



DIOCESE of
PARRAMATTA

Pastoral Formation

DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL
& DEANERY PASTORAL COUNCILS

HANDBOOK

Guiding our Parishes – Moved by the Spirit

VERSION 1.0 | NOVEMBER 2021

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WELCOME

I thank you for your willingness to participate in the Deanery & Diocesan Pastoral Councils. Your wisdom, faithfulness, questions and passion will truly enrich our church communion and mission, and I look forward to experiencing the fruits of our shared labours.

Successive Papal and Vatican documents and the Code of Canon Law offer strong encouragement for the formation of councils of the faithful, especially of lay people. Such councils express a rightful co-responsibility for the mission of the Church. These bodies, aligning with Diocese Vision, will seek to strengthen the growing and sharing of faith in Christ within our diocese. They will be our vehicle through which the faithful can be heard and join in the diocesan task of recognising the signs of the times. In challenging times as the Church, it can be tempting to take safe paths of maintenance. I hope and trust that an excellent incorporation of these councils will help us to grow in our missionary courage. They will also assist in our collaboration with the wider Church in Australia as we look forward to the national Plenary Council.

Importantly, I see these bodies interacting with the Council of Priests and our Deanery Clergy Gatherings, to ensure we remain 'one body and one Spirit in Christ'.

Let us pray for one another, that these councils will help enable and welcome a rich harvest in the service of God's mission for today.

Yours in friendship and service,



Most Reverend Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM Conv
Bishop of Parramatta



ORGANISATIONAL CHART

The current Organisational chart is available from parracatholic.org/diocesan-organisational-chart



INTRODUCTION



**Pastoral
Formation**

Dear friends,

We are delighted to warmly welcome you to the Deanery and Diocesan Pastoral Councils of the Diocese of Parramatta. Thank you for your willingness to offer your gifts for the mission of the kingdom of God and God's glory. You have been chosen to be part of a representative body and affirmed by your communities for your humility, generosity and positivity. We acknowledge the leadership qualities you possess and your desire to serve your communities as an expression of God's love. We recognise your commitment and hope our shared journey towards synodality will be a rewarding and enriching experience.

Our relationship with God and our encounters with Christ through Prayer, Scripture, Sacraments, Tradition and the Signs of the Times, call us to be prophetic witnesses to God's love in our world. Through our Baptism we become members of Christ's body, the Church, and are called to encounter Christ in and through our service of others. Our pastoral councils are made up of different people with different perspectives and different gifts. As council members, we are called to "go forth", to serve and engage with each other in the sure knowledge that God is speaking and acting through each one of us.

This handbook is offered as a practical resource for pastoral councils in our shared ministry of service across our diocese. We hope it be helpful

for those serving now and for those considering membership in the future. The subtitle of this handbook: *Guiding our Parishes, Moved by the Spirit*, expresses our hope that council members will accept their role of collaboration in guiding the spiritual and pastoral direction of the Diocese. We hope that members feel confident that they are in touch with and moved by the Spirit of our living God. May this handbook offer support and inspire our creativity as we carry on the mission of Jesus and plan for the pastoral needs of our community.

The Pastoral Formation Team desires to joyfully accompany and nurture pastoral councils on the journey towards synodality and collaboration. We seek to learn from your experiences and offer you enriching formation opportunities to further equip you in your discipleship and ministerial role. Let us pray that our pastoral councils be places of warm engagement in mission. May the Holy Spirit fill us with faith, hope and love and encourage and support us as we walk together in the unfolding process of synodality.

We look forward to journeying with you.

In friendship,

The Pastoral Formation Team



**“AT THE HEART OF THE
CHURCH’S MISSION IS
PRAYER”**

POPE FRANCIS

Generous and loving God,
Our parish communities of the Diocese of
Parramatta pray that the future we plan will
enable us to grow in loving intimacy and desire
for you. May this love flow on to and through
our parish communities.

May the Holy Spirit who is Wisdom guide our
thoughts and responses, always respecting the
opinions of others and accepting change where
necessary.

Help us to recognise and hold with gratitude the
talents you have given, always being willing to
share these gifts for you in service of others.

With grateful hearts we thank you for the many
blessings you have given us.

We place this prayer before you in the name of
Jesus who is the Christ forever and ever.

Amen.

We invite you to allow these words to sink into your heart:

You have been appointed as member for a Pastoral Council because you are:



Prayerful



A good listener and communicator who believes in the value of shared discernment



Willing to grow in awareness of the pastoral needs of parishes and diocese



Seeking to promote the Church's merciful, joyful engagement with the wider community



Keen to explore how the people and leadership at each level of our diocese can grow in faith, awareness and skills for the mission of evangelisation in today's world



Accepting of the mission and purpose of the council, including its role as a consultative body within the structure of the Catholic Church



Open to formation and reflection and willing to come prepared to meetings



Interested in the directions of the church locally, nationally and beyond.



Pastoral – you have a sense of what it means to be pastoral – that is to be concerned about the pastoral and spiritual issues of our parish communities.



Prophetic – you desire to move our parish communities in a direction that is faithful to the Gospel. You desire to move the parish from maintaining the status quo to challenging mission.



Discerning – as a Council member you are invited to discern the direction of the parish. This is prayerful, reflective process enables members to consider what is at the heart of their decisions.



Consensus building – you are challenged to talk things out so that they are in agreement.

The heart of Jesus Christ for Mission:

Jesus has a heart of love; a true missionary heart, and a heart for mission which He wants us all to have. Jesus desires that our hearts be filled with God's love for all people which includes every precious person and living creature on the planet. When we are filled with God's love, we desire to share that love with others.

"Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus: we no longer say we are: "disciples" and "missionaries", but rather that we are "missionary disciples"". Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, #120.

Joy in God is the Heart of Mission:

Mission begins with a kind of explosion of joy because of the incredible story of God's love revealed in Jesus Christ. The news that the rejected and crucified Jesus is risen and alive is something that cannot possibly be suppressed, it must be told. The glory of God and our joy and hope in Him is the heart of mission.

The Mission of the Church is that God may be glorified:

At the heart of the mission of the church is thanksgiving and praise. As the People of God we are called into the continuation of the work of Jesus, which will proceed until love, justice and peace reign in the hearts and lives of the people of all nations.

The word Church is not a reference to a building, nor does it define an organisation. The Church is the people whom God calls to be one in Christ. Jesus gives us the Holy Spirit to fulfil our mission and the Holy Spirit leads us in the way of discipleship. The life of our Church comes from the Holy Spirit. Each one of us in the community of the Diocese of Parramatta is called to live this life in the Spirit.

Christ's Mission is our Mission:

- Proclaim the good news of God's love throughout the world
- Invite more and more people into the community of disciples
- Encourage the whole community of faith to grow in holiness
- Transform the world until justice, love and peace

Mission focussed Christian communities in union with Christ are:

Attractive: The community is recognised and valued as a source of spiritual nourishment, belonging, healing, meaning, personal transformation and challenge.

Hospitable: Each member takes on a personal responsibility to welcome newcomers. A deep sense of respect for the dignity and worth of every person underlies every action.

