

STATUTES OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

Catholic Archdiocese of Johannesburg
November 2009

Preamble

“Let the spiritual shepherds recognise and promote the dignity as well as the responsibility of the laity in the Church. Let them willingly employ their prudent advice. Let them confidently assign duties to them in the service of the Church, allowing them freedom and room for action. Further, let them consider with fatherly love the projects, suggestions and desires proposed by the laity. However, let the shepherds respectfully acknowledge that just freedom which belong to everyone in this earthly city.” (Lumen Gentium 37)

Immediately before the above lines, the same Constitution on the Church declared “(the laity) are, by reason of knowledge, competence or outstanding ability which they enjoy, permitted and sometimes even obliged to express their opinions on those things which concern the good of the Church. When occasion arises, let this be done through the organs erected by the Church for this purpose.” In order to implement this teaching, parish councils were quickly set up in parishes and missions in this Archdiocese and elsewhere; guidelines were requested and issued with good results so that lay people became involved in the decision-making processes in different areas of parish life.

The Code of Canon Law, promulgated in 1983, has seen fit to give effect to Vatican II’s teaching on the participation of the laity in the decision-making processes of the Church at the level of parish life:

Canon 536:

§ 1 If, after consulting the council of priests, the diocesan bishop considers opportune, a pastoral council is to be established in each parish. In this 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.

§ 2 The pastoral council has only a consultative vote, and it is regulated by the norms laid down by the diocesan bishop.

1. Purpose, Function and Competence

1.1 Each parish shall have a Parish Pastoral Council (PPC), to facilitate proper consultation and common action in matters concerning religious formation and pastoral action in the parish.

Matters connected with the administration of the goods of the parish, do not fall within the competence of the PPC, but are the concern of the Parish Finance Committee.

The overriding purpose and concern of the PPC, is the renewal of the People of God in the parish according to the mind of the Second Vatican Council, and to ensure unity and harmony in the parish.

1.2 It shall be the function of the PPC to:

1.2.1 Promote diocesan pastoral policy in the parish and in other pastoral communities represented on it.

1.2.2 Make proposals to the Pastor for the implementation of the diocesan pastoral policy.

1.2.3 In the absence of the Pastor, the PPC is not able to make final decisions.

1.2.4 If a parish has no appointed Pastor, then the Archdiocese shall appoint a priest to be its administrator in accordance with Canons 539 and 540. The administrator, inter alia, will preside over the PPC.

1.3 The PPC functions as a consultative body in the pastoral development of the parish. Its competence shall be in these areas:

1.3.1 The promotion of liturgy

1.3.2 Catechetics

1.3.3 Consistent policy and practice regarding sacramental participation

1.3.4 The youth apostolate

1.3.5 Lay ministries

1.3.6 Lay participation in pastoral responsibilities

1.3.7 Marriage and the family apostolate

1.3.8 Vocations to the priesthood and religious life

1.3.9 Christian witness regarding social concern particularly as evidenced in justice, reconciliation, and peace

1.3.10 Ecumenism

1.4 Parish Pastoral Councils are part of a broader structure agreed upon in the Archdiocese. Accordingly, to ensure continuity, the PPC chairperson, or his/her designate from the PPC Executive, plus one other person of the PPC, shall be members of the Diocesan Pastoral Council.

2. Membership

2.1 The Pastor and Assistant Pastor (priests and deacons), duly appointed to the parish, shall be members of the PPC.

2.2 To ensure that membership of the PPC is truly representative of the parish seen as a geographic entity and as a community of believers of diverse groups:

2.2.1 Each of the approved pastoral committees will be represented by two of their committee members who are designated by that committee. (see explanatory notes 2.3)

2.2.2 At least 50% of the members of the PPC should be elected either through local structures (e.g. small communities or blocks), or by the general body of the parishioners. Those elected should obtain at least a simple majority of votes.

2.2.3 Each of the approved lay confraternities, sodalities, societies or groups in the parish should designate one adult representative as a member of the PPC. (see explanatory notes 2.3)

2.2.4 Institutes of consecrated life within the parish boundaries may choose from among themselves a representative. Should the number of such communities require it, the PPC should suggest two or more representatives.

2.2.5 Catholic institutions in the parish (e. g. Catholic Schools, Hospitals), should each have one representative on the PPC.

2.2.6 The Pastor may appoint members to the PPC at his discretion provided the Pastor's appointments do not number more than 20% of the total number of the PPC members.

