

DIOCESE OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE

DIOCESAN PASTORAL PLAN

1.00 OUR MISSION AS CHURCH

The Synod, acting on behalf of the diocesan community, resolved to embrace and promote the Vatican II understanding of the Church's mission contained in the following:

The Church, because it is the People of God and the Body of Christ enlivened by his Spirit, is called to be a sign and instrument of communion with God and of unity among all people (LG)¹. The Church exists to promote the Kingdom of God on earth (LG5). This it does by proclaiming Christ - the Good News of God's love for all people - and by working in the world for justice, peace and reconciliation. This mission finds its source and summit in the Eucharist which, when lived in everyday life and celebrated in the liturgy, is both the living symbol of Christ's life, death and resurrection and celebrates the deepest identity of the Church as a communion of life, love and truth (LG9,11). All those who, through Baptism, have been initiated into the community of the Church have the right and duty to participate in its life and mission as a response to the Spirit in their lives (LG3).

*We are called to live out the commandment of Jesus:
'Love one another as I have loved you.' (Jn 15:12)*

2.00 PASTORAL GOALS

The Synod, acting on behalf of the diocesan community, accepted the following as our diocesan pastoral goals:

1. That we, the Church of the Maitland-Newcastle diocese, will be recognised as a visible and credible sign and instrument of communion with God and of unity among all people (LG1)
2. That in every parish of the diocese all the baptised will have the opportunity and formation to make their contribution to the life and mission of the Church.
3. That all members of the diocesan community - young and old, poor and rich, weak and strong, clergy, religious and laity, individuals, families and institutions – will be recognised as working together to meet the spiritual and pastoral needs of God's people

¹ LG: *Lumen Gentium*, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Second Vatican Council.

3.00 THEOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES

The Synod, acting on behalf of the diocesan community, resolved that the following principles be used as the basis of our life together and of our parish and diocesan pastoral planning activities:

3.1 Seek first the Kingdom of God (Mt 6:33)

Our mission is to evangelise - to proclaim Christ, the Good News of God's love for all. All our pastoral activities must, therefore, both flow from our personal response to Christ and be carried out in the spirit of the Gospel.

The Kingdom of God is like a treasure hidden in a field (Mt 13) ... is like a net that gathers fish of every kind (Mt 20:1) ... The blind see, the deaf hear, the sick are healed, the hungry are fed, the lowly are exalted, the mourners are comforted, prisoners are set free ... The Kingdom of God is within you (Lk 17:21)

3.2 The Equality of All Believers

All members of the church through baptism have the same right and duty to participate in the life and mission of the Church and should be actively encouraged to participate in that mission.

All baptised in Christ, you have all clothed yourselves in Christ, and there are no more distinctions between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female, but all of you are one in Christ Jesus. (Gal 3:27,28)

3.3 Faith Development is a Life-Long Process

To grow to Christian maturity and participate fully in Christ's mission, all of us - clergy and religious as well as lay men and women, youth and children - must continually deepen our understanding of the faith through formation that is faithful to the Scriptures and Sacred Tradition.

*Formation is not the privilege of a few but the right and duty of all ... Possibilities of formation should be proposed to all, especially the poor who can be a source of formation for all.*¹

¹ Pope John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici*, 1988

3.4 The Dignity of the Human Person

The Church is called to heal, liberate, and promote the growth of persons into maturity in Christ. Structures and programmes exist in order to serve persons, not persons to serve structures or programmes. All our pastoral activity should be marked by a concern for persons affected by it.

I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. (Jn 10:10)

3.5 Diversity of Gifts

Each community must seek out, recognise, and utilise the diversity of gifts, experience, knowledge, and competence amongst its members. It is better that many people be involved, using their particular talents and abilities, than that a few try to do everything.

Allotting his gifts to everyone according as he wills (1 Cor 12:11). God distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank. By these gifts he makes them fit and ready to undertake the various tasks or offices advantageous to the upbuilding of the Church ... These gifts are to be received with thanksgiving (LG12)

3.6 Diversity of Ministries/Unity of Purpose

We must respect and support the diversity of roles and functions in the community, those of the laity as well as those of the ordained ministers. The unity of purpose of all ministers is expressed in their union with the Bishop who as principal minister of the Eucharist - the Sacrament of unity - is the Chief Pastor of the Diocese.

For as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them ... (Rom 12:4-6)

3.7 Servant Leadership

Leadership at all levels within the Church is a ministry of service to God's People.

The rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them ... It must not be so among you for whoever would be great among you must be your servant and whoever would be first among you must be your slave even as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many. (Mt 20:25-28)

3.8 Decision-making by Discernment

In keeping with what it means to be and to build Church, we seek to arrive at decisions which all can accept gracefully and support wholeheartedly (even if some wish the decision had been different) because they know the group honestly searched together for the Spirit of God in and for the life of the community.

Discernment of the Spirit ... listens to others so as to learn, is sensitive to all approaches, encourages collaboration rather than competition and aims not at majority vote but consensus. It recognises that each participant has a part of the truth and a share of the wisdom by reason of each one's unique experience of God in life, union with Christ and gifts of the Spirit. The process also recognises the right of each person to contribute his or her part without which the whole picture will not be presented and the whole wisdom of the spirit will not be available¹

3.9 Read the Signs of the Times

To fulfil our mission in today's world and become a credible sign of God's love for all people, we must discover the signs of God's presence and purpose in our culture and in our world. Reading the signs of God for our time means being open to hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church through the hearts and minds of his people.

The joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of people of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ.²

3.10 Concern for Ecumenism

In keeping with the Lord's own prayer that all his followers be one, we acknowledge the need to deepen our bonds with all our brothers and sisters in Christ.

The concern for restoring unity involves the whole Church, faithful and clergy alike.³

¹ Archbishop F Carroll, Canberra-Goulburn Synod, 1989

² *Gaudium et Spes*, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Second Vatican Council

³ *Unitatis redintegratio*, Decree on Ecumenism, Second Vatican Council

4.00 PASTORAL PLANNING PRINCIPLES

4.1 Pastoral Planning

Pastoral Planning is a process by which a faith community, with a deep appreciation of its past and an understanding of its present strengths and weaknesses, seeks to respond to the spiritual and pastoral needs of people within and beyond the community.

4.2 In order to resolve particular pastoral issues effective structures and processes are needed to facilitate communication and coordination, create opportunities for people to use their gifts and encourage all the baptised to participate in the life and mission of the local Church.

4.3 A Pastoral Plan

A Pastoral Plan is a set of goals and objectives, freely embraced by a community through a process of shared decision-making, which directs that community in its pastoral activities and decisions. It is the guiding light for all bodies and teams in a parish or diocese.

4.4 Shared Decision Making

Shared Decision-making involves several distinct stages, each requiring different skills:

- *Preparation:* gathering factual data, identifying options, developing proposals, consultation. All those whose cooperation is needed for successful implementation of a decision should be consulted.
- *Decision-taking* which involves both agreement on which course of action is most advisable, and ratification by the person(s) held to be accountable for the decision, e.g. the Bishop or Parish Priest.
- *Implementation* of the decisions taken.
- *Evaluation:* monitoring of implementation and overall evaluation of a Plan in the light of its goals.

4.5 A Pastoral Council

A Pastoral Council is a group that is representative of an entire parish, region or diocese. Its function according to the Code of Canon Law is "to investigate and weigh matters which bear on pastoral activity and formulate practical conclusions regarding them". (Canon 511) Its responsibilities, therefore, include the *preparation* and *evaluation* stages of decision-making.

4.6 A Pastoral Assembly

A Pastoral Assembly is a gathering of the people of a parish, region or diocese, which accepts, rejects or modifies the plan presented to it by the Pastoral Council. Pastoral Assemblies are held regularly, e.g. in a parish each year, in a region each 2-3 years and in the diocese each 2-4 years.

4.7 A Pastoral Team

A Pastoral Team is a small group, ideally 6-8 people, who are responsible for coordinating the *implementation* of the Pastoral Plan determined by the Pastoral Assembly. This group attends to detailed programming, allocation and coordination of tasks, and any necessary adaptation to changing circumstances.

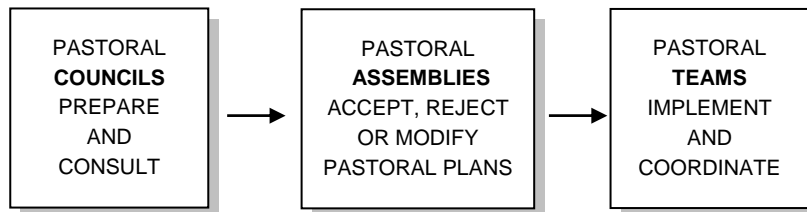
4.8 Accountability

The Pastoral Team is accountable to the Pastoral Council, which is the guardian of the Pastoral Plan and is in its turn accountable to the whole community through the Pastoral Assembly.

