THE DIOCESE OF CHEYENNE

STATUTES OF PARISH PASTORAL COUNCILS

Feast of St. Catherine of Siena
April 29, 2022

I. Purpose

The purpose of the Parish Pastoral Council is to give counsel to the Pastor, or his equivalent in canon law,[1] concerning the needs of the people and the pastoral activity in the parish or parishes under his care.[2] Under his authority, this Council investigates, discerns, and proposes practical recommendations about those things which pertain to the pastoral activities in the parish in order to promote the life and actions of the People of God with the Gospel so that the evangelical mission of the Church reaches everyone.[3] Each parish or grouping of parishes is to have a Parish Pastoral Council, and the Pastor is to seek the counsel of the Parish Pastoral Council.[4] The Parish Pastoral Council is a distinct and separate body from the Parish Finance Council.[5]

[1] The equivalent to a "Pastor" in canon law are the Moderator, when the pastoral care of the parish has been assigned to a team of priests *in solidum* (see *Codex Iuris Canonici auctoritate Ioannis Pauli PP. II promulgatus* [*CIC*] (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1989) cc. 517 §1; 543 §2, 3º), or when there is no Pastor or the Pastor is impeded from functioning, the Parochial Administrator, the senior Parochial Vicar by assignment, or the Priest Director (see *CIC*, cc. 517 §2; 533 §3; 539-540; 541; 548 §2; 549).

[2]. See *CIC*, c. 515 §1; 517; 519; 526; 536; confer c. 514 §1; Congregation for the Clergy, et al., instruction *Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priests*, August 15, 1997, art. 5 §2: *AAS* 89 (1997) 867-868; Congregation for the Clergy, instruction *The pastoral conversion of the Parish community in the service of the evangelizing mission of the Church*, July 20, 2020:n. 108: *Canon Law Digest* 19: 2016-2020.

[3] See *CIC*, c. 536; confer c. 511; Congregation for Bishops, Directory for the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops *Apostolorum Successores,* March 9, 2004 (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2004) nn. 210; 211; *The pastoral conversion of the Parish community in the service of the evangelizing mission of the Church*,:n. 110: *CLD* 19: 2016-2020.

[4] See *CIC*, c. 536 §1; *Apostolorum Successores,* nn. 210; 211; *The pastoral conversion of the Parish community in the service of the evangelizing mission of the Church*,:n. 108: *CLD* 19: 2016-2020.

[5] See *CIC*, cc. 536 and 537; Congregation for the Clergy, et al., instruction *Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priests*, August 15, 1997, art. 5 §2: *AAS* 89 (1997) 868.

II. Membership and Terms of Office

A. In order to serve as a member of the Parish Pastoral Council, a person must be:

1. A fully initiated Catholic;[6]

2. Outstanding in firm faith, good morals and prudence;[7]

3. Willing to work with all ages and with parishioners of various backgrounds;

4. Capable and willing to use "process and visioning skills," such as listening, collaborating, thinking creatively, discerning spiritually, evaluating, and planning, including the means by which others will participate in the implementation of the process and vision;

5. Free of any canonical penalties or impediments including an irregular marriage;[8]

6. Have domicile or quasi-domicile in the parish or parishes that are grouped together; and,

7. Selected according to the norms that follow.[9]

B. The Parish Pastoral Council shall be composed of not less than seven (7) but not more than thirteen (13) members. The exact number of members of the Parish Pastoral Council is to be determined by the Pastor, or his equivalent in canon law.

C. Membership on the Parish Pastoral Council is to represent the Parish, not in the sense of representing a constituency, but in the sense that the Council mirrors or looks like the Parish.

D. The elected members of the Parish Pastoral Council, constituting minimally about half of the membership of the Council, shall be chosen according to the following norms:

1. The Pastor, or his equivalent in canon law, in a manner determined by him, is to solicit from the members of the Parish nominations for the Parish Pastoral Council.

2. The Pastor, or his equivalent in canon law, in a manner determined by him, is to propose qualified and acceptable nominees as candidates for positions on the

[6] See *CIC*, cc. 149 §1; 205; confer c. 512 §1.
[7] See *CIC*, c. 149 §1; confer c. 512 §2.
[8] See *Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priests*, art. 5 §2: *AAS* 89 (1997) 868; *Catechism of the Catholic Church,* 2d ed. (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 2000) n. 1650.
[9] See *CIC*, c. 536.

