

THE EPARCHY OF TORONTO AND EASTERN CANADA STATUTES OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

INTRODUCTION

The Church of Christ is a community of persons who, through the Mystery of Baptism, are freed from sin, reborn to new life and have become her full members. Indeed, through this Mystery of Baptism the faithful form the People of God, and are called to fulfill the mission which the Lord commends and entrusts to the Church to carry out in the world.

Being her members, the faithful are called to care for the good of the entire body, which is the Church—the mystical Body of Christ. This consciousness of co-responsibility for the good of the Church is placed in a person’s heart from a young age, so that, as each person grows, they see themselves as members of the Body of Christ not only by formal membership, but also by active participation in the life of a specific parish community. As they grow, young people, in addition to common spiritual values, should develop a sense of co-responsibility and concern for the good of the community to which they belong.

Since Christ's Church is the “ark” in which people are called to find salvation, all the faithful should be concerned about the salvation of all her members—those showing initiative and those less active. The Church through the authority of her hierarchs is called to preach salvation and proclaim that the kingdom of God is at hand, and this is why all her members, under the leadership of a shepherd and spiritual father should, solely under his direction, organize diverse pastoral initiatives that would help convert people towards a life in Christ through the Holy Mysteries in the Church of Christ, founded on Peter (cf. Mt 16,18).

The hierarchical structure of Christ’s Church also has a fundamental goal—to proclaim the kingdom of God and ensure that this “proclamation” not bypass anyone. The Church accomplishes this pastoral ministry in concrete places (parishes) with parish clergy supported by a pastoral council, whose members, having been selected according to these statutes, are called to provide effective assistance to the pastor in all pastoral-evangelical initiatives of the parish.

The Church calls on the clergy and faithful to recognize their shared responsibility in a parish community, taking on duties to promote its development and activity. And when a duly-appointed pastor or administrator presides over a pastoral council, it is to develop consensus, foster cooperation and encourage an exchange of gifts and talents, so that they might be placed at the service of the Church and her mission.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Art. 1. TEXT OF DECREE ESTABLISHING A PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL: In accordance with the prescriptions of can. 295 of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches (CCEO) which states: “In the parish there are to be appropriate councils dealing with pastoral and economic matters, according to the norms of the particular law of its own Church *sui iurus*,” and can. 41 of the Canons of the Particular Law of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (UGCC PL), in “(name of parish)” parish¹, a parish pastoral council (hereinafter—pastoral council) has been established,

¹ Give the name of the parish according to the decree of the eparchial bishop.

which serves the parish community for the growth of the entire Church and the fulfillment of her mission in the world.

Art. 2. The pastoral council is an advisory body in the parish. It is established in order to systematically discuss, together with the pastor or administrator, the pastoral situation of the parish, with special focus on the mission of the parish community which is a place to proclaim the Word of God, sanctify the People of God, grow spiritually and serve one's neighbour.

Art. 3. Deciding questions which pertain to the pastoral office are solely the competence of the pastor or administrator who bears responsibility for the parish before the eparchial bishop. The pastor or administrator should readily hear out the advice of the pastoral council and give its proposals due consideration in the course of making decisions.

Art 4. Should systematic and substantial differences emerge between the decisions of the pastor or administrator and the advice of the pastoral council, the matter can be referred to the local hierarchy for consideration.

Art. 5. In their activities, the pastoral council is guided by the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches, the Canons of the Particular Law of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, the UGCC Parish Directory, the decrees and guidelines of the eparchial bishop and these statutes.

STRUCTURE AND MEMBERSHIP

Art. 6. Only adult persons over the age of 18 can be invited to serve on the pastoral council. Members must: belong to the Ukrainian (Greek) Catholic Church, be of good faith, lead a moral way of life, take an active part in the life of their parish, be distinguished by gifts of wisdom, prudence, the ability to engage and cooperate with other people, have expertise in a particular area, useful for ministry, and demonstrate a readiness to dedicate their time and skills for the good of the parish community. Such persons should have a temporary or permanent place of residence on the territory of the parish, in accordance with the prescriptions of CCEO can. 912.

Art. 7. The pastoral council includes:

- 1) members by virtue of the law and their office: pastor or administrator, pastoral associates, deacons; representatives from every institute of consecrated life, active in the parish;
- 2) lay members of the parish, elected by the parish community: men and women who meet the requirements foreseen in Art. 6 of these statutes;
- 3) members, appointed by the pastor or administrator, in view of their special competence or potential contribution.

