

Diocese of OUDTSHOORN

Statutes for Parish Pastoral Councils

27 November 2011

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PREAMBLE

Canon 536 states:

- 1 After the diocesan bishop has listened to the presbyteral council and if he judges it opportune, a pastoral council is to be established in each parish; the pastor presides over it, and through it the Christian faithful along with those who share in the pastoral care of the parish in virtue of their office give their help in fostering pastoral activity.
- 2 This pastoral council possesses a consultative vote only and is governed by norms determined by the diocesan bishop.

The parish pastoral council, referred to in these statutes as the PPC, is the parish's response to the call of Vatican II to all the baptized to build up the kingdom of God in the parish (cf. *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity*, 10). In this body, parishioners united with their parish priest investigate, reflect and formulate practical conclusions on matters which bear on the pastoral activity which brings to fulfilment the mission of Jesus and the Church in the parish. Through this body they encourage and motivate all the baptized to participate in this mission. They lead and facilitate the parish's pastoral planning in the light of the pastoral plan of the diocese. They measure and monitor the pastoral activity of the parish (can. 536 §1) and so help to ensure that the baptized remain united with Jesus and the Church. They "see to it that parish life is harmonious, expressing the Church as Family, where all devote themselves to the Apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers" (*Acts 2:42*)" (*Ecclesia in Africa*, 100).

Therefore, the present Statutes are hereby promulgated.

Article 1 – NAME

Section 1

The name of this body shall be the Parish Pastoral Council of

Section 2

Where there is more than one community served by the same parish priest/priest in charge in the same town and/or others, and when deemed suitable and practical, each such community may have its own Pastoral Council.

Section 3

Where there is more than one community served by the same parish priest/priest in charge in the same town and/or others, and when deemed suitable and practical, these communities may have a combined Parish Pastoral Council. In this case, the PPC will include representation from all these communities.

Section 4

There shall be only one Parish Pastoral Council in the parish, whether it is in the form described in Section 2 or Section 3 of this same Article.

Article 2 – NATURE AND PURPOSE

Section 1

The PPC provides a forum for the investigation, reflection and formulation of practical conclusions on pastoral matters which express the mission of the parish, always facilitating the structured and ordered expression of the views and desires of parishioners regarding this mission.

Section 2

The PPC ensures that the parish in all its activities remains in harmony with the Diocese of Oudtshoorn and its Bishop, participating in the life and mission of the diocese through structures such as the Diocesan Pastoral Council, the Deanery Pastoral Council, etc.

Section 3

In accordance with the norm of law (canon 536 §2), the PPC enjoys a consultative voice; its role is to collaborate with the parish priest/priest in charge in an advisory capacity in the mission of the parish. Therefore, each member is obliged to offer opinions sincerely (cf. canon 127 §3). The parish priest/priest in charge is, according to law, not bound by the advice of the PPC, even if it is unanimous; nevertheless he should not act against their advice, especially if it is unanimous, unless there be a reason which in his judgement is overriding (cf. canon 127, §2, 2°).

Section 4

This calls for the PPC members to foster a spirit of communion among themselves and in the parish so they may, through consensus, be led to pastoral activity by the Holy Spirit.

Article 3 – COMPETENCE AND SCOPE

The following matters shall fall within the competence of the PPC

Section 1 – Liturgy and Spirituality

1. To encourage the participation of all parishioners in the liturgical life of the community and to ensure that a liturgical committee be established and maintained;
2. To put in place and maintain programmes that ensure adequate sacramental preparation for all parishioners and fitting celebration of the liturgy;
3. To provide for the nourishment and development of the spirituality of all parishioners, including those who belong to the various sodalities and organisations of the parish;
4. To develop practical ways for parishioners to assist those in need of healing and consolation.

Section 2 – Catechesis

To develop and maintain structures for the formal formation of parishioners in the Christian mystery, thereby facilitating initiation into the Church and ongoing catechesis in all other sacraments and aspects of Church life.

Section 3 – Adult Faith Formation

To propose and prepare ways for all parishioners to participate in the mission of the Church through active evangelisation in their personal, parish and public life.

Section 4 – Family Life

1. To provide effective means for the pastoral support and strengthening of family life in the parish;
2. To provide pastoral support programmes for those preparing to marry, newly weds, widowed, divorced and single-parent families;
3. To provide ongoing pastoral support for the sick, the aged and the dying, in accordance with Article 3, Section 1, Subsection 4;
4. To encourage prayer and work for vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

Section 5 – Youth

1. To guard and protect children and youth with love, understanding and perseverance, by means of effective guidance and organisation;
2. To encourage formal parish-based programmes that foster the spiritual and pastoral welfare of the youth of the parish.

