

PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL
Diocese of Scranton

CONSTITUTION

Preamble

Paragraph One

The Bishop and the priests of the Diocese of Scranton share in the one Priesthood of Jesus Christ by their Baptism and, in a special way, by their call to Holy Orders. While all members of the Church belong to the one Body of Christ, priests, by their ordination, enjoy a special relationship to the Bishop and are called to a unique ministry in the Church. The Bishop and priests are called to the same purpose: To proclaim the kingdom of God and to build the Body of Christ.

Paragraph Two

The Presbyteral Council of the Diocese of Scranton will be a place for mutual, open reflection and fraternal dialogue between the Bishop and priests representative of the entire presbyterate of the Diocese. This shall reflect our understanding of the fact that each priest member represents not his own constituency but the entire presbyterate, an organic unity which includes the Bishop with the priests.

Conscious of our responsibility to the Diocese and the communion of the Catholic Church; aware of the bonds of fraternity among all priests of this Diocese, diocesan and religious; seeking to strengthen and promote the bond of unity and affection among all the People of God in this Diocese; mindful of the call of the Second Vatican Council and in conformity with the revised Code of Canon Law; we, the priests of the Diocese of Scranton, with the approval of the Diocesan Bishop, do hereby establish these statutes of the Presbyteral Council of this Diocese.

Article 1: Name

The name of this body shall be "The Presbyteral Council of the Diocese of Scranton".

Article 2: Purpose

The purpose of this Presbyteral Council shall be to act as a preeminent consultative body to the Bishop of the Diocese. It will:

1. Provide a forum for the full and free discussion of all issues of pastoral concern in the Diocese of Scranton.
2. Aid the Diocesan Bishop in the governance of the Diocese according to the norms of law so that the pastoral welfare of the People of God committed to the Bishop with the cooperation of the priests may be carried forward as effectively as possible. Thus, as defined by Church law, the Council will be consulted when the Bishop must make decisions with regard to the following issues:
 - a. Whether or not to hold a diocesan synod (c. 461, par. 1).
 - b. Erecting, dividing, modifying and suppressing parishes (c. 512, par. 2).
 - c. Determining norms with regard to the allocation of offerings received from the Christian faithful for parochial functions and the remuneration of clerics who fulfill such functions (c. 531).
 - d. Whether or not to make pastoral councils mandatory in every parish (c. 536).
 - e. Building a new church (c. 1215, par.2).
 - f. Converting an existing church building for secular purposes (c. 1222, par. 2).
 - g. Imposing a tax on the faithful and on public juridical persons (c. 1263).
3. Advise the Bishop of the Diocese on any issue which, though not specifically within the competence of the Council as defined by the universal law of the Church, the Bishop may deem appropriate to place before the Council.

Article 3: Membership

Section 1. The membership shall consist of the Diocesan Bishop and priests as follows:

- a. Elected members: About half of the total membership of the Presbyteral council are to be freely elected by the priests of the Diocese: two members elected from each of four established peer groups, one member elected from each of four regions of the Diocese, one member elected from the retired priests. Also there will be one representative of priests who are members of institutes of consecrated life or societies of apostolic life.

- b. Ex-officio members: The ex-officio members shall be the Vicar(s) General, the Episcopal Vicar for Clergy, the Episcopal Vicars for each Region and any members of the College of Consultors whose term on the Council shall otherwise expire while he is still a Consultor, for the duration of his term as Consultor.
- c. Members appointed by the Diocesan Bishop not to exceed six. Three members will be appointed from among the international priests serving in the Diocese.

Section 2. The elected members shall be chosen for a term of four years, by a secret ballot by and from the priests of the Diocese. Elections shall be held according to the by-laws of this Constitution.

Section 3. The appointed members shall be selected by the Bishop for a term of four years, a term which can be renewed upon expiration at the discretion of the Bishop. Their term should be staggered so that up to half of these seated members may be appointed every other year. The vacancy of any appointed member's seat shall be filled by an appointment by the Bishop for the unexpired portion of the term.

Article 4: College of Consultors

The diocesan bishop freely appoints some priests from among the members of the Presbyteral council to constitute for five years a College of Consultors to which belongs the functions determined by law. The number of Consultors should be not fewer than six and not more than twelve.

Article 5: Officers

Section 1. The Officers of the Presbyteral Council shall be the President, the Chairman, and the Secretary.

Section 2. The President of the Council shall be the Bishop of Scranton. The President shall have the right to call the meetings of the Council; to preside over meetings of the Council; to place matters of concern on the agenda of the Council; to accept or reject (except where otherwise provided by Canon Law) the results of the Council deliberations; and to promulgate officially decisions arising there from.

Section 3. The Chairman shall conduct meetings of the Council and shall along with the Vicar for Clergy and Secretary, assist the Bishop in the preparation of the agenda of the Council. He shall have the duty prescribed for this office by commonly accepted procedures and by such standing rules as the Council shall adopt.

