



The Roman Catholic  
Diocese of Thunder Bay

Pastoral Council  
Guidelines or  
Constitutions

1. A Preamble containing the Mission Statement of the Parish could be included as an introduction.
2. The name of the Parish is to be included and the fact that this Council is constituted in conformity with Canon 536 of the Code of Canon Law and the Diocesan Statutes.
3. The Aims and Objectives of the Council are to be listed. Please Remember...
  - a. It is very important to keep in mind that the Pastor/Administrator is responsible for the spiritual AND temporal well being of the Parish. It is a popular misconception to believe that the Clergy is responsible for spiritual matters and the Laity for temporal affairs.
  - b. The Council is a Consultative not an Executive body. It give Counsel to the Pastor who is responsible for the implementation of recommendations.
  - c. The Council must not deal with financial issues. This is the role of a separate Finance Council which is regulated by its own Constitution.
4. **Membership.** Who can be members of the Council? What is the maximum number of members? How are they selected. Members can be selected in three ways: namely: by election; by appointment; and by virtue of the office they hold ("ex officio"). It goes without saying that the Members of the Pastoral Team and the Chair of the Financial Council should always be members of the Pastoral Council by virtue of their Offices. Strictly speaking, the Pastor is not a member but presides "ex officio" members. These Organizations should be specifically mentioned. It is also important in the Constitution to outline the process of the election and when it is to take place. It is also important to specify the duration of terms of membership and the process to be used

in replacing members who resign or are terminated for specific reasons (also to be specified).

5. **Officers of Council.** Each Council should have an executive and these Executive Officers should be listed. Their method of selection; their roles and the duration of their terms of Office are also to be spelled out here.
6. **Committees:** It is important to list a number of specific committees which will be part of the Council: ie: educational, outreach, celebration, social, etc... and to outline their roles within the Council.
7. **Meetings:** How frequently are they held, what constitutes a quorum, etc... it may also be helpful here to add a guideline agenda (Order of Business).
8. **Accountability:** It should be stated here that the Pastoral Council is accountable to the Diocesan Bishop, the Pastor and the Parishioners. It must also be stated that all decisions of the Council are to be made by **CONSENSUS only** and not by Vote.
9. **Amendments:** There is to be a section included to outline the process by which amendments to the Constitution are to be made, with the reminder that these are to be made infrequently.
10. **Arbitrator:** It must be stated that the Diocesan Bishop in his role as chief Pastor of the Diocese is the sole arbitrator in situations of deadlock or disagreements between the Pastor and the Pastoral Council.