4.9 It is possible, at least in a small parish, that the preparation and implementation stages of pastoral planning may be carried out by the same group of people, Council, or Team. However, the distinction between these stages must be made. Otherwise the result is "government by committee" which causes resentment and frustration, especially if the same group also assumes the role of decision-takers.

4.10 Regional Pastoral Council

A Regional Pastoral Council shall include representatives of each Parish Pastoral Council, and in turn each Regional Pastoral Council shall have representatives on the Diocesan Pastoral Council. This network is seen as important for making effective the upward and downward process of consultation and communication.



5.0 DIOCESAN NORMS FOR PASTORAL COUNCILS, ASSEMBLIES AND TEAMS

The Synod, acting on behalf of the whole diocesan community, resolved that the following Norms shall govern the establishment and functioning of pastoral planning bodies within the diocese.

5.10 NORMS FOR PARISH PASTORAL COUNCILS

5.11 The role of the Parish Pastoral Council

The Parish Pastoral Council's primary focus is to promote the Kingdom of God by listening to the People of God, helping them to discover/discern what they need to live the gospel and to enable them, through the Spirit, to fulfil those needs. The Parish Pastoral Council's role is two-fold:

- i. to facilitate pastoral planning at parish level (Diocesan Pastoral Plan 4.5).
- ii. to collaborate with and involve their own parish in regional and diocesan pastoral planning .

In practice it carries out its role in parish pastoral planning by

1. promoting within the parish the spirit and the principles of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan.
2. facilitating an ongoing, year to year process whereby the parish community (pastor and people), through prayer, consultation and discernment, look ahead to the coming years and decide what they want to be and what steps they will need to take to achieve their goals.
3. preparing a draft Parish Pastoral Plan, after gathering factual data, identifying options, developing proposals, consulting widely and discerning the needs and concerns of the parish. This draft Plan shall be put to a Parish Pastoral Assembly.
4. guarding the integrity of the Parish Pastoral Plan. Substantial change cannot be made to the Parish Pastoral Plan without those changes being approved by the Parish Assembly.
5. being responsible for the evaluation of the Parish Pastoral Plan and its implementation.
6. leading the Parish Pastoral Assembly.
7. continuing the pastoral planning process in the event of the Pastor's extended absence or the parish becoming vacant.

The Council carries out its role as a link in regional and diocesan wide communication, consultation, and pastoral planning by:

1. acting as a channel of communication between all elements in the parish and between the parish and the rest of the diocesan community,
2. selecting representatives for the Regional Pastoral Council,
4. collaborating with the planning of Diocesan and Regional Pastoral Plans.

5.12 The Council's Membership

The Council shall normally consist of between 6 and 15 members comprising:

1. the Parish Priest or his delegate, e.g. in the case of a canonically established parish whose parish priest is not resident in the parish, a person (priest, deacon, religious or lay person) appointed by the Bishop to share in the pastoral care of the parish, according to Canon 517:2.
2. if appropriate any assistant priests and full-time pastoral assistants.
3. a number of other members (lay and/or religious) elected according to parish statutes, to ensure that the Parish Pastoral Council is a representative group covering the whole parish community.
4. a clear majority of Council members shall be elected by the parish community at large.
5. other members may be invited or co-opted by the Parish Pastoral Council if needed to assist in its planning.

5.13 The Council's Term of Office

1. The Council's term of office shall be set by the parish statutes. Members elected or co-opted shall serve a maximum of four years consecutively.
2. There should be at least a twelve month break before they are again eligible for membership of the Council.
3. Council terms should be staggered to ensure some continuity.
4. Casual vacancies shall be filled according to parish statutes.

5.14 How The Council Shall Function

1. The Parish Priest as authorised leader of the parish community calls the people together and presides. He shall not normally be the chairperson of the meetings and scheduled meetings may proceed if circumstances prevent him from attending.
2. To foster the discernment process every meeting shall include prayer and reflection.

3. All meetings shall have a chairperson and secretary.
4. A quorum shall consist of 50% plus one of the Council membership.
5. Members shall participate in on-going formation.
6. Each parish shall draw up its own set of statutes, for approval by the Parish Pastoral Assembly, guided by the goals, principles and norms established in the 1992-93 Diocesan Synod.
7. Amendments shall have the approval of the Parish Pastoral Assembly before being implemented.
8. Parish Statutes should contain details of:
 - i. the size and membership of the Council
 - ii the term of office for members of Council, office bearers and regional representatives.
 - iii the frequency of Parish Pastoral Council meetings.
 - iv procedures for:
 - a) selecting members
 - b) filling casual vacancies
 - c) selecting office bearers including regional representatives.
9. Because of the importance placed on pastoral planning by the 1992-93 Diocesan Synod, a new Parish Priest or Administrator shall reconvene the Parish Pastoral Council within a month of taking up his appointment.
- 10 Where a parish operates as part of a region or team ministry:
 - i. the parish should be sensitive to the needs and concerns of the region/team ministry and their region.
 - ii. the region/team ministry should be sensitive to the needs and concerns of the member parishes and the other parishes in their region.

