

DIOCESE OF SASKATOON

GUIDELINES

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

and

PARISH FINANCE COMMITTEE

Parish Pastoral Councils have an invaluable leadership role as the Church today takes on the challenge of New Evangelization, the call to find new ways and a new language by which to proclaim the Good News, to proclaim Jesus Christ to our culture here and now. Parish Pastoral Councils are indispensable vehicles for the Word of God, the voice of the Spirit to be heard guiding the Church. St. Paulinus of Nola once stated, "Let us listen to what all the faithful say because in everyone of them the Spirit of God breathes." As we enter into a time of reflection during which we assess our fervour and find fresh enthusiasm for our spiritual and pastoral responsibilities (as called for by Pope John Paul II in At the Beginning of the New Millennium), the leadership of the Parish Pastoral Council is again vital. Each parish (or cluster of parishes) within the Diocese of Saskatoon must have a Parish Pastoral Council and the norms that have been developed to assist Parish Pastoral Councils in their work are contained in this document.

HISTORY

Parish Councils originated in the spirit of Vatican II. The Parish Councils that developed were largely administrative in their functioning. Today, Parish Councils are moving into another realm indicated by their new title, Parish Pastoral Councils. The focus has shifted from the administrative, dealing primarily with buildings and finance, to the pastoral needs of the parish. This is in keeping with the spirit of the documents of the Second Vatican Council, which refer to the apostolate of the Church to be fulfilled by all, pastors and lay people working together in collaboration.

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REFERENCES TO CHURCH DOCUMENTS:

- “The laity should disclose their needs and desires to the pastors with that liberty and confidence which befits children of God and brothers and sisters in Christ. To the extent of their knowledge, competence or authority the laity are entitled, and indeed sometimes duty-bound, to express their opinion on matters which concern the good of the church.” (The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, 37)
- The laity, “sharing in the function of Christ, priest, prophet and king...have an active part of their own in the life and activity of the church...The laity should develop the habit of working in the parish in close cooperation with their priests, of bringing before the ecclesial community their own problems, world problems, and questions regarding humanity’s salvation, to examine them together and solve them by general discussion.” (Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People, 10)
- “Lay people who are outstanding in the requisite knowledge, prudence and integrity, are capable of being experts or advisors, even in councils in accordance with the law, in order to provide assistance to the Pastors of the Church.” (Code of Canon Law, Canon 228 s 2)
- Pastors/pastoral ministers should, “recognize and promote the dignity and responsibility of the laity in the church. They should willingly use their prudent advice and confidently assign offices to them in the service of the church, leaving them freedom and scope for activity. Indeed, they should encourage them to take on work on their own initiative. They should with paternal love consider attentively in Christ initial moves, suggestions and desires proposed by the laity.” (The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, 37)
- In the Parish Pastoral Council, “which is presided over by the parish priest, Christ’s faithful, together with those who by virtue of their office are engaged in pastoral care in the parish, give their help in fostering pastoral action. The pastoral council has only a consultative vote, and it is regulated by the norms laid down by the diocesan Bishop.” (Code of Canon Law, 536 s.1 and 2)
- Pastoral Councils are “to investigate and consider matters relating to pastoral activity and to formulate practical conclusions concerning them.” (Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church, 27)

ROLE:

- To act as a consultative body serving the Pastor/Pastoral Leadership Team in the spirit of mutual appreciation, charity and dialogue
- To be the main instrument of lay leadership in the pastoral care of the parish, collaborating to build the parish as a living, witnessing Christian Community.
- To share the concerns of the broader church – other parishes, deaneries, diocese, church universal
- To strive to enable the parish community to bring the gospel message to all people and places in their neighbourhood and beyond

MEMBERSHIP:

a) Number of Members:

- recommend 10-15 people

b) Qualifications of a Member:

- is a practicing, confirmed Catholic
- understands the purpose of the Parish Pastoral Council
- is committed to the whole mission of the parish community not just one particular interest
- communicates well in all aspects: listens to others, reflects on what is seen and heard, and shares ideas with clarity
- works well with groups: supports, affirms, and respects others and their gifts
- is prepared to creatively solve problems and to undertake new initiatives

c) Representative of Various Dimensions of Parish:

