

Diocese of Winona-Rochester

Parish Governance



September 15, 2023



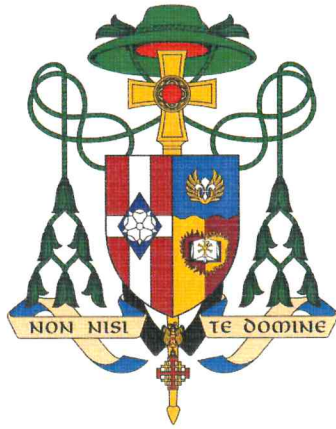
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Office of the Bishop

Most Reverend Robert Barron

September 21, 2023
Feast of St. Matthew

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Twenty-two years ago, my predecessor and friend, then-Bishop John Vlazny, issued the first diocesan statutes for Parish Pastoral Councils and Parish Finance Councils. After two decades, I am issuing revised diocesan statutes. The purpose of these statutes is to bring clarity to the purpose of these two vital consultative bodies in the life of the parishes of the Diocese of Winona-Rochester.

It is no secret that evangelization is a priority of mine. My hope is that these consultative bodies will assist in the governance of each parish in such a way that any necessary maintenance of ecclesial temporal goods always ends in conversations about how the gospel of Jesus Christ can be spread further and with greater efficacy.

Every parish is required by Church law to have a parish finance council. By diocesan statute I expect every parish to be involved in a parish pastoral council. However, if a pastor has multiple parishes it is strongly encouraged that he form one pastoral council for his entire cluster, with representation from all his parishes. Separate parish sub-committees may be practical, but the shared vision of a people under the leadership of one pastor is an expectation I place before you.

The revised norms in these statutes will become effective on September 27, 2023, the Memorial of St. Vincent de Paul. I am hopeful that all parishes will undertake a process for pastoral and financial council formation that is consistent with these norms. Please contact the Vicar General if you would like to schedule formation and education opportunities. Additional resource materials are available on the diocesan website. I ask you to take advantage of these opportunities and I commend your efforts to the prayerful intercession of Mary, Mother of the Church.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Rev. Robert Barron
Bishop of Winona-Rochester



FORWARD

Jesus Christ entrusted his mission to the twelve apostles and through them to the bishops of the Church, the successors of the apostles, and the Holy Father, the successor of Peter. A parish derives its nature and function from the diocesan Church under the leadership of the local Bishop. Each diocese and its parishes are a part of the Universal Church and are guided by its tradition and teaching under the leadership of the Pope. The parish also exists within broader human communities on a local, national, and global level.

The parish exists to carry forward the work of the Church which is the mission of Jesus. The parish has three basic purposes:

- to bring together God's people in a local context to worship God;
- to go forth from the Liturgy to share the Good News through evangelization; and
- to extend charity as good stewards toward all of creation, especially through service to the poor.

All Christians are called through Baptism and Confirmation to share responsibility for this mission and contribute according to their time, talent, and treasure. But not everyone is called to fulfill this responsibility in the same manner or with the same role.

The pastor serves the parish community entrusted to him by the diocesan bishop. The pastor carries out this role through teaching, sanctifying, and governing with the cooperation of others who share in the pastoral care of the parish and the assistance of the Christian faithful (Canon 519). The role of the pastor cannot be surrendered or diminished. This authority is not to be viewed as personal power but as genuine service to the Christian faithful exercised in a collaborative manner.

In virtue of his office, the pastor presides over the Parish Pastoral Council and the Parish Finance Council. As Presider, the pastor is responsible for ensuring that council members are trained to fulfill their consultative role. Training resources may be found at <https://www.dowr.org/offices/pastoral-planning/index.html>. The pastor fully participates in the deliberations of the Parish Pastoral Council and the Parish Finance Council and is involved completely in the planning and policy development. The pastor is responsible for the final approval of the Councils' recommendations concerning pastoral plans and policies as well as for the implementation by parish staff and other groups.

The Parish Pastoral Council and the Parish Finance Council are consultative bodies which unite laity and clergy in the community of prayer, leadership, service, and pastoral planning. All councilors work together as they seek to listen to the Holy Spirit in discerning what is best for the parish in the light of the Gospel, the Church's teaching, and the experiences and needs of parishioners and the surrounding community. The Councils can fulfill their roles by encouraging a climate in which people can feel free to speak the truth with openness and love.



The pastor consults the Pastoral Council and Finance Council on major pastoral and financial concerns which affect the life and mission of the parish: namely, to proclaim the Word, to build up the community, to celebrate Liturgy, and to serve all God's people. The Councils strive to achieve consensual agreement upon recommendations which affect future directions.

As consultative bodies, the recommendations of the Parish Pastoral Council and the Parish Finance Council bear considerable weight. The Councils are not bodies which make binding decisions nor are they an advisory group which gives advice that can be readily ignored. When a Council regularly seeks to arrive at a consensus, rarely would a pastor not accept a Council recommendation. While the Pastor is not obliged to follow the recommendations of a Parish Pastoral Council or the Parish Finance Council, it is understood that he would do so unless there is an extraordinary reason to do otherwise. When this is the case, he makes known the basis for his decision to those concerned (unless confidentiality prevents this).

- The Parish Pastoral Council's recommendations deal with pastoral plans and policies and not with acts of administration. This is an important distinction. A pastoral policy or plan:
 - sets a basic direction and selects the best strategies to promote this direction;
 - provides a guide for future actions, particularly in areas that have a broad impact on parish life; and,
 - provides clear direction while allowing room for creative, flexible action by those who will implement the policies.

Matters of administration are distinct from pastoral policies and plans. Acts of administration concern the daily operations of the parish which includes the implementation of pastoral plans and policies, parish programming, budgeting, and personnel matters. Decisions relating to acts of administration are the responsibility of the pastor of the staff, committee, or other people designated by the Pastor. These decisions include the development and application of administrative policies, plans, structures, and procedures, all of which are distinct from the pastoral issues addressed by the Parish Pastoral Council.

