

# Section 1 Constitution of the Armagh Diocesan Pastoral Council



## Decree of Promulgation

## In the Decree on the Bishops' Pastoral Office in the Church the bishops said:

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

### Christus Dominus, 27

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

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

### Christifidelis Laici, 25.5

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

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

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

+ Sean Brady

Signed by Cardinal Sean Brady of the Archdiocese of Armagh on this 8th day of June 2010.



## **Article I: NAME**

This body shall be called the The Armagh Diocesan Pastoral Council.

## Article II: NATURE and FUNCTION

The Code of Canon Law states:

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

Can. #511

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

Can. #512 §1

## **Article III: FUNCTION**

The Diocesan Pastoral Council is a diocesan structure that acts as a significant form of collaborative dialogue and discernment within the diocese in service of the diocesan aim which reads:

## As a diocese, we aim to be the Body of Christ with the help of the Holy Spirit so that we can live like Jesus in our time and place sharing his compassionate love with all.

The Diocesan Pastoral Council shall:

- 1. Study matters that concern the pastoral work of the diocese and make recommendations to the Archbishop.
- 2. Collaborate with the Senate of Priests, the Office of Pastoral Renewal and Family Ministry, Diocesan Youth Council, Safeguarding Children Committee, parish pastoral councils, current and future established diocesan entities in the implementation of the goals and strategies of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan.



- 3. Support the work of the Diocesan Pastoral Commissions as established by the Archbishop. The initial commissions are:
  - Liturgy
  - Faith Formation and Training
  - Justice, Peace and Development
  - Mission and Ecumenism
  - Prayer and Spirituality
  - Christian Vocation
  - Youth
  - Care for Priests.
- 4. Collaborate with the Office of Pastoral Renewal and Family Ministry in an annual review of the pastoral plan and recommend any necessary revisions to the Archbishop.

### Article IV: MEMBERSHIP

The Code of Canon Law states:

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 each other.

Can. 512 §2

- 1. Membership of the council shall represent all the People of God in the Archdiocese of Armagh.
- 2. The Council will consist of permanent and renewable members.



### **PERMANENT MEMBERS**

Permanent members of the Diocesan Pastoral Council shall form the executive. These members will be:

- The Archbishop of Armagh (President)
- The Auxiliary Bishop
- The Vicars General
- Chairman of the Senate of Priests
- The Chairpersons of the Diocesan Pastoral Council Commissions
- The Director/s of the Office of Pastoral Renewal and Family Ministry
- The Chairperson of the Diocesan Pastoral Council as elected by the Council
- The Diocesan Youth Director
- The Diocesan Safeguarding Children Officer.

### SECRETARY

The Council will have a Recording Secretary whose appointment will be renewed after each term of the Diocesan Pastoral Council.

### **RENEWABLE MEMBERS**

The renewable members of the Council will be comprised of the following:

- Two members from each pastoral area nominated by the pastoral area resource teams
- Two priests nominated by the Senate of Priests



- Three full time pastoral workers nominated from their own cohort
- Six religious nominated from within their own members
- Six members nominated by the Youth Commission
- Six members nominated by the New Ecclesial Movements
- Ten representatives drawn from active diocesan groups as nominated by the Archbishop
- Diocesan Secretary.

### TERMS

Renewable members shall serve four years except in the inaugural term when half of the membership will step down after the second year. After two years interim, a person is again eligible for selection. Terms of new members begin September 1.

### **SELECTION**

The Code of Canon Law states:

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

Typical expectations of a member would include that he / she would be a committed Catholic, a person of prayer, a good listener, a good communicator, open to study and reflection and be pastorally sensitive to the needs of the parish and diocese.

## **Article V: Safeguarding Children**

The Diocesan Pastoral Council will adhere to diocesan procedures and legislative requirements with regard to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.



## **Article VI: Members of Other Christian Denominations**

It is envisaged that opportunities would be offered to representatives from the other Christian traditions to attend meetings of the Diocesan Pastoral Council as observers when this is deemed appropriate by the executive.