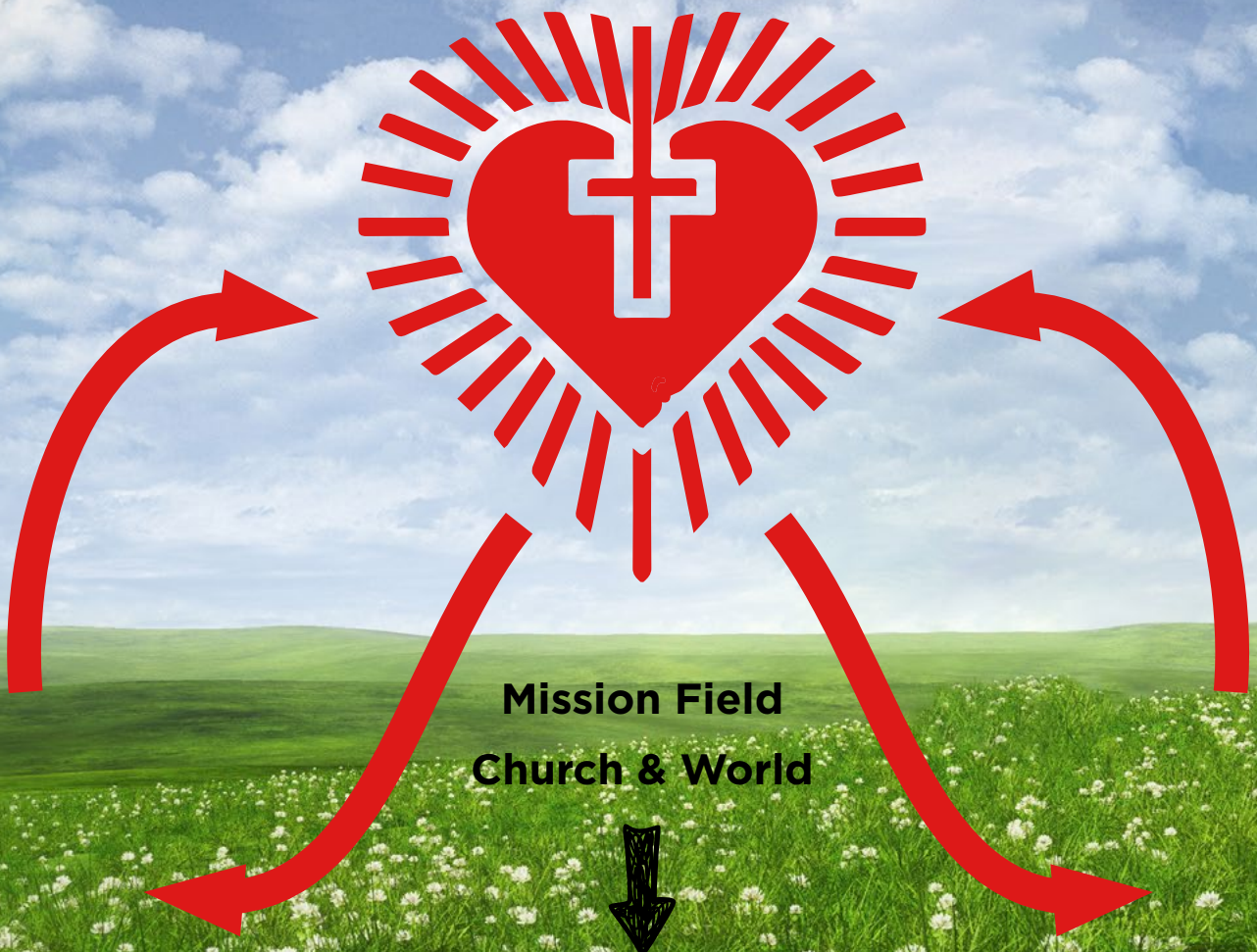
Inclusive: There is a spirit of inclusion in the community for everyone.

Outward focused: The community actively embraces a life-giving focus directed towards recognising and responding to issues of concern.

Our role in God's Mission is to be a messenger of the Good News to others:

Through our Baptism, we are drawn into God's communion of love, and commissioned to go out on mission and draw others into this communion. Below is a simple depiction of our mission. We follow Jesus Christ (symbolised by the Cross), who through the power of the Holy Spirit (symbolised by the red arrows) draws us into the Heart of God, sacramentalised in our church, the Body of Christ, and propels us back into the world to share the Good News with others, and so the cycle continues.

**God invites all creation to
participate in the divine
communion of love**



Parishes are called to a key role in Mission: Pastoral Councils:

Our Pastoral Councils are representative bodies in our church, the Body of Christ, both symbolising our call to walk together (be synodal) in this mission. Our councils operate as strong synodal bodies, “walking together” with the Holy Spirit in discerning a response to God’s mission in our local context.

One of the outcomes of Second Vatican Council was the promotion of Pastoral Councils as part of the movement towards shared responsibility and shared service. Our Councils are an expression of the reality that by reason of our Baptism, every one of us is equal in dignity and responsibility when it comes to living and communicating the love and values of Christ in our world. This can be understood as promoting the Mission of the Church, which is the task of all of us.



Pastoral Councils are important to help enable the parishes within our diocese to continue to develop, to nourish our faith communities and to reach out to others.

Pastoral Councils are the functional structure of Catholic communities. They are supportive, visioning, advisory, consultative and planning bodies that help articulate the Mission of the parish, deanery and diocese. Councils are involved in a process of evaluation and forward thinking to help the community stay up to date with the changing circumstances of life and faith. They are involved in pastoral planning and setting goals and are responsible for seeing the bigger picture of the parish, deanery and diocese.

Council members meet with the parish, deanery and Diocese and offer the wisdom of the community. In addition to doing long-range planning, the council members assess whatever pastoral concerns that are brought before them. The most important work Councils do is planning, especially planning on how to witness to Jesus and bring his presence into the world. Working in collaboration developing a pastoral plan, they help ensure the vibrancy of parishes and that the presence of Jesus is shining forth.

Our Councils assist Bishop Vincent Long by carefully listening to the needs of the parishioners within the Diocese of Parramatta furthered by wisely analysing what they have heard and by offering helpful recommendations.

As our Pastoral Councils work together, we strive to keep before us the mission of Jesus, a mission Jesus shared with His Church.

Pastoral Council Goals:

Create

parish communities capable of spreading the Word of God and uniting parish family with the entire community.

Assure

an analysis of both spiritual and temporal needs of the individual, the family, the parish and the greater community. After setting priorities, develop and implement programs aimed at meeting these needs.

Serve

as a permanent structure for constructive dialogue between clergy and laity of the Parish, Deanery and Diocese so all can work in close cooperation and collaboration as a truly Christian community in fulfilling Christ's saving mission.

Provide

leadership, direction, education, resources and encouragement in accordance with the mission.

Cooperate

with and effectively carry out the guidelines and the directions given by the Bishop and the Diocesan Pastoral Council.

Determine

and utilise the abilities of all members of the parish community. To serve as an organising and coordinating body for all organisations, committees and group activities within the parish.

A GUIDE TO ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES: PARISHES, DEANERIES AND DIOCESE

Critical to the success is a shared understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities. For the full list of responsibilities please refer to the Statutes on page 33 of this handbook.

	Brief Summary of Role	Responsibilities with regard to developing mission of the faithful
Parish Priest, Administrator or Pastoral Leader	Spiritual and sacramental leader of local faith community; president of parish pastoral council	As community leader, engages with parish pastoral council on parish mission, and liaises with deanery representatives on deanery & diocesan initiatives related to the parish
Parish Pastoral Council	Representative synodal body, advising parish priest through discerning with him the mission of parish	Focused on parish mission and liaises with deanery representatives on deanery and diocesan initiatives related to the parish
Deanery Representatives of Parish	Represent deanery, with particular association with their local parish	Liaise with parish priest and parish pastoral council on deanery & diocesan initiatives related to parish. Contribute to discernment of deanery pastoral council on deanery mission
Deanery Pastoral Council	Representative synodal body, advising dean through discerning with him mission of deanery	Draws wisdom from parishes and from wider diocese to discern and enact deanery-based mission initiatives.
Dean	Assists in the fraternal support of the clergy of the Deanery, president of deanery pastoral council	Engages with deanery pastoral council on deanery mission, and is main conduit between this council and the deanery clergy
Deanery Clergy	Clergy – priests and deacons – who gather in fraternity, share pastoral matters	Support one another, and draws wisdom from parishes and from wider diocese to promote deanery initiatives
Diocesan Pastoral Council	Representative synodal body, advising bishop through discerning with him mission of diocese	Draws on wisdom of deanery pastoral councils, and through them, parish pastoral councils, and the wider diocese in shaping diocesan mission initiatives.
Council of Priests	Advise Bishop on the pastoral welfare of the priests of the Diocese	Draws upon wisdom of deanery clergy gatherings in offering advice on pastoral welfare of diocese
Curia	Key governance body advising bishop	Draws upon wisdom of key bodies in diocese to advise bishop in key governance matters



1

In Our Local Deanery – Our Mission Field – Serving Jesus Christ

Together we aim to strengthen the growing and sharing of faith in Christ within the Diocese of Parramatta

2

Each Community Discerns

How do we share and grow our faith in Jesus Christ in our local neighbourhood?

3

Each Deanery Listens, Discerns and Supports

We work together across our local communities in:

- * A joint Mission Area,
- * Shared Formation,
- * Key Communication and Collaboration

4

Our Diocese Listens, Serves and Guides

Our Curia, Council of Priests, Diocesan Pastoral Council, Agencies, Ministries, Works and Chaplaincies listen, inform and consult with our parishes, chaplaincies, deaneries and with one another.

Together we discern how best to serve Christ's mission in the Parramatta Diocese



A Snapshot of our Diocese

The Diocese of Parramatta takes in seven local government divisions: Baulkham Hills Shire, Blacktown City, the City of the Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury Shire, Cumberland City, Parramatta City and Penrith City and parts of Wollondilly and Liverpool. This area encompasses the lands of the Darug people.