5.15 How The Parish Council Relates to Regional and Diocesan Bodies

1. The Parish Pastoral Council shall participate in diocesan wide consultation and communication through representatives selected from amongst its ranks to sit on the Regional Pastoral Council.
2. These representatives shall communicate ideas and concerns from the parish to the Diocesan or Regional Pastoral Councils or Teams and vice versa.

5.20 NORMS FOR PARISH PASTORAL ASSEMBLIES.

5.21 The Role of the Parish Pastoral Assembly

The Parish Pastoral Assembly fulfils its role in pastoral planning by:

1. expressing and celebrating the unity of the Parish as a faith Community, and its commitment to decision making by discernment in a context of prayer and openness to the guidance of the Spirit.
2. in a spirit of prayer, reflection and discernment, accepting, modifying or rejecting a draft Parish Pastoral Plan or reviewing/updating the existing Parish Pastoral Plan.
3. hearing and responding to the evaluation made by the Parish Pastoral Council of the implementation of the Parish Pastoral Plan.
4. Accepting, rejecting or amending the Parish Statutes for the functioning of the Parish Pastoral Council, Team and Assembly.

5.22 The Assembly Membership

The Parish Pastoral Assembly is a gathering to which *all* members of the **community** are invited.

5.23 When Should It Meet

It is in the spirit of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan that a Parish Pastoral Assembly should be held each year. **In the event of a regional assembly, parishes of the region may choose to forgo their parish assembly in that year.** Formal Assemblies shall be held at least every two years but in years when there is no Parish Pastoral Plan to be put, a less formal parish gathering should be held.

5.24 How the Assembly Shall Function

1. The Parish Pastoral Assembly shall be held in the context of community prayer, in which all those who wish to be part of the Assembly will participate, and at which the process of discernment shall be clarified and applied.
2. The date, meeting time, venue and agenda (including the draft Parish Pastoral Plan) of the Parish Pastoral Assembly shall be publicised at least one month in advance and genuine efforts made to ensure all **members of the parish community** are invited.
3. Parish Pastoral Assemblies shall be run along lines determined by local Statutes.
4. The Parish Priest shall have the responsibility of ratifying and promulgating any plan accepted by the Parish Pastoral Assembly.

5.30 NORMS FOR PARISH PASTORAL TEAMS.

5.31 The Role of the Parish Pastoral Team

The Parish Pastoral Team fulfils its role in pastoral planning by:

1. co-ordinating the implementation of the Parish Pastoral Plan accepted by the Parish Pastoral Assembly. The Team attends to the detailed programming, allocation and co-ordination of tasks and, in consultation with the Parish Pastoral Council and in the spirit of the Parish Pastoral Plan, makes decisions about adapting the Plan to changing circumstances when this is deemed necessary.
2. where necessary, and in consultation with the Parish Pastoral Council, establishing, assisting and co-ordinating parish committees, commissions or teams as needed for specific areas of parish ministry and makes provision for their ongoing formation.
3. acting as the agent of communication within the Parish. In particular it provides information and feedback to the Parish Pastoral Council and the parish in general on the implementation of the Parish Pastoral Plan.
4. co-operating, where the parish is part of a region/team ministry, in the communication, co-ordination and implementation of any region/team ministry plans.
5. co-operating with the Parish Pastoral Council in preparing for the Parish Pastoral Assembly.

5.32 The Team's Membership

The Team shall consist of:

1. the Parish Priest (by virtue of his position) or Parish Co-ordinator in parishes without a resident Parish Priest, and any assistant clergy.
3. a sufficient number of people, paid pastoral associate(s) or voluntary worker(s), deemed appropriate by the parish community to implement the Parish Pastoral Plan and co-ordinate the various parish ministry groups.

5.33 The Team's Term of Office

1. Any paid pastoral associate shall be under contract.
2. For voluntary team members, their term should be at the discretion of the Parish Pastoral Assembly, or as stipulated in Parish Statutes. A maximum term of four consecutive years is recommended.
3. Casual vacancies shall be filled by the Parish Pastoral Council.