- gender
- age
- civil status
- walks of life
- social conditions
- geographic sectors
- pastoral activities
- pastoral team

d) Methods of Selection:

- election by the parish is the primary method of selection
- appointments may be made by the Pastor/Pastoral Minister to ensure that there is a good representation of all dimensions of the parish.
- recommendations may come from the pastoral team, the Parish Pastoral Council, or may be invited from specific parish organizations

e) Length of Mandate:

- Term of three years: maximum of two consecutive terms
- not more than 1/3 replaced at a time

EXECUTIVE:

- The Pastor or Parish Life Director, as President, calls the council together, ensures that the mission of the church is kept at the forefront, and nurtures the vitality and dynamism necessary for the council to fulfill its function.
- The Chairperson elected by the Parish Pastoral Council from its membership sees to the good functioning of the council by animating and chairing the meetings, encouraging all council members to participate actively and to express their views freely so that the parish can benefit from their diverse gifts. The Chairperson also has a key role and responsibility to encourage the Parish Pastoral Council members to extend their leadership to the on-going life and mission of the parish. The Chairperson is elected for a term of one year, which is renewable.
- The Vice-Chairperson elected by the Parish Pastoral Council from its membership assumes the duties of the Chairperson when the Chairperson is absent. The Vice-Chairperson is elected for a term of one year, which is renewable.
- The Secretary should not be a member of the Parish Pastoral Council but should serve the council by preparing materials for the meeting, recording the discussion of the council and performing other tasks as designated.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Grow in knowledge of the mission and the ministry of Jesus in which the parish community by virtue of baptism is called to share
- Understand and/or assist with the development of a community vision or mission that takes into consideration the overall good of the parish
- Promote pastoral activity (community building, worship, proclamation of the Word, care of others) that will help the parish transform its vision into action, recognizing that every baptized person is both called and gifted for ministry and that the discovery and sharing of these gifts for the building of the kingdom must be facilitated.

FUNCTIONING:

a) Meetings:

- should be held once a month except for July and August
- may be called by the President at the request of a council member
- will follow an agenda developed by the President, Chairperson and one other member of the Council and circulated, if possible, prior to the meeting.
- are to be managed by the chairperson who will focus each item explaining what the item is and what is to be done with it and who will affirm the contribution and the right of each member to speak.
- an Annual General Meeting of the parish will be held once a year. Reports will be given and discussion on relevant issues will take place. It is to be noted that the Annual General Meeting is advisory to the Pastor/Pastoral Leadership Team.

b) Decision-making process:

- strive to achieve consensus, which means that each person supports the decision to some degree.
- require at least a 2/3 majority if consensus is not possible. (The President does not vote since the Parish Pastoral Council serves as his/her consultative body.)

c) Method:

- Reflect by allowing a significant portion of the meeting for spiritual reflection, faith formation and/or praxis formation
- Plan to identify the needs of the faithful and find the means to meet these needs by bringing forth the ministries of service required for growth
- Coordinate by encouraging growth of different parish activities/committees and see to their harmonious integration into the service of the common mission
- Enable action through existing committees or by establishing special committees rather than taking action themselves

AUTHORITY:

- The Pastor/Pastoral Leadership Team is ultimately responsible to the bishop for pastoral care in the parish.
- The Parish Pastoral Council is his/her consultative voice.
- A Council recommendation, when it is ratified by the Pastor/Parish Life Director can then be described as a council decision.

RELATIONSHIPS:

A. Within the Structures of the Church:

- The Parish Pastoral Council should take an interest in the overall pastoral needs of all those within the diocese.
- The Parish Pastoral Council should participate in the deanery and diocesan structure and respond to deanery and diocesan consultation and initiatives. The Parish Pastoral Council Chairperson or someone selected from the council will be the Deanery Pastoral Council Representative to assist in this endeavour.
- The Parish Pastoral Council should keep informed through the educational opportunities and pastoral publications of the deanery, the local Bishop, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Holy See.

B. With the Finance Committee (see Finance Committee Guidelines):

- The Finance Committee should be separate from the Parish Pastoral Council (an exception may be considered if there are not sufficient numbers of parishioners to enable this separation).
- The Parish Pastoral Council should ensure regular dialogue with the Finance Committee so that the committee can carry out its responsibility to see that expenditures reflect the mission of the parish as understood and communicated by the Council.