Section 6 – Justice, Peace, Charity and Development

1. To motivate parishioners toward spiritual and corporal works of mercy;
2. To ensure the maintenance of various societies and groups in the parish such as the St. Vincent de Paul Society, thereby seeking ways of rendering assistance to the poor;
3. To conscientise parishioners through the maintenance of various societies and groups in the parish such as the Justice and Peace group to be salt and yeast of the earth, and light of the world, thereby facilitating ways for parishioners to active evangelisation in public life with love and concern for all people.

Section 7 – Communication

1. To provide for the parish an integrated communication network that facilitates effective internal and external communication;
2. To ensure that all parishioners and parish groups stay abreast of the life of the parish and its development;
3. To maintain the parish list and provide for the registration of new parishioners;
4. To keep all parishioners abreast of communication from and developments in the diocese.

Section 8 – Ecumenism

To ensure that the mind of the Church regarding ecumenism govern the formal relationship of the parish with fellow Christians and believers from other faith communities.

Article 5 – MEMBERSHIP OF THE PPC

Membership of the PPC shall consist of the parish priest/priest in charge, together with the following:

Section 1

The assistant priest(s) and parish deacon(s), where applicable, are *ex officio* members.

Section 2

Those parishioners elected by members of the parish (3 to 6 members); the parish priest/priest in charge is to determine the number of elected members bearing in mind the size of the parish and its particular needs.

Section 3

Those parishioners freely appointed at the discretion of the parish priest/priest in charge (3 to 6 members), bearing in mind the size of the parish and its needs and in accordance with Article 4. The number of appointees should not exceed the number of those elected to the council.

Section 4

One representative of each sodality or approved association in the parish. A sodality or approved association may change its representative at any time, provided that the council has been notified in writing.

Section 5

One representative of each religious and secular institute pastorally active in the parish.

Section 6

Occasionally the PPC may co-opt parishioners for a special purpose for a period not exceeding its own term of office; such co-opted members are not entitled to a vote on the PPC.

Section 7

No person may be a member of the PPC in more than one capacity, unless local circumstances determine otherwise.

Article 6 – ELIGIBILITY TO NOMINATE, VOTE AND HOLD OFFICE

Section 1

Any parishioner who has completed his or her eighteenth birthday, has received the sacrament of confirmation and enjoys a good reputation shall be eligible for nomination and election.

Section 2

Any parishioner who has celebrated his or her eighteenth birthday and has received the sacrament of confirmation shall be eligible to nominate candidates for the council and to vote.

Section 3

Disputes concerning the eligibility to nominate or vote for members of the council, or to be nominated for election or elected to the council, shall be resolved by the parish priest/priest in charge together with the chairperson of the outgoing council.

Article 7 – ELECTIONS

Section 1

Nominations for members to be elected to the PPC shall be made three months prior to the conclusion of the term of office of the outgoing council. All parishioners shall be invited to submit nominations for election to the PPC.

Section 2

Those parishioners who accept nomination as candidates for election to the PPC shall be deemed eligible for election, subject to Articles 4 and 6.

Section 3

The election is to be conducted by secret ballot at the weekend Masses or at a general meeting of the parish on a designated date subject to the supervision of the parish priest/priest in charge and chairperson of the outgoing council.

Section 4

In parishes where there are wards or small Christian communities, the parish priest/priest in charge can decide, if possible in consultation with the outgoing PPC executive, to call for the election of leaders (1 member per ward or small Christian community) who would constitute the quota of elected members on the PPC. This will then replace the process outline above in Sections 1-3 of this same Article.

Article 8 – OFFICERS

Section 1

The officers of the PPC shall be the parish priest/priest in charge, the chairperson, the vice-chairperson and the secretary. They constitute the executive of the PPC.

Section 2

The chairperson, the vice-chairperson and the secretary shall be elected by the members of the PPC by simple majority.

Section 3

The parish priest/priest in charge shall preside over the PPC and, in consultation with the chairperson, shall convoke it and prepare an agenda for the meeting.

Section 4

The chairperson shall chair meetings of the PPC and facilitate its smooth functioning. The chairperson shall also present a full report to the parish on the goals and objectives of the PPC, its accomplishments and any special difficulties during its term, at the annual general meeting of the parish, where applicable, or three months before its term ends at weekend masses, or in any other form determined by the parish priest/priest in charge and chairperson.

