

STATUTES OF THE COUNCIL OF PRIESTS

DIOCESE OF PENANG

1. NATURE

1.1. The Council of Priests (Henceforth known as "The Council") is the Senate of the Diocese of Penang, constituted by law to help the Bishop in the governance of the Diocese in accordance with the canons and these statutes in order that the pastoral welfare of the People of God entrusted to the Bishop may be effectively promoted.

2. COMPETENCE

2.1. The Council enjoys only a consultative vote. The Bishop is bound by law to consult in the "more serious moments" as required by law. (See Appendix I.)

2.2. The Bishop seeks the consent of The Council only in those cases expressly defined by law. (See Appendix II)

2.3. He will promote principles of organic unity, participation, co-responsibility, subsidiarity, communion of love and cooperation between the Bishop and the presbyterium. This will include caring for the spiritual and material good of all priests in the Diocese.

2.4. Members of the Council of Priests must try to be sensitive to issues, personal and pastoral, concerning priests and try to help personally, with others or through the Council. They must be aware of the Diocesan Directives and policies.

3. MEMBERSHIP

3.1. ELECTED: At least half of The Council's membership shall consist of the elected representatives from the 5 Districts of the Diocese. Elected representatives should be channels to bring to and take from The Council whatever happens in the District, and The Council.

3.2. The "ex-officio" members: namely the Vicar General, the Chancellor and the Procurator.

3.3. APPOINTED: Those "freely appointed" by the Bishop.

4. OFFICIALS AND THEIR DUTIES

4.1. **PRESIDENT:** The Bishop serves by law as President of the Council. It is the right and duty of the Bishop to convoke The Council, to preside over it, to determine the items treated by it, and to receive proposals from its members.

4.2. **CHAIRMAN:** The Vicar General, by nature of his office, shall serve as the delegate of the President in conducting The Council meetings, convening The Council for special meetings with the express permission of the President, assisting the President in drawing up the items for the meetings, appointing Chairman for special Committees, and for any duties the President might see fit to seek his assistance.

4.3. **SECRETARY:** Chancellor shall serve as the Executive Secretary of the Council and in that capacity shall be responsible for notifying the members of Council meetings, assisting the Chairman and the President in drawing up the agenda for the meetings, keeping the records of the Council, and be responsible for the minutes of Council meetings. He may obtain the assistance of a priest even if he is not a member of The Council in taking minutes. The priest shall therefore take and keep the oath of secrecy of The Council deliberations.

4.4. **ELECTED AND APPOINTED REPRESENTATIVES** are to present written reports of their district or responsibility.

5. TERM OF OFFICE

5.1. The elected representative shall serve for a five year term and shall not be eligible for second term consecutively in the same district.

5.1.1 The elected representative when he is transferred to another district ceases to be a member of the Council.

5.2. The "ex-officio" members shall serve as long as they hold offices entrusted upon them by the Bishop.

5.3 Those "freely appointed" by the Bishop shall serve as long as required by their appointment.

6. COMMITTEES

6.1. The Chairman with the consent of The Council may establish special Committees to assist it in attending to matters of the same.

6.2. The Chairmen of these special Committees shall be a member of the Council.

6.3. The Chairmen of these special Committees shall have the right to co-opt members from the Council and the Presbyterium in attending to matters given to them by the Council.

6.4. The special Committees shall cease to exist once their purpose has been achieved.

7. CESSATION

7.1. The Council shall cease to exist when the see is vacant. Its functions shall be fulfilled by the College of Consultors.

7.2. The Bishop must reconstitute The Council within a year of taking possession of the Diocese.

8. DISSOLUTION

8.1. The Bishop has the right to disssolve The Council when it either does not fulfill the office entrusted to it for the welfare of the Diocese or when it gravely abuses it.

8.2. The Bishop can dissolve The Council only after consultation with the Metropolitan.

8.3. The Bishop must then reconstitute The Council within a year of its dissolution.

9. OATH OF OFFICE AND SECRECY

9.1. All the elected and appointed members of the Council are required to take and keep the Oath of Office.

9.2. All members shall keep the Oath of Secrecy on the deliberations of the Council which have been placed explicitly under this category by The Council.

9.3. Only the Bishop has the right to make public those matters decided upon under 9.2.

10. STATUTES

10.1. These Statutes are promulgated by the Bishop of Penang in consultation with the Presbyterium.

10.2. Canon 94 provides the proper norm for the interpretation of this document.

10.3. The Conference of Catholic Bishops of the Region may issue norms for the Statutes of The Council as provided by law. This document will be amended to include such norms.

10.4. Amendments to this document recommended either by a majority but not less than two thirds of The Council or the Presbyterium will be referred to the Consultors before any action is taken by the Bishop.

APPENDIX I

The cases in which the Bishop must consult The Council are the following:

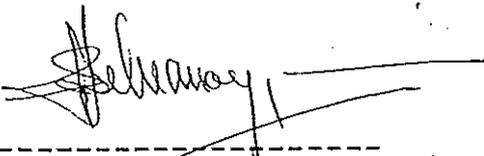
- Canon 461 # 1 - convoking a Diocesan Synod;
- Canon 515 # 2 - in erecting, suppressing or altering parishes;
- Canon 531 - on offerings in a parish;
- Canon 536 # 1 - in establishing pastoral councils in parishes;
- Canon 1215 # 2 - in permitting the erection of a new church;
- Canon 1222 - in permitting the relegation of the use of an old unreparable church to profane but not sordid use;
- Canon 1263 - in imposing moderate taxes to public juridical persons.

APPENDIX II

Canon 500 # 2 - The Bishop is to listen to The Council "in matters of greater moment", but he needs its consent only in cases expressly defined by law. (C. 1277, C. 1292 # 1 & 2)

Canon 1742 - The Bishop submits a list of pastors from which The Council selects the membership of a Standing Committee to serve as advisors to the Bishop whenever a pastor is administratively removed from office or transferred against his will.

These statutes were accepted by the Presbyterium and approved by the Bishop of Penang to be effective on the 1st of January 1997

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Bishop A. Selvanayagam

15th November 1996