Art. 8. The pastor is the president (or head) of the pastoral council.

Art. 9. The number of members on the pastoral council may vary depending on the size of the parish and its degree of activity. Generally, the number of members should not be less than 5 and not exceed 20.

Art. 10. The members of the pastoral council are selected at a general assembly of parishioners. The pastor or administrator is required to inform all parishioners at least three weeks prior to convening a general assembly.

Art. 11. For elections, the pastor should invite the protopresbyter (dean) of the given district to represent the eparchial bishop.

Art. 12. Elections are to be held according to the prescriptions of CCEO can. 947-960.

Art. 13. The pastor or administrator appoints up to one-third of the parish council membership, taking into account those mentioned in Art. 7, par. 3 of these statutes. Two-thirds of the parish council membership are selected by the parishioners themselves, by an election process foreseen in Art. 7, par. 2 and in accordance with Art. 6. The pastor or administrator may form a nomination committee to assist in the election process.

Art. 14. A secretary, whose responsibility is to record the minutes of the pastoral council, shall be chosen from among the elected or appointed members of the council.

Art. 15. If not determined by the election process, prior to confirmation, appointed or elected council members shall propose a first-councilor or vice-chairman from among the lay members of the council, to work closely with the pastor or administrator and secretary in facilitating and coordinating the work of the pastoral council. Within 15 days from the selection of the pastoral council, the pastor is to submit to the local hierarchy a request to confirm the composition of the council and its officers. The pastoral council lawfully begins its activity only after it is confirmed by the local hierarchy.

Art. 16. Members of the pastoral council shall make a promise to faithfully execute their duties (the text of the promise is at the end of these statutes).

Art. 17. The ministry of a pastoral council is by nature a public service, and thus no one is to expect remuneration for it.

Art. 18. The mandate of a pastoral council is generally for three years. Council members can serve for another subsequent term, but it is advisable that council membership be at least partially changed with each term.

COMPETENCE

Art. 19. The fundamental and primary task of a pastoral council is to support the pastor or administrator by advising and assisting him in his apostolic and social-charitable activity in the parish. In this, a pastoral council has the right to propose its own initiatives, especially in the area of catechesis and education of the faithful of any age and status² and in the area of charitable ministry³, and to effectively support the pastor or administrator in their implementation, to make every necessary effort to develop various lay initiatives, movements and communities⁴.

² See CCEO c. 289 §1, 619.

³ See CCEO c. 289 §3.

⁴ See CCEO cc. 18, 19.

Art. 20. The other functions of a pastoral council are:

- 1) to initiate and develop apostolic initiatives among the parishioners;
- 2) to coordinate various religious initiatives;
- 3) to assist the parish clergy and catechists in their pastoral work;
- 4) to care for the sick and elderly members of the parish, especially those who are in need of assistance;
- 5) to promote the development and deepening of prayer and religious life in the parish;
- 6) to foster the formation of good public opinion about the Church, the parish itself and the clergy;
- 7) to promote the preservation and development of an ecclesial and public consciousness, founded on Christian principles, among the members of the parish community;
- 8) to cooperate with all organizations active within the parish.
- 9) in cooperation with the parish finance council, to care for adequate financial security and preservation of parish property;
- 10) to support and help coordinate the pastoral activity of the parish in accordance with the decrees and instructions of the eparchial bishop;
- 11) to assist the pastor in implementing parish pastoral planning, in accordance with the *Handbook for Pastoral Planning*;
- 12) to refer to the parish finance council pastoral needs which are of a material and financial nature;
- 13) to assist the clergy of the parish to care for the beauty, cleanliness of the parish church, of other church facilities, parish buildings and adjacent territory;
- 14) to assess and analyze the true state of parish life and propose action for improvement and perfection, for correction of possible flaws, deficiencies;
- 15) to fulfill other tasks and services at the request of the pastor or administrator.

ACTIVITY

Art. 21. Meetings of the pastoral council should occur:

- 1) at least three times a year;
- 2) when the pastor considers it necessary;
- 3) during a canonical parish visitation or out of another necessity, by special decision of the local hierarch.

