, Vice-Chair and appropriate resource persons who will be responsible for the general supervision of Council affairs, such as the planning for Council meetings.

COMMITTEES

Standing committees and ad hoc committees will be established as needed.

DISMISSAL

In the case of three (3) unexcused absences in one year of any member, the Chair will meet with the respective member to consider his/her membership on the Council. If appropriate, after the meeting, the Chair will recommend to the Bishop that the member be replaced.

VACANCY

1. In the event that a member is unable to fulfill his or her term, the Bishop shall fill the vacancy by appointment, after consultation with the appropriate Episcopal Vicar/Director, or as he sees fit.
2. If the unexpired term is 12 months or less, the appointed member is eligible for a second term.

MEETINGS

1. The Council meets in the months of September, November, January, March and May.
2. Council members are given the meeting dates for the Fiscal Year in June/July and are expected to attend all meetings.

3. Attention is given to parliamentary procedure; however, there is a concern for group consensus during Council deliberations.

AMENDMENTS AND BY-LAWS

1. Amendments to/Revision of this constitution and their respective date shall be made by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Council.
2. By-Laws not in conflict with this constitution may be adopted by the affirmative vote of the majority of the Council.
3. All amendments and By-Laws must have the approval of the Bishop.

Approved +Michael Jarrell

Date May 27, 2014