



# DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL

## CHARTER and PROMULGATION

January 2006

Catholic Diocese of Lansing  
300 West Ottawa Street  
Lansing, MI 48933-1577  
[www.dioceseoflansing.org](http://www.dioceseoflansing.org)



## ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF LANSING

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Office of the Bishop

300 West Ottawa Street • Lansing, Michigan 48933-1577

### DECREE OF PROMULGATION

*In Nomine Domini. Amen.*

In his Apostolic Exhortation, *Christifideles Laici*, Pope John Paul II identified and encouraged the formation of Diocesan Pastoral Councils:

[O]n a diocesan level this structure [the Diocesan Pastoral Council] could be the principal form of collaboration, dialogue, and discernment... The participation of the lay faithful in these Councils can broaden resources in consultation and the principle of collaboration – and in certain instances also in decision-making – if applied in a broad and determined manner.

(Cf. Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, *Christifidelis Laici*, n. 25.5)

The Diocesan Pastoral Council of the Diocese of Lansing is a vital aspect of communion with the universal church. Considering the pastoral questions of our day and making appropriate recommendations to the Bishop of Lansing, the Diocesan Pastoral Council is imbued with a pastoral spirit to aid the Bishop with the pastoral governance of the Church.

The statutes attached to this Decree of Promulgation provide the framework and context of collaboration for the efficacy of the mission of Jesus Christ in the Diocese of Lansing.

The statutes, which I promulgate today, will take effect the same day in the Diocese of Lansing, anything to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given at the Curia of the Diocese of Lansing on this the 26<sup>th</sup> day of January 2006, the memorial of SS. Timothy and Titus.

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✠ Carl F. Mengeling

Bishop of Lansing

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Msgr. Steven J. Raica  
Chancellor

*“He must increase, I must decrease” – Jn 3:30*



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF LANSING  
Lansing, Michigan  
January 2006

CHARTER FOR THE DIOCESAN PASTORAL  
COUNCIL

“It is highly desirable that in every diocese a special pastoral council be established, presided over by the diocesan bishop himself, in which clergy, religious, and laity specially chosen for the purpose will participate. It will be the function of this council to investigate and consider matters relating to pastoral activity, and to formulate practical conclusions regarding them.”

Decree on the Bishops’ Pastoral Office in the Church  
Vatican II Document, *Christus Dominus* Ch II, Sec III, n 27)

**Article I: NAME**

This body shall be the  
PASTORAL COUNCIL OF THE DIOCESE OF LANSING.

**Article II: NATURE**

The Code of Canon Law states:

**Can. #511**

**In each diocese, in so far as pastoral circumstances suggest, a pastoral council is to be established. Its function, under the authority of the Bishop, is to study and weigh those matters which concern the pastoral works in the diocese, and to propose practical conclusions concerning them.**

**Can. #512 §1**

**A pastoral council is composed of members of Christ’s faithful who are in full communion with the Catholic Church: clerics, members of institutes of consecrated life, and especially lay people. They are designated in the manner determined by the diocesan bishop.**

### **Article III: MISSION**

The Pastoral Council shall:

1. Study matters that concern the pastoral works of the diocese and make recommendations to the bishop
2. Collaborate with the Office of Pastoral Planning in the implementation of the goals and strategies of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan
3. Collaborate with parish pastoral councils, regional councils/assemblies, and established diocesan entities, such as Diocesan Central Offices, Presbyteral Council, etc. in the implementation of the goals and strategies of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan
4. Collaborate with the Office of Pastoral Planning in an annual review of the pastoral plan and recommend any necessary revisions to the bishop

### **Article IV: MEMBERSHIP**

#### **Can. 512 §2**

**The members of Christ's faithful assigned to the pastoral council are to be selected in such a way that the council truly reflects the entire portion of the people of God which constitutes the diocese taking account of the different regions of the diocese, of social conditions and professions, and of the part played in the apostolate by the members, whether individually or in association with others.**

Permanent members of the Pastoral Council shall be:

- The Most Reverend Bishop of the Diocese of Lansing, President Ex-officio
- Director of the Office of Pastoral Planning, Executive Director
- Recording Secretary appointed by the council

Membership of the council shall represent all the people of God in the Diocese of Lansing. There will be two members from each region of the diocese who may be lay, clergy, vowed religious, or ecclesial lay ministers. To ensure representation of all the people of God, the bishop may appoint as many as three (3) at-large members.

## **TERMS**

Selected and at-large members shall serve three years. After a one-year interim, a person is again eligible for selection. The terms of membership shall be staggered so that no more than one-third of the membership leaves the council in any given year. No more than one member of a region shall be replaced in any given year. Terms of new members begin July 1.

## **SELECTION**

### **Can. 512 §3**

**Only those members of Christ's faithful who are outstanding in firm faith, high moral standards, and prudence are to be assigned to the pastoral council.**

It is imperative that any candidate will have been involved in pastoral planning at the local, regional, or diocesan level. At the beginning of January each year, the Office of Pastoral Planning will invite parishes, regional assemblies and/or councils, and diocesan groups to nominate candidates for the Diocesan Pastoral Council. The candidates will be fully informed of the role and responsibilities of council membership. From those who accept nomination, new members will be selected by lot on Pentecost Sunday by the bishop or his delegate.