2.2.7 The Parish Youth Pastoral Forum shall choose from among its members a representative. Should the number of young people require it, the PPC should suggest two or more representatives.

2.2.8 The Parish Finance Committee (PFC) shall appoint from among its members a representative as a member of the PPC, to ensure that the PPC is fully informed of the financial situation of the parish.

2.3 Explanatory notes:

2.3.1 Pastoral Committees: represent migrants, immigrants, or other special groups. They may only be formed with the approval of the Bishop after he has consulted with the Pastor and the PPC.

2.3.2 Lay Confraternities, Sodalities and Societies, are referred to in the Code as Associations of the Christian Faithful (Canons 298-329). Approved Associations are those approved by the Bishop for the Archdiocese as from January 1st of 1997.

2.3.3 Lay Groups: Ad hoc informal groups of the laity, which are not Associations of the Christian Faithful as per Canons 298-329. Approved groups are those approved by the Pastor as eligible to designate to the PPC.

3. Term of Office

3.1 The term of office of all the members of the PPC shall be three years

3.2 In the event of any member of the PPC relinquishing membership before the end of the term of office, replacement will be elected or designated, as the case may be, for the remaining period of that term of office.

3.3 No person may serve as a member of the PPC for more than two consecutive terms of office, after which he or she is not eligible for one term of office.

3.4 If in the reasonable opinion of the PPC, a member of the PPC is no longer able to carry out his/her PPC duties satisfactorily or adequately, the Pastor may require the member to relinquish his or her membership.

3.5 A Parish Pastoral Council cannot be suspended or dismissed without prior consultation, first with the Dean and then with the Bishop, or his representatives, and with the approval of the Bishop.

4. Office Bearers

4.1 The President of the PPC will be the Pastor of the Parish.

4.2 The Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Secretary of the PPC will be elected by the members of the PPC, and ratified by the President. They will hold

office for the three-year term of the PPC. The Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson may not be elected for a third term of office to the same position.

5. Executive Committee

5.1 The President, Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Secretary of the PPC, together with a maximum of three other members of the PPC elected by, it will be the Executive Committee of the PPC.

5.2 The Executive Committee shall ensure that urgent matters are attended to between meetings. The full PPC must be kept informed of such matters, and where possible their approval must be obtained. Regular communication with the parish community is to be maintained.

6. Relationships and Portfolios

6.1 The PPC and PFC have mutual representation – one of their members is also a full member of the other body.

6.2 Members of the PPC should share among themselves the responsibility for keeping contact with the activities of the Pastoral Departments of the Archdiocese: AIDS, Catechetics, Ecumenism, Evangelization, Family Life, Justice and Peace, Liturgy, Migrants and Refugees, SPRED, Vocations, Youth.

7. Committees

7.1 The PPC shall be entitled to set up Commissions, Committees, Sub-committees and Working Groups for various purposes and aims of the PPC, and to appoint members to them. The PPC shall determine the purposes and way of working of such bodies including their term of office, which cannot go beyond that of the PPC itself.

7.2 It shall be at the discretion of the PPC to appoint Office-Bearers for these groups or to authorise their election by the members of the groups themselves.

8. Vision Statement

The Parish Pastoral Council shall draw up, in collaboration with the Parish Community, a Vision Statement for the parish and report to the parish at regular intervals, at least annually.

9. Meetings

9.1. The PPC shall meet at least once a quarter.

9.2 Minutes shall be kept of all meetings and copies submitted to all members of the PPC and be available to parishioners on request.

9.3 Decision making is normally through discussion leading to a consensus. For the purposes of a formal vote a quorum shall be the personal presence of 50% of the members of the PPC.

9.4 Absences must be by apology to the relevant Chairperson. Anyone who is not present at three consecutive meetings without an apology will be deemed to have resigned.

9.5 Each meeting of the PPC should be preceded by a discussion and drawing up of the Agenda by the President and the Chairperson. This Agenda should be received by all the members of the PPC at least three days before the meeting of the PPC.

9.6 With the agreement of the President and the Chairperson, the PPC may invite parishioners or other observers to be present during part or all of a PPC meeting. Such an invitation may be general or for particular meetings only.

9.7 For genuine and serious reasons, at the request of at least ten parishioners made to the Pastor, the PPC shall hold an extraordinary meeting.

10. Amendments

After consulting the Archdiocesan Council of Priest, the Archdiocesan Bishop or Archdiocesan Administrator may at any time amend any of the provisions of these statutes excepting the provisions of General Law.