### **Article VII: MEETINGS**

- 1. There will be at least three meetings each year.
- 2. Some members will serve as members of the Commissions of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan.
- 3. Special meetings may be scheduled by the Archbishop.

### Article VIII: DIOCESAN PASTORAL COMMISSIONS

- 1. The Diocesan Pastoral Council Commissions, under the guidance of the Diocesan Pastoral Council, will be responsible for the ongoing development of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan.
- 2. There will be a close working relationship between the Diocesan Pastoral Commissions and the Diocesan Pastoral Council.
- 3. The Commissions will be structured as follows:
  - The Commissions will consist of at least ten people.
  - The Cardinal will appoint four.
  - The Religious will appoint one member to each Commission.
  - The Diocesan Pastoral Council will appoint two. The remaining members will be appointed by the Commission.
  - When fully comprised, each Commission will elect its own chairperson.



- The Commissions will report to the Diocesan Pastoral Council at each meeting (three per annum). They will indicate work being done, areas of concern and initiatives that need to be undertaken.
- The Commissions will be accountable for the exercise of their remit to the executive of the Diocesan Pastoral Council.
- 4. The Archbishop may create new commissions as the need arises. All Commissions shall cease to exist when their work is complete, or when they are dissolved by the Archbishop.

## Article IX: FINANCING

A separate budget for the Diocesan Pastoral Council shall be presented to the Financial Controller on a yearly basis.

## **Article X: AMENDMENTS**

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



# Section 2 The Framework of The Armagh Diocesan Pastoral Council



## Introduction

The Diocesan Pastoral Council consists of a central body, an executive and a number of working commissions. This framework document reviews the background to the reformation of the Diocesan Pastoral Council and outlines the function of the Diocesan Pastoral Council and its commissions. It also suggests a mode of interrelating among the commissions, the council and the executive.<sup>1</sup>

## Background

In 1992 Cardinal Daly announced his decision to form a Diocesan Pastoral Council. It was his view that the membership of the Council should be drawn from the members of parish pastoral councils. At the time there were very few parishes that had a pastoral council so an Interim Diocesan Pastoral Council was formed. In 1996 Cardinal Daly changed the Interim Diocesan Pastoral Council into the Diocesan Pastoral Council. It was made up of a core group and regional groups. Three members from each of six regions were appointed by their region to sit on the core group. The core group met three times a year with the bishops. Each region was to hold a regional meeting before the core group meeting. A plenary session for all members was held annually. At no time was a constitution for the Diocesan Pastoral Council created.

In 2003 a decision was taken to replace the regions with groupings at vicariate level, thus changing the number of regional groups from six to fourteen. This transition did not function well leading to a decline in the effective working of the Diocesan Pastoral Council.<sup>2</sup>

In 2004 Cardinal Brady announced his decision to create a diocesan pastoral plan. In Lent 2005 a series of consultation meetings were held across the diocese to discuss the formation of an action plan to address the pastoral needs of the diocese. Following these regional meetings the findings of the consultation process were collated and summarised and priorities were identified. Fourteen priorities emerged and nine working groups were formed to address the main areas of need within each priority. The nine working groups were:

- faith formation;
- youth ministry;

<sup>1</sup>See the Constitution of the Armagh Diocesan Pastoral Council.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>A history of the Diocesan Pastoral Council 1992-2003 by Mrs. Sheila McEneaney (Secretary) is available on the diocesan website: http://www. archdioceseofarmagh.com/archdiocese/diocesan-pastoral-council



- prayer and spirituality;
- meaningful liturgy;
- care for priests;
- developing the role and ministry of women in the Church;
- family ministry and life issues;
- outreach to others ecumenism and interfaith dialogue;
- parish pastoral councils, attending to diocesan and parish structures, leadership and training, diocesan / parish surveys.