Art. 22. Convening pastoral council meetings, setting agenda items and presiding at meetings is the sole competence of the pastor or administrator. He may invite another council member—another member of the parish clergy or the first-councilor—to preside over a part of or the entirety of a council meeting to work through the agenda on his behalf. However, a parish pastoral council cannot meet without the pastor or administrator present, unless permission is granted by the local hierarch.

Art. 23. Members of the pastoral council have the right to add their proposals to the agenda of a meeting, having informed the pastor or administrator beforehand.

Art. 24. In the event of a justifiable absence of the pastor or administrator due to illness or other unforeseen circumstances, a temporary president may be appointed by the dean (protopresbyter)

to preside at a meeting of the pastoral council, having received permission from the bishop beforehand.

Art. 25. §1. All voting, that occurs during meetings, expresses the will of the pastoral council. A decision is considered adopted when it is approved by an absolute majority of those present. When the number of votes is equal, then the president casts the determining vote.

§2. A decision, accepted by the majority, no matter how important, nevertheless is of an advisory nature. The final decision regarding its implementation belongs to the pastor or administrator, and in general to the competent ecclesiastical authority.

Art. 26. Decisions (motions and action items) of the pastoral council are recorded in the minutes.

Art. 27. Pastoral Council meeting minutes should be signed by the pastor or administrator and recording secretary once they have been formally accepted by the council. Once signed, they are to be retained in the parish archives.

Art. 28. The pastor or administrator can invite competent persons to a meeting of the pastoral council due to their knowledge or expertise, to assist in addressing matters of interest to the pastoral council.

Art 29. The consideration of matters related to parish finances and property are the competence of the parish finance council, the functions of which are determined by separate statutes. If the need should arise, the pastoral council may offer advice and make recommendations to the parish finance council, especially in regard to resources associated with the pastoral activity and mission of the parish.

Art. 30. Important decisions of the pastoral council are to be communicated to all parishioners by whatever means are available: verbally during announcements after a service, in print in the *Parish Bulletin* or on a parish bulletin board; electronically, if the parish has an email list.

Art. 31. All members of the parish have the right to show interest in the activity of the pastoral council and express their proposals and observations regarding its activity or decisions.

LOSS OF MEMBERSHIP AND SUSPENSION OF ACTIVITY

Art. 32. The loss of status of a member of the pastoral council occurs in case of death, resignation, expiration of election term or with a council member establishing permanent residence outside the canonical territory of the parish, or upon removal for just cause.

Art. 33. §1. Grounds for loss of membership on the pastoral council include:

- 1) an unjustified absence from meetings of the pastoral council twice in a row;
- 2) behaviour that causes great damage to the parish and the good of the Church, immoral behaviour, apostasy from the faith or from unity with the Catholic Church, sowing discord, disobedience to ecclesiastical authority.

§2. In order to protect a person’s confidentiality and right to privacy, a pastor or administrator may present grounds for expulsion to the bishop, who decides how to proceed in the matter.

Art. 34. At the request of the pastor or administrator, the local hierarch can dissolve the pastoral council if the council does not fulfill its tasks, exceeds its powers, or if its activity causes damage to the parish community.

FINAL PROVISIONS

Art. 35. The eparchial bishop has the right to introduce amendments and additions to these statutes, or issue special provisions and restrictions applicable to a specific parish or group of parishes.

Art. 36. These statutes, when approved by the competent ecclesiastical authority, shall come into force from the moment of their promulgation, according to the norms of the law.⁵.

⁵ See CCEO c. 1489 §2.

PROMISE

(This promise can be solemnly made before the parish community at the tetrapod. A common sheet can be prepared for multiple signatures on the basis of the text provided here.)

I, (say your first name and surname), in accepting the responsibilities of member of the parish pastoral council of _____ (name of parish), in the name of the Most Holy Trinity, promise to conscientiously fulfill the responsibilities placed upon me within the limits and in the manner prescribed by the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches, by the Canons of the Particular Law of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and applicable statutes. So help me, God, One in the Holy Trinity and all the Saints, through the prayers of the most holy Mother of God and all the saints, and this Holy Gospels.

1. Place Promise Made (city, church/parish):
2. Date and Saint's Day:
3. Name of Member (First Name and Surname):
4. Pastoral Council Member's Signature
5. Pastor's Signature