

CONSTITUTION DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL

ARTICLE I: TITLE

1. The title of this body shall be DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL, commonly referred to as the “Pastoral Council,” the “Council,” or the “DPC.”

ARTICLE II: RELATIONSHIPS

1. The Diocesan Pastoral Council is established in accordance with the stipulation of the Church’s *Code of Canon Law* (# 511) for the purpose of providing advice to the Bishop of the Diocese of Spokane in the exercise of his care of the People of God in light of the mission of the Roman Catholic Church.
2. The Council can be dissolved only by the Bishop. It ceases to exist when the See is vacant; the successor bishop may reconstitute the Council or, in time, form a new one.
3. The Council is advisory to the Bishop and through him to his priests, deacons, diocesan staff and lay leaders regarding diocesan needs. Whenever the Council reaches a consensus through dialogue and discernment with him, he gives serious weight to its recommendation. The Bishop ordinarily will offer a clear explanation of the compelling reasons for deciding not to act in accordance with the consensus of the Council.
4. Once approved by the Bishop, the recommendations of the Council are binding in appropriate degrees on all the faithful in the Diocese.
5. The Council works in collaborative fashion with the other major consultative bodies of the diocese – that is, the Bishop’s Finance Council and the Presbyteral Council – as well as with the pastoral councils of the various parishes in the Diocese, recognizing and respecting the unique authority and responsibility of each.

ARTICLE III: RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The Diocesan Pastoral Council assists the Bishop as he establishes and develops mission statements for all major diocesan ministries.
2. The Council recommends to the Bishop diocesan policies relative to the pastoral care of the People of God.
3. The Council assists the Bishop as he fosters pastoral planning in light of parish and diocesan needs, and as he establishes short- and long-term goals and priorities.
4. The Council assists the Bishop as he holds accountable groups and organizations associated with the Diocese for satisfying the pastoral plan of the Diocese.
5. The Council assists the Bishop as he assures by varying means an annual assessment of the major spiritual and pastoral needs of the Diocese.
6. Within the scope of its responsibility, the Council shall be a responsible forum for the discussion of issues relevant to the spiritual growth and development of the faithful of the Diocese.
7. The Council assists with the identification and chartering of ministry positions or groups necessary for the welfare of the mission of the Diocese.

ARTICLE IV: MEMBERSHIP

1. The Bishop presides over the Council and its work; technically he is not a member.
2. The Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia are *ex-officio* members of the Council.
3. Lay membership on the Pastoral Council shall consist of at least fifteen additional members, reflecting in the selection as much as possible the presbyteral regions and major characteristics of the diocesan community [ethnicity, age, gender, ecclesial status].

4. All members of the Pastoral Council must possess these qualities:
 - is a baptized Catholic
 - is a registered and active member of a parish
 - is familiar with the dynamics of parish life
 - gives witness to a sense of Church as articulated by the Second Vatican Council
 - is willing to work for the common good of the diocese
 - can collaborate with others in decision-making
 - is discrete, prudent and respectful of confidentiality
5. A new Council is constituted every five years. Members are appointed formally by the Bishop from among a list of candidates developed through the Council's selection process.
6. The selection process by which candidates are identified for a membership on the Council shall include:
 - solicitation from the diocese at large of the names of individuals who meet the criteria for Council membership; reasons for nomination are to be included with the name
 - solicitation from Council members themselves of the names of qualified individuals
 - discussion by the Council in a confidential and respectful manner, identifying those best qualified to serve
 - development of a list of candidates with the input of the presbyterate for the use of the Bishop in making his selection
 - candidates are invited by the Bishop to serve on the Council
 - the Bishop makes a formal written appointment to the Council
7. Term of office is for five years, renewable once consecutively. The term begins on August 15.
8. Resignations from the Council are submitted to the Bishop. He may fill vacancies by direct appointment. Appointees complete the remainder of a vacated term and serve an additional term.
9. Only the Bishop may remove a member from the Pastoral Council.

ARTICLE V: OFFICERS

1. At its first meeting after August 15 in any given year, the Council shall select one of its members to serve as chairperson for the year and another member to serve as vice-chairperson in his/her absence. An *ex officio* member may not serve in either capacity.
2. The duties of the Chairperson or, in his absence, the Vice-Chairperson, are:
 - collaborate with the Bishop and his staff in developing an agenda for meetings of the Council
 - conduct meetings according to the agenda
 - represent the Council as requested by the Bishop

ARTICLE VI: MEETINGS

1. The Diocesan Pastoral Council must meet at least annually, but normally it shall meet three times a year.
2. The Council may meet only if it is convened by the Bishop.
3. Meetings of the Council shall include a time for prayer and shall be conducted in a prayerful discerning manner.
4. The meetings of the Council are closed meetings. Individual priests, deacons, diocesan staff or other members of the faithful may be invited by the Bishop to attend meetings or in some fashion bring their concerns to the Council, following procedures determined by the Bishop to fit the issue or circumstance.
5. Recommended agenda items may be submitted to the Bishop by any member of the Council.
6. A majority of the members of the Council shall constitute a quorum.
7. Decisions of the Council normally shall be reached by means of consensus characterized by an atmosphere of prayerful and respectful deliberation.
8. The work of the Council is made public at the discretion of the Bishop.

9. Participation in the decision-making process by proxy is not permitted.
10. An individual identified by the Bishop (not necessarily a member of the Council) will serve as the Council's recording secretary for the year. The secretary prepares the minutes of meetings, and after their approval by the Bishop, distributes them to the members of the Council. Further distribution of the minutes is at the discretion of the Bishop.

ARTICLE VII: COMMITTEES

1. The Diocesan Pastoral Council may establish committees and appoint committee chairpersons as necessary for the facilitation of its responsibilities.
2. The Council shall provide its committees with a charter which identifies their scope of responsibility and any other pertinent information.
3. Unless chartered otherwise by the Council, the committee chairperson is free to select committee members and determine the committee's method of operation.

ARTICLE VIII: AMENDMENTS

1. This *Constitution* may be amended by vote of Council.

APPROVED: _____ DATE: August 15, 2014

Most Reverend Blase J. Cupich