To coordinate the work of the nine working groups Cardinal Brady created the Co-ordinating Group of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan. Mrs Helen Forde was appointed as co-ordinator of the pastoral plan, a role that has since been carried out by Dr Tony Hanna and Fr Andrew McNally of the Office of Pastoral Renewal and Family Ministry.

With the pastoral energy of the diocese being funnelled through the Co-ordinating Group of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan the Diocesan Pastoral Council became largely redundant. Meetings went from being infrequent to non-existent. The last plenary meeting of the original Diocesan Pastoral Council was held in November 2006. A final gathering of the Diocesan Pastoral Council was held in September 2009.

In April 2008 Cardinal Brady and Bishop Clifford adopted the Plan for Parish Reorganisation 2008-2011. The plan states:

The role of the Diocesan Pastoral Council in conjunction with the role of the Senate of Priests and the Co-ordinating Group of the Pastoral Plan will be reviewed in the latter part of 2009 and will be followed by the integration of Parish Pastoral Councils with the Diocesan Pastoral Council in 2010.<sup>3</sup>

To this end Fr Andrew McNally and Dr Tony Hanna of the Office of Pastoral Renewal and Family Ministry have worked with Mr. Liam McCallion, Chairperson of the Diocesan Pastoral Council and Mr. Joe Purcell, Deputy Director of the Armagh Diocesan Pastoral Centre to draw up a draft constitution for the Diocesan Pastoral Council. The proposals were brought to the members of the coordinating group of the pastoral plan, the working groups and to the existing Diocesan Pastoral Council. A final draft of the Constitution and framework document were approved with the Constitution being promulgated by Cardinal Brady on Tuesday 8 June, 2010 in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh.

<sup>3</sup>Clustering, Rationalisation, New Parish Structures And Ministries: Moving Toward Parish Reorganisation In The Archdiocese Of Armagh 2008 - 2011 - Outline Of The Way Ahead, p. 10. See: http://armagharchdiocese.org/images/stories/pdf/prwayahead.pdf.



The promulgation of the Diocesan Pastoral Council Constitution is an attempt to create a functioning and effective Diocesan Pastoral Council that, in collaboration with the Archbishop of the diocese and his auxiliary(s), is responsible for the pastoral mission and pastoral planning of the diocese.

Accordingly, it is proposed that the work carried out by the Co-ordinating Group of the Pastoral Plan will be transferred to the Diocesan Pastoral Council. In this new structure the work that was previously carried out by the nine working groups will be carried out by the Diocesan Commissions and the work of the Co-ordinating Group will be carried out by the executive and the main body of the Diocesan Pastoral Council.

## The Diocesan Pastoral Council

The Diocesan Pastoral Council is made up of permanent members who form the executive and renewable members who make up the body of the Pastoral Council. In all it has about 70 members.<sup>4</sup> The Diocesan Pastoral Council also has a number of working commissions for pastoral planning within the Archdiocese. The initial commissions are:

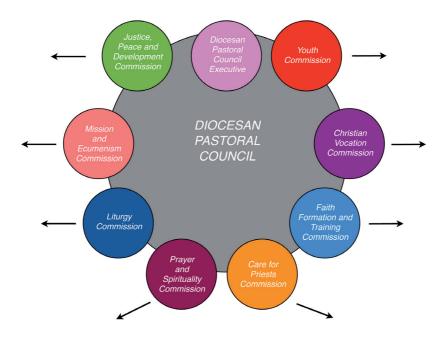
- Mission and Ecumenism Commission
- Prayer and Spirituality Commission
- Youth Commission
- Justice, Peace and Development Commission
- Christian Vocation Commission
- Faith Formation and Training Commission
- Liturgy Commission
- Care for Priests Commission.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>For the exact makeup of the membership of the Diocesan Pastoral Council see the Constitution of the Armagh Diocesan Pastoral Council.



