



ARCHDIOCESE OF ATLANTA

Pastoral Council

Statutes

Adopted December 1, 2007

I. Introduction:

In accord to the vision established by the Second Vatican Council and as promulgated according to the norms of canon law, in every diocese, a pastoral council may be constituted, which under the authority of the Diocesan Bishop, the same council is to investigate, consider and propose practical conclusions about those matters which pertain to the pastoral works of the diocese (c. 511). Therefore, responding to the call of Christ and the Church, the Archdiocese of Atlanta is to have an Archdiocesan Pastoral Council for the sole purpose of aiding the Archbishop of Atlanta to support the pastoral works of the mission of this local church; in other words, it is the sole aim of this body of persons to investigate, consider carefully and propose practical needs and concerns as well as solutions about matters which pertain to the pastoral work of the archdiocese. In this way, it is the sure and certain hope that this pastoral council will help identify as a community of faith, pledged through mutual support and collaboration, to work to make the presence of Jesus Christ most visible and operative in this local church. Aided by the primacy of the Holy Spirit, together with the archbishop, the council members are to be conciliatory in nature, offering counsel to the archbishop as a means of support and challenge to meet the needs of this local church. It is the aim of these Statutes to avail each member of this council to understand individually and collectively his/her rights to this council as well as to understand the nature of the mission of this body in the service of Christ and this local church.

II. Membership:

A. In General:

The archdiocesan pastoral council shall consist of members of the Christian faithful who are in full communion with the Catholic Church; specifically, members shall be representative of the whole People of God in this local church, including members who are especially lay, members of institutes of consecrated life, as well as clerics (c.512, 1). Reflecting the true nature of this local church (c.512, 2), membership of this council

shall be constituted in this manner: 1) twelve (12) lay deanery representatives – that is two representatives from each of the six deaneries; 2) five to seven (5 – 7) discretionary representatives appointed by the archbishop; 3) two (2) priests; 4) one (1) permanent deacon; and 4) two (2) members of religious institutes and/or societies of apostolic life (one man and one woman). Therefore, there shall be approximately twenty – five (25) members of this council, including the archbishop.

B. Selection process and timetable of membership:

Annually and/or at the request of the archbishop, each parish, under the discretion of the pastor, is asked to select one prospective Archdiocesan Pastoral Council (APC) member. The pastor is asked to convene a committee of three persons to work with him. If there is a parish pastoral council, it is preferred that these persons be selected from the membership. If there is no council, the pastor selects whomever he wishes from the parish roster.

Members of the parish are invited to submit their own names and/or those of others in the parish for consideration for membership. According to the norm of law, only those members of the Christian Faithful who possess the request qualities of a firm faith, good morals and prudence shall be designated to serve on the APC (c. 512, 3). The pastor, together with his committee, is required to review the individuals whose names have been submitted, and then, he is to draw a name from the pool of qualified prospects.

The pastor will be sent an information sheet to be completed by the person(s) selected. One of the “qualifications” for consideration will be availability to attend a gathering of parish representatives on a specific date given by the archbishop.

The parish representatives shall come together on a designated date determined by the archbishop for a general orientation to the APC. The candidates are grouped by Deaneries. During this session, the parish representatives gather and are led through a discernment process. Four (4) persons are selected: two (2) for membership on the APC and two (2) who will act as “alternates” in the event that the members cannot complete their terms. The deanery representatives who become members of the APC will be selected from the different geographic areas in the deanery.

Each of the prospective representatives shall state their willingness to serve on the APC and it is noted that the archbishop makes the final decision about members and representation. After membership is determined, each of the prospective representatives is notified accordingly. After notification, there shall be a Day of Formation for the

representatives prior to the commissioning ceremony for the purpose of aiding the members to better understand their role and mission as members of the APC. After this Day of Recollection and Formation, a commissioning Mass will be held at the Cathedral of Christ the King, thus installing the membership of the APC.

III. Commissioning of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council:

The APC was constituted formally on March 31, 2007 at the Cathedral of Christ the King, Atlanta, Georgia.

IV. Council Structure:

According to the norm of law, the APC is constituted by the archbishop; subsequently then, if the see were to be vacant, the APC would cease to exist (c.513). According to these statutes, the council is to be organized as follows: 1) Chair – the archbishop; 2) Secretary – the chancellor; 3) and executive committee consisting of two members. These two members are selected by the APC at random by a “hand drawing of the names” of persons who are nominated to serve. Each member of the executive committee serves on a two – year cycle, so that each year, there would be a continuity of old and new ideas from persons serving on the executive committee. For the pastoral reasons, the Chair may amend this process and/or the length of service by an individual who serves on the executive committee. As the norm, at the beginning of each term, the Chair is to call forth and receive at least two not more than four nominations from the APC to serve on the executive committee. From the pool of names, the Chair, or his designate is to draw two names at random to determine who will serve on the committee. The first name drawn shall serve on the committee, while the other nominees shall be considered alternates for the duration of the term, and may serve in the event something would happened that would impede the committee member from serving out his/her term.

