



ARCHDIOCESE OF SAINT BONIFACE PASTORAL CENTRE

EXAMPLE OF GUIDELINES (CONSTITUTION) FOR PARISH PASTORAL COUNCILS (PPCs) December 17, 2015

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ARTICLE 1 – Definition

The PPC is a group parishioners who work together with their Pastor or Parish Life Director to serve, lead and grow the Christian community.

ARTICLE 2 – Goal / Mission

The PPC endeavors to respond to the spiritual needs of the faithful, it watches over the unity of the parish, and it works at integrating new faithful into the Christian community.

It ensures that the various pastoral services of the parish are put in place:

- Evangelization and healing
- Liturgy, Sunday celebrations, adoration, and other forms of prayer and praise
- Hospitality and fellowship
- Faith education and spiritual growth (Catechesis of adults, youth and children)
- Charity and justice (Social Pastoral Mission)

ARTICLE 3 – Methods

The PPC achieves its objective through prayer, reflection, planning, delegation, and evaluation.

Prayer: Council members find a variety of ways to involve parishioners in prayers for the renewal and growth of the parish.

Reflection: Council members read books that deal with leading and growing parishes. They visit growing churches and participate in seminars and conferences on evangelization.

Planning: Council members evaluate the pastoral situation in the parish using, among other things, the questionnaire found in the *Guide for the Renewal and Growth of Parishes* (this document can be found in the archdiocese's website). They develop a list of priorities for the renewal of the parish.

Delegation: Council members identify the skills and interests of parishioners. They create teams that attend to parish activities (hospitality, evangelization, catechetical, liturgy, decor, choir, etc.).

Evaluation: Council members evaluate the previous year's pastoral activities in the light of their mission (Article 2) and adjust their plans and priorities accordingly. (See the *Guide for the Renewal and Growth of Parishes*)

ARTICLE 4 – Characteristics

The PPC is governed by the regulations established by the Archbishop, as required in the Guidelines for Parish Pastoral Councils: *From the "Upper Chamber" to "the Ends of the Earth"*, available on the archdiocese website.

Decisions within the PPC are made by consensus (except those to amend the constitution, for internal elections, or other technical aspects in which a proposal is required.) The Pastor or Parish Life Director may accept or reject the recommendations, but with few exceptions, he/she generally approves them. If he/she rejects a recommendation, however, a thorough explanation is required.

ARTICLE 5 – Composition

The PPC must be representative of the faithful of the parish and the different areas of pastoral activities. The total membership of the Council may vary between 10 and 15 members.

1) The Pastor or Parish Life Director (ex officio)

2) The Executive Committee

- The Chair
- The Co-Chair
- The Secretary

Note:

- The members of the executive are chosen by Council members from among Council members (except possibly the secretary).
- The Secretary does not necessarily have to be a member of the Council, but may be a parishioner capable of undertaking the duties of this role. This person may also occupy the role of secretary of the administrative affairs or daily business of the parish.

3) Parish Leadership Team (PLT)

- The Pastor or Parish Life Director (ex officio)
- The Chair of the PPC
- The Chair the Parish Financial Council (PFC)
- The Secretary
- **The pastoral coordinators of:**
 - Evangelization and healing
 - Liturgy, Sunday celebrations, adoration, and other forms of prayer and praise
 - Hospitality and fellowship
 - Faith formation and spiritual growth (Catechesis for adults, youth and children)
 - Charity and justice (Social Pastoral Mission)

Note:

- Other parishioners may be part of the Parish Leadership Team if they offer a significant contribution of talent and experience. This may include, for example, persons with experience in communications, planning, youth ministry, volunteer recruitment, couples ministry, leadership training, etc. These persons automatically become part of the PPC.

4) The other members who represent the faithful and the catholic movements in the parish.