## The Work of the Diocesan Pastoral Council

The Diocesan Pastoral Council is the body that makes sure that everything is going in the same direction with a clear sense of purpose. It is the task of the Council to explore the values and essentials of the diocese as a whole. The Council might declare; *No matter what we do we will...*(an example might be: *No matter what we do we will care for the most vulnerable in our midst* or *Whatever else we do we will be sure to celebrate the liturgy meaningfully*). The Council formulates, promotes and maintains the stated aim of the Archdiocese. This is the primary task of the Diocesan Pastoral Council The other tasks follow from it.



The aim of the Archdiocese of Armagh states:

As a diocese, we aim to be the Body of Christ with the help of the Holy Spirit so that we can live like Jesus in our time and place sharing his compassionate love with all.



Another task for the Diocesan Pastoral Council is to establish a theme or a common direction for the year. For example, if the theme for the year was "fostering a sense of belonging" this would give focus to the work of each of the commissions and other groups in the diocese. Each commission, in its planning would then ask: *how does what we are planning foster a sense of belonging within parishes and among the people of our diocese*?<sup>5</sup>

The Diocesan Pastoral Council is the glue that holds the commission structure together. It therefore supports and fosters the work of the commissions. The membership of the Council has links with the parishes, the pastoral areas, the priests, the religious orders and many of the Church-based organisations in the diocese. This gives the membership a two-way role. One is to assess what is happening in their local context and bring that feedback to the commissions. The other is to promote the work of the commissions in their local context.

The Diocesan Pastoral Council also serves as a link between the commissions and fosters close interaction among them. It can identify where commissions are working well and where they need help and support.

### **The Executive**

The executive of the Council is at the service of the Council. It is responsible for steering the Council and the Commissions.

The executive coordinates and facilitates the meetings of the Diocesan Pastoral Council.

The executive monitors, evaluates and ensures the ongoing progress of pastoral planning in the diocese. $^{6}$ 

It will have responsibility for the ongoing development and reformation of diocesan and parish structures.<sup>7</sup>

The executive has an important role in decision-making in the diocese, when such responsibilities are delegated by the Archbishop. The executive does not make all the decisions delegated by the Archbishop but decides who are the right people to make the decision in each particular case.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup>On occasion a theme for the year will suggest itself from a source outside the diocese. For example in the year 2008 - 2009 the Irish Catholic Bishops declared a year of vocation. At the same time Pope Benedict declared a Jubilee Year of the Apostle Paul. <sup>6</sup>It takes over this role from the Coordinating Group of the Diocesan Plan.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>While the Coordinating Group of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan was in place much of the work with regard to diocesan and parish structures was carried out by the sub-group known as PALS. It was at the forefront of the formation of parish pastoral councils and the parish reorganisation plan. This work now falls to the executive, supported by the Office of Pastoral Renewal and Family Ministry and by any sub-committees formed by the executive.



## **The Pastoral Council Commissions**

The Diocesan Pastoral council has a number of working commissions responsible for the pastoral planning within their area of work. Commissions can be created by the Executive with the support of the Council and the approval of the Archbishop or directly by the Archbishop.<sup>8</sup>

## The Work of the Commissions

The commissions are the planning arms of the Diocesan Pastoral Council, responsible for pastoral planning within their area of work. Each commission's overarching question is: *Given our area of concern, what do want to see in place in three years' time?* It is the task of the commission to answer this question as they set goals for their area of pastoral life. Each commission will be committed to learning from, building upon and supporting parish, pastoral areas, diocesan and voluntary organisational initiatives that are relevant to their area of concern.<sup>9</sup>

Each commission for its area of concern will reflect on:

- What is happening?
- What is going well?
- What is missing?
- What more can be done?