## **Article V: VACANCIES**

Vacancies may occur by written resignation to the bishop of the diocese.

Resignation shall be deemed automatic and a vacancy constituted by four (4) unexcused absences from regularly scheduled meetings that year.

If a vacancy of an appointed member should occur, the bishop shall fill the vacancy by appointment. If a vacancy of a selected member shall occur, the council shall appoint a new member to complete the term from the list of candidates who were nominated for the council.

## **Article VI: OFFICERS**

Ex-Officio:

Bishop of the Diocese of Lansing, President

Director of the Office of Pastoral Planning, Executive Director

Elected by the Council:           Chairperson  
  Vice-chairperson  
Appointed by the Council:       Recording Secretary

**Article VII: MEETINGS**

**REGULAR MEETINGS:**

At least six meetings annually shall be scheduled and announced.  
Date for each subsequent meeting shall be confirmed at the regular meeting.  
Agenda, committee reports, minutes of the previous meeting, and appropriate documentation shall be forwarded to council members ten (10) days prior to regular meetings.  
Items on the agenda shall be determined by the bishop, executive director, and the chairperson. Members of the council may also propose additional agenda items.  
Relying fully on the Holy Spirit, the Diocesan Pastoral Council will seek consensus in prayerful discernment.

SPECIAL MEETINGS may be scheduled by the bishop.

**Article VIII: COMMITTEES**

SPECIAL or AD HOC: May be appointed by the bishop or the chairperson of the pastoral council who may or may not authorize the committee chairperson to expand the committee

Ad Hoc Committees shall cease to exist at the end of the term of the appointing chairperson, when its work is complete, or when it is dissolved by the bishop or chairperson.

**Article IX: FINANCING**

Budget for the Diocesan Pastoral Council shall be incorporated into the Office of Pastoral Planning annual budget.

Expenses of the council shall be paid by the Diocese of Lansing and charged to the Office of Pastoral Planning. Expenses incurred by a member of the council may be submitted for approval to the Office of Pastoral Planning for reimbursement.

## **Article X: AMENDMENTS**

This Charter may be amended with the approval of the bishop at any regular council meeting by consensus of those present provided that the proposed amendment was presented in writing by a council member at the immediate previous council meeting.



## **HISTORY OF THE DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL**

In the Vatican II document, Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishop, Bishops throughout the world were asked to form “in each diocese a pastoral council over which the diocesan bishop himself will preside and in which specially chosen clergy, religious and lay people will participate”. The document stated that the function of the diocesan council would be “to investigate and to weigh matters which bear on pastoral activity and to formulate practical conclusions regarding them”. The implementation of this document was begun by the late Bishop Kenneth J. Povish. In 1977 he asked the regional priest-vicars, the Sisters’ Council, and the Priests’ Senate to recommend names for a steering committee to perform work preliminary to the establishment of a Diocesan Pastoral Council.

During its first year, the committee familiarized itself with the structure of the diocese and studied, under competent scholars, the theological dimension of a diocesan pastoral council. In September 1978, Bishop Povish appointed Reverend William Meyers to be executive secretary of the committee. In January of 1979, Bishop Povish designated the committee as the “Interim Diocesan Pastoral Council”. Officers appointed to the Interim Council were Sister Carol Jean McDonnell OP, chairperson, Mr. Robert Grace, vice-chairperson, and Reverend William Meyers, executive secretary.

Following these appointments, the council adopted By-Laws and Articles of Understanding which included the process for electing members for the permanent Diocesan Pastoral Council. The process began with Spring Regional Meetings in 1980 and during the First Diocesan Pastoral Assembly that year, one-half of the permanent council was elected. One-half of the Interim Council members continued to serve until the elected membership was completed at the Second Diocesan Pastoral Assembly in the fall of 1982.

The Assembly of 1990 responded to the challenge described in the Acts of the Apostles by introducing a “selection by lot” process for new members. Four priorities were identified at this Assembly. The efforts of the Council were directed toward assisting parishes of the diocese in the implementation of these priorities from 1990-1995.

In 1999, Bishop Carl F. Mengeling established the Office of Pastoral Planning whose mission statement reads: “Pastoral planning calls the Church to collaborate in the mission of Jesus Christ. This ministry is a continuing process of listening, surfacing needs, assessing resources, planning, and implementing a faith-filled response.”

The Diocese of Lansing continued its preparation for the celebration of the Great Jubilee Year 2000 and heeded the words of Pope John Paul II in *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 29 that state: “the programme of the Gospel must continue to take root, as it has always done, in the life of the Church everywhere. It is in the local churches that the specific features of a detailed pastoral plan can be identified — goals and methods, formation and enrichment of the people involved, the search for the necessary resources — which will enable the proclamation of Christ to reach people, mould communities, and have a deep and incisive influence in bringing Gospel values to bear in society and culture”.

It was within this framework that the detailed seven-goal pastoral plan for the Diocese of Lansing was developed. Promulgated by Bishop Mengeling on November 15, 2001, the seven-goal pastoral plan was designed to move the Church of Lansing far into the first decade of the third millennium. The newly formed Diocesan Pastoral Council was given the responsibility of guiding the process of implementing the plan.