5.34 How the Team Shall Function

1. The Team shall function according to parish statutes.
2. Because a Parish Pastoral Plan is the fruit of the whole community's discernment and decision-making, its implementation by the Parish Pastoral Team shall continue when there is a change of pastor or when the pastor is absent for extended periods.

5.40 NORMS FOR REGIONAL PASTORAL COUNCILS

5.41 Role of the Regional Pastoral Council

1. The **Regional Pastoral Council** exists in order to facilitate collaboration amongst all parishes of a region and to support them in their efforts to further the mission of Christ. It fulfils its role in pastoral planning and co-ordination by:

- i) fostering co-operation, familiarity, and goodwill between the parishes through collaborative ministries, thus giving people a real sense of belonging to the wider, Universal Church.
 - ii) providing a forum for ideas that come up at parish level which deserve to go further either because they work well at parish level or because they cannot be handled at parish level.
 - iii) providing support, resources and expertise that cannot be provided at parish level.
 - iv) promoting the spirit of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan, **engaging in appropriate consultation while also acting as a representative body**, nourishing the spiritual life of the region, and providing formation for its members; for example through regional **assemblies**, seminars, retreats and liturgy.
 - v) **preparing a draft Regional Pastoral Plan or reviewing/updating the existing regional plan, after gathering factual data, identifying options, developing proposals, consulting widely and discerning the needs and concerns of the region. The draft or updated plan shall then be put to the Regional Pastoral Assembly for approval.**
 - vi) **guarding the integrity of the Regional Pastoral Plan in accord with 5.44.5iii**
 - vii) **overseeing the implementation of the Regional Pastoral Plan.**
 - viii) **evaluating the plan and its implementation.**
 - ix) providing a link between parishes and the diocesan planning bodies and vice versa. Where an issue requires discussion at a broader level the issue should be passed on promptly to the Diocesan Pastoral Council.
 - x) **electing a member of the Regional Pastoral Council to the Diocesan Pastoral Council.**
- 2) **Any or all parishes within a region may agree to allow the Regional Pastoral Council to become their Parish Pastoral Council. In this event:**

- i) the Regional Pastoral Council will also fulfil the functions of the Parish Pastoral Council in relation to those Parishes for which it exercises the responsibility of Pastoral Council.
- ii) Parish Pastoral Teams and other parish structures would continue to function in these parishes.

5.42 The Council's Membership

The Council shall consist of:

1. The Parish Priest, Associate Pastor and Parish Pastoral Co-ordinator from each of the constituent parishes.
2. Representatives (at least 1) from each parish appointed by the Parish Pastoral Council or, in the event of there being no Parish Pastoral Council, by the parish community according to Regional Statutes. These statutes should take into account the need for gender balance as well as local community representation.
3. other members determined by the Regional Statutes or by invitation of the Regional Pastoral Council.

5.43 The Council's Term of Office

1. As much continuity as possible should be preserved in representation and by staggering appointments.
2. The term of office shall be a maximum of four years continuous membership for all non-ex officio members.
3. Terms of office shall be determined by regional statutes.
4. Casual vacancies shall be filled by the relevant Parish Pastoral Council.

5.44 How the Council Shall Function

1. The Regional Convenor, appointed by the bishop, shall convoke and preside at the Regional Pastoral Council meetings. He shall not normally be the chairperson of the meeting and scheduled meetings may proceed if circumstances prevent his attendance.
2. The Regional Pastoral Council shall meet at least four times a year.
3. To foster discernment each meeting shall include prayer and reflection.
4. All meetings shall have a chairperson and secretary. It is recommended that every region appoint an executive secretary/co-ordinator to assist in organising regional affairs.
5. When developing and implementing **Regional Pastoral Plans or other plans for action at regional level the principles of shared decision making outlined in the Diocesan Pastoral Plan should be followed.**
 - i. Proper planning and consultation should be undertaken.
 - ii. A draft plan or strategy should be developed.
 - iii. **Substantial changes to Regional Pastoral Plan cannot be made without changes being approved by the Regional Assembly, or the Regional Pastoral Council after appropriate consultation with all parish communities either through their Parish Pastoral Council, or where Parish Pastoral Councils do not exist, by the parish community according to regional statutes.**
 - iv. Implementation should take place through appointment of personnel (as needed) to a sub committee/team which will operate (independently but) according to guidelines established by the Regional Council.
 - v. Evaluation of the plan/strategy and its implementation by the team/sub committee should be undertaken by the Regional Pastoral Council.
 - vi. The Regional Convenor shall have the responsibility of ratifying and promulgating any plan accepted by this process.