Section 4. The Vice-Chairman shall conduct meetings in the absence of the chairman and shall assist in the preparation of the agenda.

Section 5. The Secretary shall assist in the preparation of the agenda and shall have the duties prescribed for this office by commonly accepted procedures and by such standing rules as the Council shall adopt.

Section 6. The Offices of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Secretary shall be fulfilled in the following manner: They shall be elected from the membership of the Council by simple majority for a period of two years.

Article 6: Meetings

Section 1. The Council shall meet at least four times a year at the discretion of the Diocesan Bishop.

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

Article 7: Committees

Section 1. The Council shall have an Executive Committee, an Elections and Membership Committee, and such other standing or special committees as shall be necessary to carry on the work of the Council.

Section 2. The Executive Committee shall consist of the Officers of the Council. This committee shall prepare the agenda for meetings of the Council and shall coordinate where necessary the work of the other committees. The Executive Committee shall not have the power to act in the name of the Council except as specifically authorized by the Council.

Section 3. The Elections and Membership Committee shall consist of not fewer than three members appointed by the Chairman and confirmed by the Council. This committee shall have supervision over matters pertaining to eligibility to vote and to be elected, and shall conduct the elections for the elected members of the Council.

Section 4. Other committees may be created by the Council, and shall have the rights and duties that the Council shall from time to time specify. Their members need not be members of the Council itself, and they shall be appointed by the Chairman and confirmed by the Council.

Article 8: Amendments

Section 1. This Constitution may be amended by a vote of two-thirds of the members of the Council provided that 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 the Council membership elections, and to the approval of the Bishop of Scranton.

Section 2. This Constitution shall be adopted by an affirmative vote of a simple majority of those eligible to vote, and two-thirds of all those casting ballots. The Constitution shall become effective upon its approval by the Diocesan Bishop.

BY-LAWS

Article 1: Membership

Section 1. Elections for the Presbyteral Council shall be held by secret ballot in the spring of each year, and terms shall begin on June 30. A plurality of the votes cast shall elect members nominated to the Council by the primary election. Terms shall be staggered in such a manner so as to allow a turnover of a significant part of the Council every two years.

Section 2. A duly established elections and Membership Committee shall arrange for and supervise all matters pertaining to the elections of members of the Council.

Section 3. Each priest of the Diocese of Scranton, each priest of another Diocese living in the Diocese of Scranton, being in good canonical standing, shall be eligible to vote and to be elected.

Section 4. One member, selected on a rotational basis from the various institutes of consecrated life and societies of apostolic life serving in the Diocese of Scranton shall serve for a period of two years. The rotation will follow the order listed below:

Society of Jesus (S.J.)
Congregation of the Passion (C.P.)
Congregation of Holy Cross (C.S.C.)
Oblates of Saint Joseph (O.S.J.)
Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter (F.S.S.P.)

Section 5. For purposes of peer representation, The Diocesan priests are to be divided into four groups (excluding retired priests) according to seniority of ordination as equally as possible without dividing any ordination class. The lists of eligible voter-candidates in each seniority group is to be updated for each election by the Elections and Membership Committee and distributed to the priests for use in the primary election.

Section 6. One member from each of the following regions of the Diocese of Scranton:

Region 1: Western Pastoral Region
Region 2: Northern Pastoral Region
Region 3: Southern Pastoral Region
Region 4: Eastern Pastoral Region

Section 7. Two priests from each of four peer groups, one from each of four pastoral regions and one retired representative shall be elected by all the members of the presbyterate of the Diocese. Two priests from among the incardinated priests of the Diocese shall be appointed by the Bishop. Three priests from among the international priests serving in the Diocese shall be appointed by the Bishop. Representation of the religious orders or congregations shall be determined by their respective groups.

Section 8. Disputed cases concerning eligibility to vote and to be elected shall be decided by the Elections and Membership Committee. The vacancy of any elected member's seat shall be filled by the priest next in order of electoral votes in the previous election. Any member of the Presbyteral Council from whom the faculties of the Diocese are revoked, or who, becomes a priest not in good canonical standing, shall lose his membership on the Council.

Section 9. No elected member shall serve for more than two consecutive terms. A priest is again eligible for election after one intervening election has passed.

Article 2: Meetings

Section 1. One or more parliamentarians are to be appointed by the Chairman at the beginning of each term. It shall be their responsibility to assist the President and Chairman in establishing proper order and procedure during meetings of the Presbyteral Council.

Section 2. The rules contained in the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* shall govern the meetings of the Council in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with Canon Law, this Constitution, or any special rules of order this Council shall adopt. *Robert's Rules* shall function for the purpose of keeping order and will in no manner overrule Canon Law nor the respect due to the members of this Council.

Article 3: Amendments

Amendments to the by-laws, having been presented at a meeting of the Council, are voted on at the next meeting. A simple majority of those voting is needed for acceptance along with the approval of the Bishop of Scranton.