Parish Pastoral Council, and an election is to be conducted according to the norms of canons 119, 1º and 164-179 of the Code of Canon Law.

3. Elected members should be chosen in a manner which represents the parish or the grouping of parishes; therefore, if several parishes are grouped together and/or if a parish has one or more mission church communities which do not have their own Pastoral Councils, then some of the elected members are to be elected from the other parishes and/or communities, in a manner determined by the Pastor, or his equivalent in canon law.

4. Elected members serve for a term of three (3) years. Upon the completion of a term, they may be elected for up to three (3) additional terms. Terms shall be staggered so that each year no more than a third (1/3) of the elected members are newly elected or re-elected members.

5. The Pastor, or his equivalent in canon law, may fill a vacancy at any time, by appointing a replacement for the vacant elected position and the newly chosen member shall serve for the remainder of the unexpired term. If the remainder is for more than a year, it counts toward the four (4) term limit.

E. The Chairperson of the Parish Finance Council, or the delegate thereof, whether for a specific meeting or for all meetings, serves as an *ex-officio*, voting member of the Parish Pastoral Council. If multiple parishes have a single Pastoral Council, then the Chair of each of the Parish Finance Councils, or the delegate thereof, whether for a specific meeting or all the meetings, serves as *ex-officio*, voting member of the Parish Pastoral Council.

F. At the discretion of the Pastor, or his equivalent in canon law, additional members of the Parish Pastoral Council may be selected according to the following norms, provided that the elected members of the Parish Pastoral Council are minimally about half of the Council and the appointments do not make the elected members less than about half of the Council.

1. The following individuals may be designated by the Pastor, or his equivalent in canon law, as *ex-officio*, voting members of the Council:

   a. One (1) or all of the Parochial Vicars assigned to the Parish; and/or,

   b. One (1) or all of the Deacons assigned to the Parish.

2. The following appointed members may be designated by the Pastor, or his equivalent in canon law, as members of the Council:

   a. One (1) to two (2) high school youths in their sophomore or junior year of high school may be appointed by the Pastor, or his equivalent in canon

law, to serve as members of the Council into or through the completion of their senior year of high school;

b. One (1) or more members may be appointed by the Pastor, or his equivalent in canon law, to insure that the Pastoral Council is representative of the Parish, so that parishioners of all ages and demographics are members of the Council and the Council mirrors or looks like the Parish. Appointed members serve for a term of three (3) years. Upon the completion of a term, they may be appointed for up to three (3) additional terms, for a maximum of four (4) terms. Terms shall be staggered so that each year no more than a third (1/3) of the appointed members are newly appointed or re-appointed members.

c. The Pastor, or his equivalent in canon law, may fill a vacancy at any time, by appointing a replacement for the vacant appointed position and the newly chosen member shall serve for the remainder of the unexpired term. If the remainder is for more than a year, it counts toward the four (4) term limit.

G. A member loses membership on the Parish Pastoral Council by:

1. The notification to the member by the Pastor, or his equivalent in canon law, of the expiration of the member's term;[10]

2. The completion of the high school member's senior year or his or her discontinuation of high school studies;

3. The loss of membership on the Parish Finance Council or the ceasing of being the Chair or delegate thereof;

4. The acceptance by the Pastor, or his equivalent in canon law, of a letter of resignation;[11]

5. The removal by the Pastor, or his equivalent in canon law, because the member has lost domicile in the parish or parishes grouped together, has failed to attend three (3) consecutive meetings without a reasonable excuse, has entered into an irregular marriage, has lost the clerical state, has publicly defected from the Catholic faith or from the communion of the Church, is a cleric who has attempted marriage even if only civilly, or other grave reasons;[12]

[10] See *CIC*, cc. 184 §§1 and 3; 186.

[11] See *CIC*, cc. 184 §§1 and 3; 187-189.

[12] See *CIC*, cc. 184 §§ 1 and 3; 192-194; *Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priests,* art. 5 §2; *AAS* 89 (1997) 868; *Catechism of the Catholic Church,* n. 1650.

