

Parish Pastoral Council

Preamble

The Vatican II Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People states:

Participants in the function of Christ, priest, prophet and king, the laity have an active part of their own in the life and action of the Church. Their action within the Church communities is so necessary that without it the apostolate of the Pastors will frequently be unable to attain its full effect. (n. 10)

The parish offers an outstanding example of community apostolate, for it gathers into a unity of all the human diversities that are found there and inserts them into the universality of the Church. The laity should develop the habit of working in the parish in close union with their priests, of bringing before the ecclesial community their own problems, world problems, and questions regarding man's salvation, to examine them together and solve them by general discussion. According to their abilities the laity ought to cooperate in all the apostolic and missionary enterprises of their ecclesial family.

The laity will continuously cultivate the "feeling for the Eparchy," of which the parish is a kind of cell; they will be always ready on the invitation of their bishop to make their own contribution to eparchial undertakings. Indeed, they will not confine their cooperation to eparchial undertakings. Indeed, they will not confine their cooperation within the limits of the parish or Eparchy, but will endeavor, in response to the needs of the towns and rural districts, to extend it to interparochial, intereparchial, national and international spheres. (n. 11)

The CCEO states:

In the parish there are to be appropriate councils dealing with Pastoral and economic matters, according to the norms of the particular law of its own autonomous Church. (c. 295)

In the spirit of the Second Vatican Council and in accord with the *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches* (CCEO), the following text is to serve as a model constitution and bylaws for the parochial **pastoral councils** and **stewardship councils** in the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn. The revisions of this Constitution and Bylaws are supplemental to the CCEO; in the case of apparent divergence, the CCEO supplants the provisions contained herein.

Definition of Terms

- Article 404.** In this document, a "parish" is a stable community of faithful as defined in c. 279 or a canonically established mission.
- Article 405.** A "Pastor" is the presbyter entrusted with the care of souls in a parish as defined in c. 281 and the counterparts in law, i.e., an administrator (cc. 298-299), a rector of

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a church (c. 304) and one who assumes the care of a parish prior to the appointment of a parish administrator (c. 300).

Role and Function

Statute 406. As its name implies, the Pastoral Council is to be concerned under the direction of the pastor with the pastoral life of the parish. Areas of pastoral life include:

- a) Liturgical life, i.e., music, maintenance of the church, vestments, sacred vessels, candles, wine and water, liturgical ministers (readers, servers, cantors, choir, ushers);
- b) Religious education of children, young persons, and adults;
- c) Pastoral care for the sick, elderly, and handicapped;
- d) Preparation of those involved in the reception of the Sacraments of Baptism and Chrismation, First Holy Communion, and Marriage;
- e) Care of immigrants and economically disadvantaged persons;
- f) Promotion of ecumenism;
- g) Fostering bonds of friendship with non-Christians.

Statute 407. It is the competency of the Pastoral Council to *advise* and *cooperate* with the Pastor in the Pastoral care of the parish. As such, the Pastoral Council serves as a permanent structure for constructive dialogue among the clergy, religious and laity.

Statute 408. The Pastoral Council is to provide leadership, counsel, resources and encouragement to the apostolic and spiritual development of all parishioners.

Statute 409. The Pastoral Council is to serve as a coordinating body for Parish organizations and activities, with the exception of the Stewardship Council.

Statute 410. All members of the Pastoral Council must maintain the confidentiality of the deliberations of the council, especially with respect to privacy and personal reputations.

Membership and Elections

Statute 411. Membership of the Pastoral Council is not to exceed nine (9) lay persons and is not to be less than (5) lay persons.

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Statute 412. Priests, deacons, subdeacons and religious appointed to the parish are *ex officio* members of the Pastoral Council. Their membership shall not be included in determining the numerical membership of the Pastoral Council nor in the determination of a quorum.

Statute 413. The majority of the members of the Pastoral Council are to be elected. The Pastor can determine that officers of certain organizations, commissions, or committees can serve as *ex officio* members of the Pastoral Council

Statute 414. At the time of constituting the Pastoral Council, fifty-percent of the elected members are to be elected for a one-year term and fifty-percent of the elected members are to be elected for a two-year term. Succeeding elections shall be every year for fifty-percent of the members for a two-year term

Statute 415. Alternate members can be elected to fill any vacancies that occur among the elected members.