Deaneries

— Central Deanery

East

Greystanes – Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish, Lalor Park – St Bernadette's Parish, Merrylands – St Margaret Mary's Parish, Seven Hills – Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Toongabbie – St Anthony of Padua Parish, Wentworthville – Our Lady of Mt Carmel Parish

West

Blacktown – Mary, Queen of the Family Parish, Doonside – St John Vianney Parish, Marayong – St Andrew's Parish, Marsden Park – St Luke's Parochial District, Plumpton – The Good Shepherd Parish, Quakers Hill-Schofields – Mary Immaculate Parish, Rooty Hill – St Aidan's Parish

— Eastern Deanery

Dundas Valley – St Bernadette's Parish, Granville – Holy Cross Parish, Guildford – St Patrick's Parish, Harris Park – St Oliver Plunkett's Parish, Parramatta – St Patrick's Cathedral Parish, Parramatta North – St Monica's Parish, Rydalmere – Holy Name of Mary Parish, Westmead – Sacred Heart Parish

— Mountains Deanery

Blackheath – Sacred Heart Parish, Emu Plains – Our Lady of the Way Parish, Glenbrook – St Finbar's Parish, Lawson – Our Lady of the Nativity Parish, Springwood – St Thomas Aquinas Parish, Upper Blue Mountains – St Mary of the Cross MacKillop Parish

— Western Deanery

Cranebrook – Corpus Christi Parish, Glenmore Park – Padre Pio Parish, Kingswood – St Joseph's Parish, Luddenham-Warragamba – Sacred Heart Parish, Mt Druitt – Holy Family Parish, Mt Druitt South – Sacred Heart Parish, Penrith – St Nicholas of Myra Parish, Richmond – St Monica's Parish, Riverstone – St John the Evangelist Parish, St Clair – Holy Spirit Parish, St Marys – Our Lady of the Rosary Parish, Windsor – St Matthew's Parish

— Northern Deanery

Baulkham Hills – St Michael's Parish, Castle Hill – St Bernadette's Parish, Glenwood-Stanhope Gardens – St John XXIII Parish, Kellyville – Our Lady of The Rosary Parish, Kenthurst – St Madeleine Sophie Barat Parish, North Rocks – Christ the King Parish, Rouse Hill – Our Lady of the Angels Parish, Winston Hills – St Paul the Apostle Parish

Ongoing Formation:

Faith formation involves equipping followers of Jesus Christ so that they may be sent out into the world to spread God's love. Formation is the process by which our faith grows, and our lives are shaped and transformed by God's love for us. All ministry requires sound theological knowledge combined with the dynamic and life-changing encounter with our living God. The Pastoral Formation Team aims to bring together these two realities as we desire to joyfully accompany and nurture Council members on a shared journey of faith enrichment.

Because our councils are constantly evolving and we ourselves are always transforming, ongoing reflection, discernment and formation must be enriching, engaging and nurturing. We offer formative reflection and knowledge, learning and skilling to assist and equip members to clarify their understanding of their role as council members and to discover more deeply their love for God.

All Council members are warmly invited and encouraged to participate in induction and ongoing formation opportunities offered by the Diocese of Parramatta and beyond. Formation topics are varied and are shaped according to the context and needs of Council members.

For helpful resources please refer to the following websites:

Diocese of Parramatta <https://parracatholic.org/>

The Well <https://thewell.org.au/>

Catholic Youth Parramatta <https://parracatholic.org/cyp/>

PASTORAL PRACTICES FOR COUNCIL MEMBERS

Our Values:

1. "It's not about us" – it is about God. What we strive for is bigger than us because it is about God, and so we are **humble** about our own or our parish or deaneries accomplishments (because they are really God's victories).
2. "Promise and possibility" – we are **positive** and solution-focussed rather than problem-fixated.
3. "Over and above" – we do not sit on the sidelines but get involved and work hard to make things happen and to make them great. We are **generous** with our time and gifts.

Pastoral Council Norms:

- We put the **parish's, deanery or diocese's interests** above our own personal interests or responsibilities (positive and generous).
- We put the best possible interpretation on others' words and actions (positive and generous)
- Frank and fearless: State your position as well as you can (generous), but also, be curious about other's positions (especially when they are different from your own) (humble)
- **Everyone speaks** at every meeting – responsibility of all to ensure this happens (generous and humble)
- Conflict about the issue is great! It is **how we disagree that matters** (positive and generous)
- We do not interrupt each other (humble)
- We are accountable to one another for these norms; we name it and apologise when required (humble)

Use with permission from St. Declans Parish – Peshurst



VISION & MISSION

DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL
DIOCESE OF PARRAMATTA

VISION AND MISSION

The Church which “goes forth”
is a community of missionary disciples
who take the first step,
who are involved and supportive,
who bear fruit and rejoice.
An evangelizing community knows
that the Lord has taken the initiative,
he has loved us first (cf. 1 Jn 4:19),
and therefore we can move forward,
boldly take the initiative,
go out to others,
seek those who have fallen away,
stand at the crossroads
and welcome the outcast.

Pope Francis: Evangelii Gaudium (24)^w

This Vision and Mission statement is presented as a source of inspiration and animation for pastoral councils in our shared ministry of service across our diocese.

Our relationship with God and our encounters with Christ through Prayer, Scripture, Sacraments, Tradition and the Signs of the Times, call us to be prophetic witnesses to God’s love in our world.

Through our Baptism we become members of Christ’s body, the Church, and are called to encounter Christ in and through our service of others.

Our pastoral councils are made up of different people with different perspectives and different gifts. As council members, we are called to “go forth”, to serve and engage with each other in the sure knowledge that God is speaking and acting through each one of us.

VISION

Becoming the Community that Christ calls us to be

MISSION

In a spirit of shared wisdom
we will listen to the voice of God's people.
We are called to discern and
advocate for matters of importance
across our diocesan community.
Together, as community called to holiness¹
we will nurture a culture which is transparent,
accountable, collegial and synodal

THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES ARE CALLING US TO:

FOCUS AREA 1: A Revolution of the Heart²

Becoming humble, healing and merciful³, we are called to

- Be in relationship with God, with each other and with our earth
- Respond to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor⁴
- Share our lived experience as pilgrim people of faith
- Be in true dialogue and reconciled with our First Nations People

We commit ourselves to

- a. Learning about and understanding the message of Laudato Si
- b. Respectfully stewarding our earth and its resources. Relate to each other in ways that mend what is fragmented and broken⁵
- c. Challenging attitudes and structures that exclude and impoverish people
- d. Accompany people of other faith traditions or convictions on our pilgrim journey
- e. Be in dialogue with and learning from our First Nations Elders, sisters and brothers

¹ *Lumen Gentium* Chapter 5 Universal Call to Holiness

² Pope Francis Laudato Si n218

³ Plenary Council 2020

⁴ Laudato Si n49

⁵ Pope Francis *Fratelli tutti*

FOCUS AREA 2: Grow as a Community of Faith

Through Engagement and Formation⁶ we are called to

- Learn about and nurture our faith as we respond to Jesus' invitation to "come and see" (John 1:39)
- Be missionary disciples together, willing to go out to others, seek those who have fallen away, stand at the crossroads and welcome the outcast⁷
- Be co-responsible⁸, co-creating priorities, working with our Councils, Clergy and Diocesan Agencies

We commit ourselves to

- a. Regular prayer and reflection, particularly using the Scriptures
- b. Participating in programs to facilitate development of our adult faith
- c. Responding to our baptismal call to become messengers of Christ's mercy to the disaffected, marginalised and disadvantaged
- d. Growing our cultural awareness and willingness to embrace diversity
- e. Making our eucharistic table both sign and symbol of inclusion (cf Luke 14:12-14)

FOCUS AREA 3: The Way of Synodality

To become a community 'of one heart and mind' we are called to

- Listen with the ear of our heart⁹
- Engage in prayerful dialogue and discernment
- Appreciate the wisdom and beauty of the richly diverse human community

We commit ourselves to

- a. Deep listening and respectful dialogue so as to be permeated with the joys and hopes, with the griefs and anxieties ... of God's people
- b. Exploring processes to assist our deep listening¹⁰ (eg Listening Circles)
- c. Ongoing discernment in our meeting processes¹¹
- d. Becoming attuned to...the *sensus fidelium*, where the revealing God can be heard speaking to the "church today"¹²
- e. Participating in the Plenary Council 2020 process and outcome
- f. Always working in a spirit of collegiality
- g. Providing a considered and compassionate pastoral response to decisions or actions by those in leadership
- h. Seeking justice by challenging decisions and structures that fragment and exclude

⁶ Go Out into the Deep! Unpacking the Diocesan Forum 2019, 13 July at Novotel, Parramatta

⁷ Pope Francis *Evangelii Gaudium* n24

⁸ Pope Benedict XVI, Opening of the Pastoral Convention of the Diocese of Rome on the theme: "Church Membership and Co-responsibility" 26 May 2009

⁹ Rule of Benedict: Prologue

¹⁰ *Gaudium et Spes* Preface

¹¹ Vic and Liz O'Callaghan (Mountains Deanery) Restorative Practices and Listening Circles

¹² Ormond Rush, Plenary Council Participation and Reception: Synodality and Discerning the *Sensus Fidelium* 2017

HOW TO DEVELOP GOALS AND ACTIONS IN LIGHT OF THE VISION, MISSION AND FOCUS AREAS

These steps offer us a way of translating the vision, mission and focus areas into goals and actions to support God's mission. The Pastoral Planning Office is available to facilitate this process.