- The Parish Finance Council's recommendations deal with financial plans and policies and not with ordinary matters of day-to-day administration. This is an important distinction. A financial policy or plan:
 - sets a basic direction and selects the best strategies to promote this direction;
 - provides a guide for future actions, particularly in areas that have a broad impact on parish life; and,
 - provides clear direction while allowing room for creative, flexible action by those



who will implement the policies.

The Parish Finance Council provides expertise and consultation through financial analysis, planning, and policy development to aid the pastor in the administration of parish goods; that is, parish financial resources, buildings, and grounds. The work of the Finance Council supports the mission of the Church and the particular way that this, mission is expressed in the parish pastoral plan and priorities as developed by the Parish Pastoral Council.

In conclusion, the Parish Pastoral Council and the Parish Finance Council are distinct in function. They are related, however, since both are concerned with the life and mission of the parish. Each parish community is to foster a cooperative relationship between the Parish Finance Council and the Parish Pastoral Council. The following distinctions may aid in developing this relationship:

- Canon 536 enables the diocesan bishop to establish Pastoral Councils.
- Canon 537 mandates the existence of a Finance Council in every parish.
- Both Parish Pastoral and Finance Councils are consultative to the Pastor; the Pastoral Council in matters of major pastoral concern, the Finance Council in matters of major financial concern.

Process for generating the Documents

The Office of the Vicar General distributed a preliminary document to the Pastoral Council, the Presbyteral Council, the Curia, and the entire Presbyterate of the Diocese of Winona. The Most Rev. John G. Vlazny, Bishop of Winona, heard from the various bodies through consultation and listening sessions.

Canon lawyers reviewed the document and in particular the Rev. Donald P. Schmitz, former Chancellor, finalized the writing. Rev. Gerald A. Mahon, Vicar General, is grateful to the many people who served to bring about these statutes. In particular, the Diocese of Cleveland is gratefully acknowledged. Since their first promulgation, the documents have been periodically revised for clarity and to express pastoral priorities.



STATUTES FOR PARISH PASTORAL COUNCILS IN THE DIOCESE OF WINONA-ROCHESTER

The Code of Canon Law states:

Canon 536.1 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.

536.2 This pastoral council possesses a consultative vote only and is governed by norms determined by the diocesan bishop.

In response to the call and direction of the Second Vatican Council and in accordance with Canon 536 of the Code of Canon Law, a parish council is to be established in each parish or cluster of parishes. The Parish Pastoral Council is to be governed by the following statutes.

I. NAME, NATURE, AND POWERS

- A. The name of this body shall be "The Parish Pastoral Council of (name) Parish," hereafter referred to in this document as "the Council" except when different councils are being referred to in the same section.
- B. The Council is a collaborative body of the Christian faithful with the pastor whose purpose is the promotion of the mission of Jesus Christ and his Church in its entirety. The Council shall at all times work in close collaboration with the pastor of the parish, advising him in matters pertaining to pastoral ministry (cc. 528- 529).
 1. In a relationship of shared responsibility with the pastor, the Council, as a representative body of the people of God of (name) parish, enables the people to experience themselves as a community of faith called to proclaim the Good News of God's kingdom present among us.
 2. In accordance with the mind of the Church (c. 536.2), the Council is a consultative body. Through its insights, expertise, and prudent advice, it will help the pastor identify, implement, and evaluate those pastoral initiatives and policies best suited to spread the Gospel in a specific parish.



3. The Council shall be the advisory body designated to assist the pastor in the formulation of policies that affect all matters of pastoral ministry of the parish, except to the extent limited by faith and morals, church or civil law or diocesan policy. (Administrative functions such as hiring and evaluating employees are not part of the Council's responsibility.) The pastor is not bound to follow the recommendations of the Council (c. 127), but for harmonious working relationships the pastor should state the reason for not following a recommendation (see section IV.C.1.e.).

II. MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF OFFICE

- A. GENERAL: Council members are to be chosen to reflect the diversity of the parish. Regardless of the selection process used, council members ideally serve not to further constituencies or special interests, but to reflect the wisdom of the parish community as a whole. Those with expertise in a certain area are to offer their expertise with an openness to what is good for the whole parish community. Members are to be fully initiated Catholics of the parish.
- B. NUMBER OF MEMBERS: The Council shall consist of at least seven (7) members of the Christian faithful (clergy, religious or Catholic lay persons) of outstanding integrity and honesty. Five (5) members will suffice where numbers are small. They are to be practicing Catholics registered in the parish, confirmed, and actively involved in the life of the parish. The Council, even in a large parish, should not exceed twelve (12) voting members.
- C. EX-OFFICIO NON-VOTING MEMBERS: The pastor and parochial vicar(s) are ex-officio non-voting members of the Council. If the parish has a parish worker (one having general pastoral duties), he/she should be an ex-officio non-voting member of the Council.
- D. EX-OFFICIO VOTING MEMBERS: The different areas of pastoral ministry, e.g., the four committees mentioned in VII,A and other parish organizations, may be represented by the chairpersons or other members of the committee/organization. In keeping with the provisions of II,A above, this representation is optional and is to be determined in the bylaws.
- E. SELECTION OF MEMBERS: Voting members of the Parish Pastoral Council are to be selected in a way that ensures the expectations listed in II.A. The selection process may include, but is not limited to: election from the parish at large, appointment by the pastor, and/or nominated by the parish at large and interviewed by Pastoral Council members. However members are appointed, they are to be trained so that they may be effective contributors on the Council.
- F. TRUSTEES: The parish corporate board trustees are eligible as appointed or elected members of the Council. Even if they are not official members of the Council, it is appropriate for trustees to attend council meetings to



remain current on parish affairs.