6. The guidelines for the establishment of any regional team/subcommittee shall include
 - i. A clear statement of its goals and objectives
 - ii. The size, membership, selection and structure of the group
 - iii. Its term of office
 - iv. How it shall function (budget, meeting frequency, its relationship to constituent parish councils and teams, etc)
 - v. Methods of evaluation
7. **The Regional Pastoral Council** shall draw up its own set of statutes, for approval **by the Regional Assembly**, guided by the goals, principles and norms established by the 1992-93 Diocesan Synod.
8. Regional Statutes should contain details of:
 - i. the size and membership of the Council
 - ii. the process for selecting office bearers
 - iii. the frequency of meetings
 - iv. the quorum
 - v. length of term of office
9. **Amendments of the Regional Statutes require the approval of the Regional Assembly.**

Bishop Michael Malone leads delegates in prayer
at the Diocesan Assembly, August 5, 2000

5.50 NORMS FOR REGIONAL PASTORAL ASSEMBLIES

5.51 The Role of the Regional Pastoral Assembly

The Regional Pastoral Assembly fulfils its role in pastoral planning by:

1. expressing and celebrating the unity of the Region as a faith community, focused on the mission of Christ and committed to decision making by discernment in a context of prayer and openness to the guidance of the Spirit.
2. providing a forum for dialogue for all members of the regional community.
3. in a spirit of prayer, reflection and discernment accepting, modifying or rejecting a draft Regional Pastoral Plan or reviewing/updating the existing Regional Pastoral Plan.
4. hearing and responding to the evaluation made by the Regional Pastoral Council of the implementation of the Regional Pastoral Plan.
5. accepting, rejecting or amending the Statutes of the Regional Pastoral Council, Assembly and any teams or sub-committees the Regional Pastoral Council may establish.

5.52 The Assembly Membership

The Regional Pastoral Assembly is a gathering to which *all* members of the regional community are invited.

5.53 When Should It Meet

In the spirit of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan, a Regional Pastoral Assembly is an opportunity to build up and celebrate the life and mission of the local Church. It is recommended that such a gathering be held every 2-3 years.

5.54 How the Assembly Shall Function

1. The Regional Pastoral Assembly shall be true to the spirit of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan. It will take place within the context of community prayer. All those who wish to be a part of the Assembly will be encouraged to participate, in accord with theological principle 3.8
2. The date, meeting time, venue and agenda (including the draft Regional Pastoral Plan) of the Regional Pastoral Assembly shall be publicised well in advance with a minimum of one months notice and genuine efforts made to ensure that all members of the regional community are invited.
3. Regional Pastoral Assemblies shall be run according to local statutes.

4. The Regional Convenor, in consultation with the Diocesan Pastoral Council, shall have the responsibility of ratifying and promulgating any plan accepted by the Regional Pastoral Assembly.

5.60 NORMS FOR THE DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL.

5.61 The Role of the Diocesan Pastoral Council (cf. Canon 511)

The Diocesan Pastoral Council fulfils its role in pastoral planning by :

1. building up the diocesan community by promoting its spiritual life through prayer, liturgy, and gatherings. Promoting in the diocese and in diocesan bodies the spirit and principles of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan.
2. building up a sense of trust and unity among all people of the diocese, so that the diocese will be recognised as a visible and credible sign and instrument of communion with God and so fulfil its mission.
3. providing a link between the diocese and the rest of the Church in Australia and the Church Universal.
4. through its close links with Parish and Regional Pastoral Councils, initiating and facilitating dialogue between the people of the diocese, diocesan bodies and the pastoral leadership of the diocese.
5. studying, reflecting upon and discussing issues of concern to the whole diocese brought to it by the Bishop, parishes, deaneries, diocesan agencies and groups, and individuals where these issues are not best addressed elsewhere.
6. establishing committees, commissions or teams to investigate areas of pastoral concern and diocesan responses to important local, national or global issues.
7. developing broad pastoral objectives and major emphases that will give a general direction in which the diocese might move.
8. addressing areas of diocesan pastoral concern and developing long term plans for the diocesan community. Such plans to be put to a Diocesan Pastoral Assembly after the Diocesan Pastoral Council gathers factual data, develops options, and sets priorities, all in a spirit of prayer, consultation and discernment.
9. evaluating Diocesan Pastoral Plans and their implementation.
10. planning the Diocesan Pastoral Assembly.

