



CONSTITUTION OF THE PRIESTS' COUNCIL

PREAMBLE: “Priests, prudent cooperators with the episcopal order as well as its aids and instruments, are called to serve the people of God. They constitute one priesthood with their bishop, although that priesthood is comprised of different functions. Associated with their bishop in a spirit of trust and generosity, priests make him present in a certain sense in the individual local congregations of the faithful, and take upon themselves, as far as they are able, his duties and concerns, discharging them with daily care. As they sanctify and govern under the bishop’s authority that part of the Lord’s flock entrusted to them, they make the universal Church visible in their own locality and lend powerful assistance to the up-building of the whole body of Christ (cf. Eph. 4:12). Intent always upon the welfare of God’s children, they must strive to lend their effort to the pastoral work of the whole diocese, and even of the entire Church.” (Art. 28--Constitution of the Church--Second Vatican Council)

Canon 495 #1: A Presbyteral council is to be established in each diocese, that is, a body of priests who are to be like a senate of the bishop, representing the presbyterate; this council is to aid the bishop in the governance of the diocese according to the norm of law, in order that the pastoral welfare of the portion of the people of God entrusted to him may be promoted as effectively as possible.

Canon 500 #1: It pertains to the diocesan bishop to convoke the Presbyteral council, to preside over it, and to determine the questions to be treated by it or to receive proposals from its members.

Canon 500 #2: The Presbyteral council enjoys only a consultative vote; the bishop is to listen to it in matters of greater moment, but he needs its consent only in cases expressly defined by law.

ARTICLE I: The name of this body shall be “**The Priests’ Council of the Diocese of Owensboro.**”

ARTICLE II: The purpose of the Priests’ Council shall be:

1. To provide a forum for the full and free discussion of all issues of pastoral concern in the diocese;
2. To aid the diocesan bishop in the governance of the diocese according to the norm of the law;
3. To search for and to propose ways and means for effective pastoral ministry;
4. To be representative of the unity and diversity of the priests of the diocese.

ARTICLE III: Membership: All incardinated priests working in the diocese, religious priests who live and work in the diocese, and secular priests not incardinated but working in the diocese, are eligible for membership in the Priests’ Council.

ARTICLE IV: Elections:

Section 1 - All priests living and working in the diocese unless retired have the right to vote and to be elected members of the Priests' Council.

Section 2 - The membership shall consist of the diocesan bishop, five priests representative of each of five age groupings, a dean from each of the deaneries, the vicar general as an ex officio member, together with two members appointed by the bishop at his pleasure. Computation of the five groups shall be according to year of ordination beginning with the most recently ordained.

Section 3 - The five age group representatives, elected for a term of five years (see Canon 502), and two priests appointed by the Bishop shall serve as Consultors. The election for the five priest representatives to serve as Consultors shall be by mail ballot.

Only the priests in each deanery are eligible to recommend to the Bishop and Personnel Committee a candidate for dean. After this consultative process, deans will be appointed to that office by the bishop for a term of three years.

Elections for vacant offices shall be held by mail ballot in the third week of June each year and terms shall begin at the first meeting following the election. A majority of votes cast shall elect. Terms shall be staggered so that not more than three terms of deans expire each year. (The members of the Priests' Council shall determine how their terms will be staggered.) The vacancy of any elected member's seat shall be filled by a special election in his constituency for the unexpired term.

ARTICLE V: Officers:

Section 1 - The officers of the Priests' Council shall be: president (the bishop--Canon 500 §1), chairperson, vice-chairperson and secretary.

Section 2 - Except for the president, the officers are elected by the members of the Priests' Council and shall serve for two years. The officers shall be elected at the first meeting of the Council following the election of the new members to the Council. No member shall hold more than one office, or be elected to the same office for more than two consecutive terms.

Section 3 - The duties of the chairperson shall be:

- A. To convene the meetings;
- B. To prepare the agenda for the meetings;
- C. To preside at the meetings;
- D. To appoint members to committees to carry out the functions of the Council;
- E. To perform the duties prescribed for this office by the parliamentary authority and by such standing rules as the Council shall adopt.

Section 4 - The vice-chairperson and the secretary shall have the duties prescribed by their respective offices by the parliamentary authority and by such standing rules as the Council shall adopt.

Section 5 - In the event of a vacancy in an elected office, the Council shall elect an officer to fill the unexpired portion of the term.

ARTICLES VI: Meetings:

Section 1 - The Council shall meet monthly, on an annual schedule to be adopted by the Council. It may also meet at the call of the bishop, the chairperson, or any four members.

Section 2 - A simple majority of the Council members shall constitute a quorum.

Section 3 - The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the Council in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with Canon Law, this Constitution, and any special rules of order the Council may adopt.

ARTICLE VII: Voting:

Section 1 - Any motion is carried by a simple majority of the votes cast.

Section 2 - Upon request of any member there shall be a secret ballot.

ARTICLE VIII: Committees: To provide for efficiency in its operation, the Council may form standing and ad hoc committees.

ARTICLE IX: Finances: The operating expenses for the Council shall covered by the Bishop's office budget.

ARTICLE X: Amendments:

Section 1 - This Constitution may be amended by a vote of two-thirds members of the Council, provided the amendment has been submitted in writing at the previous meeting of the Council and subject to the concurrence of a majority vote by mail ballot of all those eligible to vote in Council membership elections and to the approval of the diocesan bishop.

Section 2 - This Constitution shall be adopted by a mail ballot majority vote of the presbyterate of the diocese and the subsequent approval of the diocesan bishop and shall become effective ten days after the date of such approval.