- G. ADVISERS: From time to time, outside advisers may be appointed by the Council in collaboration with the pastor because of special concerns. The advisers are not to be voting members of the Council and need not be Catholic.
- H. TERM OF OFFICE: Elected and appointed members shall assume their seats at the first regular meeting after being elected or appointed. Their normal term of office shall be three years with a limit of two consecutive three-year terms for an individual. A lapse of one year is required before the member is eligible again for membership. The terms should be staggered so that all do not end at the same time. Vacancies shall be filled according to provisions in the bylaws.

III. CESSATION

- A. Upon the departure of the pastor, the Council ceases to exist until the new pastor, within ninety (90) days after assuming the assignment, officially reconstitutes the previous council or establishes a new one according to the diocesan norms.
- B. Since the Council is a consultative body of the pastor, it is inappropriate for the Council to meet without the pastor present unless the agenda has been determined with/by the pastor and he has requested that the Council consider the agenda issues for recommendations to the pastor. "Secret" meetings without the pastor or excluding him are without effect. Any council which operates in this fashion dissolves itself. The pastor in such a case is free to establish a new council.
- C. If some other grave reason exists, based on these Statutes, and judged to be legitimate by the diocesan bishop, the pastor may dissolve the parish council. The dissolution is only temporary; the problem is to be resolved and a new council formed.



IV. OFFICERS AND DUTIES

- A. At the first regularly scheduled meeting of the Parish Pastoral Council following the annual election, the members of the Council shall select a chairperson, vice-chairperson, and secretary from their own membership. The officers shall serve no more than two consecutive one-year terms in the same office. A one-year lapse of time is required before the member may be elected to the previously held office.
- B. The chairperson, vice-chairperson, and secretary, together with the pastor, shall constitute the Executive Committee. The pastor may utilize this committee for setting the agenda (See Appendix II) or for other tasks such as conducting emergency parish business.
- C. Each member of the Executive Committee has specific duties.
 1. The pastor is the Presider at the Council. He fulfills his role by:
 - a. making certain that the scope of the Council's concerns reflects the entire mission of the Church;
 - b. enabling the Council to build a community of faith and an atmosphere of trust among council members, making certain that they have adequate training for their role in the Church;
 - c. overseeing the formulation of the Council agenda and ensuring that council members have copies of background information that will familiarize them sufficiently on parish issues and enable them to make informed recommendations;
 - d. sharing in the dialogue that leads to the formulation of policy;
 - e. reflecting upon all business conducted at the meetings and receiving in a very serious manner any recommendations offered by the Council. In order to fulfill this role, it is necessary that the pastor attend all meetings of the Parish Pastoral Council. The pastor should indicate his acceptance or rejection of a recommendation within a reasonable time and state his reasons for rejecting a recommendation if such is the case. A rejection of a recommendation would normally involve one of the following: 1) faith and morals; 2) general Church law; 3) a conflict with diocesan policy; 4) pastoral or administrative needs of the parish; 5) general good order of the parish; or, 6) confidential matters that the pastor is not free to divulge; and,



- f. seeing to it that a summary of the meeting is given to the parishioners.
2. The Chairperson fulfills this role by:
 - a. chairing all meetings of the Council and overseeing the Council's activities;
 - b. convening, upon request of the pastor, the Executive Committee in order to prepare council meeting agendas and when special assistance or decisions are required on parish business;
 - c. familiarizing himself with diocesan and other Church policies;
 - d. being skilled in maintaining an atmosphere conducive to council business;
 - e. relying on an agenda, leading the Council members through an orderly and well-balanced session;
 - f. initiating discussion, providing information, assuring fairness, encouraging participation, and avoiding disruptions;
 - g. evaluating and summarizing discussions and recognizing the point at which consensus is reached;
 - h. drawing upon the expertise and gifts of individual members as appropriate to further specific items of council business; and,
 - i. calling special meetings, with the consent of the pastor, that he determines as necessary for the good of the parish.
3. The Vice-Chairperson shall assume the office of the Chairperson in the event that the Chairperson is vacant from the office for any reason. He/she shall perform such other duties as may be delegated by the Chairperson.
4. The Secretary shall keep minutes of the meetings of the Council and shall perform other duties assigned to him/her by the Presider or Chairperson. The Secretary especially fulfills this role by:
 - a. forwarding the minutes to the Chairperson and Presider for review/corrections before distributing the minutes to the Council members;



- b. recording the minutes in the proper minutes book as a permanent record of the parish after the minutes have been approved at a meeting of the Council and signed by the Chairperson or Presider in addition to the Secretary;
 - c. maintaining the official list of names and addresses of council members and their terms of office, and the names and addresses of the committee chairpersons and members;
 - d. keeping an accurate record of attendance of council members at meetings;
 - e. being responsible for advance notification of all members of the Council of both regular and special meetings and ensuring that agendas and necessary information are sent to members with sufficient time for members to prepare for meetings; and,
 - f. handling all correspondence as directed by the Council.
- D. Each officer shall, within ten days after the expiration of his term of office, turn over to his/her successor or the Presider, all books, papers, and other records and property pertaining to the office.