- 11 guarding the integrity of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan adopted by Synod and any Diocesan Pastoral Plan accepted by a Diocesan Pastoral Assembly. Substantial change cannot be made to a Diocesan Pastoral Plan without the approval of the appropriate body, Synod or Assembly.
- 12 making recommendations to the Bishop about the appointment of members to the Diocesan Pastoral Team, subcommittees, and various task teams.

5.62 The Council's Membership (cf Canon 512)

The Council shall consist of:

Three ex officio members.

- i. The Bishop (or his delegate)
 - ii. The Vicar General
 - iii. The co-ordinator of the Diocesan Team who shall act as Executive Secretary to the Council.
2. and a maximum of seventeen other members.
- i. 1 priest of the diocese elected by the priests of the diocese
 - ii. 1 religious of the diocese elected by the religious of the diocese.
 - iii. A representative of every Regional Pastoral Council.
 - iv. 2 others chosen by the Bishop from diocesan bodies for their diocesan perspective.
 - v. 3 others chosen from the diocese by the Diocesan Pastoral Council for their pastoral sensitivity and expertise in planning.

Care should be taken to ensure the entire people of God is truly reflected with due regard for gender, age and social position (cf Canon 512.2).

5.63 The Council's Term of Office

1. A maximum of four years continuous membership for all non ex-officio members.
2. Normally terms shall be two years with the possibility of one renewal. Regard should be given to the need for some continuity and for a staggering of appointments.
3. Casual vacancies shall be filled by the constituent body.

5.64 How the Council Shall Function

1. The Diocesan Pastoral Council shall function according to its own statutes in keeping with the Diocesan Pastoral Plan.
2. It shall meet at least four times a year.
3. The Bishop shall convoke and preside at Diocesan Pastoral Council meetings. Scheduled meetings may proceed if circumstances prevent the bishop from attending.
4. The Diocesan Pastoral Council shall have a Chairperson and Secretary who shall be elected annually by the members.
5. To foster the discernment process every meeting shall include prayer and reflection. At least once a year the Diocesan Pastoral Council shall meet for an extended period of prayer, reflection, and formation.
6. Issues may be sent to the Diocesan Pastoral Council from Parish and Regional Pastoral Councils and by individuals and bodies in the Diocese.
 - i. The Diocesan Pastoral Council shall determine whether they need to be considered at diocesan level i.e. they are important pastoral issues that are relevant to the whole diocese. If so the Diocesan Pastoral Council should pursue that matter.
 - ii. Where an issue requires it, the Diocesan Pastoral Council shall negotiate with the relevant diocesan, national or curial bodies.
 - iii. When considering options and solutions the Diocesan Pastoral Council shall always build upon existing parish and regional resources and organisation.
 - iv. If the issue is not an appropriate diocesan concern it shall be referred to the most appropriate body (Principle of Subsidiarity).
7. The Diocesan Pastoral Council shall determine the role, functioning, composition and term of office of any sub-committee or task group that it establishes. Such task groups/sub-committees shall report directly to the Council.

5.65 How the Council Relates to Other Bodies

1. The Diocesan Pastoral Council, like all bodies in the diocese, is bound by and guided by the Diocesan Pastoral Plan adopted by the Synod and the pastoral priorities set by subsequent Diocesan Pastoral Plans. Within this framework it maintains its autonomy while at the same time it recognises the mutual dependence of all diocesan bodies.
2. The Diocesan Pastoral Council, in keeping with its role as guardian of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan, has a particular task of linking diocesan bodies. It should therefore maintain effective communication with other diocesan bodies while in the process of pastoral planning for the diocese. Where necessary the Diocesan Pastoral Council and the relevant body will negotiate with each other.

3. The Diocesan Pastoral Council should be consulted on any major decision being taken by other diocesan bodies and vice versa.
4. The Diocesan Pastoral Council should be able to request information to help it in its deliberations from any diocesan or parish body, and receive prompt replies. If the matter is confidential the Diocesan Pastoral Council shall treat it with confidentiality.
5. At least once a year the Diocesan Pastoral Council shall invite other diocesan bodies to an ecclesial meeting where emerging pastoral priorities and other matters of mutual concern can be discussed.
6. Where the Diocesan Pastoral Council discusses the recommendation of a Regional and/or Parish Pastoral Council, or any matter affecting a Regional or Parish Pastoral Council, a summary of that discussion should be promptly forwarded to that council.
7. Parish Pastoral Councils should be involved in diocesan pastoral planning through collection of data and consultation about options and recommendations.