6. The privation of office as the penalty for the commission of an ecclesiastical offense when imposed according to the norms of the penal laws of the Catholic Church;[13] and,

7. Death.

H. If the Parish has no resident Pastor and either a Parish Life Coordinator, or a Pastoral Associate has been assigned to assist in the pastoral care of the Parish, the Parish Life-Coordinator or the Pastoral Associate serves as an *ex officio*, non-voting member of the Parish Pastoral Council.[14] The Parish Life Coordinator or Pastoral Associate does not count toward the maximum number of the members of the Council.

I. Newly elected or appointed members take office on July 1 of the year they are elected or appointed, unless they are appointed to fill an unexpired term in which case the member takes office immediately.

J. New members are to receive orientation, which is to include:

1. The Diocesan Pastoral Plan and the Parish Pastoral Plan;

2. The Statutes of the Parish Pastoral Council and any modifications to the Statutes for the parish or grouping of parishes;

3. The minutes from the last year; and,

4. The names and contact information of the other members.

III. Officers

A. The President of the Parish Pastoral Council is the Pastor, or his equivalent in canon law.[15] As President, he or his delegate presides over the meeting.

B. If the Parish has no resident Pastor and either a Parish Life Coordinator or Pastoral Associate has been assigned to assist in the pastoral care of the Parish, the Parish Life Coordinator or Pastoral Associate may serve as the delegate of the Pastor, or his equivalent in canon law.[16]

C. A Chairperson shall be elected from the members of the Parish Pastoral Council according to the norms of canons 119, 1º and 164-179 of the Code of Canon Law. The Chairperson serves for a term of one (1) year and may be reelected. The Chairperson shall administer and direct the meetings and activities of the Council in cooperation with

[13] See *CIC*, cc. 184 §§1 and 3; 196.
[14] See *CIC*, c. 517 §2.
[15] See *CIC*, cc. 517 §1; 532; 537; 543 §2, 3º.
[16] See *CIC*, cc. 533 §3; 539-540; 541; 548 §2; 549.

the Pastor. The Chairperson, or the delegate thereof, serves an ex officio, voting member of the Parish Finance Council.

D. A Vice-Chairperson shall be elected from the members of the Parish Pastoral Council according to the norms of canons 119, 1º and 164-179 of the Code of Canon Law. The Vice-Chairperson serves for a term of one (1) year and may be reelected. The Vice-Chairperson shall assist the Chairperson in administering and directing the meetings and activities of the Council, and shall in the absence of the Chairperson temporarily assume the role of Chairperson.

E. A Secretary shall also be elected from the members of the Parish Pastoral Council according to the norms of canons 119, 1º and 164-179 of the Code of Canon Law. The Secretary serves for a term of one (1) year and may be reelected. The Secretary shall take minutes, keep a copy of the records of the Council, and oversee the communications to the members of the Council.

IV. Meetings

A. The Parish Pastoral Council shall meet in regular session four (4) to twelve (12) times a year (e.g., quarterly to monthly), according to the notice given by the Pastor or his equivalent in canon law and delivered to each member. The notice will specify the time and the place of the meeting. An agenda and supporting materials are to be sent to all the members of the Council at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the meeting.

B. At the discretion of the Pastor, or his equivalent in canon law, additional meetings may be scheduled or called. All members, however, are to be notified of the meeting at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance and an agenda and supporting materials are to be sent with the notice or shortly after the notice is given. The notice will specify the time and the place of the meeting.

C. The agenda for each meeting is to be set by the Pastor, or his equivalent in canon law, who, prior to the meeting of the Council, shall consult the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary in order that the Pastor may determine the agenda. The Pastor may consult with other members of the Council, Parish Staff, and others in preparing the agenda.

D. In order for a meeting to be convened, there must be a majority of the members of the Parish Pastoral Council present.[17]

E. The Parish Pastoral Council cannot meet without the Pastor, his equivalent in canon law, or his delegate attending.[18]

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[17] *CIC*, c. 119, 2º.

[18] *Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priests*, art. 5 §3: *AAS* 89 (1997) 868.

