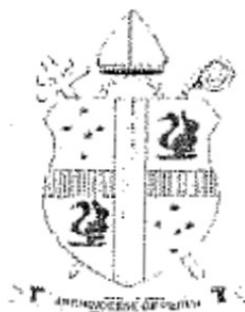


# Constitution for Parish Pastoral Councils



Archdiocese of Perth

## **Mission Statement**

A parish is a community of Christ's faithful established within the Archdiocese, whose pastoral care, under the authority of the Archbishop, is entrusted to a parish priest as its proper pastor.

In this parish community of Christ's faithful:

“The laity should accustom themselves to working to the parish in close union with their priests, bringing to the church community their own and the world's problems as well as questions concerning human salvation, all of which should be examined and resolved by common deliberation. As far as possible, the laity ought to collaborate energetically in every apostolic and missionary undertaking sponsored by their local parish.”

The council recommends that:

"In dioceses, as far as possible, there should be councils which assist the apostolic work of the Church either in the field of making the gospel known and people holy, or in the charitable, social, or other spheres. To this end, clergy and religious should appropriately co-operate with the laity." (Vatican 11 Apostolate of the Laity)

## **Role and Function**

The Parish Pastoral Council is a body representative of the whole parish. Through it the Christian faithful, along with those who share in the pastoral care of the parish in virtue of their office, give their help in fostering pastoral activity.

The Parish Pastoral Council is a consultative body. As such it has the right and duty to provide wise advice and constructive assessments to the parish priest. It is to be involved in prudent policy making, goal planning and setting of objectives for the furtherance of Christian ministry within the parish.

Canon law requires the setting up of a separate Parish Finance Committee. The Parish Pastoral Council will be required to dialogue and collaborate with that Committee where necessary in fulfilling the mission of the parish.

The mission of the Parish Pastoral Council, in cooperation with the priest, is to see to it that every avenue is opened for all members of the parish to:

- i) Discover their call as disciples of Christ;
- ii) Develop the confidence and skills they need to carry out their mission;
- iii) Find in the parish the structures they will need for their ongoing support and growth; and
- iv) Review regularly individual and parish goals and strategies so that everyone will have a sense of proceeding purposefully and effectively towards the bringing about of God's reign.

In carrying out this role the Parish Pastoral Council will:

- i) Provide for education and formation of parish councillors and the parish in understanding the role of the council within the mission of the Church.
- ii) Initiate processes of participative pastoral planning in order to:
  - Develop a vision for the parish;
  - Plan appropriate goals and specific object for the spiritual, liturgical and apostolic life of the parish; and
  - Ensure regular evaluation of the parish's attempts to achieve them.
- III) Overview the workings of the parish groups and services and the sharing of services with other parishes so as to provide for:
  - The efficient co-ordination of those services; and
  - The initiation of new services where needed.
- iv) Ensure that lines of communication are kept as open as possible between parish administration/ parish agencies and individual members of the parish and be a means of communication with other parishes, the deanery and the Arch- diocese.

- v) Prepare the parish for the future, particularly through providing opportunities for future leaders of the parish to emerge and be trained.

In order for the Church to have the fullness of God's light and guidance, the people must be consulted. Thus, a totally new ministry of the people of God is born - a special ministry of people and pastor together reflecting on the parish's ministerial activity and on the basis of that reflection, discerning what needs to be changed or developed in the parish to make it more faithful to what God is calling us to be. It is this ministry that is specifically and particularly the ministry of the parish council.

The Parish Pastoral Council is a representative body of the whole parish, priests, religious and laity, working together to form a Christian community, which seeks out and responds to the spiritual and material needs of all God's people. A parish council, therefore, should be truly "pastoral", and reflect a sharing of responsibility for the Church's mission, so that the Church in this particular place may reflect more fully the presence of Christ.

## Objectives

1. To endeavour to involve the whole of the parish in the mission of the Church to the world.
2. To assist the apostolic work of the Church by promoting Christian formation of people and providing for them the means to achieve this.
3. To promote courses of study and reflection and any other initiatives which develop an understanding of the apostolate of the laity so that they can carry out their mission to the world at the parish level and beyond.
4. To seek out and respond to the needs of people in the parish and beyond and to involve the whole parish in the response to their needs.
5. To develop a sense of Church beyond parish boundaries and to stimulate a Christian response to local issues and the problems confronting our world.
6. To foster and support all parish activities.
7. To promote communication between all members, sectors, and organisations of the parish and wider community.
8. To co-operate and communicate with diocesan organisations and to support and promote the activities and services of these organisations.

## Council Membership

1. The council shall consist of:
  - i) The parish priest and his assistant clergy;
  - ii) A representative of other pastoral workers specifically serving the parish;
  - iii) Elected parishioners of sufficient numbers to adequately represent the parish;
  - iv) Such parishioners as may be co-opted by the parish priest and council provided that the number co-opted shall not exceed the number of elected members.
2. People who are active members of the Church community and have reached the age of 18 years are eligible for election.
3.
  - i) Membership of the council shall be for a period of two years. Any retiring member may be re-elected provided he/she has not served for more than six consecutive years.
  - ii) On completion of six years service, a retiring member may again be eligible after a lapse of one year.
  - iii) Should the position of an elected member become vacant, the council shall have the power to appoint a replacement until the next election.
4.
  - i) Any member of the council may resign by giving written notice of intention to the secretary and the resignation shall operate from its acceptance by the council.
  - ii) Any member of the council who, without giving adequate reason is absent from three successive meetings, is automatically excluded from the council.

## **Council Meetings**

1. The parish priest is ex-officio the president of the council.
2. Council members shall elect their own chairperson, vice chairperson and secretary. They may hold office for no longer than two years.
3. The council shall normally meet once a month/ or as often as necessary.
4. Sub-committees may be appointed as required, to which any other people may be co-opted. These groups report to the council.

## **Annual General Meetings**

An annual general meeting of parishioners should be held on a date fixed by the council.

**October 1992**