DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL AND DEANERY COUNCILS

Introduction

The Second Vatican Council provided us with a new image of Church...the People of God. The *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium)* states that all the faithful, laity, religious and clergy alike, are called, by virtue of their Baptism, to "share the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ, and to the best of their ability carry on the mission of the whole Christian people in the Church and in the world." (Chapter IV, §3)

The Code of Canon Law states that

> (I)n each Diocese, to the extent that pastoral circumstances recommend it, a pastoral council is to be established whose responsibility it is to investigate under the authority of the Bishop all those things which pertain to pastoral works, to ponder them and to propose practical conclusions about them.
>
> The pastoral council consists of Christian faithful who are in full communion with the Church, clerics, members of institutes of consecrated life and especially lay persons, who are designated in a manner determined by the diocesan Bishop.
>
> The Christian faithful who are appointed to the pastoral council are to be so selected that the entire portion of the people of God which constitutes the Diocese is truly reflected, with due regard for the diverse regions, social conditions and professions of the Diocese as well as the role which they have in the apostolate, either as individuals or in conjunction with others. (Can.511-512)

In the *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* we find the role of the laity expressed in these terms:

> God's people share in Christ's kingly mission, which is to lead through loving service to them. Jesus came not "to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mt. 20-28). We are called in imitation of the Lord Jesus, to be people who offer ourselves willingly in service to others. Actions of such service can point to Christ's Kingdom of love, justice, mercy, and salvation to all persons, cultures, governments, and other structures of society. We are also called to a life of service to the Church herself. Servant leadership is the responsibility of all God's people within their differing roles and responsibilities. Bishops have a particular responsibility of leadership and governance in the Church.
>
> Lay members of the Christian faithful can cooperate in the exercise of this power (of governance).... The Church provides for their presence at particular councils, diocesan synods, pastoral councils, the exercise of the pastoral care of a parish, collaboration in finance committees, and participation in the ecclesiastical tribunals, etc. (CCC, no. 911, citing Code of Canon Law can.129,§. 2.) page 118.

DIOCESE OF COVINGTON

I. The Diocese of Covington is divided into five Deaneries consisting of a cluster of parishes where support, pastoral planning and resources can be identified and shared for the benefit of the faithful within the deanery and the Diocesan church.

II. Names of the Deaneries: Covington, Northern Kenton County, South West, Campbell County and South East. Parishes included in the respective deaneries form the deanery membership.

Covington Deanery

Serves Bellevue, Covington, Dayton, Latonia, Ludlow, Newport, Taylor Mill

Parishes/Missions

Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption
Divine Mercy
Holy Cross
Holy Spirit
Mother of God
Our Savior
St. Ann (Mission of St. John, Covington)
St. Anthony
St. Augustine, Covington
St. Benedict
St. Bernard
St. John the Evangelist, Covington
Sts. Boniface and James

Campbell County Deanery

Serves Alexandria, California, Camp Springs, Cold Spring, Ft. Thomas, Melbourne, Southgate, Wilder

Parishes/Missions

St. Catherine of Siena
St. John the Baptist, Wilder
St. Joseph, Camp Springs
St. Joseph, Cold Spring
St. Mary of the Assumption
St. Philip
St. Therese
St. Thomas
Sts. Peter and Paul

Northern Kenton County Deanery

Serves Crescent Springs, Edgewood, Elsmere, Erlanger, Ft. Mitchell, Ft. Wright, Independence, Taylor Mill

Parishes/Missions

Blessed Sacrament
Our Lady of Lourdes
St. Agnes
St. Barbara
St. Cecilia
St. Henry
St. Joseph, Crescent Springs
St. Patrick, Taylor Mill
St. Pius X

South East Deanery

Serves Augusta, Brooksville, Cynthiana, Falmouth, Flemingsburg, Mays Lick, Maysville, Minerva, Vanceburg

Parishes/Missions

Holy Redeemer
St. Augustine, Augusta
St. Charles Borromeo
St. Edward, Cynthiana
St. Francis Xavier
St. James, Brooksville
St. James, Minerva (Mission of St. Patrick, Maysville)
St. Patrick, Maysville
St. Rose of Lima

South West Deanery

Serves Burlington, Carrollton, Dividing Ridge, Erlanger, Florence, Kenton, Owenton, Perry Park, Union, Walton, Warsaw, Williamstown

Parishes/Missions

All Saints
Cristo Rey
Immaculate Heart of Mary
Mary, Queen of Heaven
St. Edward, Owenton (Mission of St. Joseph, Warsaw)
St. John, Dividing Ridge (Mission of St. William)
St. John the Evangelist, Carrollton
St. Joseph, Warsaw
St. Matthew
St. Paul
St. Timothy
St. William
Transfiguration (Mission of St. John, Carrollton)

III. The Dean

- Each Deanery has a Dean who is the priest appointed by the Bishop after consultation with the priests of that Deanery to share the pastoral leadership of the Bishop as his representative in the Deanery. He has specific Canonical responsibilities as identified in Canon law (c 553-555).