The Chair of the council presides at the meetings of the council. The secretary is to send out the minutes, agendas and handle the logistics of the meetings of the council. A facilitator may be designated by the chair to monitor or run the council meeting. The executive committee consists of two members who serve a two – year term by election from the council. This committee meets three times per year to discuss topics and to discern the agenda for the council. Moreover, this committee shall meet at least three times per year with the executive committee of the Presbyterial Council in order that these two bodies can share, exchange and collaborate ideas between the governing bodies of the APC and the Presbyterial Council of the archdiocese.

The APC shall meet at least four (4) times per year, or as called by the chair of the council for special needs (c.514).

The terms of the general membership of the APC are three (3) years. Members can return after they have been off the council for a full term. For the initial and charter members of the APC, the terms of their office will be decided by drawing lots: A third of the body (eight members) will serve two years; another third (eight members) will serve three years; and the last third (eight members) will serve four years. As a note, both representatives from a deanery will not rotate off the council in the same year, thus ensuring some continuity within the given jurisdiction. The staggering of the length of time serving as a member of the APC is to ensure continuity between new and old members, so that at no one time, a “new” membership will be placed as the initial membership. In other words, following the initial term period, each year a third of the council will be new, thus allowing “fresh” ideas and wisdom of the council to flourish.

Orientation for new members will be handled outside of the APC sessions. An Ad Hoc committee is to be established for the purpose of serving to orientate the new members while safe – keeping the knowledge and wisdom acquired by the outgoing members. In order to replace the outgoing members, the process stated in these statutes (IIB) is to be followed accordingly.

V. *Mission of the Council and Agenda Development*

Aided by the promptings and guidance of the Holy Spirit and through the intercession of Our Blessed Mother known as Seat of Wisdom, it is the aim of the APC to identify through collaboration and support the challenges to make the presence of Jesus Christ more known and operative in the works of throughout the jurisdiction of this local church. The APC offers the archbishop counsel and insight in a consultative manner to offer support in the implementation of the works of the church as well as to help facilitate and communicate a healthy vision shared between the various offices in the curia as well as between the local parishes and missions throughout the local church.

Concerning the agenda of the APC meetings, the Chair as well as each and every member of the APC can introduce and/or submit items for the agenda. Prior to the APC meetings, the executive committee is to convene in order to gather information given to them by the different APC members, and/or parish pastoral councils throughout the archdiocese. If any member of a given parish would like to submit an item for consideration for the APC, he or she is to forward the item to either the chancellor or to the deanery representative of the APC. In either instance, the chancellor and the deanery representative are to forward these items to the executive committee, who will ascertain the importance of the item for discussion in setting the agenda for the APC

meeting. If a given parish pastoral council desires an item to be discussed by the APC, the given chair of the parish council should submit the item to the deanery representative of the APC. Agenda items can be sent also through the chancery office, although proper routing through the deanery is preferred and to be highly encouraged. The executive committee, together with the chair, finalizes the actual agenda prior to each APC meeting. The final agenda is to be set at least two (2) weeks prior to each APC meeting; and, the agenda is to be forwarded to each member of the APC accordingly.

VI. Communications given by the APC and the local church of Atlanta

These statutes of the APC shall be made widely available to each member of the APC and to the various parishes, missions and offices of the curia for the purpose of establishing a cohesive understanding of the nature and mission of the APC and its service to the local church.

A mailing list shall be established containing the names and addresses of the APC membership; routine correspondence (i.e.: minutes of the meetings) shall be exchanged in this manner between the council meetings, so as to offer a sound communications between the members.

Publication of the works of the APC (i.e.: minutes of the meetings, etc.) shall be made available to the clergy via the Clergy Newsletter and for the whole Christian Faithful of this local church via the Georgia Bulletin, as well as being posted on the archdiocesan website. Other methods of communication may be considered by the APC to better serve the needs of the local church; these methodologies will be established and included in an amended version of these statutes.

VII. Conclusion

The APC is to be a forum for the archbishop to make contact with the people of the archdiocese; in accord with the vision of the Second Vatican Council, the entire Christian Faithful have the duty to serve the Lord, thus fulfilling the call of Christ in Baptism to be a shepherd, priest and prophetic people. By serving on the APC; the lay faithful together with the religious and clergy share in a unique capacity in the shepherding of the local church by offering a sage – like and prophetic voice (counsel and inspiration) to the archbishop in the task of fulfillment of the mission of Church to make known the presence of Jesus Christ. The aim of the APC is to be a vehicle by which the needs and works of the archdiocese are to be considered properly and with vigilance as well as to offer support to the archbishop so that the needs of the local church can be better met and communicated accordingly.