



# PRIESTS COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

Diocese of Great Falls-Billings

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## Preamble:

The bishop and priests of the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings, both diocesan and religious, aware of their unity with one another in the priesthood of Christ, realizing that they form one presbytery and one brotherhood in the service of the People of God, are called to fulfill the ordained ministry of the pastoral mission of the Church.

The bishop and priests share a communion in the same priesthood and ministry. The Priests' Council will be the forum for consultation and discussion about those matters which concern the necessities of pastoral ministry and the welfare of the diocese. This forum will be characterized by mutual, open reflection, and fraternal dialogue between the bishop and the Priests' Council.

Mindful of our responsibility and in response to the leadership of the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council, and in conformity with the revised Code of Canon Law, we, the bishop and presbyters of the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings do hereby adopt this ***Constitution of the Priests' Council of the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings*** as a means to promote with our bishop, the exploration of evermore dynamic ways to implement our shared ministry in a Church ever-renewing itself to serve the modern world.



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## ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this body shall be ***“The Priests’ Council of the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings”***.

## ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

The purposes of the Priests’ Council will be:

1. to assist the bishop, as a primary consultative body for the governance of the diocese according to the norm of law in order to promote the pastoral welfare of the People of God within the diocese as effectively as possible;
2. to provide a forum for the full and free discussion of all issues of pastoral concern in the diocese;
3. to search for and to propose ways and means for effective pastoral ministry and to promote the pastoral care and continuing formation of the priests of the diocese;
4. to promote greater collaboration between the bishop and the priests;
5. to foster a stronger bond of fraternity among all priests, diocesan and religious, and to further a consciousness of their unity with the bishop;
6. to be representative to the unity and diversity of the priests of the diocese; and
7. to acknowledge and promote the dignity of the laity, religious and deacons and the role which is proper to them in the mission of the Church.

## ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP

**Section 1:** The membership shall consist of the diocesan bishop, seven (7) elected members, one (1) from each vicariate and two (2) at-large), two (2) ex-officio non-voting members (Vicar General and Judicial Vicar), and two (2) appointed members appointed by the diocesan bishop.

### **Section 2:**

The following have the right to vote and be elected for the Priests’ Council:

- a) All secular priests incardinated in the diocese;



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- b) Other priests who reside in the diocese and exercise some office for the good of the diocese.

**Section 3:** The terms of office for elected members shall be three (3) years. An elected member may serve only two (2) successive full terms.

**Section 4:** The appointed members shall be appointed by the diocesan bishop for a term of three (3) years, which can be renewed upon expiration at the discretion of the bishop. Appointees may serve two consecutive terms. 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 IV - ELECTIONS

**Section 1:** The elected members shall be elected at the fall meeting of the presbyteral assembly and their terms shall begin November 1.

**Section 2:** Priests in each vicariate shall elect one (1) priest from their vicariate. Following the election by vicariate, all priests shall elect two (2) at-large members from the total presbyterate. The priests receiving the highest number of votes cast at the fall assembly shall be elected.

**Section 3:** Voting will be done by secret ballot.

**Section 4:** In the event that an elected member of the Priests' Council, by reason of inability, resignation, death, or transfer to a new constituency, is unable to complete his term, a replacement to fill the unexpired term will be elected at the next assembly.

**Section 5:** Procedural details of nomination and election shall be determined by the committee on membership and elections with the approval of the Priests' Council.

## ARTICLE V - OFFICERS

**Section 1:** The officers of the Priests' Council shall be the president, the chairman, the vice-chairman, the secretary and the treasurer.

**Section 2:** The president of the Priests' Council shall be the diocesan bishop. The president has the right to call 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 recommendations of the council, and to promulgate decisions arising there from.



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## Section 3: The Chairman:

- a) The chairman of the Priests' Council is to be elected from the seven (7) elected members of the Priests' Council.
- b) The chairman of the Priests' Council will be elected by the members of the presbyterate present. The priest receiving the highest number of votes shall be elected.
- c) The chairman shall serve a term of three years. He may serve two consecutive terms.
- d) In the event that the chairman of the Priests' Council, by reason of inability, resignation, expiration of elected position, or death is unable to complete his term, the vice-chairman shall complete the unexpired term of the chairman, and shall be eligible for re-election as chairman for two full terms.
- e) Duties: The chairman shall preside at meetings of the council not presided over by the president. He will forward to the president proposals regarding matters to be added to the agenda from the Priests' Council and the Presbyteral Assembly. In general, he shall perform all duties incident to the office of the chairman and such duties as may be prescribed by the Priests' Council, the Executive Committee, or the president from time to time.

