

No: 2024/ 099

DIOCESE OF BARODA
STATUTES OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL
IN THE DIOCESE OF BARODA

PREAMBLE

The parish, established as a community of the Christian faithful and united in faith and fraternal communion, is a “living cell” of the diocese (*Apostolicam Actuositatem* AA, 10). Each of the Christian faithful, according to his/her particular state in life and special charism, is called to participate in the sanctifying, preaching and shepherding ministry of Jesus Christ. The Parish Pastoral Council, on the one hand, represents and reflects the loving communion of the parishioners and, on the other, constitutes the pre-eminent organ for planning and implementing the triple pastoral ministries in the parish community. Pope St. John Paul II in *Christifideles Laici* stresses that “the examining and solving pastoral problems by general discussion ought to find its adequate and structured development through a more convinced, extensive and decided appreciation for ‘Parish Pastoral Councils’, on which the Synod Fathers have rightly insisted” (No. 27).

Pope Francis has called all faithful to walk together in communion with Christ the Synodal Path in which genuine participation at all levels is the way of being Church. It involves reciprocal Listening, Dialogue, community Discernment, and creation of Consensus as an expression that renders Christ present in the Church with the Holy Spirit. Pastoral Councils are a basic structure for a Synodal Church.

ARTICLE I: NAME

- 1.1. This council is called the Parish Pastoral Council.

ARTICLE II: NATURE

- 2.1 In the Parish Pastoral Council, which is presided over by the Parish Priest, the Christian faithful, together with those who share in pastoral care by virtue of their office in the parish, assist in fostering pastoral activity (cf. can. 536, §1).

ARTICLE III: COMPETENCE

- 3.1 The Parish Pastoral Council shall be advisory in character and is governed by the norms established by the diocesan bishop (can. 536 §2). The Parish Priest is obliged to give due consideration to the recommendations and suggestions of the Council when making decisions regarding the spiritual welfare and temporal administration of the Parish.

ARTICLE IV: SCOPE

The following shall be the functions of the Parish Pastoral Council:

- 4.1 To reflect on how to enable all faithful to witness and proclaim the Kingdom of God and thus build the parish community in faith, hope and love;

- 4.2 To plan, organize and implement programs and activities in the parish that enable the Christian faithful to live the triple priesthood of Christ - of priest, prophet and minister.
- 4.3 To make an Annual Pastoral Plan for the Parish while integrating the diocesan level plans as per the Diocesan Annual Plan and the Diocesan Pastoral Plan.
- 4.4 To encourage and strengthen the pastoral activities of the different pious associations and groups in the parish
- 4.5 To resolve with compassion and integrity any issue that affects the pastoral life in the parish;
- 4.6 To foster solid Christian family life;
- 4.7 To build friendly relationships with other Christians and non-Christians and work together in the struggle for justice, for defence of human dignity and human rights and for promotion of peace.

ARTICLE V: MEMBERSHIP

- 5.1. The Pastoral Council is constituted with *ex officio*, elected and nominated members.
- 5.2. The *ex officio* members shall be:
 - i) The Parish Priest
 - ii) All assistant Parish Priests
 - iii) The superiors of all religious houses in the parish or their authorised representatives.
 - iv) The heads of all institutions administered by the Catholic Church within the parish, even lay persons if they are Catholic.

5.3 Elected members

The Parish Pastoral Council shall have members who will represent the faithful of the parish based on its components, like ward, village etc. The PPC will decide on the wards and number of members to be elected from time to time. The mode of selection would be generally by consensus but if deemed fit by the PPC, elections may be held.

5.4 Elected representatives of groups or associations

The Parish Pastoral Council shall have a representative each of every group or association approved by the Church for a religious or social motive and serving under the auspices of the parish. These representatives will be nominated/elected by the association. In case the parish priest, in consultation with the PPC deems it necessary that some local group created in the parish (and only for the parish) would need representation in the PPC, a representative of the same may be elected/nominated.

5.5 Nominated members

The Parish Priest may nominate a maximum of three persons who are in good standing among the parishioners for their Christian living and their talents and skills which may be helpful for the common good of the parish. The total number of nominated members shall not exceed one fourth of the total number of Parish Pastoral Council members.

5.6 The nominated and the elected members must formally give in writing their acceptance of the membership and of the duties attached to it.

5.7 Qualifications for the elected and the nominated members are:

- a) Must have completed 18 years of age, must be living in the parish continuously at least for one year when being elected/appointed as a member of the PPC.
- b) Must be persons of firm faith, exemplary in moral conduct and prudence and in full communion with the Catholic Church (cf. can. 205).

- c) Must enjoy good name and reputation among the parishioners.
 - d) Must be service-minded and open to all.
- 5.8 A member will lose his/her membership by expiry of the term, resignation, suspension imposed by the bishop for grave reasons or for absence for three consecutive meetings without reasonable cause.
- 5.9 A vacancy of membership should be filled within a month by the Parish Priest upon the recommendation of the Council. Such appointee shall hold membership for the remaining period of the term of the person he or she replaces.

