

ARTICLE II. NATURE AND PURPOSE

Section 1. Nature

This "coming together" as the Pastoral Council is rooted in Holy Scripture and the Second Vatican Council.

"In one Spirit we were all baptized, Jews as well as Greeks, slaves as well as citizens, and one Spirit was given to us all to drink." (1 Corinthians 12:13)

"It is highly desirable that in each diocese a pastoral council be established over which the diocesan bishop himself will preside and in which specifically chosen clergy, religious, and lay people will participate." (*Christus Dominus*, #27)

This Council, consultative by nature (5), is a forum (6) seeking the collective wisdom of the local Church. It is convoked by the bishop to witness the Gospel's radical demands in our world. Shared responsibility, regional pluralism and secular involvement are the marks of this body. (7)

By its very nature the Pastoral Council is broadly based and composed of persons aware of the hopes and needs of the people they represent. This membership with its variety of ministries gives the council a unique competence. While distinct from other diocesan consultative bodies, it should function in close cooperation with them under the bishop's coordination. (8)

Section 2. Purpose

As the most broadly based consultative group in the Diocese, the Pastoral Council has as its purpose to share with the bishop its insights into Diocesan needs and resources.

"You are the light of the world. Your light must shine in the sight of men, so that, seeing your good works they might give praise to your Father in heaven." Matthew 5:14,16

To fulfill this purpose the Pastoral Council must create a prayerful atmosphere which calls forth from each member his or her particular faith, insights and gifts. This sharing enables the membership to formulate positions that seek to reflect the light of Christ.

More specifically the Pastoral Council is convoked to:

- provide a means for the bishop to fulfill his obligation to seek the prudent advice of the local Church on all substantive issues;
- support the bishop in his prophetic role in the Diocese;
- search for common values in the Diocese and recommend priorities; review and evaluate Diocesan priorities and ministries;
- foster and encourage throughout the Diocese a hope-filled sense of Church. (9)

(5) "The Pastoral Council, which has a consultative vote only." *Ecclesiae Sanctae*, #16

Consultative implies that a group's advice must be sought. This is distinguished from deliberative and advisory. Deliberative necessitates consent; advisory implies advice only on request.

(6) "Forum" — an assembly for the discussion of pastoral matters and current questions.

(7) Hogan, The Most Reverend Joseph L., op. cit. These three concepts are explained at length by the bishop.

(8) *Ecclesiae Sanctae*, #17. "Let the bishops also see to it that all diocesan councils are coordinated in the most suitable way by means of an accurate indication of competence, mutual participation of members, joint or successive sessions, and in other ways."

(9) *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Walter M. Abbott (New York: Gould Press, 1966). "Dogmatic Constitution of the Church," pg. 18.

"The Church consequently equipped with the gift of her Founder and faithfully guarding His precept of charity, humility and self-sacrifice receives the mission to proclaim and to establish among all peoples the Kingdom of Christ and of God. She becomes on earth the initial putting forth of that Kingdom. While she slowly grows, the Church strains toward the consummation of the Kingdom and, with all her strengths, hopes and desires to be united in glory with her King."

E. confer with existing diocesan bodies and develop a mutual accountability (10) so as to move toward a collegial team in our Diocese.

F. provide a forum for interregional and interministerial concerns (11) of regional conferences (12) and make appropriate recommendations to the Bishop;

G. strengthen parish councils through regional conferences and participate with them in mutual evaluation;

H. effectively communicate the results of its deliberations to the Diocese.

This specification of purpose is not meant to be comprehensive for "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom." (2 Corinthians, 3:17)

Since the Pastoral Council is a representative diversity seeking the direction of the Holy Spirit, it will best achieve the above purposes by arriving at major decisions through consensus. (13) This requires a mutually respectful atmosphere in which each member shares his or her own insights and listens to those of others. Although it may prolong decision making, consensus replaces the customary win-lose stance with a corporate sense of responsibility for the council's decisions.

ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the Pastoral Council shall consist of:

- The Bishop
- The Executive Secretary appointed by the Bishop (without vote)
- Director of Pastoral Ministry — ex officio (with vote)
- Five (5) Priests elected in a manner determined by the Priests' Council. At least one of the 5 should be a member of the Priests' Council who would act as liaison person.
- Five (5) Sisters elected in a manner determined by the Sisters' Council. At least one of the 5 should be a member of the Sisters' Council who would act as liaison person.
- Thirty (30) Regional Representatives, elected by the Regional Conferences (3 from each conference) at least two of whom should be lay persons.
- Four (4) Youth Members, appointed by the Bishop
- One (1) Brother appointed by the Bishop
- Five to ten (5-10) other members representing minority groups and special ministries, appointed by the Bishop.

(10) "mutual accountability" — here refers to the obligation to give an account to an equal; it does not imply a superior-inferior relationship.

(11) "Interregional and interministerial concerns" — since all regions and ministries are represented on the Pastoral Council it is an obvious forum for matters that involve these broad issues; however, any individual region or ministry does have access to the agenda of the Pastoral Council.

(12) A regional conference (or a region) is a geographical district of the Diocese and a voluntary association of the Catholic parishes and institutions within it. Under the overall leadership of a regional coordinator, the various apostolates are developed and strengthened. Its structure includes the assembly, the standing committees, and the executive committee.

(13) Consensus is reached when each member of a group agrees that the decision is appropriate. Some members may still feel that there is a better course of action, but they acknowledge that their point is understood by the other members and are willing to commit themselves wholeheartedly to the resolution.

ARTICLE IV. ELIGIBILITY FOR MEMBERSHIP

In the selection of nominees to the Pastoral Council the following guidelines should be considered:

- Any Roman Catholic in the Diocese of Rochester who has evidenced a real concern for the mission of the Church and a personal commitment to service is eligible.
- Proposed nominees should have a reasonable understanding of the time, effort and travel involved in regular attendance at Council meetings and committee activities. They must express willingness to serve on the Pastoral Council if elected.
- Selection of nominees should be made only after prayerful reflection and deliberation.

ARTICLE V. NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF MEMBERS

Section 1. Nominations

A. Members Representing Regions

(1) Each Regional Conference shall bi-annually nominate three (3) persons (lay, brother, sister, or priest) to serve as its liaison members on the Pastoral Council.

(2) Each Regional Conference shall initiate a process whereby annually one (1) candidate shall be nominated by each parish council for election to the Pastoral Council.

B. Members Representing Sisters

(1) The Sisters' Council shall bi-annually nominate at least one (1) of its members to serve as its liaison member on the Pastoral Council.

(2) The Sisters' Council shall initiate a process whereby annually four (4) Sisters serving in the Diocese shall be nominated for election to the Pastoral Council.

C. Members Representing Priests

(1) The Priests' Council shall bi-annually nominate at least one (1) of its members to serve as its liaison member on the Pastoral Council.

(2) The Priests' Council shall initiate a process whereby annually four (4) priests serving in the Diocese shall be nominated for election to the Pastoral Council.

Section 2. Elections

A. Members Representing Regions

(1) Each Regional Conference shall bi-annually elect before April 15th one (1) of its candidates (lay, brother, sister, or priest) to serve as its liaison member on the Pastoral Council. This person shall become a member of the Regional Conference for the duration of his or her term.

(2) Each Regional Conference shall annually elect before April 15th one (1) of its Parish Council nominees to serve on the Pastoral Council for a two year term.

B. Members Representing Sisters

(1) The Sisters' Council shall bi-annually elect before April 15th one (1) of its members to serve as its liaison member on the Pastoral Council.

(2) Two (2) Sisters serving in the Diocese shall annually be elected before April 15th to serve on the Pastoral Council for a two year term. The process for election will be determined by the Sisters' Council.