STEP ONE: We Gather as the Body of Christ

- It is important that before discerning our way forward, we have adequately listened to those we engage with. We may draw upon existing responses of forums and plenary sessions or choose to enact a process of listening such as offering a plenary reflection session.
- Once satisfied we have truly heard the voices of those in our midst, we gather those we believe will best help us listen and discern what the Holy Spirit is saying to us at this time.
- Deanery Pastoral Councils may wish to gather their clergy and representatives of parishes and school communities and special works.

STEP TWO: We centre ourselves in God's Holy Spirit and Promise

Individually and with others, we renew ourselves in prayer and contemplation, remembering God's goodness and promise.

- We open in prayer (e.g. *Come Holy Spirit, be with us and guide us.*)
- We pray a short scripture passage. (e.g. Psalm 96:1-3; 1 Samuel 12:24; Jeremiah 20:9; Mark 10:45; Acts 4:19-20; Galatians 6:9; 1 Peter 4:10)
- We silently consider how we are the community that Christ calls us to be.
- We share our insights aloud, particularly what we are grateful for, what we value as members of the Catholic Church, and what we think God may be inviting us to be and do.
- We offer a final prayer, from our heart, perhaps via a formal prayer, for example:
Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And You shall renew the face of the earth. Amen.
- We may conclude with a hymn

STEP THREE: Listen to what the Spirit is Saying

- We identify the community we are called to serve - parish, school, deanery, diocese and revisit responses we have gathered before commencing this exercise.
- We employ the focus areas and plenary topics as a stimulus.
- We listen to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor in our midst
- We spend time silently contemplating what we believe God is asking us to be and do at this time.

STEP FOUR: Consider the ways in which we are being called to serve in God's Mission

We brainstorm the main ways we believe God is calling us to serve God's mission.

STEP FIVE: Prioritise the main areas we believe are most important for us to bring to life with the Holy Spirit in the next six to twelve months.

- We reflect on the vision and mission of our council via the following questions:
 - How is God calling us to live the vision and mission of the church through this mission statement?
 - How might our personal values in our Catholic faith resonate with this vision and mission?
- In light of this vision and mission, prioritise up to three main ways from our list
- Create an achievable goal for each of these ways.
- Align each of the goals with the focus area(s) and plenary topics

If a larger group has gathered, it normally finishes now, and a smaller group of representatives completes step six.

STEP SIX: Develop a plan to bring to life our goals at the service of God's mission

- Seek support from the community and our diocese
- Our Pastoral Planning Office offers good advice and resources, and can suggest other communities, agencies and ministries who you can connect with.
- Our plan may include the following, for each goal:
 - Our Goal
 - Connected Focus Area(s)
 - Connected Plenary Topic(s)
 - What is already happening in this area
 - What we want to achieve
 - By when
 - Who is coordinating our goal
 - With these main actions
 - With these resources
- If a smaller group has prepared, it now seeks sign off from the larger group.
- We may develop a working group with people both from our council and from our wider community to serve in bringing each goal to life. This working group reports its progress to the council.

STEP SEVEN: Share the Good News of our plan and our outcomes

- We keep track of our goals through having them on our meeting agenda and minutes, and circulating these to those we serve and the wider diocese
- We pray and encourage each other throughout the process, keeping our focus on becoming the community Christ calls us to be
- We celebrate our achievements, giving thanks to God for the fruits of the Holy Spirit
- We share our outcomes with the community and wider diocese.

AN EXAMPLE OF HOW DEANERY PASTORAL COUNCIL MAY SET GOALS

Our Deanery decides to develop key goals. We invite the Pastoral Planning Office to assist us in the following process.

STEP ONE:

- We realise we haven't heard much from our parishes and schools so send out a short survey and offering plenary reflection sessions. The pastoral Planning office offers us resources to achieve this and collates the findings.
- We bring together our clergy, deanery pastoral council, some school representatives, and the youth director and social justice coordinator from the diocese. We decide to hold our session via zoom due to covid-19 restrictions.
- Before the session, our participants are briefed on the findings of our survey.

STEP TWO:

- We centre ourselves in prayer and are offered smaller breakout rooms on zoom to intentionally share the fruits of our prayer.

STEP THREE:

- We silently consider what the Holy Spirit is sharing with us.

STEP FOUR:

- In small groups, we gather a list of main ways we believe we are being asked to share. Once these are shared with main group, we have over 30 areas listed, though realise these can be grouped into ten main areas.

STEP FIVE:

- We reflect on the councils' vision and mission.
- Through an online poll, we prioritise our top three areas.
- We identify how each of these goals is aligned with our focus areas and plenary topics.
- The meeting ends.

STEP SIX:

- A smaller group of deanery pastoral council reps, clergy reps and school reps, regathers.
- A draft plan is developed, with timelines and achievable actions.
- This is shared back to each parish community and other relevant group for sign off.

STEP SEVEN:

- We develop three teams to progress the goals, and these periodically offer progress.
- Our parishes, deanery and diocese receive updates of our progress.
- We give thanks to God for what is achieved and review and restart our process.

APPENDIX 1: MEETING AGENDA TEMPLATE

Name:			
Date of Meeting:		Time:	
Meeting Chairperson:		Location:	
Minute Taker:			
Attendees:			
Apologies:			

Time	Agenda Item	Speaker	Focus area

APPENDIX 2: MEETING MINUTES TEMPLATE

Meeting Name:					
Date of Meeting: (MM/DD/YYYY)		Time:			
Meeting Chaired by:		Meeting Opened:			
Minutes Prepared By:		Location:			
1. Attendance at Meeting					
Name:			Present/Apology/No Response		
2. Acceptance of Previous Minutes					
Accepted:					
Seconded:					
3. Agenda and Notes, Decisions, Issues (Including formation)					
Topics & Notes		Owner/Presenter		Outcomes	
4. Action items					
Action		Owner		Which Goal/Focus Area Aligned to	
5. Next Meeting					
Date: (MM/DD/YYYY)		Time:		Location:	
Meeting Closed:					

APPENDIX 3: DISCERNMENT GUIDE FOR OFFICE BEARERS

Adapted from Cecilia Anning's Guidelines for Parish Pastoral Councils

A SUGGESTED PROCESS OF SELECTION

Before the meeting, invite all councillors to read the Role Statement for Office Bearers [see statutes]. Then, begin the process with prayer to the Holy Spirit for guidance.

The usual practice is for the President or ex-officio member to chair the following sections, acting as a Returning Officer.

The previous office bearers, at this point, may be invited to offer a short description of how they experienced their role.

1. Choosing the Chairperson

Invite each councillor to write down the names of two people whom they wish to recommend for the position of chairperson. (Secret ballot)

2. The Returning Officer will then collect the written sheets and name the people recommended (but **not** the number of times each has been recommended).

3. Invite those recommended to indicate whether they accept or decline nomination, giving their reasons for either accepting or declining. This is an opportunity for a given member to share the gifts and experience they may bring to the role.

4. If necessary, decide the position by ballot. (Again, secret ballot. It is suggested not to share the number of votes received by each nominee, only to name the successful nominee.)

5. Choosing the Secretary

Initially clarify whether or not there is a minutes' secretary separate from this role. Ask each councillor in turn if he/she would be open to accepting the position of secretary. Usually, simple negotiation will decide the position. If not, conduct a ballot as above.

6. Choosing the Deputy Chairperson

Ask each councillor in turn if he/she would be open to accepting the position. If negotiation cannot determine the position, conduct another ballot as above.

7. Thank all who accepted nomination and made the process possible.

8. Thank the three councillors who accepted the positions.

9. Thank the outgoing office bearers for their committed efforts during the previous term.





ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY:

*I begin this session by acknowledging
the Traditional Custodians of the land
on which we gather today, and pay my
respects to their Elders past and present.
I extend that respect to Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander peoples here today.*

THE FOLLOWING PRAYERS ARE OFFERED AS SUGGESTIONS FOR MEETINGS:

OPENING PRAYER:

Lord, as we prepare to begin our meeting, we recall your promise to be present when two or three are gathered in your name.

