



Guidelines for Parish Pastoral Councils

A. General Principles

1. In accordance with the recommendation of Canon 536, every parish in the Archdiocese of Vancouver must have a Parish Pastoral Council.
2. It is the purpose of the Parish Pastoral Council to work with the pastor, who in virtue of his office has the pastoral care of the parish (c. 536), in fostering its pastoral life and activity. As an instrument of ecclesial communion, this Council serves the orderly collaboration of the faithful in offering advice to the pastor.
3. “The Pastoral Council enjoys only a consultative vote, and is governed by the norms established by the diocesan bishop” (c. 536§2). Thus, while the Parish Pastoral Council must assist the pastor in all areas, its principal role is consultative.
4. While financial issues are not properly the competence of the Parish Pastoral Council, but rather of the Parish Finance Council, it is appropriate that the Parish Finance Council report periodically to the Parish Pastoral Council. Financial issues have spiritual and pastoral import, and every financial transaction must reflect the mission of the Church. Hence, the Parish Pastoral Council, together with the pastor, must deal with financial issues by setting priorities. The Parish Finance Council, however, is not a subcommittee of the Parish Pastoral Council; it has its own juridical autonomy and configuration.
5. Every Parish Pastoral Council in the Archdiocese of Vancouver must operate in accordance with Canon Law and this Decree. If a Council chooses to have its own constitution, that constitution must be approved by the Archbishop.

B. Composition

1. The members of the Parish Pastoral Council should come from the various spheres of the life and pastoral activity of the parish: liturgical, educational, charitable and social. They may also come from various organizations, movements and other bodies, though never in an exclusive way.
2. Since in all juridical matters the pastor acts in the person of the parish (c. 532), the pastor is ex officio the chairman of the Parish Pastoral Council. Assistant pastors are ex officio members of the Council as are deacons assigned to ministry in the parish.
3. The pastor has the right to appoint up to five members to the Parish Pastoral Council.
4. Additional members may be elected by means of a parish election or selected by means other than appointment.
5. The members of the Parish Pastoral Council must be practicing Catholics of proven faith and sound morals, at least 18 years of age, and have belonged to the parish for at least one year. They must also demonstrate wisdom, prudence and willingness to collaborate.



6. The minimum number of members of the Parish Pastoral Council is five and the maximum fifteen.
7. The pastor may decide to establish terms for the appointment or a selection of all the Council members.
8. The presence of the pastor or his delegate is necessary for the Parish Pastoral Council to conduct its business.
9. It is the right and responsibility of the pastor to remove or dismiss a member from the Parish Pastoral Council for grave reasons.
10. When the pastor is transferred or dies, the Parish Pastoral Council ceases. It will be the duty of the new pastor to reconstitute it or form a new Parish Pastoral Council within six months of his appointment.

C. Responsibilities

1. With prayer and docility to the Holy Spirit, the Council will foster the parish's planning, programs and services.
2. The pastor sets the agenda and presides at Council meetings. He may choose to delegate the responsibility to chair meetings to another member.
3. In setting the agenda, the pastor must take into account the legitimate desires and aspirations of all parishioners, as presented by the Parish Pastoral Council members.
4. The Parish Pastoral Council must work to build unity in the parish. Thus, in its deliberations it strives for consensus by discussion and by sharing information and ideas.
5. A secretary is to keep accurate minutes of each meeting.
6. Meetings are to be held at the call of the pastor at least six times a year.

D. Decree

Granted, with the approval of the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Vancouver, on this Fifteenth Day of May, in the Year of our Lord, Two Thousand and Fourteen, at the John Paul II Pastoral Centre in Vancouver.

Approved: 2014-May-15

† J. Michael Miller, CSB
Archbishop of Vancouver