



DIOCESE *of* PARRAMATTA

DEANERY AND DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCILS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

14 October 2020, Version 3.0

1. Why is not every parish represented on the Diocesan Pastoral Council?

The Diocesan Pastoral Council does not need each parish representative as its concerns are universal, and those who join the council are invited to remove their “parish hat” and replace it with a “diocesan hat”. Members sought for such a council will have experience and gifts orientating them towards offering wisdom from this wider diocesan perspective. Members will be aided in their discernment via reports received from the deanery pastoral council meetings and via other sources. Such reports will include relevant updates from parishes. Direct representation of parishes can still take place via deanery and diocesan gatherings.

2. How do we ensure each deanery is represented on the diocesan pastoral council?

It is not mandatory that two members per deanery are to be appointed to the Diocesan Pastoral Council, however, the spirit of the Council is to ensure that there is broad geographical representation. In order to ensure Deanery representation at least one member will be appointed from each Deanery. In addition, Deanery Pastoral Councils are represented at each Diocesan Pastoral Council meeting.

3. How do we ensure a transparent process for appointments at diocesan level?

The selection process for the diocesan pastoral council is as follows:

- Anyone can nominate themselves by completing the form.
- Any priest of the diocese can authorise the nomination.
- The Pastoral Planning Office will contact authorising clergy to gain a sense of who they prioritise and about who they may have reservations.
- The Diocesan Pastoral Council is consulted for views regarding the qualities/make-up that would be best suited to enhance and complement existing membership. Short-listing of nominees aims to best represent the needs and nature of the Diocese. The Bishop is assisted by the Pastoral Planning Office and any other advice he requires before making the final appointments and he may seek additional and ex-officio members.

4. How do we ensure a transparent process for appointments at Deanery level?

The selection process for the Deanery Pastoral Council is as follows:

- Anyone can nominate themselves by completing the form.
- The parish priest of the nominee’s parish is required to authorise the nomination.
- The Pastoral Planning Office will contact authorising clergy to gain a sense of who they prioritise and about who they may have reservations.
- The Parish Priest, Administrator or Pastoral Leader approves their members.
- The Dean and chair sign off on the membership.

5. What are the main components of the Deanery Pastoral Council meetings?

There are three main components:

- i. Discern matters that concern the pastoral life of the deanery, particularly with regard to the parishes of the deanery.
- ii. Discern and collaborate with other bodies, particularly other deanery pastoral councils and the Diocesan Pastoral Council, with regard to pastoral life of the broader diocese.
- iii. Set realistic and achievable short-term and long-term pastoral goals for the deanery within the framework of strategic pastoral goals of the Diocese and oversee the implementation of these goals.

The Deanery Pastoral Council convenes at least one deanery gathering a year, that is, an open gathering of representatives from deanery-based parishes, schools, chaplaincies, and other Catholic bodies. The purpose of these gatherings is to strengthen the synodal character of the diocese.

6. How will issues affecting parishes be communicated to the Diocesan Pastoral Council?

Deanery and Diocesan Pastoral Council are not being set up to circumvent or create extra bureaucracy between a parish and the bishop. Parishes, through their parish priest, will maintain pastoral communication with their bishop on issues related to their own parish.

7. How will similar issues affecting multiple parishes be addressed at a Deanery or Diocesan Pastoral Council level?

Minutes summarising meeting outcomes are circulated at the different council levels. This aids information and aids discussion and advice to the bishop, dean etc. Relevant ministries or agencies will be advised of issues pertinent to their area of expertise, and responses sought. In addition, ministries and agencies will be asked to advise the councils on their own initiatives.

8. How long is the term of office for a representative? How will it be ensured that there will be staggered representation, i.e. not all council members are replaced after the end of a term?

Terms for both councils are of three years duration, with the option of a second term. Members will be canvassed before the end of the first term to ensure a core remains in place before new members are nominated and appointed.

9. How many members of our parish will sit on the Diocesan Pastoral Council?

The Diocesan Pastoral Council is not modelled on direct representation from each parish. Hence, the majority of parishes will not have one of their parishioners on the Diocesan Pastoral Council. The Diocesan Pastoral Council will be made aware of parish and deanery matters through the Deanery Pastoral Councils and other methods of consultation (e.g. surveys, diocesan assemblies).

10. How many members are required for a Deanery Pastoral Council?

Each parish will be represented by two members of the Deanery Pastoral Council.

11. What days, times and locations would the Deanery and Diocesan Council Meetings be held?

Meeting times and venues (including online options) are determined by the members of each council.