V. MEETINGS

- A. Meetings are to be held monthly or as otherwise determined by the Presider and Chairperson, but no less than quarterly.
- B. A quorum shall consist of a majority of the voting members. In the absence of a quorum no official business shall be transacted by the Council.
- C. Each member is required to maintain confidentiality on those matters designated as confidential.
- D. A consensus decision-making model is preferred for the Council; if consensus cannot be reached, a voting procedure can be followed.
- E. At the meetings of the Council, those invited by the Presider or by the Chairperson with the Presider's consent, may participate where opportune as non-voting members. Individuals or groups who want to address the Council are to:
 - 1. document the issues they want considered by the Council;



2. present their documentation to the Presider and/or Chairperson who will jointly, or with the Executive Committee, determine whether the issues are appropriate matters for the Council's agenda; and,
 3. be invited by the Presider or Chairperson to a council meeting if their issue is being considered and their presence is deemed necessary or appropriate.
- F. Every regular meeting shall include substantial time for prayer, reflection, and study.
- G. At special meetings, no business will be conducted at the meeting other than that stated as the purpose of the meeting.
- H. Advance notice of the time and place of regular meetings of the Council shall be published in the parish bulletin, and all members of the parish shall be entitled and welcome to attend as observers. The Council may open any meeting to discussion by parish members on such subjects and under such rules as the Council may announce. Meetings are to take place in person whenever possible, though it is acceptable to use electronic means to allow greater participation.
- I. The Council is allowed to conduct "closed" meetings if there are sensitive matters to consider that involve the reputations of people or issues which are considered to be confidential at the time.

VI. COMPETENCE, DUTIES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COUNCIL

- A. Council members especially fulfill their role in pastoral activity by:
1. forming themselves together as a community of faith through regular prayer and reflection at meetings;
 2. familiarizing themselves with diocesan policies and directives and other Church and civil law documents that must guide their discernment on some parish matters;
 3. drawing upon the wisdom of the community and discerning the guidance of the Spirit in developing and maintaining a parish mission statement which embraces the mission of Jesus and the total life and mission of the parish;
 4. assisting the pastor in prayerfully discerning and identifying pastoral needs in the parish and serving as his consultative body in parish pastoral matters;



5. establishing clear and concise long-range and short-range goals and objectives based on the mission statement of the parish and ensuring compliance with diocesan policies and directives and updating the goals and objectives as emerging needs are identified;
6. recommending policies, procedures, and programs by which the parish goals and objectives can be implemented, furthered, and accomplished;
7. identifying and calling forth the gifts and talents of the members of the parish community;
8. coordinating, encouraging, and promoting every apostolic activity within the parish through which the parish community discharges its common responsibility to make the Gospel message known;
9. examining, reviewing, and coordinating the efforts of existing organizations within the parish, the autonomy and particular nature of each remaining untouched;
10. complementing and rendering more effective those pastoral activities which are already taking place in a more fragmented way and evaluating the effectiveness of existing programs and services with a view to their improvement, or, at times, their substitution or termination;
11. encouraging good relationships among all members of the parish through open dialogue, reconciliation efforts, parish assemblies, and regular communication about council business to the parish at large;
12. encouraging good relationships with other Catholic communities of faith by sharing resources and personnel and fostering clustering efforts whenever possible;
13. encouraging good relationships with the diocesan bishop and the diocesan staff by participating in the total life and mission of the local Church of the Diocese of Winona-Rochester and calling for assistance as needed;
14. encouraging good relationships with non-Catholic communities of faith by sharing life and prayer and by cooperating in community concerns and projects whenever possible (ecumenism) for the betterment of the social community in which the parish exists;
15. involving as many people as possible in the ministries and work of the parish, encouraging and facilitating their visible witness to all of the message of the Gospel;



16. providing programs that make those in need feel welcome to the parish--the poor, the uneducated, the handicapped, the elderly, the lonely, the widows(ers), the singles, the divorced, the single parents, the homeless, the sick and dying, the grieving, and all minorities;
 17. sustaining parents and spouses in their duties and vocations, and fostering Christian growth in families;
 18. fostering vocations to the priesthood and religious life through parish prayer and programs;
 19. providing education and enrichment programs for all age- levels; to counteract unchristian values in our culture; and,
 20. collaborating with the pastor and Parish Finance Council in determining funding levels which will further the accomplishment of the parish goals and objectives and by staying informed of the financial condition of the parish.
- B. In order for the Council to fulfill its role, the Council is to:
1. be kept informed by the pastor and finance council of any matters or issues which would contribute to their making informed recommendations about pastoral matters;
 2. be provided with, or have available to them, copies of all diocesan policies and regulations affecting pastoral activity for their study and assistance in implementation in the parish;
 3. participate in diocesan training sessions that are held from time to time for members of the Parish Pastoral Councils and other lay leadership in the parishes; and,
 4. be familiar with and supportive of the diocesan mission statement and the parish mission statement, goals, and objectives;
 5. facilitate annual synodal conversations among parishioners according to the needs of the parish and guidance by the diocese.
- C. Among the matters of pastoral ministry which call for the attention of the Council, three general areas can be identified, each with areas of concentration:
- 1. WORSHIP GOD**
 - a. promoting the perfection of Christian life which involves developing and strengthening the faith of all people in the parish;
 - b. promoting divine worship, especially the liturgical celebration of the sacraments;



2. EVANGELIZATION

- a. promoting the evangelization and outreach to others which includes ecumenical activity;
- b. promoting the teaching of the faith, passing on of the faith to younger generations and to those who search for deeper faith or greater knowledge of faith;
- c. facilitate efforts to create the parish as a school of prayer and the font of missionary discipleship;
- d. coordinate the efforts of a listening and discerning church at the parish level;
- e. assist the pastor in identifying the key areas of pastoral ministry raised by parishioners.

3. SERVICE TO THE POOR

- a. promoting the spiritual works of mercy, piety, and devotions;
- b. animating the world with a Christian spirit through charitable service, advocacy, social action, and education to justice; and,
- c. recognizing that we not only need faith but also works, therefore, promoting the corporal works of mercy and charity with a vision of Christian stewardship of resources (finances and personnel).