All: *Unite us, Lord, in your Spirit.*

Lord, inspire us with your Spirit of wisdom; plant seeds of your vision in our hearts and minds; give us humour and give us humility as we work with one another to help people to come to know you.

All: *Unite us, Lord, in your Spirit.*

Grant us the willingness to be open to each other, to respect each other, to be honest with each other to be supportive of each other as we strive to do your will.

All: *Unite us, Lord, in your Spirit.*

(Adapted from Prayer for Parish Groups D Harrington & J. Kavanagh)

Amen

CLOSING PRAYER:

Lord, with your help may the wisdom gained from our reflection and sharing inspire us as we work through the business of this meeting remembering we are your hands and feet on this earth. We ask this, through Christ Our Lord. Amen

IN THE SPIRIT OF SYNODALITY WE TRY TO FINISH EACH MEETING WITH THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

“In my prayer today, I ..., and this leaves me feeling...”

“ After silent reflection, “In the voices of the group, I hear the Spirit.... and this leaves me feeling...”

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Administration	Diocesan Reception, Executive Assistant, Secretary and Admin Roles
Agencies	Umbrella term for larger works of the diocese e.g. Catholic Care Social Services
Archives	Diocesan record keeping
Audit & Risk	Inspects and mitigates risk in financials and broader workings of the diocese
Australian Catholic Bishops Conference	The national organisation of the Catholic Church. All bishops gather twice a year. A number of other national offices & councils exist
Bethany Centre	Chancery, Catholic Education, Diocesan Development Fund offices – 470 Church St, Parramatta
Bishop	Oversees the ministerial and administrative life of a diocese, is the superior of all the priests, as well as the local spiritual leader for all of the faithful within his care. Called to exercise a three-fold office: to teach, govern, and sanctify.
Catholic Care Social Services	Services include: Aboriginal and Community Building; Family and Community Support; Disability, Mental Health and Ageing; Counselling and Education
Catholic Diocese of Parramatta Services Limited	A new diocesan agency supporting pastoral outreach including, but not to be limited to: a system of Catholic early childhood services; providing social enterprise services; and undertaking any other services related to these activities.
Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta	Provides learning and teaching in a faith-centred environment. Intent is to provide quality Catholic schooling by strengthening the professional lives of staff, to improve the learning outcomes for students within a Catholic faith community.
Catholic Foundation	Replaces the Diocesan Works Fund, and expands on its good works. Seeks to raise \$2.5 million annually to sustain diocesan works
Catholic Youth Parramatta	Connects youth and young adults of Western Sydney & the Blue Mountains with the Church through events, quality formation programs & local youth groups.
Chancellors	Two roles: Monsignor Ron McFarlane, who is responsible for archives; and Sr Ailsa Mackinnon, Chancellor – Ministries, who coordinates Head Mission Engagement and Head Formation for Mission. Both are members of the Curia.
Chancery	Short-hand name given to some offices of Bethany Centre. More broadly refers to Operations and Finance; Ministries, CCD & CYP, Curia and Bishop.
Chaplains	Support ethnic communities, prisons, hospitals, aged care, universities.
Chief of Operations & Finance	Geoff Officer, responsible for operations and finance. Member of curia.
Clergy	Term includes deacons, priests and bishops.
Clergy Conferences	Held several times a year to engage all clergy in the diocese on key matters.
Clergy Health & Wellbeing	Support team in the chancery.
College of Consultors	Priests who advise the bishop on key matters.

Communications	Team in Chancery handling all the communications needs of the bishop and the diocese in order to grow and share the message of love and salvation of Jesus Christ to the people of Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains.
Confraternity of Christian Doctrine	The CCD supports the parishes by conducting training courses that accredit Catechists/Special Religious Education Teachers (SREs) who teach in state schools.
Council of Priests	Priests who advise the bishop on key matters.
Covenant Communities	Group of Christians who bind themselves to God and one another via public commitment. e.g. Servants of Jesus, Disciples of Jesus.
Curia	In this diocese, the name given to key advisory group to the bishop including vicars general, chancellors, chief of operations and finance and Sue Walsh.
Deanery	Name given to a geographical grouping of parishes within a diocese. Each deanery has a dean (one of the parish priests), a Deanery Clergy Gathering, and a Deanery Pastoral Council. Central Deanery Pastoral Council incorporates Central East and Central West parishes.
Deanery Clergy Gatherings	Gathering of deanery clergy for fellowship and to consider pastoral matters.
Deanery Pastoral Councils	Advisory group of lay people drawn from parishes within a deanery.
Diocese	Geographical grouping of parishes in a region, served by a bishop. Sometimes referred to as the Local church or particular church in Church documents.
Diocesan Councils	An umbrella term to describe the number of advisory councils operating at a diocesan level.
Diocesan Development Fund	Provide a source of finance and credit for capital expenditure in the works of the Church: and to provide funds for welfare and pastoral programs in the diocese.
Diocesan Pastoral Council	Lay council offering advice to the bishop on key pastoral matters.
Ecclesial Movements	Associations which have received the official recognition and explicit approval of the Holy See including Opus Dei, Neo-Catechumenal Way.
Episcopal Vicars	Clergy who represent the bishop and are assigned oversight of various diocesan responsibilities.
Financial Services	A team of the chancery.
ICT Services	Information and Communications Technology Services, a team of the chancery.
Lay Organisations	Includes St Vincent de Paul Society, Caritas, Catholic Mission, Catholic Women's League and Legion of Mary.
Lay Pastoral Ministers	Term employed by Australian Catholic Bishops for key lay volunteers or employees working alongside ordained for the building up of the church (e.g. pastoral associate).
Marriage and Family	Mission to proclaim and support the Church's teaching on pro-life issues, marriage, family life and relationships, includes pre-marriage courses and natural family planning support.
Ministries	An umbrella term used to describe a number of works of the diocese.

Office for Safeguarding	To ensure that agencies and services in the Diocese of Parramatta are child-safe environments. This includes having robust systems in place to keep children and other vulnerable people safe when they are involved in diocesan activities.
Worship	Offers liturgical formation, coordination and practice; and assists local parish communities to implement diocesan policy regarding the Sacraments of Initiation for Children (SOI) and Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA).
Operations & Finance	Umbrella term for chancery services including finances, communications, Information Technology, Properties & Infrastructure, and People & Culture.
Parish Finance Committee	Advises parish priest on administration of temporal goods. Required by canon law.
Parish Pastoral Council	Advisory council in parish advising the parish priest of pastoral issues.
Parish Staff	Umbrella term for secretary, parish manager, accountant, sacramental coordinator, pastoral associate etc. Parishes may have none of these roles, or one person may carry out several roles, sometimes as a volunteer.
Parish Support Team	A virtual team within chancery drawn from the different areas, focused on support for parishes, particularly through the provision of parish secretary training, formation and resourcing.
Parramatta Tribunal	Responsible for the preparation and assessment of all cases (marriage and otherwise) presented to it. It prepares formal nullity cases as well as other cases.
Pastoral Formation	Serves the implementation of the diocesan pastoral plan, including pastoral council formation and support and other diocesan formation opportunities.
People & Culture	Name given to human resources role in the chancery.
Plenary	Australian Catholic Bishops Conference are coordinating this key synodal process in the life of the Church in Australia.
Property & Infrastructure	A service of the chancery.
Religious Institutions	Umbrella term given to the many religious orders present in the diocese.
Peace, Justice & Ecology	Identifies, reflects on and responds to issues which affect society and the natural environment, especially the most vulnerable and marginalised. The team disseminates information and supports parishes and schools in taking action. It liaises with other welfare and social justice organisations.

DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL STATUTES

Revised 28 October 2020

INTRODUCTION

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

The People of God, endowed with *sensus fidei*, “the sense of the faithful”, are called to synodality, that is to practice continual discernment within the Body of Christ, united with the voice and action of the Holy Spirit. Such discernment includes listening to the Word of God, discerning the signs of the times in the light of the Gospel, and consulting with all the baptised through formative processes. The synodal task ensures both fidelity to our Catholic Church and creative engagement with our current context, leading to effective planning for mission.

St Paul VI states: “It is the function of the pastoral council to investigate everything pertaining to pastoral activities, to weigh them carefully and to set forth practical conclusions concerning them so as to promote conformity of the life and actions of the People of God with the Gospel”, in the awareness that, as Pope Francis recalled, the purpose of such a Council “should not be ecclesiastical organization but rather the missionary aspiration of reaching everyone”.

The Diocese of Parramatta serves the mission of the church through the work of a number of pastoral councils. These include the Diocesan Pastoral Council, Deanery Pastoral Councils, and a Parish Pastoral Council in each parish, as mandated by the Bishop (see Canon 536).