F. Meetings are normally to be held in person. When this is not possible, consultation by a conference call, video conferencing, or other electronic means is permitted so long as the members can actively participate in the discussions and interact with one another, thus preserving the collegial nature of the consultation. When conducting a meeting through electronic means is not possible and the matter is urgent, the consultation may be conducted by mail, electronic mail, or facsimile; but if at least a third (1/3) of the members of the council desire a meeting, then the matter must be delayed until a meeting to discuss the matter can be convened, which is to be done as soon as possible. Advice constitutes the recommendations of the members of the council. A vote is to be taken and recorded in the minutes in order to document the consensus of the council.[19] The results of a consultation conducted without a meeting are to be recorded in the next meeting's minutes.

G. When necessary and appropriate in the judgment of the one moderating the meeting, *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* shall be followed.

H. Members of the Parish Pastoral Council are to be provided the materials necessary to adequately prepare for each meeting, are to appropriately prepare themselves for each meeting,[20] and are to offer their opinions sincerely.[21]

I. The Pastor, or his equivalent in canon law, can require that matters discussed be kept confidential and secret.[22]

J. The Pastor, or his equivalent in canon law, when appropriate, is to make public the actions and deliberations of the Parish Pastoral Council.

V. Competence

A. The Parish Pastoral Council is competent to investigate, discern, and propose practical recommendations concerning pastoral activities in the parish in order to promote the life and actions of the People of God with the Gospel so that the evangelical mission of the Church reaches everyone.[23] This competence extends to, but is not limited to, the following areas:

1. Pastoral planning;

2. Catechetical, missionary, and apostolic initiatives;

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[19] *CIC*, c. 127 §1.
[20] See *CIC*, c. 126.
[21] *CIC*, c. 127 §3.
[22] Ibid.
[23] See *CIC*, c. 536; confer c. 511; *Apostolorum Successores,* nn. 210; 211; *The pastoral conversion of the Parish community in the service of the evangelizing mission of the Church*,:n. 110: *CLD* 19: 2016-2020.

3. Improvement of doctrinal formation and the sacramental life of the members of the Parish;

4. Pastoral activities;

5. Means of raising public awareness regarding concerns of the Church;

6. Reviews of studies and recommendations of the Parish Staff and Ministries;

7. In certain cases, important financial matters; and,

8. To meet with the Bishop of Cheyenne, or his representative, when he is conducting a pastoral visit to the parish.[24]

B. The Parish Pastoral Council ordinarily is not competent to deal with the following areas:

1. Most financial matters, which are primarily the competence of the Parish Finance Council;[25]

2. Questions bearing on faith, orthodoxy, moral principles, or canon law.[26]

C. At least once a year, the Parish Pastoral Council is to review the Statutes of the Parish Pastoral Council and modifications to the Statutes for the parish or grouping of parishes.

VI. Individual Assignments and Committees

A. Individual members of the Parish Pastoral Council can be assigned tasks to complete between meetings in order to assist the full Council in the investigation, consideration, and development of practical conclusions concerning the pastoral works in the Parish.

B. From time to time, the Parish Pastoral Council can form committees to assist the full Council in the investigation, consideration, and development of practical conclusions concerning the pastoral works in the Parish. These committees can be standing committees, whose existence is indeterminate, or *ad hoc*, whose existence is for a specified time or is until a specified project is completed.

VII. Experts and Others

In order to thoroughly investigate, consider, and develop practical conclusions concerning pastoral works in the Parish, the Parish Pastoral Council may seek the services of experts and of those who are ministering in the pastoral work.

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[24] See *Apostolorum Successores*, n. 221 d).
[25] See *CIC*, cc. 493; 494 §§1-2; 126;;1277; 1280;1291-1295;1305; *Apostolorum Successores*, nn. 210; 211.
[26] See *Omnes Christifideles*, n. 9; *Canon Law Digest*, 8: 286.

VIII. Adoption and Amendment

A. These Statutes shall be adopted by decree of the Diocesan Bishop after hearing the Presbyteral Council and are effective for all parishes in the Diocese of Cheyenne.[27]

B. These Statutes shall be amended by decree of the Diocesan Bishop after hearing the Presbyteral Council and shall be effective for all parishes in the Diocese of Cheyenne.[28]

C. Pastors determine the specific number of elected and additional members, and who the additional members will be.[29]

[27] See *CIC*, c. 536 §1.
[28] Ibid.
[29] See II. B., C., and E. above.