Deanery Pastoral Council Orientation Minutes
Saturday, August 9, 2025
9:00 – 11:00am
Bishop Howard Memorial Auditorium, Diocesan Curia

Call to Order – *Jamie*

Welcome and Thank You – *Jamie*

Opening Prayer: Adsumus, Sancte Spiritus (Prayer for Synodality) – *Jamie*

Housekeeping and Agenda – *Jamie and Rachael*

1. Review of meeting materials
   Please notify the Chancery if the contact information in the membership booklet is incorrect.
   a. Folders (for new members and those who need a new one)
   b. Agenda
   c. Excerpt from Final Document of the Synod on Synodality
   d. 2025-2026 Meeting Calendar (for Deans)
   e. Updated Parishes and Shrines list
   f. Membership Booklets (update information) – *Rachael*
   g. New DPC Webpage (instructions) – *Rachael*
   h. Unchanged documents
      i. DPC Guidelines
      ii. Spiritual Conversation / Conversation in the Spirit / Consensus Building / Conflict Resolution
      iii. Map of the Deaneries of the Diocese

2. Meeting Objectives
   a. Review the vision, role, and function of the DPC
   b. Use the Spiritual Conversation model to reflect and pray about an excerpt from the final document of the Synod on Synodality to discuss the current state of the use of parish and Diocesan council in the life of the local Church
   c. Make recommendations about how these council could be fostered and strengthened

Vision for the role and function of pastoral councils – *Bishop Iffert*

1. Authority in the Church is to be more servant leadership than dictatorship
   a. Should not be a legislature or a board of directors
   b. Should be a wisdom community and a praying community

2. Members of leadership need to take time to listen, check their motivations, and think about the people around them

3. Metaphor: The head takes input from the body and responds accordingly
      i. Parishes > Deanery Pastoral Council > Diocesan Pastoral Council > Bishop and back

4. Discern the will and spirit of God together as one body
   a. Discernments decide the direction of the Diocese
   b. Discern, prayerfully, together
   c. Family of faith together

Feedback from the Deans
The Deans appreciated guidelines from Bishop Iffert as to the topic of the individual DPC meetings

Review of the DPC Guidelines – *Jamie (PowerPoint: "COVDPC Revised Aug 2025")*

1. Each section of the DPC Guidelines was reviewed individually, in depth, with opportunity for members to ask questions
2. Members were reminded that if their term was for 2 years instead of 3 years, it was not a mistake
    a. We are realigning term expirations across the Diocese
3. The function of the Diocesan Pastoral Council (DioPC) was reviewed
4. What happens to the feedback from the individual DPC meetings?
    a. Minutes from individual deanery meetings should be submitted to the Chancery Office for records
    b. Feedback from individual deanery meetings should be brought up at DioPC meetings for further discussion and discernment
5. Curia Offices can approach the DPC for recommendations for their individual councils and boards
    a. DPC members should prayerfully consider recommendations outside of the same percentage of people at each parish that are involved in everything
    b. Recruit new members to become involved in the Diocese
6. How often should Parish Council meetings be held?
    a. At least quarterly with at minimum 6 people
7. Are members outside of the DPC allowed to attend individual deanery meetings?
    a. Yes
        i. Can be held town hall style
        ii. Should have topics submitted ahead of time
        iii. Keep the lines of communication open

BREAK

Spiritual Conversation and Pope Francis' Synod on Synodality (Paragraphs 103-107) – *Bishop Iffert*
Given that "a Synodal Church is based upon the existence, efficiency, and effective vitality of… participatory bodies, not on the merely nominal existence of them," what is the state of our parish and diocesan finance councils, parish councils, deanery pastoral councils, and diocesan council?

What is needed to help them (especially today our Deanery Pastoral Council) serve this great purpose?

When practicing Spiritual Conversation, there are key things to remember:

1. About discerning with the Holy Spirit
2. Consensus is the goal
3. The final verdict on deciding can be "We are not there yet"
    a. Try to find a solution that everyone can agree upon in good faith and good conscience

Questions and Answers – *Bishop Iffert*

Closing Prayer and Blessing – *Bishop Iffert*