

Parish Pastoral Council
St Gregory the Great and St Thomas More
Cheltenham

Terms of Reference

1. The Parish Pastoral Council is established under Code 536 of ‘The Code of Canon Law’ as follows:

“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. The pastoral council has only a consultative vote, and it is regulated by the norms laid down by the diocesan Bishop.”
2. The pastoral guidelines ‘Called to be a People of Hope’ published by the Diocese of Clifton, explain that pastoral councils have a three-fold purpose as follows:
 - to investigate the pastoral activity of parishes,
 - to consider what this means, and
 - to formulate practical conclusions to help parishes move forward.
3. The Parish Pastoral Council is called to have a sense of where the Parish is, look at ways in which it needs to grow and develop, and propose practical ways of achieving this. Suitable starting points for this activity are the fourteen areas identified in the diocesan guidelines, ‘Called to be a People of Hope’.
4. The Parish Pastoral Council shall offer support, advice and consult with the Parish Priest in the development of policies to support those activities and programs which foster the spiritual, intellectual, moral and temporal well-being of the parish, and shall facilitate diocesan goals and policies.
5. The Parish Pastoral Council shall engage in a continuous process of planning to meet the needs of the Parish, the diocese and the broader community, with a vision for the future and a strong basis in stewardship.
6. The Parish Pastoral Council shall undertake its role by fostering growth within the parish communities of St Gregory and St Thomas More and encouraging positive relationships among all members of these communities, and by collaborating with other parishes and the wider community.
7. The Parish Pastoral Council shall be comprised of up to 12 members nominated by the Parish Priest.
8. The Parish Clergy will be ‘ex-officio’ members of the Parish Pastoral Council and the Parish Priest will serve as its Chairman. The Parish Pastoral Council shall elect a Vice Chairperson from amongst its members to chair meetings in the event of the absence of the Parish Priest.

9. The Parish Priest will nominate a Clerk to the Parish Pastoral Council. The role of the Clerk is to keep written records of meetings of the Parish Pastoral Council which shall be publicly displayed for all parishioners, and to ensure that members are advised of future meetings.
 10. Parish Pastoral Council meetings shall be held at least three times each year.
 11. Recognising that the Parish Pastoral Council's main aim is to provide support to the Parish Priest and to facilitate pastoral action, the Parish Pastoral Council's manner of operation shall be communal discernment, which includes prayerful reflection, gathering of information, dialogue and sharing of conclusions. The usual method of reaching decisions shall be consensus. Where this is not possible the Parish Priest shall have the deciding vote.
 12. Members of the Parish Pastoral Council shall be commissioned to serve at a Rite of Commissioning to be celebrated each year at the Sunday morning Mass on the Feast of Pentecost.
 13. At the inauguration of the Parish Pastoral Council it is envisaged that members will serve for two years. After two years there shall be an annual change of a third of the membership of the Parish Pastoral Council.
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