

DIOCESE OF MARQUETTE

DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL GUIDELINES

PREAMBLE

In the Decree on the Bishops' Pastoral office in the Church of the Second Vatican Council, the Council Fathers wrote:

It is highly desirable that in each diocese a pastoral council be established over which the diocesan bishop himself will preside and in which specifically chosen clergy, religious and lay people will participate. The function of this council will be to investigate and to weigh matters which bear on pastoral activity, and to formulate practical conclusions regarding them. (Christus Dominus 27)

The 1983 revised Code of Canon Law reflects the teachings of the Second Vatican Council:

Can. 511 - In each diocese, to the extent that the pastoral circumstances recommend it, a pastoral council is to be established whose responsibility it is to investigate under the authority of the bishop all those things which pertain to pastoral works, to ponder them and to propose practical conclusions about them.

Can. 512 §1. - The pastoral council consists of Christian faithful who are in full communion with the Catholic Church, clerics, members of institutes of consecrated life and especially lay persons, who are designated in a manner determined by the diocesan bishop.

§2. - 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.

§3. - No one except Christians of proven faith, good morals and outstanding prudence are to be appointed to the pastoral council.

Can. 513 §1. - The pastoral council is to be established for a period of time according to the prescriptions of the statutes which are issued by the bishop.

§2. - When the see is vacant, the pastoral council ceases to exist.

Can. 514 §1. - It pertains exclusively to the diocesan bishop to convoke the pastoral council according to the necessities of the apostolate and to preside over it; the pastoral council enjoys only a consultative vote; it is for the bishop alone to make public what has been done in the council.

§2. - The pastoral council is to be convoked at least once a year.

These Canons contain several key elements of a pastoral council, which merit emphasis.

1. The purpose is pastoral. While the bishop may ask a council for “business-related advice”, even that should be seen as related to the purposes of the Church which are pastoral. Concern for the structures and administration of the diocesan Church are secondary to working closely with the bishop to help bring about the Kingdom of God. Rather than being a narrowing concept, this opens the council’s concerns to be as far-reaching as those of the Church itself.
2. The membership attempts to be truly representative. All persons are eligible for membership if they are in full communion with the Church. The fact that clergy, religious and laity are all to be called places emphasis on a certain root equality all have as simply members of “the People of God”.
3. The council is formed at the bishop’s request to serve as his advisors on pastoral matters. The members report to him. They address an agenda he approves. The bishop presides over the meeting and, when the see becomes vacant, the council ceases to exist.
4. The council is advisory. The function is consultative, but to refer to it as “merely advisory” is to do the concept a disservice. A decision is only the last in a number of other steps which include identifying alternatives, researching them, weighing their pros and cons, estimating the consequences of alternative actions, etc. The council is consultative in the sense that the bishop makes the final decision, but his advisors who help him prepare for the decision accompany him to that point in a very real way.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Diocesan Pastoral Council consisting of clerics, members of institutes of the consecrated life and especially lay persons, is called to serve in building the Kingdom of God in the Church of the Diocese of Marquette through prayer, cooperation, collaboration and consultation with our Bishop and the people of God whom he shepherds. The Diocesan Pastoral Council is to investigate under the authority of the Bishop all those things which pertain to pastoral works, to ponder them and to propose practical conclusions about them.

FUNCTION

Since the function of the Council is consultative only, voting will not take place at Council meetings or Committee meetings unless the Bishop requests a vote to determine consensus on a issue. It is for the Bishop alone to make public what has been done in the Council.

The functions of the Diocesan Pastoral Council include but are not limited to:

- Diocesan Pastoral Planning
- Consulting with other diocesan bodies and the people
- Evaluation of the work of the Diocesan Pastoral Council, its mission statement and the pastoral activity of the Diocese of Marquette
- Communication of the pastoral needs of the people and the movement of the Spirit among them to the Bishop and through the Bishop make public to the people what the Council has concluded

- Reviewing the Diocesan Mission Statement
- Sharing responsibility with the Bishop for the mission of the Church in the Upper Peninsula
- Making recommendations to the Bishop concerning priorities related to diocesan resources.

MEMBERSHIP

The Bishop of the Diocese of Marquette, because of his role of pastoral leadership, is an integral part of the Council. He serves in a presidential role in relationship to the entire Council, and his consensus in any decision is essential.

In addition, there will be 25-27 members of the Council. Two lay people from each vicariate, one priest from each region, the chair or delegate from the Priests' Council, the vicar general, two women religious and a deacon. Finally, three to five members at large appointed by the Bishop to reflect the diversity of the Church.

The Council will have the service of an executive secretary appointed by the Bishop. The Council may also have the services of a recording secretary.

DUTIES OF MEMBERS

Members are to devote adequate time to prayerful study of council materials and agenda items. They are to enhance discussion through future-oriented thinking, balanced assessment, and a constructive attitude. Council members consult periodically with as wide a spectrum of the diocesan family as feasible to learn concerns and possible solutions appropriate to the local Church and region.

Service on the Council is a special ministry to the Church of Marquette and members should be baptized and confirmed Roman Catholics, "in full communion with the Catholic Church"¹, participants in their parish life, and have an understanding and commitment to the Church and the reforms of the Second Vatican Council.

