

Constitution

A parish pastoral council must have a set of operating procedures. This document, often called a constitution, normally includes but is not limited to the following:

A. Name and Purpose

The name and the purpose should reflect the principles enunciated in —Called to Serve.||

B. Membership

The membership would normally include the pastor, the parochial vicar(s) and members selected from the congregation. A statement regarding council membership criteria should be included. Only active, registered members of the parish are eligible for service on the pastoral council.

C. Structures for Parish Ministry

Each parish should define the model by which the vision set by the council will be brought to life. That direction will take different forms within the ordinary activities of the parish, usually through committees or other task bodies. The specific purpose and function of the permanent committees should be defined, as well as the method for appointing members, selecting leadership and setting terms of service. If the committees are not represented on the council, some method of communication and/or interaction should be designated. Each committee is to assist in the development of the vision of the council and to implement that vision in the life and activities of the parish and community, within the area of its competence and purpose. The constitution should also state the administrative and executive functions for the council itself. That is, the constitution should define how members shall be selected for membership; set forth methods and processes for their ongoing faith formation, as individuals and as members of an intentional faith community; provide for the orientation and welcoming of their new members, with special emphasis on community building; and make provision for establishing ad hoc or other special groups/bodies for special tasks.

D. Relationship

The constitution should clearly describe the relationship between the parish pastoral council and the parish finance council, the pastor, the parish staff, parish committees, and the school board(s).

E. Officers

The constitution should provide for the choice of a chairperson, vice-chairperson, and other council officers as are needed, as well as define their duties. It may also permit appointment of a recording secretary.

F. Terms of Membership

The constitution should establish the terms for members, provide for filling vacancies, and policy concerning period of continuous service on the council.

G. Selection of Members

The constitution should establish procedures for the selection of council members. Members' terms should be staggered to maintain some continuity, with a portion of the members selected each year.

H. Amendments

The constitution should contain provisions for its amendment.

I. Meeting Procedures

The constitution should authorize the council to establish guidelines and processes for conducting meetings and other business.