VII. COMMITTEES OF THE PARISH AND THE PASTORAL COUNCIL

- A. In each parish there will be several committees or boards formed to focus their attention on each of the five general aspects mentioned above:

1. WORSHIP AND SPIRITUAL LIFE
2. EVANGELIZATION AND CATECHESIS
3. SOCIAL MINISTRY
4. ADMINISTRATION AND STEWARDSHIP
5. SYNODAL PATH

These committees will be related to the Parish Council in varying ways. In all cases the Parish Finance Council, with its focus on stewardship and administration, is a separate consultative body. While it is not a committee of the Parish Council, it is to work close with it (see VIII below). In many cases the education committee/board will deal in depth with a parish Catholic school, a consolidated Catholic school, or a religious education program. This committee may be structured as a sub-committee of the Parish Council, or it may be a board of education that is not a committee of the Parish Council. Nevertheless, it must formulate its specific objectives in accord with the goals and objectives of the Parish Pastoral Council.



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- B. The Council is free to establish additional standing committees.
- C. Special ad hoc committees may be established from time to time by agreement of council membership along with the pastor to meet on specific projects.
- D. All of the above-mentioned committees are to formulate their specific objectives in accord with the goals and objectives of the Parish Pastoral Council and the respective diocesan committee. (There is a set of statutes for parish finance councils issued for the Diocese of Winona-Rochester). The committees accomplish this by:
1. identifying the needs of the parish in their particular area of expertise and responsibility;
 2. communicating these needs to the Council, discerning with them which needs can realistically be addressed and where inter-committee collaboration might be needed/effective or where those needs may already be met; a brief summary report should be submitted in writing or orally to the Council, for each meeting, on the activities and proposals of the committees;
 3. formulating long-range and short-range goals and objectives after prioritizing needs;
 4. developing means to implement the goals and accomplish the objectives (action plans), as well as collaborating with the Finance Council and Parish Pastoral Council on budget matters;
 5. communicating with the pastor (or other staff) about implementation when appropriate and the need for their active support or involvement;
 6. maintaining communication with the respective diocesan offices for guidelines and resources; and,
 7. providing ongoing formation of committee members in areas of concern through workshops, study, spiritual formation, and prayer.

VIII. RELATIONSHIP TO THE PARISH FINANCE COUNCIL

- A. The Parish Pastoral Council and Parish Finance Council are two separate consultative bodies of the pastor. Universal Church law (Code of Canon Law) establishes the Finance Council as a body in itself. The Finance Council is not to act as a committee of the Parish Pastoral Council, and the Parish Pastoral Council does not report to the Parish Finance Council.
- B. The two consultative bodies must communicate and work closely together. The pastoral ministry needs of the parish and the goals set by the Parish Pastoral Council are to be the Finance Council's primary guideposts in



determining funding levels for different programs/projects in the parish. The Finance Council makes recommendations to the Parish Pastoral Council concerning budget matters, the Parish Pastoral Council makes the

final recommendation regarding how programs and projects are to be tailored in keeping with the goals and objectives of the parish. These recommendations are made after consultation and collaboration with the various standing committees and affected staff personnel.

- C. The pastor is instrumental in maintaining harmonious relationships between the councils, by fully entrusting each council with the duties specified in its respective statutes, providing both with sufficient information to conduct their business with efficiency and knowledge, and by respecting the recommendations made by the Councils for the good of the parish.



SUMMARY FOR PARISH PASTORAL COUNCILS

I. NATURE

- A. The Parish Pastoral Council is a consultative body, over which the pastor presides.
- B. Its scope is the parish community as a whole, fostering the total mission of the parish.

II. MEMBERSHIP

- A. Membership should reflect the diversity of the parish.
- B. At least half of the members should be elected by the parishioners.
- C. The pastor, parochial vicar, and parish worker are ex officio nonvoting members.
- D. Some members may be appointed by the pastor.
- E. Some members may be on the Council as representatives of other committees or organizations of the parish.
- F. The bylaws further determine membership and method of election.
- G. The Council ceases upon the departure of the pastor until the new pastor reconstitutes it.

III. OFFICERS

- A. The pastor, as president, sees to the preparation of the agenda, presides at each meeting or requests that, in his absence, the approved agenda items be considered.
- B. While not bound to follow the recommendations of the Council, the pastor should give reasons for not following them.
- C. The chairperson, and in his/her absence, the vice-chairperson, chairs the meetings and oversees the Council's activities.
- D. The secretary gives notice of meetings, distributes the agenda, and takes minutes at meetings.



IV. MEETINGS

- A. Some time of prayer is a part of each meeting.
- B. Meetings held regularly; parishioners are informed of upcoming meetings and afterward are given a summary of each meeting.
- C. The meetings normally are open to all parishioners to attend as observers.
- D. Individuals and groups may be invited to address the Council.

V. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COUNCIL

- A. Members should have ongoing formation in the faith.
- B. They should be familiar with the pertinent policies of the Diocesan and Universal Church.
- C. The Council establishes goals for the parish and recommends policies to the pastor.
- D. The Council coordinates the activities of other parish committees and organizations, particularly the following:
 - Worship and Spiritual Life Committee
 - Evangelization and Catechesis Committee
 - Social Ministry Committee
 - Administration and Stewardship Committee
 - Synodal Path Commission
- E. The over-all goals and objectives of the Parish Pastoral Council give direction to the specific goals and directions of these committees.
- F. The Parish Finance Council, which focuses on stewardship and administration, is a separate consultative body. While it is not a sub-committee of the Parish Pastoral Council, it is to work closely with it.



STATUTES FOR PARISH FINANCE COUNCILS IN THE DIOCESE OF WINONA-ROCHESTER

The Code of Canon Law states:

Canon 537: "Each parish is to have a finance council which is regulated by universal law as well as by norms issued by the diocesan bishop; in this council the Christian faithful, selected according to the same norms, aid the pastor in the administration of parish goods with due regard for the prescriptions of Canon 532."

