

CONSTITUTION OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL (PPC)

DIOCESE OF PENANG

1. NAME

- 1.1 The Council shall be called the Parish Pastoral Council of the Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

2. AIMS & OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The Parish Pastoral Council is consultative in nature
- 2.2 It will work at all times in close collaboration and consultation with the Parish Priest advising him in matters pertaining to pastoral ministry.
- 2.3 It will identify, implement and evaluate pastoral initiatives and policies in line with the pastoral priorities of the Diocese and of the universal Church.

3. MEMBERSHIP

3.1 Ex-officio members:

- a) The Parish Priest
- b) Assistant Priest(s)
- c) Full-time religious working in the parish

Note: One (1) member representing each religious house situated in the parish can be appointed (future)

3.2 Elected members

- a) BEC Coordinator
- b) One (1) representative from each of the Tamil/Chinese Apostolate, Ministry Coordinator (to be elected by Ministry/Organization Leaders), Liturgical, and any other Ministry as deemed necessary by the Parish Priest, at his discretion.
- c) One (1) representative from the Parish Animating Team
- d) One (1) representative from the Parish Finance Committee

3.3 Appointed members:

The Parish Priest may appoint a maximum of three (3) persons for their expertise.

- 3.4 The term of office shall be three (3) years. No member shall serve in his/her same capacity for more than two (2) consecutive terms.
- 3.5 Any member failing to attend three (3) consecutive meetings without reasonable explanation shall be deemed to have resigned.
- 3.6 Vacancies shall be filled by co-option/selection/nomination or appointment by Parish Priest.
- 3.7 More than half (1/2) of the members shall consist of elected representatives from no. 3.2.
- 3.8 In order to function effectively, it is recommended that the Council consist of between 10 to 12 members.

4. OFFICE-BEARERS

- 4.1 The office bearers of the Parish Pastoral Council are:
- a) The Parish Priest is the President
 - b) Chairperson (elected by the Council members or appointed by Parish Priest)
 - c) Vice-Chairperson (elected by the Council members or appointed by Parish Priest)
 - d) Honorary Secretary (elected by the Council members)
- 4.2 The office bearers may not hold the same office for more than two (2) consecutive terms or six (6) years.
- 4.3 The members of the incoming council shall at their first (1st) meeting vote among themselves for the office bearers. After nominations, voting shall be by secret ballot. The simple majority vote of members present shall determine the winners. Each office shall be taken individually to permit candidates not elected to be nominated for another office.
- 4.4 During any other emergency situation (eg. Covid19 Pandemic) which do not allow physical meetings, election can be carried out via virtual platform or as an alternative, by appointment made by the Parish Priest subject to simple majority support by members present at the virtual meeting.
- 4.5 Ideally, elections are to be held in the month of January so that the incoming council can be prepared for the Annual Parish Assembly in the final quarter of the year.
- 4.6 The duties of the Chairperson focus upon the effective operation of the Council in relation to the aims and objectives of the Council. His/her duties are:
- a) to chair the meetings of the Council

b) to work closely with the Parish Priest in discharging the following responsibilities:

1. to call special meetings.
2. to recommend appointment of members of special sub-committees to Parish Pastoral Council for approval
3. to develop the agenda for all council meetings together with the Secretary
4. to monitor the progress of programmes being carried out by the different groups/sub-committees

4.7 The Vice-Chairperson will assist the Chairperson in his/her duties and will deputize in his/her absence.

4.8 The duties of the Secretary are:

- a) to keep accurate minutes of the council meetings
- b) two weeks prior to the next council meeting, to mail the following materials to the members with the help of the Parish Secretariat:
 1. minutes of the previous Council meeting
 2. agenda for the next meeting
 3. any pertinent background information
- c) to be responsible for all correspondence of the Council

4.9 Vacancies:

If a vacancy occurs among any of the office-bearers, a successor will be elected from among the council members to serve the remaining portion of the term.

5. MEETINGS

5.1 Meetings of the Council are to be held not less than three (3) times in a year.

5.2 The Parish Priest or his assistant (as delegated by Parish Priest) shall preside at all meetings. No meeting shall be deemed valid without the presence of the Parish Priest (or his assistant as delegated).