Statute 416. The elections are to be conducted in the following manner:

- a) Elections to the Pastoral Council are to be conducted in September in conjunction with elections to the Stewardship Council.
- b) Sixty (60) days prior to the election, the Pastor is to appoint an Elections Committee, who will prepare a list of candidates for election to one-year or two-year terms of service on the Pastoral Council. Prior to publication, this list is to be kept confidential and is to be submitted to the Pastor for approval. The Pastor is not obliged to provide reasons for the removal of any potential candidates from the list.
- c) It is the responsibility of the Elections Committee to determine the manner, time and place of the elections to the Pastoral Council.
- d) It is the responsibility of the Elections Committee to conduct the election and report to the Pastor, who will communicate the results to the Parish.
- e) A person enjoys the power to vote in the elections if he/she is a member of the parish in good standing.

Statute 417. A person is ineligible to be a member of the Pastoral Council if :

- a) A person from the same household is a candidate or is currently serving on the Pastoral Council;

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- b) He/she has been removed from the list of candidates by the Pastor.

Statute 418. The members of the Pastoral Council are to be installed during an appropriate liturgical or para-liturgical ceremony.

Statute 419. All members of the Pastoral Council, except for the Pastor, have a right to vote.

Officers

Statute 420. The Officers of the Pastoral Council are the Chairperson and Secretary and serve under the directions of the pastor.

Statute 421.

- a) The lay members of the Pastoral Council shall elect from among the lay members a Chairperson and Secretary .
- b) The Chairperson and Secretary are elected for a term of one (1) year and are eligible to be re-elected.

Statute 422. It is the responsibility of the Chairperson:

- a) To convoke, conduct, and close all meetings of the Pastoral Council;
- b) To coordinate the activities of the Pastoral Council and all committees affiliated with it;
- c) With the prior approval of the Pastor, to report to the Parish regarding the activities of the Pastoral Council;
- d) To act as a liaison between the Pastoral Council and the Stewardship Council.

Statute 423. It is the responsibility of the Secretary to take the minutes of the meetings, to maintain the record of the Pastoral Council and to expedite any correspondence on behalf of the Council.

Vacancy

Statute 424. A vacancy on the Pastoral Council can arise through removal, resignation, incapacity or death.

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- Statute 425.** It is the exclusive competence of the Pastor to accept a resignation from the Pastoral Council. In order to be valid, notification of the acceptance of the resignation must be given in writing to the person offering the resignation.
- Statute 426.** It is the exclusive competence of the Pastor to remove a member from the Pastoral Council. In order for the removal to be valid, the Pastor must hear the opinion of all the members of the Pastoral Council assembled in one place. The member who is to be removed must be given an opportunity of defense before the Pastoral Council. Notification of removal must be made in writing.
- Statute 427.** If a quorum cannot be obtained even through the inclusion of alternates, a vacancy is to be filled at a subsequent election. If the quorum cannot be obtained, an election for all vacancies is to be conducted within sixty (60) days.

Meetings

- Statute 428.** Meetings of the Pastoral Council are to be held in the parish facilities or at another convenient place as determined by the Chairperson with the prior approval of the Pastor.
- Statute 429.** The Pastoral Council is to meet at least once every thirty days.
- Statute 430.** Notification of the meetings are to be published in the parish bulletin.
- Statute 431.** Unless determined otherwise by the Chairperson, meetings of the Pastoral Council are public and all parishioners are free to attend.
- Statute 432.** With the prior approval of the Pastor, the Chairperson can convoke a special meeting of the Pastoral Council. Members are to be given seven (7) days notice and a quorum of a simple majority is required for the meeting to be conducted.
- Statute 433.** In order for a meeting to be conducted, two-thirds of the members of the Pastoral Council must be present.
- Statute 434.** With due regard for the *CCEO*, meetings are to be conducted in conformity with Robert's *Rules of Order*.
- Statute 435.** Summaries of the meetings of the Pastoral Council are to be reported to the Parish in a timely manner.

Committees

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STATUTES OF THE CHURCH

- Statute 436.** With the prior approval of the Pastor, the Chairperson can establish committees responsible for specific Pastoral programs.
- Statute 437.** With the prior approval of the Pastor, the Chairperson is to appoint Committee Chairpersons and Members.

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