ARTICLE 6 – Functions of the Members

The Chair:

- Calls meetings for the PPC and the meetings of the Parish Leadership Team
- Presides over the PPC and the meetings of the Parish Leadership Team
- Receives questions asked by the members of the PPC and parishioners
- Prepares the meeting agenda in collaboration with the Executive, as well as the Pastor or the Parish Life Director, and gives it to the secretary. The secretary then forwards it to the members of the PPC.
- Conducts the meetings in such a way that in-depth dialogue and full participation from each member results in consensus when decisions must be made
- In the Chair's absence, his functions are assumed by the Co-Chair

The Co-Chair:

- Assists the Chair and collaborates in his/her duties
- Assumes the role of Chair in case of his/her absence, or if he/she is unable or unwilling to act in full capacity

The Secretary:

- Prepares the minutes of the meetings and the reports on the various activities and sub-committees, and ensures the safekeeping of these reports and/or documents for the parish archives
- Distributes the minutes of the previous meeting to members a week ahead of the next scheduled meeting, along with a copy of the agenda and any new documents to be discussed
- Notifies members of any special meetings
- Prepares the documents required for the meetings

The Executive Committee:

- Prepares the Council's meetings (Agenda, room, convening of members, etc.)
- Maintains regular contact and good communication with the whole parish
- Stimulates discussions and sharing of ideas and motivates PPC members to identify the parish needs
- Helps set up teams of volunteers for the different pastoral activities, led by the pastoral coordinators (see below)
- Ensures that subcommittees are in place to suggest recommendations to be discussed at the PPC
- Organizes an annual assembly of parishioners
- Organizes re-election or replacement of members when terms are completed

The Pastoral Coordinators:

- The pastoral coordinators ensure that activities related to their specific area of responsibility are implemented. With the help of the PPC, they create one or more teams of volunteers who carry out the pastoral activities related to their ministry (A description of the individual ministries can be found in the document *Guide for the Renewal and Growth of Parishes* available on the archdiocese website).

The Parish Leadership Team (PLT):

- The members of the Parish Leadership Team:
 - Focus on reflection and planning using the document *Guide for the Renewal and Growth of Parishes* and the tables found there-in.
 - Work with the planning sheets found in the document *Guide for the Renewal and Growth of Parishes*.
 - Share information about their activities and work together to find solutions to the challenges they may encounter.
 - Inform the full assembly of the PPC of their work and submit their plans for suggestions and approval.
- The Parish Leadership Team meets once a month or more. The entire Parish Pastoral Council meets two or three times a year.

The other members of the PPC:

- Work together as one team
- Help the Parish Leadership Team focus on its purpose and maintain the course of its mission. Their role is to give council for the mission and let the members of the Parish Leadership Team operate in their respective areas.
- Revise, and approve if necessary, the projects of the members of the Parish Leadership Team.
- Help the pastoral coordinators put together their teams and committees.
- Reflect together to build a Christian community which invites and welcomes new people and helps parishioners grow in Christ.
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ARTICLE 7 – Designation of Members

Members of the PPC shall be chosen using the most efficient and appropriate means. There are several methods, some of which may be used at the same time.

The pastoral coordinators of the Parish Leadership Team may be designated differently from the other members of the PPC.

- **Election by all parishioners** from amongst any candidates that come forward, or from those suggested by the parishioners or the Council itself.

- **Designation of representatives by the pastoral teams.** This way suits well for pastoral coordinators of the Parish Leadership Team.
 - **Election by the members of the PPC** from amongst spontaneous candidates, or from those nominated by the parish faithful, or from those nominated by the Council itself.
 - **Designation of representatives by parish or catholic movements.** These members are part of the PPC to represent parishioners, not the exclusive interests of their movement or group.
 - **Designation of members by the Pastor.**
 - **Designation of members by the PPC itself.** This can be a way of ensuring the participation of people whose abilities are not always known to the parish at large.
- Positions for the Chair person, the Co-Chair and the secretary will be filled by election within the PPC at the regular meeting of June each year, quorum is required. The Executive Committee members are chosen for a term of one (1) or two (2) years. They take office immediately.

ARTICLE 8 – Terms of the Members

Apart from the Pastor (or the Parish Life Director), who is member ex officio, members serve three year terms, which may be renewed once, for a total of 6 consecutive years. Then after a period of at least two years of not serving on the Council, former members are eligible for re-election for another three year term, renewable once.