5.70 NORMS FOR THE DIOCESAN PASTORAL ASSEMBLY

5.71 The Role of the Diocesan Pastoral Assembly

The Diocesan Pastoral Assembly fulfils its role in pastoral planning by:

1. acting as a gathering place for the faithful of the diocese to celebrate their unity under the Bishop.
2. providing a representative forum for the interchange of ideas and issues amongst all members of the diocese; lay, clergy, and religious, church leaders and parishioners, and apostolic and administrative groups in the diocese.
3. accepting, rejecting or modifying draft Diocesan Pastoral Plans presented to it by the Diocesan Pastoral Council after consultation with the diocesan community.
4. hearing and responding to evaluations of Diocesan Pastoral Plans.

5.72 The Assembly Membership

The Diocesan Pastoral Assembly shall consist of:

1. The Bishop and Clergy of the diocese.
3. A representative group of religious, representative of the whole religious but also of all the orders in the diocese (maximum 30).
4. Four persons from every parish in the diocese representative of that parish (age, gender and social condition).
5. Representatives of diocesan bodies whom the Diocesan Pastoral Council considers should be represented (maximum of 20)
6. Others, at the invitation of the Bishop or the Diocesan Pastoral Assembly, may be admitted as observers.

5.73 When Should It Meet

Formal Diocesan Pastoral Assemblies shall be held **each 2-4 years**. In years when there is no Diocesan Pastoral Plan to be put, a less formal diocesan gathering should be held **during that time**.

5.74 How the Assembly Shall Function

1. The Bishop shall convoke and preside at any Diocesan Pastoral Assembly. It is his responsibility to ratify and promulgate any decisions made at the Assembly.
2. Parishes and all diocesan bodies should be given at least three months notice of any Diocesan Pastoral Assembly. Full agenda and relevant papers should be available to all participants at least a month before the date.
3. Meeting procedure shall be according to the principles of discernment and the procedures for the 1992-93 Synod.
4. The Diocesan Pastoral Assembly shall function according to its own statutes.

5.80 NORMS FOR THE DIOCESAN PASTORAL TEAM

5.81 The Role of the Diocesan Pastoral Team

The Diocesan Pastoral Team fulfils its role in pastoral planning by:

1. acting as the secretariat of the Diocesan Pastoral Council.
2. overseeing various committees, task teams, or commissions established by the Diocesan Pastoral Council; planning for and co-ordinating the implementation of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan.
3. consulting with the Diocesan Pastoral Council to make any necessary adaptations to the Diocesan Pastoral Plan, on a day to day basis, in response to changing circumstances.
4. assisting in providing a communication link between diocesan bodies, the Diocesan Pastoral Council, and parishes.
5. promoting the spirit and principles of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan.
6. assisting the Diocesan Pastoral Council in the preparation for the Diocesan Pastoral Assembly.
7. co-ordinating on a diocesan level the formation of all the faithful for their role in shared decision making and pastoral planning.
8. being the immediate point of contact for parishes seeking information on pastoral issues.

5.82 The Team's Membership

All positions shall be open to all members of Christ's Faithful (Canons 204.1 & 2); clergy, religious and laity. The Team shall consist of:

1. a Diocesan Co-ordinator (full time) who shall also act as Executive Secretary to the Council.
2. at least two other full time persons.
3. secretarial assistance.

5.83 The Team's Term of Office

All paid members should be on contract approved by the Diocesan Pastoral Council. Others (especially those appointed to task teams, sub-committees, commissions etc) may be appointed on a voluntary basis.

1. For members who are on contract: the contract should be for a fixed term. Contracts should not be renewed until an evaluation of the team is completed.
2. For members who are not on contract: a maximum term of four years
3. All positions (whether vacant by termination of contract or by casual vacancy) should be advertised widely throughout the diocese and beyond.

5.84 How the Team Shall Function

1. Formal meetings should be held at least once a week.
2. The Diocesan Pastoral Team should set aside times for prayer and formation (on a weekly basis and once a year on a more extended basis)
It should maintain extensive lines of communication with the parishes, apostolic groups, and other groups within the diocese and beyond.

5.90 NORMS FOR AN INTERPRETATION COMMITTEE.

5.91 The Role and Functioning of the Interpretation Committee

1. The Bishop will appoint an Interpretation Committee which will be authorised to issue authentic interpretations in writing should disputes arise concerning these norms.
2. Membership and procedures will be determined by the Bishop in the light of Canons 16 and 51.

Bishop Leo Clarke ratified and promulgated the Diocesan Pastoral Plan
Sacred Heart Church Campbell's Hill, November 27th, 1993