

feel included, they will increase their involvement and their participation in ministries and activities.

Strategy: Planned action that directs efforts toward attaining a goal. Besides describing a result, an objective also specifies what is to be done, who is to do it, and when it is to be completed.

Sunday Eucharist: An essential element of parish life which is both source and summit of the parish's expression of its life in Christ. The center of pastoral planning and mission.

Tradition: The long-standing practices and beliefs of the Church, developed since the days of the Apostles and revered as normative, along with Scriptures, for the life of the Church.

Vatican II: The most recent of 21 Church councils (1962-1965) in which bishops from throughout the universal Church gather with the Pope to discuss and decide matters of Church teaching and practice. A council of this nature has supreme and full authority over the Church.

Worship: One of the seven essentials of parish life that gives expression to the sacramental and prayer life of parishioners. Encompasses both Sunday Eucharist and other ritual forms of sacred celebration.

SOURCES

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Diocese of Shreveport

Parish Pastoral Council Bylaws and Glossary of Terms

A Quick Reference Handbook

January 2020

I. PASTORAL COUNCIL BYLAWS

The parish pastoral council bylaws comprises a document which enumerates the items that give expression and definition to the governing principles and procedures for the council. It can be a different document for each parish, since parishes differ. The council should be prepared to take the time and effort to produce a document suited to its own unique situation. There are, however, certain basic elements which appear in bylaws if it is to be a living and effective document.

The pastoral council should reflect the make-up of the parish. There is great diversity in our diocese and our parishes. Diversity exists in age, gender, race, ethnicity, economy, education, and theology. That diversity of each parish should be reflected in the bylaws of the respective councils.

A. Basic Elements

1. **PREAMBLE:** The preamble expresses the basic identity, the nature, and the purpose of the group (the parish) which is establishing the document.

2. **NAME:** Simply the name by which the council is to be known.

3. **PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES:** This section expresses the basic purposes and general objectives of the parish pastoral council. It states what the parish wants to do in their council deliberations.

4. **POWERS:** Here is stated what the council may do, what kind of decisions it may make on behalf of the parish. The limits of its power are also stated here.

5. **MEMBERSHIP:** This section states who the members of the council are to be; the distinction between ex-officio members, at-large representatives and special representatives is made here.

6. **NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS:** Here are stated how and when elective members are to be nominated.

Pastoral Planning: The process which turns the parish vision into reality within a particular span of time, through a systematic, cyclical design. It involves constructing the mission statement, long-range goals, and annual parish objectives.

Presbyteral Council: The consultative body of the bishop that assists with the governance of the diocese and the concerns of the presbyters (*priests*), formerly called Priests' Council.

Reign of God: The Biblical expression of God's dynamic rule of the universe, the values and qualities which were most clearly manifested in the sayings and deeds of Jesus.

Representative: A characteristic of the makeup of parish pastoral council, namely, their concern with the common good of the entire parish as opposed to special interest groups or organizations.

Selection: A method by which leaders are chosen to serve on the parish pastoral council, through a discernment rather than election process.

Sense of Belonging/Hospitality: One essential of parish life that welcomes people in a friendly, inclusive, and non-judgmental manner.

Spirituality: The essence of parish life which invites us to deepen our relationship with God. This often involves prayer, study, and activities that nurture our spirit and call us to growth.

Stewardship/Involvement, Participation, and Inclusion: One of the seven essential elements of parish life, which challenges all parishioners to share their time, talent, and treasure for the fulfillment of the parish mission. If people

Goal: A clearly defined statement of desired direction or activity in general terms.

Leadership: One essential of parish life which calls forth gifts of visioning, planning, empowering, and evaluating for the service of the community.

Ministry: Active service of the baptized, dependent upon the gifts of the individual, the community's needs, and is always directed to building up the kingdom of God.

Mission (of the Church): Purpose for which Christians are gathered in faith.

Outreach: One of the major aspects of parish life, which extends the resources of the parish to the needs of others and demonstrates a commitment to works of compassion and justice. A part of evangelization.