ARTICLE VI: CONSTITUTION AND TERM

- 6.1 The Parish Pastoral Council is juridically constituted by a decree of the Diocesan Bishop on presentation of the names of the members by the Parish Priest. Every time a new Pastoral Council is to be constituted in a parish, the parish priest should present the names of the members and get the written approval of the Diocesan Bishop.
- 6.2 The Council is constituted for a period of four years; it could be extended for another one year with the written permission from the Diocesan Bishop in extraordinary circumstances.
- 6.3 The Council does not cease to exist when the parish becomes vacant or impeded.
- 6.4 The term of service for the elected and the nominated members is four years.
- 6.5 No member serves for more than two terms consecutively. He/she may be elected/nominated after a gap of one term.
- 6.6 For grave reasons, the parish priest may request the diocesan bishop to dissolve the Council. In such cases the bishop can dissolve the Council after consulting the Priest Council. However, it must be reconstituted within six months.
- 6.7 For grave reasons, after getting the permission of the diocesan bishop, the parish priest may suspend the Council for a period not exceeding six months.

ARTICLE VII: OFFICE BEARERS

- 7.1 The Parish Priest is the president of the Parish Pastoral Council *de iure* (c. 536, § 1). It is his right and duty to convoke the Council, determine the agenda for the meetings, preside over them and to give approval to the consensus arrived at the meetings.
- 7.2 Age limit to hold any office in the Pastoral Council is 21 to 75 years. Employees of the Parish should not be office bearers.
- 7.3 The vice-president will be a layperson elected from among and by the Council members. He/she will help the president in all his duties.
- 7.4 The members of the Parish Pastoral Council shall elect a Secretary who should be a lay person or a sister whose duties are:
- 7.4.1 to arrange for the meetings at the advice of the parish priest;
 - 7.4.2 to send the agenda approved by the President to the members of the Council;
 - 7.4.3 to write and maintain the minutes-book and all the other relevant records and documents of the Council;
 - 7.4.4 to prepare an annual report of the activities of the Council at the end of each calendar year to be presented to the parishioners and to be forwarded to the diocesan office.
- 7.5 The members of the Parish Pastoral Council will elect a Joint secretary (lay person or sister) who will assist the secretary and also take care of the duties of the secretary in his/her absence.

ARTICLE VIII: MEETINGS

- 8.1. The Parish Pastoral Council meets at least once every two months or as per need. However, the Council must meet a minimum six times in a year.
- 8.2 Extraordinary meetings may be convoked by the president when there is a need or when the majority of the members (half + one) request the president in writing.
- 8.3 The Agenda is prepared by the Parish Priest, Vice- President and the Secretary together. At least 7 days prior to the meeting the secretary should send the agenda to all the members in order to enable them to come prepared for the meetings.
- 8.4 The quorum for the meeting is the absolute majority (half + one) of the total number of members. If the quorum is not present, the meeting may be adjourned for 15 minutes and then the meeting will begin with the available members being considered as the quorum. An attendance record of the meetings is to be maintained by the secretary.
- 8.5 Every meeting will begin with a 15-30 minutes silent prayer, preferably with Adoration. After the prayer, the secretary will present the minutes of the previous meeting and get it approved by the meeting and duly signed by the President. The agenda will then follow. The spirit of Synodality – listening and discerning in prayer – is to be fostered.
- 8.6 The “Spiritual Conversation” method may be used, especially when discerning important issues.
- 8.7 The President has the authority to make the final decisions. However, it is highly recommended that in its deliberations the Parish Pastoral Council arrive at a *consensus*. In a situation where the President finds the need to take a decision contrary to the opinion of a large majority of the Council, he should refer the matter to the diocesan Bishop.
- 8.8. Matters that do not fall within the purview of the parish shall not be taken up in the Parish Pastoral Council meeting, but must be referred to the appropriate authority.

Article IX: AMENDMENTS

- 9.1 Any amendment to these Statutes may be made only by the diocesan bishop in consultation with the Council of Priests.

Article X: INTERPRETATION

- 10.1 If any doubt/ dispute arises regarding any of the articles or sections of this constitution, the interpretation/ decision given by the Bishop of Baroda in consultation with the Council of Priests will be final.

EPISCOPAL DECREE OF APPROVAL AND PROMULGATION

The Parish Pastoral Council is an organ for collaborative ministry at the parish level. I hope these statutes will help the parish pastoral council members to render selfless service to the parish and make the parish a community centred around the Word of God and the Eucharist and to live after the model of the Good Shepherd. I hereby approve and promulgate the above *Statutes of the Parish Pastoral Council* in the diocese of Baroda. These *Statutes* come into effect in the diocese of Baroda from 1st April 2024.

Given in the Bishop’s House, Vadodara, on the 21st day of March in the year of the Lord two thousand and twenty four, on the occasion of the Celebration of the Chrism Mass at the Rosary Cathedral, Vadodara.

Bishop Sebastião Mascarinhas, sfx
Bishop of Baroda