



Parish Pastoral Council Membership

The process used for identifying new council members will vary from parish to parish, but ought to include some opportunity for parishioners to participate. The entire process needs to be permeated with private and public prayer to the Holy Spirit. The intention should be included in the prayers of intercession at each Mass.

Ordinarily, the composition of the Council should be a balance between members:

- nominated and elected by the parish at large
- appointed by the pastor

The number of council members should consist of not less than 6, or more than 15 members. Councilors are to be chosen so as to truly reflect the wisdom of the parish community. When parishioners understand the Council ministry and have an opportunity to discern which parishioners are suited for it, they can contribute enormously to the selection of councilors.

Serving on the council is a ministry to the whole parish. When considering membership on the council, the following criteria should be kept in mind. Potential candidates should be:

- of proven faith,
- with sound morals,
- demonstrating the gifts of wisdom and prudence,
- willing to commit their time, talent and wisdom in a consultative and collaborative manner.

Council members should have the ability to study and reflect prayerfully, and to recognize and respect the viewpoints of others.

Official Church documents state that the Pastoral Councils are to represent the people of God, but not in the legal sense. Rather, council members are representative in that they are a witness or a sign of the whole community. They make its wisdom present. (Sacred Congregation for the Clergy, *Private letter on Pastoral Councils*, # 7).

The Pastoral Council is a representative body rather than a body of representatives. A council member is not a representative for a particular neighborhood, age bracket, special interest group or organization.

Members are required to attend monthly meetings of the council (from September until June). Considering the responsibility entrusted to them, Parish Pastoral Council members are expected to participate in an ongoing formation process.

Ongoing formation at the parish level may include an annual evening of recollection and other prayer experiences. In addition, the diocese will also offer regular presentations on pastoral planning, goal-setting, visioning, conflict resolution and discernment.