Parish: A gathering of the people of God united in faith and dedicated to continuing the universal mission of the Church in their local setting. Its life is expressed through the seven essentials.

Pastoral: An approach of caring for the life of the parish as a whole.

Parish Councils: Each parish has two councils, finance and pastoral. Quasi-parishes have a single Community Council with a pastoral and finance committee.

Pastoral Council: A group consultative to the pastor of a parish designed primarily to envision, plan, and oversee the mission of the parish community as an extension of the mission of Jesus.

Nominations are as important as elections. They should be carefully designed to ensure that the council is as representative of the parish as possible.

7. **APPOINTMENTS:** In order that all elements are represented the pastor will make several appointments to the council. Usually one of these is a youth designee. This section can deal with the number and method of appointments.

8. **OFFICERS:** This section states what officers are elected on the council, their terms of office, and their duties. This is also a good place to deal with the incidence of vacancies in offices. Also this section should include something about the number of terms and trying to bring in new members to the council. It is recommended that each council has a specific chair, vice-chair and secretary.

9. **EX-OFFICIO:** The pastor, associate priests, parochial vicars and deacons of the parish may serve on the council as ex-officio members (without voting privileges).

10. **MEETINGS:** Here are stated the dates of the regular meetings, how special meetings may be called and rules for the procedures to come to a decision. It is recommended that a consensus approach rather than majority vote is used to reach a council decision.

11. **COMMITTEES:** The names of standing committees that are needed are listed along with a short description of the particular field of activity of each committee. Also the method and authority for appointing additional ad hoc committees.

12. **AMENDMENTS:** This section states how the bylaws may be amended from time to time in order to be kept current when conditions change or experience indicates that something should be changed.

13. **RATIFICATION:** This section states how and by whom the bylaws are to be ratified within the parish.

14: **DIOCESAN REVIEW/ BISHOP'S ACCEPTANCE:** All bylaws once approved by the pastor should be sent to the Bishop's office for review and acceptance as witnessed by his signature.

II. GLOSSARY OF TERMS:

Baptism: Sacrament of initiation by which men and women become members of the Catholic Church and assume responsibility for using their gifts and talents to build up the community in fulfilling the mission of Jesus.

Catechesis: Process through which individuals within communities systematically acquire and deepen Christian faith.

Code of Canon Law: Law enacted and promulgated for the orderly pastoral administration and government of the Church. The revised Code, effective November 27, 1983, consists of 1,752 canons in seven books.

Collaboration: Act of working together through reflective listening and genuine articulation of ideas in a partnership of mutual respect and diversity.

Collegiality: A characteristic of church leadership based on mutuality and unity in diversity: in reference to the universal communion of the bishops with the Holy Father, of pastors with their bishop, and of the faithful with their pastor.

Consensus: A method of making decisions. A group strives to reach substantial, not necessarily unanimous, agreement on matters of overall direction and policy that can be supported by all.

Consultation: Act of conferring, deliberating and making decisions together. Refers particularly to the relationship between pastor and laity, respecting the pastor's unique role as canonical head of the parish.

Diocese: The local or "particular" church, referring to a geographically-designated area in which Catholics, usually gathered in parishes, are united in faith and sacraments with their bishop, ordained in apostolic succession.

Discernment: Formal, prayerful process where a group discovers God's will in a particularly significant situation or decision.

Diverse Cultures/Gifts: One of the ten essentials of parish life which recognizes, appreciates, celebrates, and uses the gifts of all peoples.

Empower: To provide individuals and/or groups with skills, information, authority, and resources in order to carry out their responsibilities.

Evaluation: Systematic way of measuring performance against objectives.

Evangelization: One of the seven essentials of parish life which encompasses any way in which the parish continues to spread the Good News of Jesus, especially, although not exclusively, through personal and community sharing of faith.

Finance Council: A consultative body to the pastor within the parish that offers expertise in finance and overall plant management as they relate to the mission of the parish.

Formation/Education: One of the cornerstones of parish life which explains, informs, and forms parishioners of all ages in the Scriptures and tradition of the Church. It also encompasses many traditional ministries of "education."