



Taken from Guidelines for Parish Pastoral Councils Promulgated at the Eighth Synod of the Archdiocese of Boston

III. Guidelines for Parish Pastoral Council

A. Establishment of a Parish Pastoral Council

1. The Code of Canon Law states (Here, the original document cites Canons 536, paragraphs 1 and 2; and Canon 537)
2. Every parish in the Archdiocese of Boston is to establish a parish pastoral council within two years of the promulgation of the Synod documents.

B. Purpose and Objectives

1. Purpose: To assist the pastor in his leadership role planning, organizing, initiating, promoting, coordinating, and reviewing the evangelization, worship, religious education and service activities within the parish.
2. Objectives:
 - a. To assess adequately the needs of the whole parish and its members, and to develop and implement a pastoral plan which will promote the common good of the parish.
 - b. To foster unity and a sense of community in the parish and to coordinate all parish activities in a manner that will best serve the interests of the parish.
 - c. To promote programs and activities recommended by the Archbishop, Archdiocesan offices and agencies as well as the pastoral council itself.

C. Membership

D. Organization of parish pastoral council

- The pastor of the parish is the chairman of the parish pastoral council
- A minimum of five regularly scheduled meetings of the PPC occur during the year
- In the event that the pastor of the parish dies, resigns, or is transferred, the primary function of the PPC, providing counsel to the pastor, ceases. However, during the vacancy of the pastorate, the PPC assists the senior Parochial Vicar or the Archdiocesan-appointed Administrator with the preparation of the materials for the parish profile for the consultation meetings. The PPC also helps in the welcoming of the new pastor. After the new pastor has been installed, he reconvenes the existing PPC within two months.

E. Scope and Authority

1. As a consultative body, the PPC is responsible to the pastor, assisting and supporting him in his leadership role
 - a. The PPC should be an important means by which the pastor will hear the voice of the parish.
 - b. Through its deliberations and consultation with the pastor, the PPC helps to unite the Pastor and the parishioners. Together they discern the pastoral needs of the parish and ways in which those needs can be addressed.

F. Characteristics of a Parish Council

1. **Prayerful.** The Council devotes time to reflective prayer at each meeting and makes provisions at least once a year to have some special time or meetings spent together solely in prayer, reflection and spiritual sharing.
2. **Pastoral.** The Council is pastoral in the sense that its purpose is to assist in the development of an overall mission plan for the parish in order to make Christ evermore present to the parishioners and the wider community.
3. **Representative.** The Council members represent the entire parish community and exercise their responsibility with a concern that includes all parishioners.
4. **Discerning** Through a prayerful consensus process, the council merges the diverse experiences, skills, and gifts of the council members, and having listened to the parishioners' needs and ideas, discerns recommendation concerning the direction and priorities of the parish
5. **Responsive** The Council has a responsibility to be sensitive to and cognizant of justice and peace issues at the local national, and international level.
6. **Enabling** In the Spirit of God's love, the members of the PPC strive to recognize and support each other's gifts and seek ways in which each parishioner's gifts may surface, grow, and flourish for the good of the Church.

See below the 2103 Decree regarding parishes in collaboratives

DECREE

In Nomine Domini

On November 27, 1988, Bernard Cardinal Law promulgated Statutes known as "Parish Pastoral Council Guidelines" (hereafter "PPC Guidelines"). The PPC Guidelines became effective March 26, 1989. Pursuant to the provision of canon 536 §1, pastoral councils were to be established in every parish within two years of promulgation.

On November 15, 2012, I formally approved the pastoral plan, *Disciples in Mission*. The central purpose of *Disciples in Mission* is evangelization. In order to better utilize both human and temporal resources, the pastoral plan at times recommends entrusting the care of neighboring parishes to one pastor (hereafter the "Collaborative"). It is the intent of the pastoral Plan to assist Parishes and Collaboratives in becoming strong, stable, conscious and effective centers of the New Evangelization. Since in many cases this will be a fundamental transformation of the embraced mission of the Parish, every possible support is needed to help the Pastor to guide his team and advisors in that mission. *Disciples in Mission* brings all of the people who work to support the mission of the Church in the constituent Parishes together, working with one Pastor on the mission of evangelization.

Therefore, I, Sean P. Cardinal O'Malley, O.F.M., Cap., hereby decree and declare, pursuant to canons 381, 391, 8 §2, 29, 536 that Section III. A. 2. of the PPC Guidelines, that became effective March 26, 1989 be abrogated and the following take its place as particular law for the Archdiocese of Boston:

III. A.:

2. a. Every Collaborative, designated as such by the Archbishop, in accord with the pastoral plan, *Disciples in Mission*, is to have one pastoral council whose membership consists of at least two members from each parish in the Collaborative. All meetings of the pastoral council of a Collaborative shall be in common.

b. Every parish in the Archdiocese of Boston that is not in a Collaborative is to have a pastoral council.

This Decree will be promulgated by electronic mail to each Pastor/Administrator/Rector of the Archdiocese. This Decree shall become effective at 12:01 AM on September 15, 2013.

Given this 15th day of August, 2013 at the Pastoral Center of the Archdiocese of Boston in Braintree, Massachusetts.


Archbishop of Boston


Chancellor