- The Dean promotes peace and unity, renewal and growth in the deanery and links the parishes of his Deanery with the larger Church of Covington. The Dean is motivated by love for the people of God to consolidate efforts to build up the church and spread the Gospel.

- The Dean oversees the Deanery Council in a facilitating and enabling manner to include the proper functioning, convening, and deliberation and finally the carrying out of its function.

DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL AND DEANERY COUNCIL GUIDELINES

I. Purposes of the Diocesan Pastoral Council (DPC)

A. The Diocesan Pastoral Council is to present the concerns and insights of the Deanery Council as a recommending body in response to the agenda identified by the Bishop.
B. The specific functions of the Diocesan Pastoral Council include:
   1. Represent and elevate deanery priorities to the Bishop.
   2. Study and discuss pastoral issues and potential responses proposed by the Bishop and the Deanery Council.
   3. Participate in diocesan planning.
   4. Facilitate common planning among the Deaneries.
   5. The assembled DPC can serve as a forum for discussion and prayer about special concerns.

II. Name of the Deanery Councils (DC)

The pre-established name of each Deanery Council is defined by the Deanery formed by the identified parishes.

III. Purposes of the Deanery Council (DC)

A. The DC is to present the concerns and insights of the people and parishes of the area as a recommending body in response to the agenda identified by the Bishop.
B. The specific functions of the Deanery Council include:
   1. Represent and elevate local priorities to the Bishop and Diocesan Pastoral Council.
   2. Study and discuss pastoral issues and potential responses proposed by the Bishop and the DC.
   3. Participate in diocesan planning.
   4. Encourage maximum use of existing and potential resources available to the Deanery.
   5. Implement appropriate communications at the Deanery level to ensure that all Catholics and others are aware of the opportunities to participate in education, worship, service and stewardship activities that build up the faith community.
   6. Facilitate common planning among the parishes of the Deanery.
   7. The assembled DC can serve as a forum for discussion and prayer about special concerns.
   8. The DC may be convened annually in convocation with the Bishop as presider.

IV. Membership of the Diocesan Pastoral Council (DPC)

A. All Deanery Council members are eligible to participate in the process for selection of representatives to the Diocesan Pastoral Council.
B. Two members of the DC shall be selected to serve as representatives to the Diocesan Pastoral Council. Representatives begin their terms when selected. The Diocesan Chancellor must be notified within two weeks of the selection.
C. Two alternates shall be selected should one or both representatives be unable to serve temporarily. Alternates begin their terms when selected. The Diocesan Chancellor must be notified within two weeks of the selection.
D. Representatives will serve on the Diocesan Pastoral Council a maximum of four consecutive years. There is no term limit for alternates to the Diocesan Pastoral Council.

V. Membership of the Deanery Council (DC)

A. DC Structure - The DC will be constituted in the following manner:
   1. The Dean.
   2. One lay representative from each parish in the Deanery, identified and appointed by the Pastor of that parish in consultation with the Parish Council.
   3. One religious, who is working and/or living in the Deanery, recommended by the religious of the Deanery and appointed by the Dean.
   4. One priest or deacon from each Deanery, recommended by the clergy of that Deanery and appointed by the Dean.
   5. Any questions of membership or eligibility because of residency or any other reason, particularly regarding religious who live and work in different areas, should be resolved individually between the Dean and the respective individual.

B. Qualifications of members
   1. Christians of proven faith, good morals and outstanding prudence are appointed to the council. (Code of Canon Law, 512 §3)
   2. Deanery Council members are called to merge their expertise, insights and wide range of experiences out of love and concern for those whom they serve. Thus, persons called to this ministry should give evidence of a clear understanding of the Church of Covington, participation in the life of the Church, a willingness to learn, an ability to work for the good of the Diocesan Church rather than advocating only one point of view.

VI. Organizational Year, Number and Terms of Membership of the Deanery Council (DC)

A. The organizational year of the DC begins on July 1 of each year.

B. Each appointed individual will serve a three-year, renewable term.
C. Unexpired terms are to be dealt with according to the discretion of the Dean and Diocesan Pastoral Council representatives of the DC, in cooperation with the respective parish.