Section 5

The vice-chairperson shall fulfil the role of the chairperson in his/her absence.

Section 6

The secretary shall notify all members of scheduled meetings of the PPC in terms of Article 11, Section 2, record the proceedings, distribute the minutes, maintain the records of the PPC and be responsible for any necessary correspondence.

Section 7

As soon as the PPC takes office, its executive shall arrange for the members to participate in a training programme offered by the diocese or deanery.

Article 9 – TERM OF OFFICE

Section 1

Ex-officio members, as defined in Article 5, Section 1, shall be members of the PPC as long as they retain their pastoral assignments to the parish.

Section 2

Elected and appointed members of the PPC shall have a three-year term and shall be eligible respectively for re-election or re-appointment for only one further period of three years. A period of three years should elapse prior to re-election or re-appointment.

Section 3

Notwithstanding this, should any member have a special expertise, he or she may be co-opted to serve on the council after the expiry of two consecutive terms, subject to the provisions of Article 5, Section 6.

Article 10 – VACANCY

Section 1

The vacancy of an elected member's seat on account of death, resignation, permanent departure from the parish or dismissal, shall be filled either by the parishioner who received the next highest number of votes in the election or through a by-election, at the discretion of the executive of the PPC.

Section 2

The vacancy of an appointed member's seat on account of death, resignation, permanent departure from the parish or dismissal, shall be filled with an appointment by the parish priest/priest in charge for the unexpired portion of the term, should he deem it expedient.

Article 11 – MEETINGS

Section 1

The PPC shall meet at least once a quarter and at any other time at the request of the parish priest/priest in charge in consultation with the members of the executive, or at the written request of at least half of the members of the PPC. The PPC may also meet at the written request of any member, provided that the executive has considered the request and deems a meeting necessary.

Section 2

As far as possible, at least seven days notice of any meeting is to be given to members.

Section 3

A simple majority of the members of the PPC, i.e. half of the membership plus one, shall constitute a *quorum*.

Section 4

Any parishioner who desires to attend a meeting of the PPC shall submit a written application to the parish priest/priest in charge at least fourteen days prior to the meeting. The executive committee shall, after careful consideration, grant approval or not. Once approved, the parishioner is invited to attend the meeting, subject to the condition that he or she is not eligible to vote.

Section 5

Decisions of the PPC are called resolutions and are ordinarily arrived at by consensus, or, in exceptional circumstances, when so determined by the parish priest/priest in charge and chairperson, through a simple majority vote and in terms of Article 2, Sections 3 and 4. Voting takes place by a show of hands unless the PPC requests a secret ballot.

Section 6

Since the PPC is a consultative body, in terms Article 2, Section 3, it shall not meet without the parish priest/priest in charge present, unless it is approved by him.

Article 12 – SUSPENSION AND DISMISSALS

Section 1

Any member absent from three consecutive PPC meetings without apology forfeits membership.

Section 2

When a member is not fulfilling his or her role in the PPC in terms of Article 2, the parish priest/priest in charge, after exhausting all avenues provided by our Christian heritage regarding fraternal correction, may apply to the Bishop for the member to be

dismissed. After careful consideration, and listening to the parish priest/priest in charge, the concerned member and the executive of the PPC, the Bishop may dismiss the member of the council.

Section 3

If, for any reason, a simple majority of the members of the PPC tender their resignation at the same time, the PPC shall be deemed dissolved. In such circumstances, the parish priest/priest in charge, in consultation with the chairperson of the outgoing PPC, shall without undue delay, initiate a process for the nomination of candidates for a new PPC and arrange for an election.

Section 4

The Bishop may suspend the activities of the PPC or dissolve it if, in his opinion, it is not fulfilling its purpose as specified in Article 2, or if it has become a source of disunity in the parish.

Article 13 – AMENDMENTS AND INTERPRETATION

Section 1

The Bishop may amend these Statutes should, in his opinion, such amendment be deemed necessary.

Section 2

The Bishop has the authority to interpret the meaning and application of these statutes, in accordance with the norm of law, in all situations in which their meaning or application is doubtful.

Section 3

These Statutes will be adopted upon the approval of the Bishop.

Article 14 – THE COMING INTO EFFECT OF THESE STATUTES

These Statutes come into effect as from 27 November 2011, First Sunday of Advent.

Signed at Oudtshoorn on this 11th day of November, in the 2011th Year of our Lord.

+ *F. de Gouveia*

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+ Francisco Fortunato de Gouveia
Bishop of OUDTSHOORN

[Signature]
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Notary



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