1. NAME

This body shall be called the Diocesan Pastoral Council, Diocese of Parramatta, otherwise known as The Diocesan Pastoral Council.

2. ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1. The Second Vatican Council recommends that

In dioceses, as far as possible, councils should be set up to assist the Church’s apostolic work, whether in the field of evangelisation and sanctification or in the fields of charity, social relations and the rest; the clergy and religious working with the laity in whatever way proves satisfactory. (Apostolate of the laity, n.26)

2.2. The Diocesan Pastoral Council acts as a significant form of the synodal church, sharing in the responsibility for the ongoing life and development of the diocese.

2.3. The Diocesan Pastoral Council shall:

- i. Discern matters that concern the pastoral life of the diocese, particularly with concern to parishes and deaneries, and make recommendations to the Bishop.
- ii. Discern and collaborate with other bodies, particularly deanery pastoral councils, in the implementation of the strategic pastoral goals of the diocese.
- iii. Collaborate with other bodies in an annual review of the strategic pastoral goals of the diocese and recommend any necessary revisions to the Bishop.

3. KEY RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER BODIES

The Diocesan Pastoral Council provides and receives key information and advice on pastoral matters, in relationship with:

- i. The parishes, particularly through their deanery pastoral councils
- ii. The Curia
- iii. The Council of Priests
- iv. The College of Consultors
- v. The Diocesan Finance Council
- vi. The Pastoral Formation Team
- vii. Other diocesan bodies (e.g. Chancery, Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta)

4. MEMBERSHIP

4.1 CANON LAW REQUIREMENTS:

- i. 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. (Can. 512 §2.)
- ii. 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. (Can. 512 §3)

4.2. QUALITIES REQUIRED FOR MEMBERSHIP

Each member is expected to be:

- i. a prayerful Catholic, 18 years or older, committed to growth in faith and sharing in the mission of Christ.
- ii. a good listener and an interested communicator who believes in the value of shared discernment.
- iii. willing to grow in awareness of the pastoral needs of parishes and diocese and to commit to examining and studying relevant issues.
- iv. seeking to promote the Church's merciful, joyful engagement with the wider community.
- v. keen to explore how the people and leadership at each level of our diocese can grow in faith, awareness and skills for the mission of evangelisation in today's world.
- vi. accepting of the mission and purpose of the council, including its role as a consultative body within the structure of the Catholic Church.
- vii. open to study and reflection and willing to come prepared to meetings.
- viii. strongly interested in the directions of the church locally, nationally and beyond.
- ix. willing to make a three-year commitment to the work of the council.

4.3. TYPES OF MEMBERSHIP

- i. Membership consists of:
 - a. Eight to eighteen members.
 - b. at least one from each deanery.
 - c. The Bishop.
 - d. Ex-officio members.
- ii. The Council will have as broad a membership as possible, with a diversity of age, gender, and ethnic origin.
- iii. Each Council member is a representative of the whole diocese and not a representative of a specific parish or deanery only.

4.4. EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Ex-officio members will consist of:

- i. The Bishop as president of the council
- ii. The following non-voting, and non-office bearers:
 - a. The Head of the Pastoral Formation Team or their representative.
 - b. Appointments made by the Council through the Bishop in consultation with the Council, which may include a member of clergy, a Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta representative, a chaplaincy representative, and/or a representative of a significant Catholic institute or religious congregation present in the diocese.

4.5. INDUCTION, FORMATION AND COMMISSIONING

- i. Prior to the first meeting, an induction including welcome and initial orientation will be offered by Council executive in collaboration with the Pastoral Formation Team.
- ii. Lay members of the Council are diocesan volunteers, and as such, should familiarise themselves with relevant diocesan policies prior to commencement of their role.
- iii. There will be a session of formation for all Council members annually.
- iv. Diocesan Commissioning of Council members is strongly encouraged.

4.6. RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS

In a spirit of prayerfulness each member of the Diocesan Pastoral Council will:

- i. Attend the regular meetings of the Council.
- ii. Provide input to deliberations of the Council.
- iii. Develop a spirit of enquiry and the ability to listen and understand the issues affecting the pastoral life of the deanery.
- iv. Provide support and encouragement for other members of the Council.
- v. Actively participate in the support of finalised plans of action.
- vi. Embrace opportunities for personal faith development and for gaining skills to assist with effective participation in the Council's operations.
- vii. Represent the Diocesan Pastoral Council when required, particularly at meetings of Deanery Pastoral Councils and the Council of Priests.

4.7. ROLE OF THE EXECUTIVE

- i. The Bishop as president of the Council plus office-bearers will form the executive.
- ii. The office-bearers will be:
 - a. Chairperson,
 - b. Deputy Chairperson,
 - c. Secretary.
- iii. Office-bearers may hold office for no more than three years. Office-bearers may be re-elected. Council members elect the office-bearers.
- iv. The Executive is assisted by the Pastoral Formation Team and is responsible for the following:
 - a. Organising the agendas.
 - b. Coordinating the business of the Council between meetings.
 - c. Representing the Council, whether on a particular topic as noted in the minutes, or in ad hoc situations such as liaising with members of the Deanery Pastoral Councils, clergy and other people in leadership positions.
 - d. Keeping a record of membership, correspondence, meeting attendance and projects.

- e. Managing any finances and risk assessments as required.
- f. Representing the Council, through at least one member at joint Diocesan and Deanery Pastoral Council Executive Meetings, as required.
- g. Ensuring provision of timely minutes, agendas, and reports to members and relevant bodies.
- h. Reviewing the effectiveness of the Council.
- i. Securing venues, setting up appointments and general administrative functions, supported by the Pastoral Formation Team.
- j. Conducting, at minimum, one meeting of all Executive members between each meeting of the Council to manage its responsibilities and business.
- k. Circulating outward correspondence from the Council. This is generally the responsibility of appointed Executive members, who draw upon the advice of the Pastoral Formation Team.

4.8. TERM OF MEMBERSHIP

- i. The term of membership is three years.
- ii. It is anticipated that approximately half the Council members will nominate to continue for a second term to facilitate continuity in Council business.
- iii. Any member who serves two terms consecutively will then stand down for a minimum period of one term.
- iv. Any member of the council may resign by giving written notice of intention to the executive. The resignation shall operate from its acceptance by the bishop.

4.9. NEW AND RENEWED MEMBERSHIP

- i. A nomination process for new members and members available for a second term will occur at the end of each term of Council membership.
- ii. Nominees are sought throughout the Diocese, each endorsed by a priest of the diocese. The Bishop may seek other expressions of interest beyond this process. Nominees do not need to be members of a Parish Pastoral Council or Deanery Pastoral Council.

- iii. 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 Formation Team and any other advice he requires before making the final appointments and he may seek additional and ex-officio members.
- iv. Ex-officio appointments are determined by the Bishop in consultation with the Council.

4.10. CASUAL VACANCIES

- i. The Council may fill any casual vacancy by invitation by the Bishop in consultation with the council and supported by the Pastoral Formation Team.
- ii. Prior to joining the Council, the proposed candidate will receive an induction on responsibilities and expectations as a member (c.f. 4.5.i, ii).
- iii. After completing the remainder of the current term of membership for a casual vacancy, the new member may seek reappointment through the nomination process.
- iv. A position is considered vacant if a member:
 - a. resigns from the Diocesan Pastoral Council,
 - b. withdraws from active participation in the Diocesan Pastoral Council,
 - c. withdraws from active participation in the Diocese.

5. PROCEDURES

5.1. MEETINGS

- i. There will be a minimum of four meetings of the Council each year.
- ii. The Bishop or his delegate and more than half the members (not including ex-officio members) constitute a quorum for a meeting.
- iii. A representative of each Deanery Pastoral Council is to be present for at least part of each meeting.
- iv. In addition, members may be invited to participate in:
 - a. joint gatherings with the deanery pastoral councils.
 - b. joint meetings with the council of priests.

5.2. CONSENSUS DECISION-MAKING

- i. The consensus approach to decision-making will be used in the process of contributing towards the making of Council decisions, with each member offering their conscience-derived input towards final outcomes.
- ii. In a spirit of synodality non-binding votes may sometimes be taken to obtain indicative Council feeling on particular matters.
- iii. Lobbying, competition and domination should be avoided, so as to support a full burgeoning of synodality in the Council.

5.3. SUB-COMMITTEES AND WORKING PARTIES

Such groups:

- i. May be set up under the auspices of the Diocesan Pastoral Council.
- ii. May be established for specific purposes for a fixed duration or as a standing committee.
- iii. Will report and be answerable to the Council.
- iv. May include members of the Diocesan Pastoral Council and other persons as required.