C. With Other Committees and Organizations:

- The Parish Pastoral Council will submit recommendations to various parish groups.
- The President should indicate his/her concurrence.
- The Parish Pastoral Council's recommendations should be received in a spirit of unity in the pursuit of the one and only mission of the parish.

FINANCE COMMITTEE GUIDELINES

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REFERENCES TO CHURCH DOCUMENTS:

- “In each parish there is to be a finance committee to help the parish priest in the administration of the goods of the parish, without prejudice to Canon 532. It is ruled by the universal law and the norms laid down by the diocesan Bishop, and it is comprised of members of the faithful selected according to these norms.” (Code of Canon Law, Canon 537)
- “In juridical matters, the parish priest acts in the person of the parish, in accordance with the law. He is to ensure that the parish goods are administered in accordance with Canons 1281-1288.” (Code of Canon Law, Canon 532)
- “Every juridical person is to have its own finance committee, or at least two counsellors, who are to assist in the performance of the administrator’s duties, in accordance with the statutes.” (Code of Canon Law, Canon 1280)
- The Finance Committee should be separate from the Parish Pastoral Council (an exception may be considered if there are not sufficient numbers of parishioners to enable this separation).

ROLE:

- To act as a consultative body serving the Pastor//Pastoral Leadership Team
- To oversee the financial concerns of the parish
- To provide financial and administrative planning and related consultation
- To work collaboratively with the Parish Pastoral Council to ensure that parish goals are understood and supported financially

MEMBERSHIP:

- a) Number of Members:
 - Pastor/Parish Life Director
 - Recommend 3-5 people
 - Should not include parish staff or relatives of staff
- b) Qualifications of a Member:
 - Is a practicing, confirmed Catholic
 - Understands the purpose of the Finance Committee
 - Skilled in financial administration
 - Understands the relationship between the Parish Pastoral Council and the Finance Committee
- c) Method of Selection:
 - Appointed by Pastor/Parish Life Director with consultation
- d) Length of Mandate:
 - Term of three years: maximum of two consecutive terms
 - Process of replacement to ensure continuity

EXECUTIVE:

- The Chairperson elected by the Finance Committee from its membership sees to the good functioning of the committee by animating and chairing the meetings, encouraging all members to participate actively and to express their views freely so that the parish can benefit from their diverse gifts. The Chairperson is elected for a one year term, which is renewable.

RESPONSIBILITIES (These are taken primarily from Together in Ministry, Archdiocese of Edmonton):

- Administer all property of the parish in accordance with Diocesan Policy or Directives
- Prepare and present an annual budget for both operating and capital expenditures of the parish based on:
 - goals and objectives of parish determined by the Pastor/Pastoral Minister and the Parish Pastoral Council
 - input from relevant parish committees
 - financial patterns of the parish for preceding years
 - financial estimates for the future needs of the parish

- Examine operating costs of the parish to ensure that financial resources and goals are compatible.
- Submit proposals to Pastor/Parish Life Director and Parish Pastoral Council based on:
 - a study of parish revenue
 - recommendations for maintaining or increasing revenue to meet parish objectives and priorities.
- Initiate fund-raising projects
- Arrange for pay-roll, accounts payable, reconciliation of bank statements
- Promote communication on finances to parishioners
 - publish a yearly report
 - share quarterly and annual financial statements with the Parish Pastoral Council
- Monitor maintenance of parish buildings and other properties

RELATIONSHIPS:

With the Parish Pastoral Council:

- Good communication between the Parish Pastoral Council and the Finance Committee is important:
 - to enable the Finance Committee to know and understand the pastoral needs and goals of the parish
 - to enable the Parish Pastoral Council to know and understand the temporal and material realities of the parish which they must take into consideration
- Good communication can be fostered by one of the following:
 - the chairperson and one other member of the Finance Committee could be members of the Parish Pastoral Council
 - the chairperson and one other member of the Parish Pastoral Council could serve as members of the Finance Committee
 - the Finance Committee, as a whole, should meet with the Parish Pastoral Council at least yearly to see how financial expenditures reflected or will reflect the true purpose of the church's mission.

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