VII. Functions of the Dean/DPC Representatives/DC Members

A. The Dean

Oversees the entire process in a facilitating and enabling manner to include the proper functioning, convening and deliberation and finally the carrying out of its function. **He delegates as much of this responsibility to the Diocesan Pastoral Council representatives as he deems necessary.**

1. Scheduling, setting location, convening, and leading DC meetings
   a. Set the yearly meeting schedule and submit to the Diocesan Chancellor.
   b. Gather relevant information for immediate and long-range agenda.
   c. Determine agenda and process for each meeting.
   d. Ensure all documentation needed for the meeting is prepared and circulated in a timely manner prior to the meeting.
   e. Provide resources needed at meetings.
   f. Ensure minutes are taken and submitted to the Diocesan Chancellor within two weeks of a meeting.
2. Making decisions relevant to the Deanery Council which cannot be held until next meeting; bring such decisions to the attention of the DC for comment or further discussion.
3. Periodically evaluating the functioning of the DC.
4. Executing ordinary responsibilities of the DC.

B. The Diocesan Pastoral Council Representatives

1. Attend meetings of the Diocesan Pastoral Council four times a year, usually in September, November, February, and May.
2. Act as a liaison between the Diocesan Pastoral Council and the Deanery Council, reporting to the DPC the work of the DC and discussing topics identified by the Bishop or raised in DC meetings.
3. At the discretion of and with the supervision of the Dean:
   a. Schedule, set location, convene, and lead DC meetings
      i. Set the yearly meeting schedule and submit to the Diocesan Chancellor.
      ii. Gather relevant information for immediate and long-range agenda.
      iii. Determine agenda and process for each meeting.
      iv. Ensure all documentation needed for the meeting is prepared and circulated in a timely manner prior to the meeting.
      v. Provide resources needed at meetings.
      vi. Ensure minutes are taken and submitted to the Diocesan Chancellor within two weeks of a meeting.

b. Make decisions relevant to the Deanery Council which cannot be held until next meeting; bring such decisions to the attention of the DC for comment or further discussion.
c. Periodically evaluate the functioning of the DC.
d. Execute ordinary responsibilities of the DC.

C. The Deanery Council Members
1. Attend meetings of their respective Deanery Council.
2. Inform the Parish Pastoral Council of issues to be dealt with by the DC, to gather their feedback and to report to the Parish Council the work of the DC.
3. Faithfully attend and participate in the Parish Pastoral Council meetings at their respective parish.

VIII. Procedures

A. A quorum should consist of no less than a majority of the entire council and, ordinarily, business should not be conducted without a quorum. The DC should never make decisions without a quorum but can meet for discussion if necessary.
B. The events of a meeting should be characterized by flexibility and a Spirit of Christ's presence; therefore:
1. It is appropriate to depart from a formal rule of order to use a more faith-type process such as discernment.
2. Preferable to majority rule is decision-making by consensus. At times it may be appropriate to postpone decision making simply because there is no true consensus.
3. As much as possible, voting ought to be done simply to officially record a consensus or discernment; in the case of such votes, all members are eligible to vote.
C. Deanery Council may meet for many reasons among which are an afternoon or evening of prayer, socialization, sharing of information, planning, or decision-making. The reason for meeting will determine both the process used and the results of the process.
D. The results of a decision-making process may be presented as a proposal to:
1. The Bishop for consideration for future DPC/DC agendas.
2. A diocesan office requesting support or direction.
3. The parish councils or pastors of the Deanery.
E. The DC does not ordinarily have standing committees although when appropriate an Ad Hoc committee may be appointed with specific tasks and timelines.
F. Relationship with the Diocesan Offices/Organizations
The Deanery Council is encouraged to respond to requests for representation to Diocesan committees or organizations. The manner of choosing a representative is left to the respective Council. Such representatives need not be members of the DC nor do they need to provide an official liaison with the DC.

G. All DC meetings are open to whoever may wish to attend, and the meetings should be announced in the respective parish bulletins along with the tentative agenda items.
H. The DC meets four times a year for purposes of Diocesan direction but may meet more frequently as determined by local need. Meetings must be scheduled in the months prior to Diocesan Pastoral Council meetings, namely August, October, January, and March.

IX. Change in Guidelines /Additions or Clarifications to Guidelines

Additions, changes or clarifications to these guidelines may be made at the recommendation of the DC or DPC. Additions which are more of the nature of by-laws may be added to Section X of the guidelines entitled By Laws.

X. By-Laws

A. Because of the importance of DC representatives remaining in contact with their Parish Councils, the appointment of a DC representative will be considered invalid if the representative does not regularly attend the parish council meeting.
B. DC agenda items should be submitted to the Executive Committee prior to the respective meeting. The agenda for the meetings should be distributed to the members and parishes prior to the meeting to provide ample opportunity for discussion and feedback.
C. The boundary lines of the DC cannot be changed without first changing parish boundaries. Erection of parishes and assignment of boundaries is the canonical responsibility of the Bishop.
D. No more ex officio members should be added to the DC without first being reviewed by the Diocesan Chancery Office.
E. If a problem arises with respect to the participation of a parish after ordinary means have been used to resolve the problem, it should be referred to the Bishop.

Approved August 17, 2023
Most Reverend John C. Iffert
Bishop of Covington

Revised March 9, 2026