

Bishop McCafferty's Letter to Priests

Here are the "Guidelines for Parish Councils" issued with the expressed approval of Bishop Hogan.

While every effort will be made to give assistance to existing Parish Councils and the formation of these Councils where they do not exist, questions may arise relating to particular circumstances.

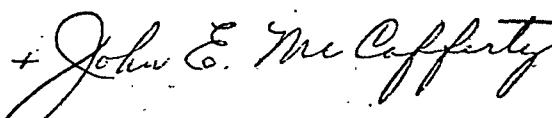
These may be directed to the Pastoral Council Office (50 Chestnut Street, Rochester, 14604), or, if possible, deferred to discussion at the Bishop-Priests meetings to be scheduled regionally after Feb. 1, 1972.

Since the Diocesan Renewal Program is one which, according to present tentative plans, will be a continuing matter culminating (but not terminating) with the institution of a Diocesan Pastoral Council by 1974, I would suggest that correspondence relating to the program, commencing with the already issued letter to the clergy by Bishop Hogan under the date of November 19, 1971, be kept together for reference in the parish office and/or by each parish priest.

It will be recalled that regional coordinators are to be chosen from the clergy to promote (with teams of religious and laity) Parish Council formation and evaluation in their respective regions. When Regional Councils have become a reality, these area representatives will be chosen by approved election procedures. Meanwhile, these coordinators will be chosen after appropriate consultation, by the elected Personnel Board; and it is our hope that it will be possible to present the names of these coordinators together with dates for the regional Bishop-Clergy meetings by late January.

With many thanks and every good wish, I am

Fraternally yours in Christ,



† Most Rev. John E. McCafferty, D.D., V.G.
Auxiliary Bishop of Rochester

SPECIAL COMMITTEES OF PARISH COUNCILS

Special committees may be appointed by the Council chairman at his or the Council's discretion. The coordinators of such special committees need not be selected from the Council membership. Among the special committees should be the nominating committee whose function shall be to provide a slate of candidates for election by the parish to serve as Council members. The Council chairman should appoint at least three members to the nominating committee, one member of which must be a Council member. It shall be the responsibility of the nominating committee, in consultation with the Pastor, to present a slate of candidates representing as far as possible a cross section of the parish. In the selection of the candidates every possible consideration should be given to the qualifications of persons best suited for service in particular areas of parish life. Some provisions may be made for additional nominations from the general body of parishioners eligible for Council membership. The initial election and all subsequent elections shall be conducted in an equitable manner designed to permit as many registered parishioners as possible the opportunity to cast a vote.

MEETINGS OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

Meetings provide the focal point for interaction of Council members and as such provide an ideal platform for stimulating the widest possible interest and participation in parish life. The judicious scheduling and conduct of these meetings will contribute to the realization of the objectives of the Parish Council.

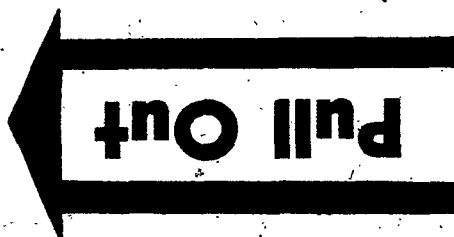
Several categories of meetings can be found useful to meet various Council needs: a) regular meetings, b) general annual meetings, c) special meetings and d) executive sessions.

Regular monthly meetings scheduled well in advance for a specific time and place are desirable. These meetings should be open to every parishioner as occasions for expressing his opinions. Good order demands that prior notice be given the Agenda Committee when a parishioner wishes to address the Council. The number of speakers and the time available for each speaker must be strictly controlled by the Parish Council. Each Council should establish rules for conducting its meetings. It is recommended that Robert's Rules of order or other specific and approved rules be incorporated in the Council Constitution.

A general Council meeting for the parish should be held at least annually. This meeting will provide an occasion for comprehensive review of the Council's work and that of its committees. At this general meeting an annual report may well be made.

Special meetings of the Council may be called at the request of the Pastor, the Chairman, or by written request of at least three members of the Parish Council.

Experience in organizational planning indicates that executive meetings, attended exclusively by Council officers and committee coordinators, are an effective means for preparing the Council agenda, proposing priorities to the Council, and meeting exceptional problems.



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