



Archdiocese of Miami
Parish Pastoral Council Guidelines

June 1, 2023



TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----------|
| 1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND..... | 3 |
| 2. THE CONSULTATIVE BODY TO THE PASTOR..... | 3 |
| 3. MEMBERSHIP..... | 3 |
| a. The Pastor/Parochial Administrator..... | 3 |
| b. Ex Officio Members..... | 3 |
| c. Other Members..... | 4 |
| d. Officers (optional)..... | 4 |
| e. Role of the Parish Pastoral Council Members..... | 5 |
| f. Requirements..... | 5 |
| g. Size of the Council..... | 5 |
| h. Selection of Members..... | 5 |
| i. Terms..... | 6 |
| j. Skills..... | 6 |
| 4. MEETINGS..... | 6 |
| 5. COMMITTEES..... | 7 |
| 6. RELATIONSHIPS..... | 7 |
| 7. ONGOING FORMATION AND EDUCATION..... | 8 |
| 8. OTHER..... | 8 |



1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Canon 536 explains that "...a pastoral council is to be established in each parish, over which the Pastor/Parochial Administrator presides and in which the Christian faithful, together with those who share in pastoral care by virtue of their office in the parish, assist in fostering pastoral activity".

Archbishop Thomas G. Wenski has determined that a Parish Pastoral Council is to be established in every Parish and Mission. The Parish Pastoral Council is advisory to the Pastor/Parochial Administrator for him to consult with on topics related to the spiritual and pastoral life of the parish. These guidelines are designed to assist the Pastor/Parochial Administrator and the members of each Parish Council, in the formation and function of the Council.

2. THE CONSULTATIVE BODY TO THE PASTOR

The Parish Pastoral Council is consultative and possesses only an advisory role to the Pastor.

Being a consultative body to the Pastor, the Parish Pastoral Council must reflect the parish by truly representing the "unity in diversity" found in parish life. When selecting members, consideration should be given to include active faithful Catholic parishioners who reflect the parish demographics, social conditions, variety of professions, roles in apostolates, et cetera.

It is recommended that the Pastor/Parochial Administrator consult his Parish Pastoral Council for implementation of archdiocesan initiatives, parish pastoral planning, evaluating current parish and school ministries or when initiating new parish and school ministries.

3. MEMBERSHIP

a. The Pastor/Parochial Administrator

The Pastor/Parochial Administrator presides as President over the Parish Pastoral Council. The Pastor/Parochial Administrator chairs the Parish Pastoral Council, or he may designate a Chair to lead the meetings. The Pastor/Parochial Administrator must attend all meetings of the Parish Pastoral Council.

b. Ex Officio Members

Certain people should be included as *ex officio* members of the Parish Pastoral Council.

- i. The Parochial Vicars officially assigned to the parish are *ex officio* members of the Parish Pastoral Council.
- ii. If one or more Permanent Deacons are officially assigned to the parish, the Pastor/Parochial Administrator selects at least one to be an *ex officio* member.



Additional permanent deacons assigned to the parish may be selected as members of the Parish Pastoral Council at the discretion of the Pastor/Parochial Administrator.

- iii. If a deacon is employed by the parish, then it is recommended that permanent deacon is not selected to serve *ex officio* on the Parish Pastoral Council.
- iv. One of the Parish Finance Council Member (often the Chair of the Finance Council) is an *ex officio* member and serves as liaison with the Parish Finance Council.

c. Other Members

The selections of other members are those whom the Pastor/Parochial Administrator selects from the People of God to represent the People of God.

- i. These other members should be faithful Catholic parishioners who bring knowledge and skills to the council to represent certain areas of parish ministry. They are not selected to represent only a specific ministry or group.
- ii. Particular attention should be given to selecting members who together reflect the diversity in the parish and the various ministries in the parish. While diversity of age among the members is encouraged,
- iii. If the parish sponsors a parish school, it is advised that representation from the school community be included on the Parish Pastoral Council (possibly a parent leader).
- iv. Members of the Parish Pastoral Council are volunteers; parish employees are not appointed to the Council; however, on occasion parish employees may be invited to attend the Parish Pastoral Council meetings to provide information, assist in implementation of initiatives or otherwise support the work of the Council.

d. Officers (optional)

The Parish Pastoral Council may have officers: chair and secretary

The Pastor/Parochial Administrator is the President of the Parish Pastoral Council; however, he may designate a chair from among the members of the Parish Pastoral Council to lead meetings. A vice chair may be selected to assist in the absence of the chair.