I. NAME, NATURE, AND POWERS

- A. The name of this body shall be "The Finance Council of (name) Parish," hereafter referred to in this document as "the Council" except when different councils are being referred to in the same section.
- B. In due proportion, what is stated regarding the diocesan finance council shall be applicable to the Parish Finance Council, cc.492- 494. The Parish Finance Council is a collaborative body of the Christian faithful with the pastor in the administration of the financial matters of the parish.
 1. The Council is an advisory group to be consulted by the pastor for acts of major importance involving the temporalities of the parish. He is not bound to follow the advice of the Council in these matters, but should receive it in a serious manner and state reasons for rejecting it. The pastor should have the consent of the Council for extraordinary acts involving the temporalities of the parish. (In addition, he will need to fulfill the requirements of civil, corporate law in these matters. See Appendix.)
 2. Recommendations made by the Council should be based on the principles of Church administration found in Book V of the Code of Canon Law.



II. MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF OFFICE

- A. The Council shall consist of at least three (3) members of the Christian faithful (clergy, religious, or Catholic lay persons) of outstanding integrity and honesty who are actively involved in the life of the parish. They are to be skilled in financial affairs or civil law as evidenced by their professional qualifications and testimonials and are to be capable of evaluating financial options while having the highest regard for Christian principles and values and the mission of the diocese and parish. Council members are to be objective advisers for the pastor, not "special interest" parishioners only concerned with one or two areas of parish life.
- B. All members shall be freely appointed by the pastor. However, the pastor is encouraged to consult the parish council for member recommendations. Appointments are to be made, in writing, for three-year terms. From time to time, outside advisers may be appointed as non-voting members. Advisers do not need to be Catholic.
- C. Persons who are related to the pastor of the parish and those who have direct financial interest in the parish, should not be appointed to the Council if other qualified parishioners are available and willing to serve on the Council.
- D. New members can be freely appointed by the pastor at any time for three-year terms and can be reappointed to additional three-year terms. Insofar as possible, terms should be staggered to avoid all terms ending at one time.
- E. For the duration of their appointment, members cannot be dismissed by the pastor except for grave and documented reasons (failure to attend meetings, breaking confidentiality, not practicing the faith, loss of respect of the people because of public scandal of a serious nature, and other reasons that may prevent an individual from serving effectively).
- F. The pastor is a non-voting member of the Council.

III. CESSATION

- A. The Council continues in existence even when no permanent pastor is assigned. It cannot act on its own, but remains a consultative group for the parish administrator during the interim period before a permanent pastor" is assigned and remains as a council for a new pastor. It is not reconstituted when a new pastor is appointed.



IV. OFFICERS AND THEIR DUTIES

- A. The President of the Council.
 - 1. The pastor or the priest assigned as parish administrator is the President of the Council. As such he:
 - a. Convoles and presides at the meetings, either personally or through a delegate; and,
 - b. Prepares or causes to be prepared the agenda for each meeting.
 - 2. The pastor appoints a secretary from among the members of the Council. He may also appoint a chairperson to conduct the meetings. The appointments are for a one-year term, renewable, and the member retains his/her right to vote on matters brought before the Council.
 - 3. The pastor or parish administrator is not to act on items in which the Finance Council has given a consensus negative vote without the permission of the Diocese.
- B. The Secretary of the Council.
 - 1. The Secretary shall keep minutes of the meetings of the Council and shall perform other duties assigned to him/her by the President or Chairperson.
 - a. Minutes are to be forwarded to the President or Chairperson for approval and for distribution to the members of the Council.
 - b. The minutes of the meetings are to be recorded in the proper minutes book and signed by the President or Chairperson and Secretary once they have been approved at the next meeting.
- C. Representative to the Parish Pastoral Council.
 - 1. The Chairperson of the Finance Council or another member may be selected to act as a representative to the Parish Pastoral Council in order to keep the two councils mutually informed.

V. MEETINGS

- A. Meetings are to be held monthly or as otherwise determined by the President, but no less than quarterly.
- B. A quorum shall consist of a majority of the members.



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- C. Each member is required to maintain confidentiality on those matters designated as confidential.
 - D. At the meetings of the Council, those invited by the President or by the Chairperson with the President's knowledge, may participate where opportune as non-voting members.
 - E. Individuals or groups who want to be heard by the Council:
 - 1. Are to document the issues they want considered by the Council;
 - 2. Are to present their documentation to the President and/or Chairperson who will jointly determine whether the issues are appropriate matters for the Council's agenda; and,
 - 3. Will be invited by the President or Chairperson to a council meeting if their issue is being considered and their presence is deemed necessary or appropriate.

VI. COMPETENCE, DUTIES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COUNCIL

- A. The Council is to:
 - 1. Observe and help implement applicable diocesan statutes and policies and advise the pastor on financial policies for the parish and other matters of administration in the parish (see Appendix) by making recommendations based on the economic climate regarding financial trends which could affect the financial stability or viability of the parish, parish investments, insurance, or other fiscal matters such as the use, maintenance, and future development/sale of parish properties;
 - 2. Prepare or cause to be prepared annually, according to diocesan policy and accounting procedures, a budget of income and expenditures foreseen for the administration of the parish in the coming year (parish fiscal year is to be July 1 to June 30);
 - 3. Examine at regular meetings a statement of parish income and expenditures compared to budget, making adjustments as necessary or making efforts to raise needed funds;
 - 4. Ensure that collections mandated for the diocese are taken-up in the parish and forwarded to the diocese in a timely manner;
 - 5. Ensure that the required permission of the diocese is obtained before the parish accepts any bequests/gifts that have restricted purposes, and that bequests/gifts with restricted purposes that are received by the parish are administered according to the donor's wishes (for future reference, a permanent file should be kept for records of such restricted gifts, and the Council should be provided information on the purpose and amount of each gift);