5.3 The quorum needed to convene the meeting shall be two-third (2/3rd) of the Council membership.

5.4 As the Council conducts its business, the parish priest expresses his opinions preferably towards the end of the discussion. He does not however vote on the motion.

5.5 All decisions of the Council become final only with the approval of the Parish Priest.

6. PARISH ASSEMBLY

- 6.1 A Parish Assembly shall be convened annually during the final quarter of the year (October to December)
- 6.2 The Assembly will evaluate/review previous year's pastoral plans and will give their views and recommendations for the coming year.

7. SUB-COMMITTEES

- 7.1 The Council may set up sub-committees to advise it on matters of special pastoral concern.
- 7.2 Recommendations from sub-committees are to be deliberated by the Council for approval or rejection.

8. THE PARISH PRIEST ON THE COUNCIL

- 8.1 As one of the people of God, the Parish Priest joins with the other members to make the Council a special family of persons bound together in friendship and support, personal sharing and mutual respect.
- 8.2 As a spiritual guide of the Parish, the Parish Priest calls for the work of the Council to grow from the action of the Holy Spirit. Through common prayer with the other members and a tone of gentle presence to the Spirit, he helps the Council see all their work as a service to God in their brothers and sisters.
- 8.3 As a leader of the parish, the Parish Priest brings a sense of vision and direction to the Council. He calls for commitment in the planning and conduct of programmes, affirms the gifts parishioners have received for the common good of the church and by his enthusiasm and care, motivates people to be involved and responsible.

9. ON-GOING FORMATION OF MEMBERS

- 9.1 Study, reflection and in-service education on the nature and mission of the Church is of paramount importance for every member of the Council and is to be conducted at least twice a year.

10. INTERPRETATION OF THE CONSTITUTION

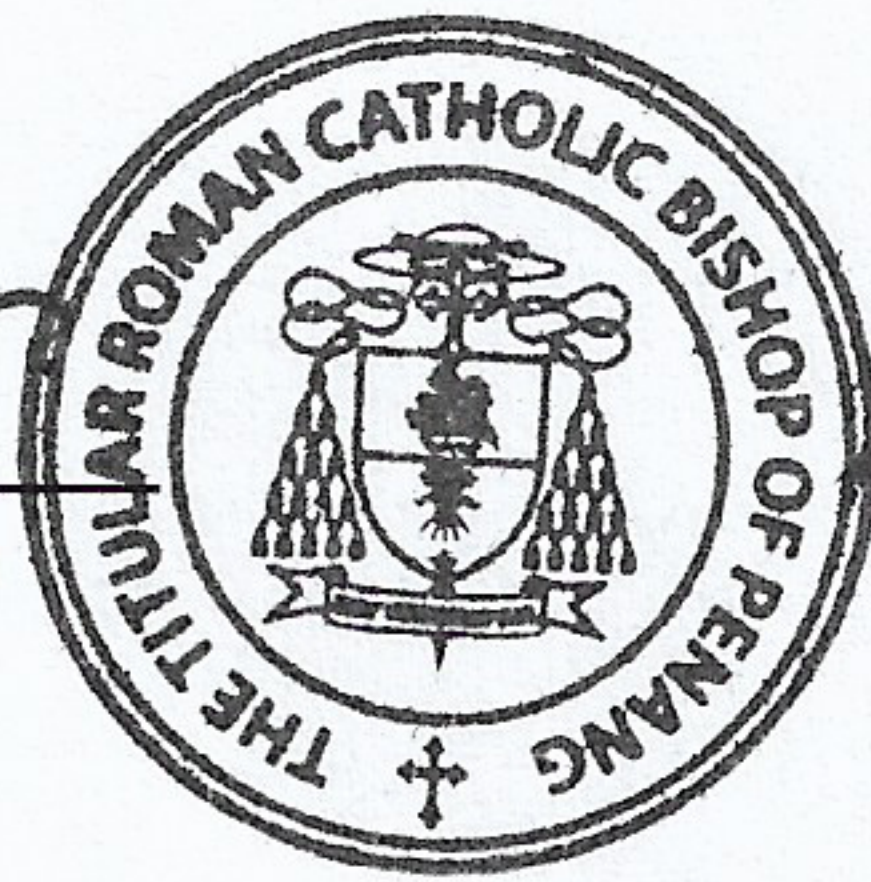
- 10.1 In the event of a dispute over the interpretation of any clause of the Constitution, the Council shall refer to the diocesan Bishop for an objective interpretation.

