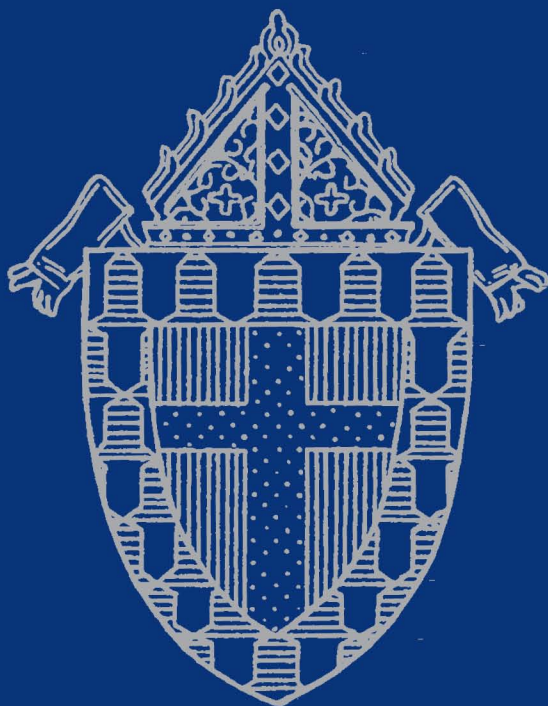


Parish Pastoral Council Handbook



Diocese of Lafayette



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

A MESSAGE FROM THE BISHOP

One of the fruits of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) is the wider involvement of lay people in the workings of the Church. In Liturgy, in education, in social ministry and in governance, the laity have responded generously. The Parish Pastoral Council is one example of this increase in participation by the laity. In the Diocese of Lafayette, Parish Pastoral Councils have been mandated since 1977. Over the past 30 years, these Councils have been enthusiastically embraced by pastors and the faithful and have proven useful in helping parishes to achieve their mission.

This new handbook replaces the 2000 edition. It is intended to clarify and simplify the diocesan requirements for Parish Pastoral Councils. It is my hope that this approach will be more useful to pastors and councils. However, the need for an effective Pastoral Council in every parish is no less urgent. Having served in the Office of Pastor for 17 years, I have seen the usefulness of the Parish Pastoral Council so much so that I find it difficult to imagine how a parish can operate effectively without one. The leadership of the Pastor is crucial in the establishment and operation of a Parish Pastoral Council.

I am grateful to Monsignor Russell Harrington for his work in the revision of the handbook. The recommendations of the Council of Priests, the Diocesan Pastoral Council and many other clergy and faithful were helpful in the process. I pray that God may bless their work by making this new handbook a useful tool for helping Councils to fulfill their mission of fostering pastoral life in all of our Churches. May God bless all in the Diocese and may he assist us in our efforts to be ever more faithful in building the Kingdom.

Sincerely yours in Our Lord,

Most Reverend Michael Jarrell
Bishop of Lafayette

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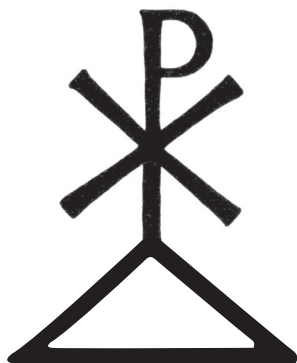
PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL HANDBOOK

Introduction

The parish is a community of the people of God empowered by the Holy Spirit. It gathers to celebrate Eucharist and to serve others by proclaiming and teaching the Word of God and living out the Gospel of Jesus Christ. To assist the work of the Spirit, the Parish Pastoral Council is to exist in every parish of the Diocese of Lafayette to advise the Pastor/Parish Life Coordinator in the pastoral care of the parish faith community.

Canon 536

1. After the diocesan bishop has listened to the presbyteral council and if he judges it opportune, a pastoral council is to be established in each parish; the pastor presides over it, and through it the Christian faithful along with those who share in the pastoral care of the parish in virtue of their office give their help in fostering pastoral activity.
2. This pastoral council possesses a consultative vote only and is governed by norms determined by the diocesan bishop.



Role of Parish Pastoral Council

1. The primary role of the Parish Pastoral Council is to advise the Pastor/Parish Life Coordinator in the administration of the parish. The Council does not perform administrative duties which are reserved for the Pastor/Parish Life Coordinator.
2. The Parish Pastoral Council is to promote parish life and encourage the involvement of the laity of the parish faith community. As parish leaders Council members represent parishioners and encourage their participation in Pastoral activities.
3. The Council is to assist the Pastor/Parish Life Coordinator in developing and fostering the pastoral plan of the parish: the pastoral vision, mission, goals, and action plans of the parish. Council members promote the vision of the parish rather than their personal visions.
4. The Parish Pastoral Council ceases upon the departure of the previous Pastor/Parish Life Coordinator when a change of Pastor occurs. Because the Council exists to advise a particular Pastor, when he is no longer Pastor, their duties and advisory responsibilities cease to exist.
5. The Parish Pastoral Council can only be dissolved by the Bishop.

