



DIOCESE OF DOWN AND CONNOR

STATUTES

OF THE

DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL

BASIS IN CHURCH TEACHING

Church Documents

The second Vatican Council, in its Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church, wrote;

“It is highly desirable that in each diocese a pastoral council be established over which the diocesan bishop himself will preside and in which specially chosen clergy, religious, and lay people will participate. The function of this council will be to investigate, and to weigh matters which bear on pastoral activity, and to formulate practical conclusions regarding them” (*Christus Dominus* n. 27)

Pope John Paul II, in his encyclical on the role of the Laity wrote 1988

“The recent Synod has favoured the creation of *Diocesan Pastoral Councils*, as a recourse at opportune times. In fact, on a diocesan level this structure could be the principle form of collaboration, dialogue, and discernment as well. The participation of the lay faithful in these Councils can broaden resources in consultation and the principle of collaboration - and in certain instances also in decision-making - if applied in a broad and determined manner” (*Christifideles Laici* n25)

In the light of this, the Bishop wishes to hear the voice of Christ’s faithful from across the Diocese, and that this voice includes those for whom no direct forum as yet exists.

Canon Law.

Four canons of the Code of Canon Law (1983) govern a Diocesan Pastoral Council.

“In each Diocese, in so far as pastoral circumstances suggest, a pastoral council is to be established. Its function, under the authority of the Bishop, is to study and weigh those matters which concern the pastoral works in the diocese, and to propose practical conclusions concerning them.” Can 511 (Code of Canon Law 1983).

“A pastoral council is composed of members of Christ’s faithful who are in full communion with the catholic Church: clerics, members of institutes of consecrated life, and especially lay people. They are designated in the manner determined by the diocesan Bishop.” Can 512 §1

“The members of Christ’s faithful assigned to the pastoral council are to be selected in such a way that the council truly reflects the entire portion of the people of God which constitutes the diocese, taking account of the different regions of the diocese, of social conditions and professions, and of the part played in the apostolate by the members, whether individually or in association with others.” Can 512 §2

“Only those members of Christ’s faithful who are outstanding in firm faith, high moral standards and prudence are to be assigned to the pastoral council.” Can 512 §3

“The pastoral council is appointed for a determinate period, in accordance with the provisions of the statutes drawn up by the Bishop.” Can 513 §1

“When the see is vacant, the pastoral council lapses.” Can 513 §2

“The pastoral council has only a consultative vote. It is for the diocesan Bishop alone to convene it, according to the needs of the apostolate, and to preside over it. He alone has the right to make public the matters dealt within the council.” Can 514 §1

“It is to be convened at least once a year.” Can 514 §2

Membership

The Council, in accordance with the above cited canons of the Code of Canon Law, will consist of *ex officio* members:

- The Bishop
- Auxiliary Bishops
- Chair of the Council of Priests
- Secretary of the Council of Priests
- Director of the Living Church
- Director of Faith Development
- Diocesan Financial Controller
- Chancellor

and appointed members:

Mr Kieran Casey	Dunloy & Cloughmills Parish
Mr John Colgan	Parish of Maghera, Newcastle
Mrs Maire Fitzpatrick	St Anne’s Parish, Belfast
Miss Katrina Lynch	Antrim Parish
Mr Stephen McAnee	St Colmcille’s Parish
Miss Claire McCusker	Holy Family Parish
Mrs Anne McDermott Butler	Loughshore Parishes
Mr Michael Rodgers	Carnlough Parish
Very Rev Sean Emerson	PP Antrim Parish
Br George Gordon	Christian Brothers
Sr Margaret Rose McSparran	Cross and Passion Sisters, Drumalis

Membership is time limited to three years with rolling replacement for non *ex officio* members. No appointed members may serve on the council for more than two consecutive terms. If a member of the Council leaves before the expiry of his / her term of membership the Bishop may appoint a replacement.

Meetings

The Diocesan Pastoral Council will meet three times a year according to a schedule established by the Bishop. Special additional meetings may be called at the discretion of the Bishop. Meetings will take place at a convenient location. Some element of evaluation/forward planning will be built into the third and/or last meeting of the year.

Format of Meetings

The meetings will include a time for prayer, coordinated by a Prayer Leader appointed by the Bishop, the main topic for discussion, timed session(s) to consider the topic and/or any items previously circulated to Council Members.

Officers

The Bishop is the President of the Diocesan Pastoral Council and he will preside at meetings. The Chair, Vice Chair and Minutes Secretary will be approved by the Bishop after consultation with the council members.

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee will consist of the Director of the Living Church and the Director of Faith Development plus the Chair and Minutes Secretary of the Council. The term of office for Steering Committee members runs parallel with the three year term of office for the Council and will not exceed the term of any member. If the need arises the Bishop will fill a vacancy on the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee shall be responsible for;

- Consulting with the Bishop to set the Council agenda for each meeting.
- Collecting and collating items that need to be circulated prior to Council meetings.
- Facilitating any follow up from the Council meetings.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of the Council's work and reporting its findings to the Bishop.

Other standing committees, *ad hoc* committees, including co-opted members, or other groups shall be established under the authority of the Bishop as needed.

Revision of Statutes

The Statutes of the Diocesan Pastoral Council may be emended or revised by the Bishop if deemed appropriate and at any time.

Signed

+Noel Treanor
Bishop of Down and Connor

Signed:

Rev Eugene D O'Hagan
Chancellor (*ad interim*)

Given this 9th day of **January 2014**
at The Diocesan Offices, Good Shepherd Centre, Belfast.

L.S.