The term begins in June of the year the member is elected or nominated and terminates in June three years later.

When a position is vacated before the term is completed (or before it has even begun), the new member simply serves the remainder of the term and takes the role immediately.

ARTICLE 9 – Functioning of the PPC

The PPC operates from June to June, with a break from regular meetings in July and August, if possible.

The PPC meets two or three times per year.

The Parish Leadership Team meets once a month or more often, if necessary.

Only the Chair, of his/her own volition or in response to a request by a minimum of three members of the PPC, may call a special meeting, if it deems appropriate.

If three or more members ask to have a special meeting, the Chair must call a meeting.

ARTICLE 10 - Quorum

The quorum is the minimum required number of members who must be present or represented for a deliberation to be valid. If the quorum is not met, the PPC cannot proceed to a vote.

The quorum for a regular Council meeting is 50% of members plus (+) one (1).

In exceptional cases where it is necessary to make a decision before the next meeting and the quorum cannot be met in a special meeting, the Chair, or in his/her absence the Co-Chair, may hold the meeting by videoconference, teleconference, or by any other electronic means in order to make a decision by the normal quorum (50% of members plus one).

ARTICLE 11 – Elections (three-year cycle)

To ensure continuity, only one-third (1/3) of the PPC shall be replaced each year.

- Year ‘A’ - 1/3 of elected members (Year ‘A’ being 2016)
- Year ‘B’ - 1/3 elected members (2017)
- Year ‘C’ – 1/3 elected members (2018)
- Cycle starts over in 2019

In order to maintain continuity, the PPC may, in exceptional situations, determine the lengths of the terms so as to conform to Article 11.

In the event that a member resigns, or if the member is absent from three consecutive meetings without good reason, the PPC shall designate a replacement for that member.

ARTICLE 12 – Election Calendar

Elections for the PPC shall be announced no later than the third week of May and held on the first Sunday in June.

Each year, a nomination committee shall be formed in March for June elections.

The nominations committee is made up of the Pastor and at least six members who will remain on the PPC in the following year.

After the elections, any remaining vacant positions shall be filled by the new PPC from the names submitted to the Council. The designated persons shall be chosen by consensus of the PPC.

The positions of Chair, Co-Chair, and Secretary shall be filled, if necessary, by election within the PPC at the June regular meeting each year by quorum of the PPC. The members of the Executive shall be

chosen for a term of one or two years, which begin immediately.

Any parishioner may request a meeting with the PPC, after having first submitted the request to the Chair. The Chair shall ask the person the purpose of his request and welcome him. The PPC is responsible for informing parishioners that they may appear before the Council once they have submitted a request to the Chair.

ARTICLE 13 – Relationship with the Parish Financial Council

The PFC (Parish Finance Council) has distinct responsibilities from those of the PPC and functions autonomously from it (but not independently from it). The two bodies need to work together closely, consult each other and develop clear mechanisms for regular communication such as:

- exchange of minutes of meetings and resolutions;
- have members who serve on both bodies;
- invite a representative of one council to attend the meeting of the other;
- agree to consult with each other before taking important decisions;
- prepare an annual parish budget together, in particular that portion of the budget which pertains to pastoral activities.

ARTICLE 14 – Relationship with Other Groups

The PPC may make recommendations to other existing groups but with respect to their specific mission. This can be done either through the Pastor or Parish Life Director, or directly, making sure to indicate the Pastor's agreement with the recommendations.

The PPC is also at the service of these other groups in their shared mission of leading and growing the Christian community

ARTICLE 15 – Changes to the Constitution

Any changes to the constitution must be presented as a motion at least one month in advance to the PPC and be approved by a minimum of two-thirds (2/3) of Council members.

Date of amendment of the constitution: _____

Signatures:

Pastor or Parish Life Director _____

Chair of the PPC _____

The Chair must send the original signed constitution to the Pastoral Centre.

Document prepared by the Pastoral Centre of the Archdiocese of Saint Boniface

with the help and counsel of the Saint-Martyrs-Canadiens and Saint-Émile parishes.
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