A secretary should be selected to take Minutes of meetings for the Parish Pastoral Council records. The Secretary is responsible for record keeping and taking notes and having them approved by the Council and then submitted to the Pastor/Parochial Administrator for submission to the Archdiocese no later than June 1 of each year.

Regular or special meetings are convened by the Pastor/Parochial Administrator, or at his delegation, by the Chair. The Pastor/Parochial Administrator creates or approves all Agendas. He is present for all meetings.



e. Role of the Parish Pastoral Council Members

The role of the members of the Parish Pastoral Council is to advise the Pastor/Parochial Administrator on spiritual and pastoral assessments and needs within the parish upon the request for consultation by the Pastor/Parochial Administrator. It is advisory only. The Parish Pastoral Council is to assist the Pastor/Parochial Administrator through research, reflection, recommendations of needs and new initiative and review and assessment of on-going initiatives

f. Requirements

There are certain expectations and requirements for service on the Parish Pastoral Council.

- i. Similarly to the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council (canon 512), the members of the Parish Pastoral Council must be “Christian faithful who are in full communion with the Catholic Church. ...No one except members of the Christian faithful outstanding in firm faith, good morals, and prudence is to be designated to a pastoral council.”
- ii. Therefore, members of the Parish Pastoral Council must
 - Be a practicing Catholic, baptized and confirmed;
 - If married, in a marriage recognized by the Church;
 - Be registered in the parish in which they serve;
 - Be an active and contributing parishioner;
 - Support the precepts of the Church, in their words and actions;
 - Be in good standing in the Parish and Archdiocese including fulfilling the standards of the ADOM safe environment training and background check;
 - Be in good standing as a Catholic in the public square (with attention to presence on social media, participation in civic groups, etc.);
 - Have a working knowledge of the Catholic Faith and assent to the Faith; and
 - Have an active personal and communal prayer life
 - Be at least 21 years of age

g. Size of the Council

It is recommended that the Parish Pastoral Council be comprised of between five (5) and fifteen (15) members, including *ex officio* members, in addition to the Pastor/Parochial Administrator.

- i. The size of the Parish Pastoral Council should reflect the size of the Parish. For a smaller parish, 5-8 members is sufficient. For a larger parish, 7-15 members is recommended.
- ii. To be able to provide proper consultation requires time for prayer, reflection, and discussion for every member.

h. Selection of Members

Special attention should be given to the selection of members as well as the selection process of members.



Archdiocese of Miami
Parish Pastoral Council Guidelines

- i. Nominations should be solicited by the Pastor/Parochial Administrator and he may choose to include the Chair in extending his invitation.
- ii. The Pastor/Parochial Administrator selects the members of the Parish Pastoral Council.
- iii. Expectations of membership should be clearly articulated by Pastor/Parochial Administrator to the candidate in the selection process. An interview for nominees may be an effective method of discovering skills and aligning interest, expectations of service, and willingness to serve.
- iv. The members of the Parish Pastoral Council should be presented to the Parish community annually.

i. Terms

The most effective terms are terms of three years, renewable twice.

- i. Stagger initial appointments by starting with some members having terms of 1, 2, and 3-year appointments.
- ii. After starting, appointments should be for 3-year periods, renewable twice, sequentially.
- iii. After a period of at least one year off the Parish Pastoral Council, a member can be reconsidered for up to three more sequential appointments for 3 years each.
- iv. *Ex officio* members should be affirmed annually as long as they remain in the role determining their *ex officio* membership on the Council.

j. Skills

Certain skills are required to be fruitful and effective participants on the Parish Pastoral Council.