## Section 4: The Vice-Chairman:

- a) The vice-chairman is to be elected from the six (6) remaining elected members of the Priests' Council according to the same procedure as the election of the chairman.
- b) The vice-chairman shall serve a term of three years. He may serve two consecutive terms.
- c) In the event that the vice-chairman, by reason of inability, resignation, loss of elected position, or death, is unable to complete his term, a new vice-chairman will be chosen by the Priests' Council members from among the elected members to complete his term.
- d) Duties: The vice-chairman shall prepare, for the approval of the Priests' Council, the program and make arrangements for the semi-annual meetings of the Presbyteral Assembly. In the absence of the



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chairman, the vice-chairman shall assume all the duties of the chairman as described in Article V, Section 3(d). In general, he shall perform all the duties incident to the office of the vice-chairman and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to him by the president, the chairman or the Priests' Council.

## **Section 5: The Secretary:**

- a) The secretary of the Priests' Council will be elected by a majority of the members of the Priests' Council. The secretary shall serve a term of one year. He may be re-elected. In the event that the secretary, by reason of inability, resignation, loss of election position, or death, is unable to complete his term, a new secretary will be chosen by the Priests' Council members.
- b) Duties: He will be responsible for the minutes taken at the Priests' Council meetings and provide a copy of the minutes electronically to Chancellor of the Diocese to be placed in diocesan archives. He will be the archivist of the council. He will call the roll. He will take the minutes of the council and committee meetings and send copies of the minutes electronically to all members of the presbyterate. As directed by the president, or in accordance with the provisions of the constitution, or any by-laws hereafter adopted, he will be responsible for communication with the council members and the presbyterate. In general, he shall perform all the duties incident to the office of the secretary and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to him by the president, the chairman or the Priests' Council.

## **Section 6: The Treasurer:**

- a) The treasurer of the Priests' Council will be elected by a majority of the members of the Priests' Council. The treasurer shall serve a term of three years. He may serve two consecutive terms. In the event that the treasurer, by reason of inability, resignation, loss of elected position, or death, is unable to complete his term, a new treasurer will be chosen by the Priests' Council members.
- b) Duties: He will be responsible for the financial records of the Priests' Council in coordination with the business manager of the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings. For the semi-annual presbyteral assemblies he shall have charge of and custody of, and be responsible for all funds received and give receipts for monies due and payable from any source whatsoever, and deposit all such monies in the name of the



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- c) presbyteral assembly in such bank or institution as determined by the executive committee. He shall also be responsible for physical arrangements for the semi-annual presbyteral assembly. He shall be responsible to make an accounting of the finances of the Priests' Council and the presbyteral assembly to both bodies. He shall provide a financial report at each Priests' Council meeting.

In general, he shall perform all the duties incident to the office of the treasurer and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to him by the president, the chairman or the Priests' Council.

## **Section 7: Ex-officio Members**

- a) The Vicar General shall serve as an ex-officio non-voting member.
- b) The Judicial Vicar shall serve as an ex-officio non-voting member.

## **ARTICLE VI - MEETINGS**

**Section 1:** The Council shall meet at least four (4) times each year, two meetings to address substantial issues (one in May and one in November) and two briefer meetings scheduled immediately prior to the Fall and Winter Presbyteral Assemblies on an annual schedule to be adopted by the council, and at the call of the president. The chairman or any five (5) voting members may request the president to call a special meeting of the Council.

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

**Section 3:** The meetings of the Priests' Council and its committees shall be open to observers, unless the council or committee by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting, or by the decision of the president, the chairman of the council or the chairman of a committee, decides that they meet in a closed session.

**Section 4:** Unless otherwise provided, no proxy or absentee voting is valid at any meeting of the Priests' Council.

**Section 5:** The Priests' Council shall recommend to the president those times when issues of significance would need consultation with the full presbyterate.

