COUNCIL OF PRIESTS
CONSTITUTION

INTRODUCTION: The Council of Priests represents the priests and assists the Bishop in his governance of the Diocese, in order that the pastoral welfare of the people of God be promoted as effectively as possible in accordance with current Canon Law (canon 495). Priests of the Diocese of Lafayette are free to communicate with any Council of Priests member.

MEMBERSHIP

There are four (4) categories of Council of Priests membership:

a. One (1) elected Dean from each Deanery.

b. Two (2) elected representatives from each Deanery.

c. Appointed representatives are named by the Bishop to ensure broad representation: religious clergy, large/small parishes, minorities or ethnic groups, and/or retired priests. The number of appointed representatives is determined by the Bishop.

d. The Vicar General, Chancellor, and Vicar for Clergy are ex-officio members.

ELIGIBILITY FOR MEMBERSHIP AND VOTING

Canon 498

§1. The following have the right to both active and passive vote in constituting the presbyteral council:

1° all secular priests incardinated in the diocese;

2° secular priests not incardinated in the diocese, and priests who are members of an institute of consecrated life or a society of apostolic life, who live in the diocese and exercise some office for the good of the diocese.

§2. To the extent of statutes provide for it, the same right of election can be extended to other priests who have a domicile or quasi-domicile in the diocese.

COLLEGE OF CONSULTORS

Members of the College of Consultors are appointed by the Bishop, drawn from the membership of the Council of Priests (canon 502§1). Consultors are appointed for a term of five (5) years.

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ELECTIONS

1. Elections take place by mail ballot sent by the Administrative Assistant of the Vicar General.

2. Elections are to be completed in time for the November Council of Priests meeting.

3. Nominations for positions vacant in a Deanery shall be made by the membership of that Deanery. Priests appointed to diocesan-wide positions who do not belong to a specific Deanery shall vote in the Central Deanery.

4. All priests eligible to vote receive a ballot to elect someone from their Deanery.

5. In the event of a tie, another ballot is mailed. If the second balloting produces a tie, the Bishop will then choose by lots.

6. The term of office of elected and appointed Council of Priests members is three (3) years.

TERMINATION

In the case of three (3) consecutive unexcused absences on the part of any elected or appointed Council of Priests member, membership on the Council ceases. Before informing the member of his termination, the Chair will consult the Bishop.

UNCOMPLETED TERM

Any elected or appointed member who cannot complete his term is replaced for the unexpired portion of his term at the next regular meeting. The Bishop will appoint the new member to finish the term of the previous member.

PRESIDER

The Bishop presides over the Council of Priests in person. The Council of Priests shall not meet unless the Bishop is present.

OFFICERS OF THE COUNCIL

1. Officers are chosen from among the membership, elected at the January meeting. These are the Chair, a Vice-Chair and a Secretary.

2. The Chair of the Council of Priests:
   a. Is elected by the members of the Council of Priests for a term of one (1) year.
   b. Assists the Bishop in preparing the agenda for the meetings of the Council of Priests.

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OFFICERS OF THE COUNCIL (continued)

3. The Vice-Chair of the Council of Priests:
   a. Is elected by the members of the Council of Priests for a term of one (1) year.
   b. Assumes the duties of the Chair upon his absence or at his request.
   c. Assists the Chair as directed by him.
   d. Assists the Bishop in preparing meeting agendas.

4. The Secretary of the Council of Priests:
   a. Is elected by the members of the Council of Priests for a term of one (1) year.
   b. Oversees the nomination and election of members of the Council of Priests.
   c. Assists the Bishop in preparing meeting agendas.
   d. Records minutes to be given to the Administrative Assistant of the Vicar General every other month.
   e. The Administrative Assistant of the Vicar General will distribute minutes to the presbyterate and appropriately archive.

MEETINGS

1. The Council of Priests will meet every other month.
2. The Bishop or the Chair, with the Bishop’s consent, may call for special meetings of the Council of Priests at any time.
3. The Officers of the Council shall represent the Council of Priests at the meeting of the New Orleans Provincial Council.
4. Standing and ad hoc committees of the Council of Priests may be established as needed.

AMENDMENTS AND BY-LAWS

1. Amendments to this constitution and their effective date shall be made by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Council of Priests.
2. By-laws not in conflict with this constitution may be adopted by the affirmative vote of the majority of the Council of Priests.
3. All amendments and by-laws must have the approval of the Bishop.
4. The Administrative Assistant of the Vicar General shall keep copies of this constitution and all pertinent by-laws.

Approved [Signature]  Date 6-28-2016

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