SELECTION

When openings exist for lay members, the Executive Secretary will furnish information regarding the Council and qualifications for membership to each parish within the vicariates in need of representation. Lay members from those vicariates can be self-nominated or nominated by another/others with the nominee's approval. The nominee must submit a nomination form to the DPC nominating committee², who will confirm a pastor's recommendation. The nominating committee will select two vicariate representatives in a prayerful spirit, by lot, from the recommended nominees. If a member is willing to serve a second term, his/her term may be renewed with the approval of the Bishop.

¹ Canon 512 §1

² Initially, the Pro-Tem Diocesan Pastoral Council Nominating Committee.

Nominations of clergy and women religious members and alternates will be sought by mail and selected by lot from those who express a willingness to serve.

Names of all those selected will be submitted to the Bishop for his appointment.

TERMS & VACANCIES

The terms of selected members will be for three years, with each term beginning on July 1st. Such members may serve no more than two consecutive terms. Provision should be made for rotation of terms so that there are new members joining the Council each year, with some experienced members remaining. Members who relocate within the diocese during their term will continue to represent their original constituency until their term expires. Those alternates selected at the beginning of the term will fill vacancies that occur during that term.

The nature of the discussions and actions taken by the Council calls for faithful attendance at all regular meetings. If a member is absent from two consecutive meetings, his or her continuation on the Council will be reviewed by the Executive Committee of the Council.

OFFICERS & EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Council will have the service of a Chairperson and a Vice-Chairperson. These officers will be selected at the June meeting and will serve a one year term or until successors are selected. They may serve for a second term. In consultation with the Bishop, these officers, together with the Bishop and Executive Secretary and one member at large selected by the membership make up the Executive Committee.

If there is a vacancy in the office of Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson becomes Chairperson. If there is a vacancy in the office of Vice-Chairperson or Executive Committee member at large, a special selection should be held following the normal procedure.

The duties of the Executive Committee include: preparing the agenda with the Bishop, recommending to the Bishop appointments to committees of the Council, making recommendations to the Bishop on the disposition of matters addressed to the Council. The Executive Committee usually meets at least once between the regular Council meetings. The Bishop may call additional meetings. The Bishop presides over all meetings of the Executive Committee and the Diocesan Pastoral Council.

OTHER COMMITTEES

At the discretion of the Council and according to need, other permanent or ad hoc committees may be formed. They may include:

- Development Committee - responsible for DPC internal development including prayer and social gatherings, Council in-service, Council performance evaluation.
- Nominating Committee – responsible for selection and orientation of new members, selection of officers, and executive committee member at large.
- Long Range Planning Committee - responsible for initiating long range planning and for

challenging the Council to a long range perspective in its deliberations.

- Short Range Planning - various ad hoc committees formed, as needed, their membership to be appointed by the Bishop.

DUTIES OF OFFICERS

The Chairperson is the chair of the Executive Committee, conducts all meetings of the Council whether regular or special meetings and serves as liaison from the Executive Committee to the chairpersons of other committees, and to other persons or groups as needed.

The Vice-Chairperson conducts the meetings in the absence of the Chairperson and assists the Chairperson in the execution of the Council decisions. He/she attends all meetings of the Executive Committee.

Duties of the Executive Secretary include: (1) keeping an accurate record of all meetings of the Council, (2) maintaining an updated record of the names, addresses, telephone numbers and terms of all council members and officers, (3) maintaining an attendance record of all Council membership bringing to the Chairperson's attention those members who have been absent, (4) attending to all correspondence related to the Council and, (5) serving as a resource person for the council by tending to the needs for regular and special meetings. Some or all of these duties may be delegated to a Diocesan Pastoral Council member or a recording secretary.

SELECTION OF OFFICERS

The Nominating Committee of the Council has the responsibility of preparing a slate of nominees for the office of Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Executive Committee member at large. These nominees are presented to the Council with the option of additional nominations from the floor.

MEETINGS

The Council will meet four times a year and the Executive Committee will have the responsibility of setting the place, date, and time. The Bishop may call special meetings.

Written reports of committees are forwarded to the Executive Secretary for inclusion with the agenda mailings to the Diocesan Pastoral Council.

Meetings are open for observation to all members of the diocese. Non-members may address the Council when invited by a council member and recognized by the Chairperson for the purpose of providing expert input about an agenda item. Meetings may be closed for certain deliberations as necessary.

A proposal by any member of the diocese may be submitted to the Diocesan Pastoral Council by presenting it to the Executive committee through the Executive Secretary for their consideration, at least three weeks prior to a council meeting.

New members are urged to attend an orientation session to be offered by the Council.

PROCEDURE OF MEETING

The nature of the Council calls for free and open discussion leading to consensus. Discernment may also be used once the members have become familiar with the process and find it beneficial. If consensus cannot be achieved, the Council can resort to parliamentary procedure, as long as the proposed procedure is not inconsistent with the principles and spirit set forth in these guidelines.

Communal prayer will be a part of all regular meetings. The basic sequence to be followed at meetings will be:

1. Call to order
2. Approval of agenda
3. Approval of minutes
4. Correspondence
5. Action items
6. Reports
7. Discussion items
8. Announcements
9. Adjournment

CHANGES IN GUIDELINES

Any member of the Council may propose changes in these Guidelines. Because of the importance of such changes, they should be proposed in writing to the Executive Committee through the Executive Secretary and copies distributed to members prior to the first meeting at which the proposed changes are to be discussed.

Approved 7/8/97 +JHG & the Pro-Tem Diocesan Pastoral Council
Revised: 12/05/98
Revised: 9/12/08