As well as supporting parishes, pastoral areas and diocesan and voluntary organisations, the commissions will bring a family perspective<sup>10</sup> to bear on their planning, implementing and evaluating policies, programmes, ministries, and services.<sup>11</sup> They will also adhere to Diocesan procedures and legislation requirements with reguard to safeguarding children.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>For the exact makeup of the membership of the Diocesan Pastoral Council Commissions see the Constitution of the Armagh Diocesan Pastoral Council.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>For example, the Faith Formation and Training Commission rather than starting from scratch would acknowledge the fact that there are very fruitful faith formation initiatives happening in the diocese. A sample of these include the work of Chokmah, Soil for the Seed, Go into my Vineyard, the Life in Spirit Seminars being offered by the Family of God community, marriage preparation being offered by Accord, courses in the Diocesan Pastoral Centre, parish based training of liturgical ministers, the formation of children and young people in primary and post-primary schools etc. The commission does not need to reinvent the wheel. Rather it applies its four questions and does its planning based on the answers to those questions.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup>At the foundation of a family perspective are four elements that touch the very heart of contemporary family life. Bringing a family perspective to bear in ministry means keeping these four elements in mind when planning, implementing, and evaluation policies, programmes, ministries and services. The four elements are, according to the Committee on Marriage and Family of the US National Conference of Catholic Bishops:

<sup>•</sup> The Christian vision of family life based on marriage - the family has a unique identity and mission that permeate its tasks and responsibilities

<sup>•</sup> The family as a developing system - the family is not a collection of individuals, but a living and developing system whose members are essentially interconnected

<sup>•</sup> Family diversity - the influence of societal trends and diversity in structure, economic status, special needs, and ethnic and religious heritages affect the roles and activities of families today

<sup>•</sup> The partnership between families and social institutions - partnerships need to be formed between families and the institutions that share family responsibilities.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup>For more information on using a family perspective in ministry see *Creating a Vision of Family Ministry in the Archdiocese of Armagh: Policy of the Office of Pastoral Renewal and Family Ministry*, pp. 10-11. It is available on the diocesan website: http://www.armagharchdiocese.ie/images/stories/pdf/familypolicy.pdf



### The Concerns of the Commissions

Each Commission has its own area of concern. The area of concern gives each commission its own distinctive work. It is important for each commission to ask: *is this our task* or *does it more properly belong to one of the other commissions?* Where there is ambiguity it is helpful for the commissions to talk to each other, work with each other and support each other.

### **Faith Formation and Training Commission**

Faith formation refers to all the activities that happen at home, in school and in the parish that help people to know, appreciate and live their faith. Central to this is the process of catechesis by which we form people in Christian identity so that they can live as disciples of Jesus. Training refers to the equipping of people for the ministries they carry out on behalf of the Christian community in parish, diocese and society. It is the task of the Faith Formation and Training Commission to initiate, promote, encourage and support initiatives within the diocese with regard to sacramental preparation, the Rite of Christian Initiation of adults, the catechesis of children, young people and families, the ongoing formation of adults and the training of people for ministry.

### **Mission and Ecumenism Commission**

The mission of the Church is evangelisation, the spreading of the Gospel with the help of the Holy Spirit. Ecumenism involves understanding the relationships within and between different traditions, and promoting dialogue and peace.<sup>12</sup> The task of the Mission and Ecumenism Commission is to promote and support evangelisation and ecumenism in schools, parishes and diocese.

### **Prayer and Spiritually Commission**

Prayer and spirituality are at the heart of what the Church does, whether it is in the home, the school, the parish or the diocese. Through a life of prayer we grow as disciples of Jesus. By our spirituality we connect faith to life and life to faith. The task of the Prayer and Spirituality Commission is to help the Christian people of the diocese develop their own understanding of prayer and encourage the development of a Catholic spirituality. The commission is to create prayer initiatives, organise Christian meditation groups and spiritual retreats.

### **Youth Commission**

Ministry with and to young people takes place in many forms throughout the Archdiocese - in homes, schools, parishes, youth clubs, pilgrimages - anywhere people of faith recognise the gift of the Gospel and the gift of young people. The task of the Youth Commission is to work in partnership with young people, Church and interested agencies to ensure that young people are encouraged and affirmed on their journey of faith. It does this by offering leadership training and through school, parish and diocesan initiatives.