- i. Consultation:
The ability to listen, share, weigh different sides, receive criticism, resolve conflict, build consensus, and present to others are good skills to look for in a Parish Pastoral Council member.
- ii. Representation:
People are to bring their knowledge, skills, and experiences, but they are to be aware of not representing only one model of ministry. They are to represent all people in the parish and all possible ministries. A good appreciation for and understanding of:
 - a. Various people, temperaments, cultures, ministries, and programs in the parish.
 - b. Capacity to understand and support the initiatives and priorities of the Archdiocese.
 - c. A desire to support the evangelization efforts of the parish.

4. MEETINGS

Every Parish Pastoral Council must have regular meetings.

- i. Frequency should be at least quarterly and not more than ten times per year.



- ii. A yearly schedule should be created and announced in advance to increase attendance.
- iii. An Agenda for each meeting should be created by the Pastor/Parochial Administrator, with the assistance of the Chair if desired, and provided to the members in advance of the meeting.
- iv. Minutes must be taken and promptly recorded by the Secretary. These should be shared with the Parish Pastoral Council and approved at the following meeting.
- v. Records of the Parish Pastoral Council are to be maintained at the parish. The agendas and minutes should be the basis of the records. An annual report of the Council's actions is provided by the Pastor/Parochial Administrator to the Office of the Archdiocesan Chancellor for Administration.
- vi. Full confidentiality is to be kept. It is solely up to the Pastor/Parochial Administrator whether to share the discussions of the Parish Pastoral Council or to implement the recommendations of the Council.

5. COMMITTEES

Especially in a large parish with a large Parish Pastoral Council it may be beneficial to establish committees including short term task force committees to study and reflect on a specific topic and propose recommendations back to the larger Council.

Employees of the parish with expertise in a topic under consideration by the Parish Pastoral Council may be invited to participate in a committee considering the topic or to offer their expertise to the discussions. Employees of the parish may serve as staff to the Pastoral Council at the discretion of the pastor/parochial administrator.

6. RELATIONSHIPS

Because ministry is about relationships, special attention must be given to certain relationships and the public perception of these relationships.

The Office for the Secretariat for Parish Life serves as the contact point for questions, information, training, or problem resolution related to the structure and function of the Parish Pastoral Council.

The Pastor/Parochial Administrator should make every effort to develop a good working relationship between the members of the Parish Pastoral Council, between the Council and the leadership of parish ministries, and between the Parish Pastoral Council and the Archdiocesan Offices that provide support to the parish and its initiatives.

If the parish sponsors a parish elementary school representation from the School on the Parish Pastoral Council is advised. A parent leader who is supportive of Catholic education and the parish school's efforts for evangelization for the school families should be considered for the Council.



A member of the parish Finance Council, the chair or another member designated, should be selected for the Parish Pastoral Council to facilitate communication between the two Councils.

The Parish Pastoral Council, at the direction of the Pastor/Parochial Administrator, should develop regular means of communication of its work with the parish community.

Every effort should be made to avoid conflict of interest. All members of the Parish Pastoral Council are to be volunteers. Immediate family members of parish employees should generally not be selected. Persons with contractual business relationships with the parish should not be selected for membership on the Parish Pastoral Council.

7. ONGOING FORMATION AND EDUCATION

Parish Pastoral Council members must be open and supportive of ongoing formation. Such formation may be provided by the parish or by the Archdiocese. The Pastor/Parochial Administrator is encouraged to make archdiocesan training and workshops available to his selected members.

8. OTHER

When there is a change in Pastor/Parochial Administrator, it is recommended that the Parish Pastoral Council membership be continued for up to twelve months, allowing the new Pastor/Parochial Administrator to meet with the members of the Parish Pastoral Council as well as get to know the needs of the parish. The pastor, within a year of his appointment, should take the opportunity to evaluate the needs of the parish and the availability of persons to select members for a new Parish Pastoral Council. Terms of the Parish Pastoral Council members cease at the time the newly appointed pastor/parochial administrator elects to appoint the new Parish Pastoral Council members. He may also reappoint past members of the Council to a new term.

A member may be removed from the Parish Pastoral Council at the discretion of the pastor.