**Section 6:** Unless otherwise specified by canon law or this document, decisions will be reached by means of the consensus model.

**Section 7:** Regarding consensus building, refer to Appendix I of this document.



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**Section 8:** Meetings of the Priests' Council will normally be in person. When required, meeting may be held via electronic means (e.g., conference call).

## ARTICLE VII - COMMITTEES

**Section 1:** The council shall have an executive committee and an elections and membership committee and such other outstanding 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 assist the president in preparing the agenda for meetings of the council, and shall coordinate, where necessary, the work of the other committees. The executive committee shall normally meet via conference call to prepare the agenda for the Priests' Council meeting one month prior to the next scheduled meeting. Prior to planning the agenda, the secretary will solicit items for consideration on the agenda from all members of the presbyterate two weeks prior to the Priests' Council meeting. The secretary will send the agenda for the next scheduled Priests' Council meeting to all Council members no later than two weeks prior to the next scheduled meeting.

**Section 3:** The executive committee shall not have the power to act in the name of the council except as specifically authorized by the council.

**Section 4:** The elections and membership committee shall have supervision over matters pertaining to eligibility to vote and to be elected and shall conduct the elections for elected members of the council. Members of the elections and membership committee should be appointed at the August Priests' Council meeting to allow for proper preparation and promotion of the elections at the fall presbyteral assembly meeting.

**Section 5:** Other committees may be created by the council and shall have the rights and duties that the council shall from time to time specify.

**Section 6:** The chairman of the Priests' Council, after seeking the advice and consent of the council, should recommend the chairman and members of the standing and special committees of the Priests' Council to the president.

## ARTICLE VIII - FINANCES

**Section 1:** The operating budget for the council shall be prepared by the treasurer, presented to the president, and approved by the council. The budget shall then be included in the diocesan budget preparation process.



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**Section 2:** The operating budget shall provide for necessary funds to be underwritten by the diocese to cover the expenses of the council.

**Section 3:** As directed by the president, the treasurer of the Priests' Council shall make an annual financial report to the council and the presbyterate for the Priests' Council and the Presbyteral Assemblies.

## ARTICLE IX - THE PRESBYTERAL ASSEMBLY

**Section 1:** Two assemblies of the presbyterate shall be scheduled each year. The presbyteral assembly shall provide the opportunity:

- a) to voice pastoral needs and concerns;
- b) to gather input on issues under consideration by the Priests' Council;
- c) to provide greater collaboration among all those who minister as priests within the diocese;
- d) to offer direction to the work of the Priests' Council;
- e) to promote the pastoral care for, and continuing formation of, the priests and others in pastoral ministry; and
- f) to strengthen and demonstrate the unity among priests in matters affecting pastoral ministry and the governance of the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings.

**Section 2:** Parish Life Coordinators may be invited to attend meetings of the presbyteral assembly and to take part in discussions and educational/formational opportunities regarding the pastoral ministry of parish communities within the diocese.

**Section 3:** Deacons, religious brothers, religious sisters, and lay ministers may be invited to particular Presbyteral Assembly sessions which will help them to fulfill their respective roles in pastoral ministry.

**Section 4:** Dues will be paid by the parishes, institutions, or the diocese to support the planning for, and meetings of the presbyteral assembly. Those in attendance at the presbyteral assembly will provide the funds for the meeting of the assembly itself through registration fees.

The amount of the dues and the registration fees will be determined by the Priests' Council based on a separate budget for the assemblies prepared by the treasurer. The





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total amount collected should be equal to the expenditures of the presbyteral assemblies. Any deficit will be underwritten by the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings.

**Section 5:** The Priests' Council shall determine which meetings of the presbyteral assembly should involve only the presence of the members of the presbyterate of the diocese.

**Section 6:** The chairman of the Priests' Council shall serve as chairman of the presbyteral assembly. In accord with Article V, Section 4, of the Constitution of the Priests' Council of the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings, the vice-chairman shall prepare the program and make arrangements for the semi-annual meetings of the presbyteral assemblies with the approval of the Priests' Council.

## ARTICLE X - 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 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 two-thirds ballot 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 an approval.