Membership

1. The Constitution of the Council determines the number of members, which should be no less than eight and no more than fifteen.
2. At least two thirds of the members are to be elected.
3. Appointed members are selected to ensure adequate representation of all groups in the parish.
4. Trustees and principals of parochial schools are to be ex officio members of the Council.
5. Staff members of the parish are never to be members of the Council, but may be invited to attend as resource people at meetings of the Council.
6. Members of the Council are to be able to communicate the needs of parishioners.
7. Members of the Council strive for unity of the parish.



Meetings

1. Meetings of the Pastoral Parish Council are presided over by the Pastor or his delegate.
2. No meetings of the Council are to be held without the Pastor being present or without his expressed permission.
3. Parish Pastoral Council meetings are to be held at least quarterly.
4. The goal of the meeting is to work towards consensus.

Commissions

1. To facilitate the work of the Council, it is advised that various commissions be created.
2. The exact number and nature of the commissions are to be determined by the Pastor in consultation with the Council. Examples of commissions would be Education, Liturgical, Social Justice, Vocation, etc.
3. When the Parish Pastoral Council is dissolved upon the departure of the Pastor/Parish Life Coordinator, the work of the commissions continues at the discretion of the Regional Vicar or appointed Administrator of the parish.

Constitution and By-laws

1. Each Parish Pastoral Council is governed by a constitution approved by the Bishop, of which there is to be a copy on file with the Archives of the Diocese of Lafayette.
2. The basic elements of the constitution include the following: preamble, name of the Council, purpose and objective, membership, nominations and elections, officers, meetings, commissions and committees, amendments, and ratification.

Roles of Regional Vicars and Executive Assistants to the Regional Vicars

1. The Vicars and their Assistants serve as the Bishop's representatives to the parishes in their regions. They serve as the liaisons between the parish and the diocesan central offices and the office of the Bishop.
2. The Vicars and their Assistants are consultants to the Pastors and the Parish Pastoral Councils in their regions.
3. The Vicars and their Assistants are available for the resolution of issues whenever the need arises.
4. When a Parish Pastoral Council is dissolved, the Vicars and their Assistants seek input from the parish Trustees and staff before the appointment of a new Pastor/Parish Life Coordinator.

Role of Pastor

1. The Pastor is the authority in the parish by virtue of his appointment by the Bishop.
2. The Pastor has the responsibility of being an active listener when communicating with the council.
3. The Pastor is the facilitator of the Council and is ordinarily present at every meeting, unless he delegates this responsibility.
4. Once a Pastor is appointed to his office as Pastor, he must establish a Parish Pastoral Council within six months. He may choose to empower the outgoing Council or establish a new one.



DIOCESAN POLICY

ADVISORS: PASTORAL COUNCIL, FINANCE COUNCIL, TRUSTEES

PASTORAL COUNCIL

INTRODUCTION: Every parish is to have a Parish Pastoral Council composed of parish leaders who serve as an advisory group to the Pastor/Parish Life Coordinator for the Pastoral care of the faith community.

IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY:

Mandated:

1. The Pastor/Parish Life Coordinator or the canonical administrator is ultimately responsible for the parish.
2. The role of the council is to assist the Pastor/Parish Life Coordinator in fostering activities in the faith community it serves.
3. Each council is governed by a written constitution approved by the Bishop.
4. The Parish Pastoral Council can only be dissolved by the Bishop.
5. When a change of Pastor occurs, the Parish Pastoral Council ceases upon the departure of the previous Pastor.

6. The incoming Pastor/Parish Life Coordinator is to establish a new Parish Pastoral Council within six months.
7. Parish Pastoral Councils are to meet at least quarterly.
8. Refer to the Policy Manual for Parish Councils for further information.

FINANCE COUNCIL

INTRODUCTION: Every Parish is obligated to have a Finance Council (Canon 1280).

IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY:

Mandated:

1. The Finance Council must be established to assist the Pastor/Parish Life Coordinator or the canonical administrator in the area of fiscal responsibilities of the parish.
2. The structure of the Finance Council is left up to the discretion of the Pastor/Parish Life Coordinator, but should include the two appointed parish trustees.
3. The Finance Council makes periodic reports to the Parish Pastoral Council.

TRUSTEES

INTRODUCTION: Two lay trustees for each parish, upon recommendation of the Pastor/Parish Life Coordinator, are appointed by the Bishop to assist the parish in its existence as a corporate entity in a secular world. They serve as members of the board of directors of the parish corporation along with the Bishop (President), the Vicar General (Vice-President), and Canonical Pastor (Secretary-Treasurer).

IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY:

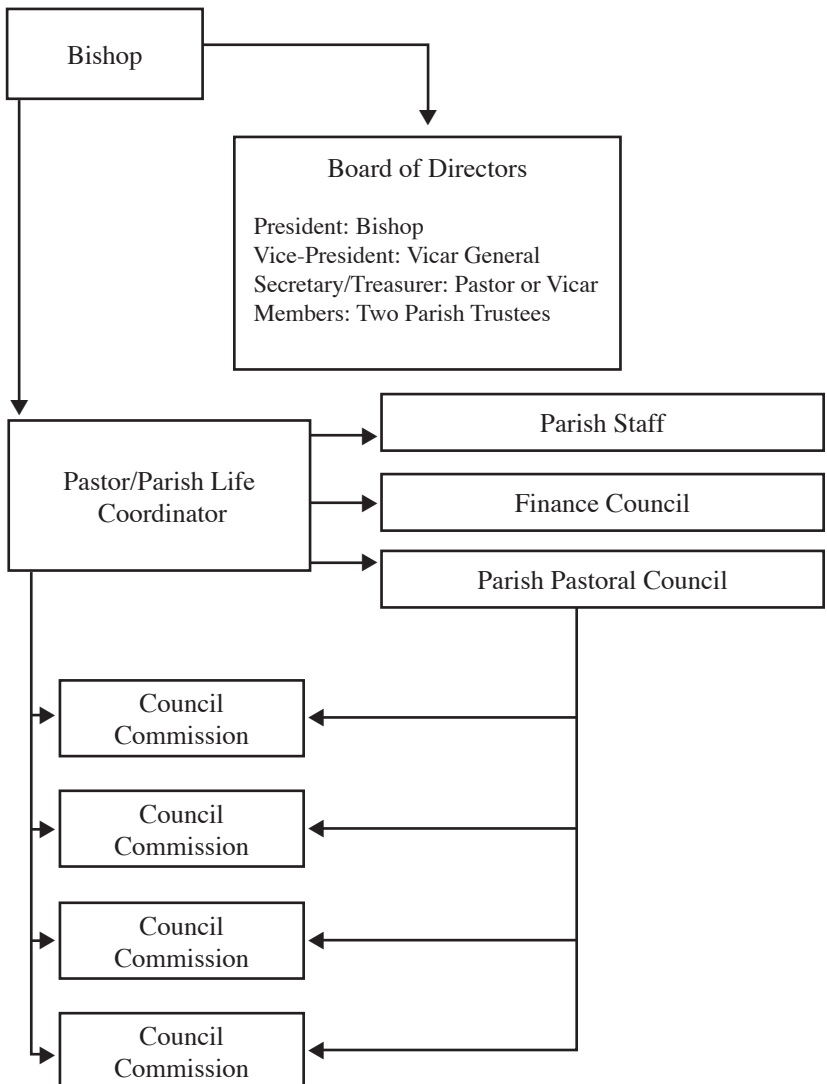
Mandated:

1. Trustees should be exemplary Catholics, 21 years of age or older and who are not in positions in which there could be a conflict of interest.
2. Trustees are to be knowledgeable in matters of business and parish life.
3. In the event that a Trustee is unable to complete a term of office, or that the Pastor wishes to replace a Trustee prior to the expiration of the term of office, petition must be made to the Bishop to appoint a successor to complete the term of office.
4. Certain acts of parish administration require resolutions adopted by the board of directors duly authorizing the specific transaction.

5. Trustees shall be appointed for a three-year term in September.
6. Trustees may be called upon to be consultants to an incoming Pastor/Parish Lire Coordinator prior to the establishment of a new Parish Pastoral Council.
7. Trustees are ex officio members of the Council.



**DIOCESE OF LAFAYETTE
PARISH FLOW OF AUTHORITY CHART**



PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL CONSTITUTION OUTLINE

Preamble

1. Purpose of Parish Pastoral Council
2. Mission statement of Council
3. Goals of the Council
4. How those goals are to be realized

Article I.

1. Name of the Council

Article II.

1. Eligibility for Council membership

Article III.

1. Number of members elected

Article IV.

1. Number of members appointed by Pastor/Parish Life Coordinator

Article V.

1. Term of office of members
2. Date of annual elections
3. Limit of consecutive terms for members

Article VI.

1. Election procedures

Article VII.

1. Officers
2. Areas of responsibilities for officers
3. Term of office for officers
4. Date of election for officers
5. Limit of consecutive terms for officers

Article VIII.

1. Establishment of Commissions
2. Names and purpose of each Commission
3. Areas of responsibility for each Commission

Article IX.

1. Resignation from Council

Article X.

1. Number of meetings for each year
2. Length of meetings
3. Format of meetings
4. How agenda for each meeting is determined
5. Place of meetings

Article XI.

1. Procedure for adding amendments and by-laws

Article XII.

1. Procedure for establishment of as-needed Committees
2. Procedure for establishment of long-term Committees



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