5.4. DIOCESAN FORUM

- i. A diocesan forum (e.g. synod or assembly) may be considered by the council as a means of engagement of the diocese. The approval of such an organ rests with the Bishop.
- ii. Such a gathering may include some or all of the following components:
 - a. Faith formation.
 - b. Information sharing.
 - c. Community building/inter-parish, inter-agency connections.
 - d. Listening and Dialogue.
 - e. Discernment and Goal Setting.
 - f. Review of goals and activities of the diocese.
- iii. The development of a diocesan forum requires the support and guidance of the Pastoral Formation Team, which coordinates financial and logistics support, including - but not limited to - advertising, venue hire, security and catering.

5.5. MEETING VENUES

Where possible, Council meetings are to be held at a diocesan or parish venue. If held at another venue, this requires approval of the Bishop and an appropriate risk assessment.

5.6. COSTS AND EXPENSES

- i. Catering for Council meetings is provided through the Pastoral Formation Team.
- ii. Travel expenses are the responsibility of the individual member.
- iii. The executive may request reasonable financial support from the diocese, via the Pastoral Formation Team, for the holding of a Diocesan Forum, or other Council initiative.

6. REVIEW OF STATUTES

- i. These Statutes will be reviewed at the end of each Council term, or more frequently if the need arises.
- ii. Changes to these Statutes will occur only after consultation with the Pastoral Formation Team and final sign off by the Bishop.

DEANERY PASTORAL COUNCIL STATUTES

Revised 28 October 2020

INTRODUCTION

The Deanery Pastoral Councils of the Diocese of Parramatta are a vital aspect of communion with the Church. Considering the pastoral questions of our day with their Dean, the members of the Deanery Pastoral Council are imbued with a pastoral spirit to aid their Dean and their Bishop and participate in the pastoral care of the Church. There is one such council per deanery.

The People of God, endowed with *sensus fidei*, “the sense of the faithful”, are called to synodality, that is to practice continual discernment within the Body of Christ, united with the voice and action of the Holy Spirit. Such discernment includes listening to the Word of God, discerning the signs of the times in the light of the Gospel, and consulting with all the baptised through formative processes. The synodal task ensures both fidelity to our Catholic Church and creative engagement with our current context, leading to effective planning for mission.

St Paul VI states: “It is the function of the pastoral council to investigate everything pertaining to pastoral activities, to weigh them carefully and to set forth practical conclusions concerning them so as to promote conformity of the life and actions of the People of God with the Gospel”, in the awareness that, as Pope Francis recalled, the purpose of such a Council “should not be ecclesiastical organization but rather the missionary aspiration of reaching everyone”.

The Diocese of Parramatta serves the mission of the church through the work of a number of pastoral councils. These include the Diocesan Pastoral Council, Deanery Pastoral Councils, and a Parish Pastoral Council in each parish, as mandated by the Bishop (see Canon 536).

1. NAME

This body shall be called the [Deanery Title] Deanery Pastoral Council, Diocese of Parramatta, otherwise known as The [Deanery Title] Deanery Pastoral Council.

2. ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1. The Second Vatican Council recommends that

In dioceses, as far as possible, councils should be set up to assist the Church’s apostolic work, whether in the field of evangelisation and sanctification or in the fields of charity, social relations and the rest; the clergy and religious working with the laity in whatever way proves satisfactory. (*Apostolate of the laity*, n.26)

2.2. The Deanery Pastoral Council acts as a significant form of the synodal church, sharing in the responsibility for the ongoing life and development of the deanery.

2.3. The Deanery Pastoral Council shall:

- 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.

3. KEY RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER BODIES

The Deanery Pastoral Council provides and receives key information and advice on pastoral matters, in relationship with:

- i. Their parishes, particularly through their parish priest/administrators and their Parish Pastoral Councils.
- ii. The deanery clergy, particularly through their Deanery Clergy gatherings.
- iii. The Diocesan Pastoral Council.
- iv. The Pastoral Formation Team.
- v. Other local and diocesan bodies (e.g. chancery, local government council).

4. MEMBERSHIP

4.1. CANON LAW REQUIREMENTS:

- i. 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. (Can. 512 §2.)
- ii. 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. (Can. 512 §3)

4.2. QUALITIES REQUIRED FOR MEMBERSHIP

Each member is expected to be:

- i. a prayerful Catholic, 18 years or older, committed to growth in faith and sharing in the mission of Christ.
- ii. a good listener and an interested communicator who believes in the value of shared discernment.
- iii. willing to grow in awareness of the pastoral needs of parishes and diocese and to commit to examining and studying relevant issues.
- iv. seeking to promote the Church's merciful, joyful engagement with the wider community.
- v. keen to explore how the people and leadership at each level of our diocese can grow in faith, awareness and skills for the mission of evangelisation in today's world.
- vi. accepting of the mission and purpose of the council, including its role as a consultative body within the structure of the Catholic Church.
- vii. open to study and reflection and willing to come prepared to meetings.
- viii. strongly interested in the directions of the church locally, nationally and beyond.
- ix. willing to make a three-year commitment to the work of the council.

4.3. TYPES OF MEMBERSHIP

i. Membership consists of:

- e. Two lay people from each parish in the deanery, at least one of whom is a member of their Parish Pastoral Council. A representative who is not a member of their Parish Pastoral Council is required to possess a strong working relationship with their parish priest/administrator and Parish Pastoral Council.
- f. The Dean.
- g. Ex-officio members.
- ii. The Council will have as broad a membership as possible, with a diversity of age, gender, and ethnic origin.
- iii. Each Council member is a representative of the whole deanery and not a representative of their home parish only.

4.4. EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Ex-officio members will consist of:

- i. The Dean as president of the council
- ii. The following non-voting, and non-office bearers:
 - a. At least one other member of clergy. Different members may participate.
 - b. The Head of the Pastoral Formation Team or their representative.
 - c. Appointments made by the Council through the Dean in consultation with the Council, which may include a Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta representative, a chaplaincy representative, and/or a representative of a significant Catholic institute or religious congregation present in the deanery.

4.5. INDUCTION, FORMATION AND COMMISSIONING

- i. Prior to the first meeting, an induction including welcome and initial orientation will be offered by Council executive in collaboration with the Pastoral Formation Team.
- ii. Lay members of the Council are diocesan volunteers, and as such, should familiarise themselves with relevant diocesan policies prior to commencement of their role.
- iii. There will be a session of formation for all Council members annually.
- iv. Parish Commissioning of Council members is strongly encouraged.

4.6. RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS

In a spirit of prayerfulness each member of the Deanery Pastoral Council will:

- i. Attend the regular meetings of the Council.
- ii. Provide input to deliberations of the Council.
- iii. Communicate and collaborate with their parish priest/administrator and Parish Pastoral Council
- iv. Develop a spirit of enquiry and the ability to listen and understand the issues affecting the pastoral life of the deanery.
- v. Provide support and encouragement for other members of the Council.
- vi. Actively participate in the support of finalised plans of action.
- vii. Embrace opportunities for personal faith development and for gaining skills to assist with effective participation in the Council's operations.
- viii. Represent the Deanery Pastoral Council when required.

4.7.ROLE OF THE EXECUTIVE

- i. The Dean as president of the Council plus office-bearers will form the executive.
- ii. The office-bearers, chosen by the members, will be:
 - a. Chairperson,
 - b. Deputy Chairperson,
 - c. Secretary.
- iii. Office-bearers may hold office for no more than three years. Office-bearers may be re-appointed. Council members discern the office-bearers.
- iv. The Executive is assisted by the Pastoral Formation Team and is responsible for the following:
 - a. Organising the agendas.
 - b. Coordinating the business of the Council between meetings.
- v. Representing the Council, whether on a particular topic as noted in the minutes, or in ad hoc situations such as liaising with members of the Diocesan Pastoral Council, clergy of the Deanery or Diocese and other people in leadership positions.
 - a. Keeping a record of membership, correspondence, meeting attendance and projects.
 - b. Managing any finances and risk assessments as required.
 - c. Representing the Council, through at least one member:
 - d. at Diocesan Pastoral Council meetings, for some or all of the meeting.
 - e. at joint Diocesan and Deanery Pastoral Council Executive Meetings, as required.
 - f. Ensuring provision of timely minutes, agendas, and reports to members and relevant bodies.
 - g. Reviewing the effectiveness of the Council.
 - h. Securing venues, setting up appointments and general administrative functions, supported by the Pastoral Formation Team.
- i. Conducting, at minimum, one meeting of all Executive members between each meeting of the Council to manage its responsibilities and business.

- j. Circulating outward correspondence from the Council. This is generally the responsibility of appointed Executive members, who draw upon the advice of the Pastoral Formation Team.