<sup>12</sup>Taken from the website of the Irish School of Ecumenics: http://tcd.ie/ise/study/mphil-degrees/ecumenics/index.php



### **Liturgy Commission**

Liturgy expresses our lives in faith before God and mediates God's life to us in love. The task of the Liturgy Commission is to be aware of the liturgical needs of the parishes in the diocese; listen, support and advise parishes regarding liturgical matters; promote and plan practical initiatives for sacramental celebrations; provide resources to individuals and to parishes and to network with other agencies in the diocese.

### Justice, Peace and Development Commission

The social teaching of the Church insists that the Church must serve those in need and redress the causes of poverty, suffering, injustice and ecological destruction. The task of the Justice, Peace and Development Commission is to promote the social teaching of the Church and support local and global efforts to end poverty and promote peace and justice.

### **Christian Vocation Commission**

Through Baptism, all of us are given a vocation from God to ministry and mission. For most, this will be through the vocation to marriage, for some through the vocation to the single life and for others to the vocation to priesthood, diaconate and the religious life. We need to be aware of the richness of each state of life and be mutually supportive of each vocation. The task of the Christian Vocations Commission will be to affirm the dignity of each of the states of life, promote vocations to each calling, call forth their special charisms, affirm and support their interdependence and provide ongoing resources to sustain them.

### **Care for Priests Commission**

The task of the Care for Priests Commission is to address issues concerning the spiritual, physical, emotional and intellectual welfare of the clergy, educating priests with regard to caring for their health and ensuring that priests receive the care they need at any particular time.



## Council Meetings

An important part of the work of the Diocesan Pastoral Council is to support the work of the Commissions. Council meetings are designed to enable this to happen. There are to be three Council meetings each year: Spring (before Easter), Summer (before July), and Autumn (before Halloween). The meetings are planned for and prepared by the executive. At its meeting the Diocesan Pastoral Council reflects on matters of pastoral importance and proposes practical responses.

As a part of each meeting the Commission is to give a report to the Council. This provides for three things:

- It allows the Commissions to speak about what they are doing;
- It enables the Commissions to outline what they need the Council members to do in their pastoral areas during the next months;
- And it provides the Council members the opportunity to feedback to the Commissions what they were asked to do in their pastoral areas during the last few months.

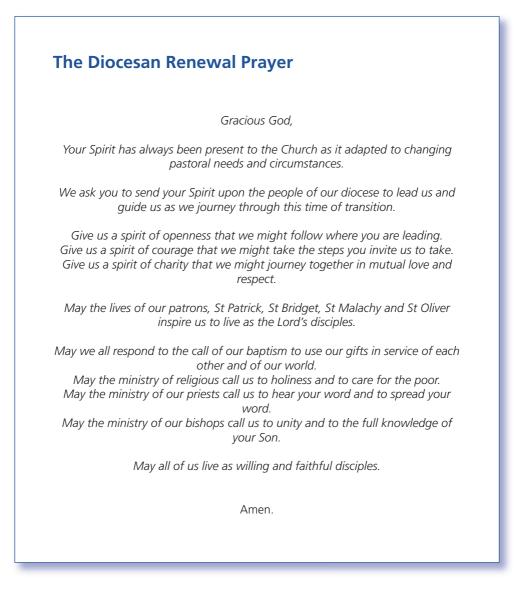
A minimum of three members of each Commission are to attend Council meetings.

In the course of its meetings the Diocesan Pastoral Council reflects on matters of pastoral importance and proposes practical responses.

To maximise the fruitfulness of Council meetings they are to allow sufficient time for prayer, study, reflection and business. The Autumn meeting will be from 10.45am - 4.30pm on a Saturday. The Spring meeting will be from 1.45pm - 6pm on a Sunday. The Summer meeting will be on a weekday evening from 7.15pm - 9.30pm.

The times and frequency of Commission meetings are to be decided upon by the Commission members. The executive meets on at least three occasions in the year in preparation for the Council meetings and at other times deemed desirable by the executive.







### Contacts

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