11. AMENDMENT & RATIFICATION OF THE CONSTITUTION

11.1 Any part of this constitution to be amended must be presented to the Bishop for consideration and approval for deliberation.

Sebastian Francis

**Cardinal Sebastian Francis
The Titular Roman Catholic
Bishop of Penang
Date: 14 January 2025**



Notes:

- 1) *The original constitution was approved by the Bishop of Penang after consultation with the Council of Priests and comes into effect in the 1 January 2000.*
- 2) *Amendments made by the Parish Priest of Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in consultation with Parish Animating Team (PAT) on 28 September 2021 to be implemented with effect from 14 January 2025 approved by His Eminence, Cardinal Sebastian Francis.*

NOTES TO THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL (P.P.C)
CONSTITUTION
DIOCESE OF PENANG

Preamble

Canon 536 §1 If, after consulting the council of priests, the diocesan Bishop considers it opportune, a pastoral council is to be established in each parish. In this council, which is presided over by the parish priest, Christ's faithful, together with those who by virtue of their office are engaged in pastoral care in the parish, give their help in fostering pastoral action.

§2 The pastoral council has only a consultative vote and it is regulated by the norms laid down by the diocesan Bishop.

Canon 536 designates the Parish Council as "The Parish Pastoral Council". It parallels the Diocesan Pastoral Council which advises the diocesan Bishop on matters related to pastoral ministry within the Diocese (Canon 511-514)

Aims & Objectives (Clause 2)

The constitution of the Parish Pastoral Council governs its operation, hence a carefully prepared constitution is essential in each parish.

Responsibility for the Mission of the Church is shared in differing but equally valid ways by those who are baptized and those who are ordained. The ministry of the members of the parish and its pastor are interdependent. This interdependence calls for the adoption of a new model of parish governance, one that includes broad consultation:

1. The P.P.C. is a representative body of Christ's faithful. Its purpose is the promotion of the vision and mission of the church in its entirety in the parish reflecting the mission of Jesus. It shall at all times work in close collaboration and consultation with the parish priest and assistant priest(s) of the parish, advising him (them) in matters pertaining to pastoral ministry (cc. 528-529). It shall act as visioner, evaluator, recommender, implementer and coordinator. This means it will ensure that all parishioners are provided the opportunity to share in the Church's vision and mission of spreading the gospel.
2. The P.P.C. realises the goals and objectives of the Diocesan Plan through parish plans and will implement and evaluate events and activities in the parish. Through these processes they will also contribute to the formulation of future diocesan goals and plan. The pastoral direction is towards evangelization through small communities (BECs) and is meant to enliven the faith life of all persons within the parish, and enable them to live fully the Christian vocation in the world
3. The P.P.C. will ensure that relevant and important information are communicated to ALL parishioners through BECs, bulletins, church announcements etc. Equally important is to find ways to solicit information and opinions from the parishioners through creative ways in order to know and to serve better. The Parish Editorial Team can be of service.

Membership (Clause 3)

It is assumed that between ten to fifteen families will form a BEC and between a minimum of three to a maximum of five BECs will then form a Zone. One person will be nominated from each Zone to represent his/her Zone to form the ZCT. Depending on the size, location, number of BECs and Zones the parish may adapt this criteria to suit their respective requirements, however, keeping in mind the benefit of laity participation.

1. It is assumed that the organisations or specialized groups will have their regular meetings. Thus the need to have monthly Council meetings does not arise.
2. The Agenda of the meeting shall include matters pertaining to the Mission of the Church i.e. a full range of pastoral activities which will enable this particular faith community to listen more attentively to God's Word and put into practice in its day to day challenges.
3. Because of the unique nature of the Council, a short period of each meeting should be given over to prayer and reflection on an appropriate section of God's Word and to seek consultation from God on issues to be discussed during that meeting, Consultation implies that the council seeks to "discern" the movement and the will of the Holy Spirit rather than simply voting on issues. Discernment and consensus are more appropriate to church structures, and are the hallmarks of the consultative process

The Parish Priest on the Council (Clause 8)

1. The roles mentioned apply only to the Parish Priest's relationship to the Pastoral Council. They do not attempt to describe his many other responsibilities towards the parish.