4.8. TERM OF MEMBERSHIP

- i. The term of membership is three years.
- ii. It is anticipated that approximately half the Council members will be appointed by their parish to continue for a second term to facilitate continuity in Council business.
- iii. Any member who serves two terms consecutively will then stand down for a minimum period of one term.
- iv. Any member of the council may resign by giving written notice of intention to the executive. The resignation shall operate from its acceptance by the Dean.

4.9. NEW AND RENEWED MEMBERSHIP

- i. A nomination process for new members and members available for a second term will occur at the end of each term of Council membership.
- ii. Membership of each Parish is determined through nomination endorsed by the parish priest/administrator. Appointments are confirmed by the Dean.
- iii. Ex-officio appointments are determined by the Dean in consultation with the Council.
- iv. Prior to joining the Council, new members will receive an induction on responsibilities and expectations as a member (c.f. 4.5.i, ii).

4.10. CASUAL VACANCIES

- i. The Council may fill any casual vacancy by consultation with the parish priest/administrator of the parish requiring representation, supported by the Pastoral Formation Team. Appointments are confirmed by the Dean.
- ii. Prior to joining the Council, the proposed candidate will receive an induction on responsibilities and expectations as a member (c.f. 4.5.i, ii).

- iii. After completing the remainder of the current term of membership for a casual vacancy, the new member may be reappointed by their parish priest/administrator.

- iv. A position is considered vacant if a member:

- a. resigns from the Deanery Pastoral Council,
- b. steps down from their Parish Pastoral Council, and was appointed as representing their parish pastoral council,
- c. withdraws from active participation on the Deanery Pastoral Council,
- d. withdraws from active participation in their home parish.

5. PROCEDURES

5.1. MEETINGS

- i. There will be a minimum of four meetings of the Council each year.
- ii. The Dean or his delegate and more than half the members (not including ex-officio members) constitute a quorum for a meeting.
- iii. In addition, members may be invited to participate in:
 - a. joint gatherings of deanery pastoral councils, which may include Diocesan Pastoral Council.
 - b. joint meetings with deanery clergy.

5.2. CONSENSUS DECISION-MAKING

- i. The consensus approach to decision-making will be used in the process of contributing towards the making of Council decisions, with each member offering their conscience-derived input towards final outcomes.
- ii. In a spirit of synodality non-binding votes may sometimes be taken to obtain indicative Council feeling on particular matters.
- iii. Lobbying, competition and domination should be avoided, so as to support a full burgeoning of synodality in the Council.

5.3. TASK GROUPS AND WORKING PARTIES

Such groups:

- i. May be set up under the auspices of the Deanery Pastoral Council.
- ii. May be established for specific purposes for a fixed duration.
- iii. Will report and be answerable to the Council.
- iv. Following review of their activities, may be extended for a further period by the Council to continue their task or project.
- v. May include members of the Deanery Pastoral Council and other persons from the Deanery.

5.4. DEANERY GATHERINGS

- i. 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.
- ii. The purpose of these gatherings is to strengthen the synodal character of the diocese, which may include some or all of the following components:
 - a. Faith formation.
 - b. Information sharing.
 - c. Community building/inter-parish connections.
 - d. Listening and Dialogue.
 - e. Discernment and Goal Setting.
 - f. Review of goals and activities of deanery.
- iii. At least once per Council term, a deanery forum is held, that is, a synodal gathering enabling the deanery to listen and discern and set directions together on matters of pastoral significance.
- iv. The development of a deanery forum requires the support and guidance of the Pastoral Formation Team.
- v. For all deanery gatherings, the Pastoral Formation Team is available to coordinate financial and logistics support, including - but not limited to - advertising, venue hire, security and catering.

5.5. MEETING VENUES

- i. Where possible, Council meetings are to be held at a parish venue. If held at a non-parish venue, this requires approval of the Dean and an appropriate risk assessment.
- ii. Meetings are likewise encouraged to be rotated to different parish venues in order to offer representatives a broader awareness of the deanery.

5.6. COSTS AND EXPENSES

- i. Catering for Council meetings may be shared between parishes, however, there is no presumption that a parish must financially support a deanery meeting. If required, the Dean, in consultation with the Pastoral Formation Team, may seek diocesan funds for reasonable catering costs.
- ii. Travel expenses are the responsibility of the individual member.
- iii. The executive may request reasonable financial support from the diocese, via the Pastoral Formation Team, for the holding of a Deanery Forum, or for other deanery-based activities of the Council. Parishes are strongly encouraged to financially support Deanery Gatherings and deanery-based activities.

6. REVIEW OF STATUTES

- i. These Statutes will be reviewed at the end of each Council term, or more frequently if the need arises.
- ii. Changes to these Statutes will occur only after consultation with the Pastoral Formation Team and final sign off by the Bishop.

VERSION CONTROL

Section	Main Edit	Updated
Advisory Councils Handbook developed	Development of Handbook	5/10/2018
Our Mission	Added 7a, b, c, d	2/2/2021
A Snapshot of our Diocese	"History" section retitled "Overview of the Area encompassed by the Diocese" and additional social awareness of diocese included	2/2/2021
A Snapshot of our Diocese	Updated Deaneries and parishes to reflect change to six deaneries which occurred in late 2020	2/2/2021
A Snapshot of our Diocese	Catholic Population and Mass Attendance section updated	2/2/2021
A Snapshot of our Diocese	Clergy section updated	2/2/2021
A Snapshot of our Diocese	Our Diocesan Staff and Volunteers updated to include CDPSL	2/2/2021
A Snapshot of our Diocese	Added: Main Communications; Diocesan Profile	2/2/2021
How We Grow & Share our Faith	Added CDPSL & Changed categorisation of some bodies	2/2/2021
Glossary of Terms	Added Bethany Centre, updated Chancellors (Sr Ailsa), added Sue Walsh to Curia, deleted Diocesan Ministry Centre, updated Office for Safeguarding title, revised Plenary	2/2/2021
Agenda and Minutes Template	Templates added Appendix 1 & 2	10/2/2021
Sample Discernment Guide	This section added Appendix 3	25/2/2021
The Unique Role of our Pastoral Councils	Added as new section	14/3/2021
How our Councils Function in and Between Meetings	Added as New Section	14/3/2021
A Guide to Role and Responsibilities - Parishes and Deaneries	Added as New Section	14/3/2021
Sample Planning Template	Added as Appendix	14/3/2021
Safeguarding Practices for our Councils	Added as New Section	14/3/2021
New Title & Footer	Renamed "Handbook for Diocesan & Deanery Pastoral Councils" from "Welcome Kit"	24/3/2021
Diocesan Pastoral Council Statutes	Version 28/10/20. Added as new section.	24/3/2021
Deanery Pastoral Council Statutes	Version 28/10/20. Added as new section.	24/3/2021
Latest Version	The document's first section has been re-written, statutes have been updated to reflect changes in governance - Pastoral Planning Office has been replaced with Pastoral Formation Team, The Mission and Vision document has been included in the Handbook. The Handbook has been renamed. Safeguarding practices for our Councils have been removed and updated with the Parramatta Way of Safeguarding. Sample planning template has been removed.	November 2021

The Parramatta Way of Safeguarding is to...



Act with Justice, and state that we have a zero tolerance for any form of abuse or harm to children or any person

Act with justice and ensure that laws and obligations are upheld, and safety is paramount

And it is to

Love tenderly, as we accept all who come to the Diocese of Parramatta from all walks of life, cultures, and abilities

Love tenderly, as we accept any person for who they are and where they are at in their lives

Love tenderly, as we look after and priorities children and care for those who may be in a difficult situation or at risk of harm for whatever reason

Love tenderly, as we are servants of the Church, and our role is to walk beside you and support you

And acknowledge

The traditional custodians of the land in which the Diocese of Parramatta sits – the Darug and Gundungurra people

The lifelong trauma of abuse victims and those failures of the Church to protect children and all adults at risk

The diversity of many cultural groups that reside in Parramatta creating a kaleidoscope of diversity and beliefs that are valued and respected

And celebrate the talents and gifts of the community and families of all abilities

And promote

The principles of Catholic social teaching of dignity, respect, association, participation, support for the vulnerable, solidarity, stewardship, subsidiarity, equality and the principle of the common good.

*"This is what the Lord asks of you: only this, to act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with your God."
(Micah 6:8)*

*The Pastoral Formation team desires to walk together
with Jesus, humanity and all creation into the depth of
God's love.*

*Guided by the Spirit of God's mission we joyfully
accompany others on our shared journey of faith
enrichment providing opportunities for personal growth
and community leadership building*



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NOTES:

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Pastoral Formation