6. Ensure that the parish tax-exempt status is maintained through compliance with state regulations;
7. Ensure that the parish complies with Minnesota Corporation regulations regarding administration matters;
8. Ensure that employment agreements are executed for staff members;
9. Be involved in long-range planning that is done for the parish;
10. Recommend to the pastor operating procedures for the building and maintenance committee;
11. Examine at the end of the fiscal year the annual report of the parish accountant/bookkeeper on the income and expenditures for the year, as well as a statement of investments and other funds, as well as parish indebtedness;
12. Ensure at the end of each fiscal year that a complete accounting of the parish financial status is published for the parishioners' review, including the annual income and expenditures as well as investments, bequests, endowments, or other funds held by the parish;
13. Review the cemetery finances annually to ensure compliance with state and diocesan regulations;
14. Ensure that the annual parish report to the diocese is a full accounting of the financial state of the parish and ensure that this report is sent in a timely manner;
15. Ensure that loaning and borrowing of money is done properly in the parish (no cemetery funds are to be loaned to the parish, no pastor or other staff person should loan money to the parish or comingle their salary or personal funds with parish money, no parishioner should loan money to the parish without proper legal documentation, and no personal loans from the parish should be made to a parishioner; diocesan approval is required for loans over \$10,000);
16. Be key individuals in raising funds in the parish; and,
17. Assist the pastor in locating a qualified individual to do the accounting/bookkeeping for the parish (the accounting/bookkeeping may not be done by the pastor).



- B. In order for the Council to fulfill its role, the Council is to:
1. Be kept informed by the pastor and or parish accountant/bookkeeper of all parish financial matters including bank accounts, investments, endowments, bequests, and other funds, held by the parish, all indebtedness and payment schedules, diocesan obligations and assessments, parish salaries, income, and expenditures;
 2. Be provided by the pastor with copies of all diocesan policies and regulations affecting parish administration for their study and assistance in implementation in the parish;
 3. Participate in diocesan training sessions that are held from time to time for members of finance councils and other lay leadership in the parishes;
 4. Be familiar with and supportive of the diocesan mission statement and the parish mission statement, goals, and objectives; and,
4. Be familiar with the general condition of parish property.

VII. OTHER COMMITTEES AND THE FINANCE COUNCIL

- A. The Parish Building and Maintenance Committee is responsible for making recommendations concerning all aspects of parish property maintenance and repair including inspection, seeking bids for contracted work, selection of contractors and maintenance personnel as well as other duties found in the committee job description. This committee needs the consent of the Council and pastor on financial matters (see also Section VI.A.10 above).
1. If no member of the Council is a member of the building and maintenance committee, a representative of the committee needs to attend council meetings periodically to keep the Council informed of committee concerns and projects and to present their recommendation to the pastor for completion of larger projects.
- B. Cemetery Association: Accurate accounting of cemetery funds is an important responsibility in the parish. The Council needs to review reports of the cemetery association and make recommendations to the pastor for any changes, major projects, or investments using cemetery funds.
1. If no member of the Council is a member of the cemetery association, a representative of the association needs to attend council meetings periodically to keep the Council informed of cemetery concerns and projects, and to get their recommendation to the pastor for completion of larger projects.



VIII. RELATIONSHIP TO THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

- A. Universal Church law (Code of Canon Law) establishes the Finance Council as a body in itself. The Finance Council is not to act as a committee of the Parish Pastoral Council, and the Parish Pastoral Council does not report to the Parish Finance Council. These are two separate consultative bodies of a parish. Since recommendation and/or advice of both the Finance Council and Parish Pastoral Council are sometimes appropriate, it would be improper to identify the Finance Council completely with the Parish Pastoral Council.
- B. The two consultative bodies should communicate and work closely together. The pastoral ministry needs of the parish and the goals set by the Parish Pastoral Council are to be the Finance Council's primary guideposts in determining funding levels for different programs/projects in the parish. The Finance Council is also responsible for ensuring that the parish is operating under sound financial principles and with a deep sense of Christian stewardship of the Church's temporal goods (money and property). The priorities of the parish can only be achieved through mutual cooperation of the two consultative bodies along with leadership of the pastor.
- C. The Finance Council should not make its final recommendations to the pastor on major items, like the budget, without having first consulted with the Parish Pastoral Council and other groups/ program directors that will be affected by any major decision.
- D. The Finance Council relieves the Parish Pastoral Council from dealing with the details of administration and fiscal matters in a parish. The Parish Pastoral Council is thus free to concentrate the greatest majority of its time on the pastoral ministry needs of the parish.



SUMMARY FOR PARISH FINANCE COUNCIL

I. NATURE

- A. The Parish Finance Council is an advisory group which aids the pastor in the administration of parish goods.
- B. The involvement of the Council consists of several levels:
 - 1. for recurring routine matters the Council's advice is in the form of an annual budget;
 - 2. for acts of major importance which affect the financial situation of the parish, the pastor consults the Council; he is not bound to follow the advice of the Council, but should state reasons for rejecting it; and,
 - 3. for acts of extraordinary importance, those which exceed \$10,000 and are not routine or recurring, the pastor should have the consent of the Council (in addition to the proxies of the Bishop and Vicar General).

II. MEMBERSHIP

- A. The Council has at least three members; lay, religious, or clergy (other than the pastor). In addition to integrity of life and involvement in the parish, each is to be knowledgeable about financial and/or civil law affairs.
- B. The pastor appoints the members for a three-year term; persons related to the pastor or having a direct financial interest in the parish should not be appointed.
- B. Members' terms do not end when the pastor leaves; they remain a consultative group for the next pastor or for the parish administrator in an interim.

III. OFFICERS

- A. The pastor, as president, sees to the preparation of the agenda, and presides at each meeting, either personally or through a delegate.
- B. A chairperson may be appointed by the president to conduct the meetings.
- C. A secretary is appointed to take the minutes.



IV. MEETINGS

- A. Meetings are held regularly as determined by the president.
- B. Individuals or groups from the parish may be invited to address the Council.

V. RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Members are to be familiar with the finances of the parish including income and expenditures, investments and indebtedness, and diocesan obligations.
- B. While it is not a committee of the Parish Pastoral Council, the Finance Council is to communicate and work closely with the Pastoral Council.
- C. The Council is to advise the pastor in the following:
 - 1. drawing up a budget and making periodic financial reports to the parishioners and to the diocese;
 - 2. long-range financial planning and fund raising;
 - 3. compliance with civil laws in parish administration;
 - 4. seeing to construction and maintenance of parish buildings and grounds; and,
 - 5. reviewing parish cemetery finances.



APPENDIX I

ORDINARY ADMINISTRATION	ACTS OF MAJOR IMPORTANCE	EXTRAORDINARY ADMINISTRATION
Pastor can complete alone. Normally the parish accountant/bookkeeper would take care of these routine matters.	Pastor should consult the Finance Council, and inform the Parish Pastoral Council.	Pastor should have the consent of the Finance Council and the favorable recommendation of the Parish Pastoral Council.
Recurring, routine, no set limit financially	Tied into financial situation of the parish. Would usually not be recurring or routine. The Bishop can determine which acts are of major importance.	Need vote of Civil Board to proceed. Set by Minnesota Corporation Law and diocesan policy. (\$25,000 or more)

The following would be considered acts of ORDINARY ADMINISTRATION:

- the collection and banking of money acquired in approved ways;
- the collection of debts from creditors (unless court action is required);
- the collection of annual income from stocks, shares, or bonds;
- buying and selling what is required for the daily maintenance of the parish; -the maintenance and repair of church property (within limits);
- the administration of the money and goods of the parish (keeping the books); -the acceptance of donations (to which no conditions are attached);
- the payment of salaries and other recurring debts (supplies, utilities, diocesan assessments, etc.); and,
- certain short-term leases (renting the parish hall, etc.).

ACTS classified as being OF MAJOR IMPORTANCE will differ from parish to parish, depending on the size of the parish.

Examples of ACTS OF MAJOR IMPORTANCE:

- purchase of parish car;
- replacing all the hymnals/missals in the church;
- substantial modifications of buildings on church property;
- landscaping the property;
- agreeing to an easement valued up to \$25,000;
- financial involvement of the parish in ecumenical or local community projects; and,
- maintenance/repair projects that are not routine, but do not need proxies from the bishop and vicar general (these projects should not begin before at least two bids are received);
- establishing parish policies pertaining to the rental of facilities.



The following are generally accepted as acts of EXTRAORDINARY ADMINISTRATION:

- to accept or renounce an inheritance, legacy, donation, or foundation to which certain conditions are attached;
- to purchase immovable goods (land, buildings, real estate, etc.);
- to begin a capital campaign of more than \$150,000 or 25% of the prior year's ordinary income, whichever is greater;
- to sell, exchange, mortgage, or divert in any other way from the place for which they were destined, objects of art, historical documents, or other movable property of significant importance;
- to sell, exchange, mortgage, or pawn immovable church property-including real estate-when the property is valued in excess of \$25,000 or 5% of the prior year's ordinary income, whichever is greater;
- even when the sale, exchange, mortgage or pawn is below that threshold but the aggregate of what has or will be alienated is in excess of the above threshold;
- or to subject it to any other servitude, burden, or purpose (e.g. those easements valued above \$25,000);
- or lease it for more than a year, or when the value is greater than \$100,000;
- to borrow money for operational needs or projects;
- to build, raze, or rebuild in a new form a church building or to make extraordinary repairs upon such buildings;
- to paint or renovate the interior of any church in the diocese, diocesan approval must be sought;
- to establish a cemetery;
- to enter into a lawsuit as one of the parties involved; and,
- to establish a school or any other similar parochial institution;
- to establish an endowment for a parish, school, or other purpose.

PROXIES: When the vote of the Corporate Civil Board is required, all five members (Bishop, Vicar General, Pastor/Administrator, two lay trustees) of the Civil Board must vote in a meeting. If the Bishop and Vicar General are not able to be present, their votes may be received before the meeting by proxy. Sufficient time should be given to all parties to review all documentation and cast an informed vote. Diocesan policy determines when the bishop is to receive the advice of the College of Consultors regarding the proposed extraordinary act of administration.

INVESTMENTS:

Long-term investments (more than one year) are to be made in keeping with the "Socially Responsible Investment Guidelines for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops." Prior to transferring funds to any long-term investment, the parish finance council must give their advice, and the Diocesan CFO is to approve the investment (c. 1284 §2, 6°).



Appendix II

Example of a Pastoral Council Agenda
Saint Theresa Parish Pastoral Council
Agenda for the Meeting of February 23
Santa Cecilia Hall, 7:30 – 9:30 P.M.

- 7:30 1. Gathering and Welcome.
- 7:35 2. Opening prayer and Lectio Divina: theme of needs of the parish community.
- A. “To whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life” (John 6:68).
- B. Reflection: How does Christ helps us build up the community?
- 7:50 3. Approval of the minutes of the January 26 meeting.
- 7:55 4. Report from Father O’Dowd (see the handout in your packet).
- A. Our growing parish population, especially Spanish-speaking parishioners.
- B. The strain on our facilities.
- 8:00 5. The needs of the Spanish-speaking Community (Mrs. Rosa Gutierrez).
- 8:10 6. Brainstorming: “In what ways can Saint Theresa respond better to the needs expressed by the Spanish-speaking community?”
- 8:40 7. Break.
- 8:50 8. Provisional Summary (Chairperson): ideas generated during the brainstorming.
- 8:55 9. Invitation to share responsibility (Father O’Dowd).
- A. Which areas discussed need further work?
- B. Who would be willing to refine them for the next meeting?
- 9:05 10. Discussion of the next steps. What are they? Who will do them?
- 9:15 11. Review of responsibilities for the March 23 meeting.
- 9:25 12. Evaluation of tonight’s meeting.
- 9:30 13. Adjourn.