Revised and Promulgated by:  
Bishop Michael W. Warfel  
November 22, 2017  
Reviewed September 2002  
Approved by Bishop Milone 7/15/00  
Approved as Amended 1/17/00  
Approved by Bishop Milone 11/1/97  
Approved as Amended 9/23/97  
Approved by Bishop Milone 11/11/94  
Approved as Amended 9/19/94  
Approved by Bishop Milone 10/21/88  
Approved as Amended 9/28/88  
Approved by Bishop Murphy 3/30/87  
Approved by Presbyterate 1/27/87



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## Appendix I – What is Consensus Diocese of Great Falls-Billings

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### I. What is Consensus?

Consensual decision-making processes are intended to help groups “think and feel together.” In the context of council meetings, *consensus* describes how council members work out a decision by thinking together as a group. It is a form of decision-making which enables a group to come to agreement without voting.

### II. Why Not Vote?

Sometimes voting is fine. It can be useful when a group is making simple decisions, uncomplicated by strong feelings or opinions one way or another. Sometimes it's useful and time-saving simply to “take a straw vote” to get a sense of the group during a discussion.

At other times, however, voting results in “winners” and “losers.” When a great deal is riding on a decision, a great deal is at stake, or when the decision to be made is highly emotional for some or all council members, a vote can polarize the group and result in tension/conflict. In such instances a vote can prevent a council from witnessing to solidarity, harmony and unity.

### III. What Are the Basic Guidelines for Consensual Decision-Making?

- Avoid blindly arguing for your own personal point of view.
- State your position as clearly and logically as you can.
- Listen closely to others' statements; observe their reactions carefully before pressing your point.
- Avoid changing your mind only to reach agreement or to avoid conflict with others. Support only solutions with which you are at least somewhat in agreement. Yield only to positions that have objective, logical-sounding foundations.
- Avoid resorting to “conflict reducing” measures like majority vote, coin toss, averaging, bargaining.
- Seek out differences of opinion (remember, it's natural to differ and differences should be expected and can be growth-inducing).



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- Try to involve *everyone* in the process. Differences of opinion or disagreements reflecting a wide range of information and opinion can create a situation in which better solutions can be reached.
- Discuss underlying assumptions. Listen carefully to one another and encourage all to express themselves. If discussion reaches a stalemate, look for the next most acceptable alternative for all members.

Don't confuse consensus with unanimity. Consensus doesn't necessarily mean that everyone agrees with every single point, or feels equally good about the final decision. It does mean that all agree this is the best decision for the faith community as a whole—taking into account the wisdom of the group.



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## Appendix II – Checklist For Effective Meetings & Procedures Diocese of Great Falls-Billings

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The following checklist is an evaluation instrument for the Priests' Council of the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings. At the August meeting each year, each member fills out his own form during the open discussion of each point, rating it according to his opinion. The results are collated and reviewed at the September meeting, and areas of concern may be addressed appropriately through the year, making adjustments and changes as called for by the results of the compiled opinion.

**Rate each item from 1 (low - needs work) to 5 (high - very satisfactory).**

### PURPOSE

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The Priests' Council collaborates as a group representing the body of priests in advising the Bishop.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. By its spirit and its manner of reaching consensus, the Priests' Council reflects its fraternal mission to promote the good of its constituency and of the entire diocese.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. In cooperation with the bishop and other advisory groups, the Priests' Council recommends policy and shares in guiding the overall direction of the diocese.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The Priests' Council effectively delegates without getting entangled in details of implementation for which others (or committees) are responsible.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Members of the Priests' Council make efforts on an on-going basis to obtain input, opinions, and insights from those whom they represent.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. The Priests' Council understands and respects the principles of subsidiarity; the rights and the responsibilities of other persons and groups are upheld by the Priests' Council members.

### MEMBERSHIP

- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Priests' Council membership is balanced and proportionately representative of the presbyterate.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. New members are adequately oriented and prepared for full and effective participation.



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### Appendix II – Checklist For Effective Meetings & Procedures Diocese of Great Falls-Billings

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- \_\_\_ 9. Members understand and are constantly fulfilling their responsibilities.
- \_\_\_ 10. Prayer is integral to all Priests' Council gatherings; it is organized and led by its members.

#### **MEETINGS**

- \_\_\_ 11. Agendas are a collaborative effort worked out by the bishop and the chairman.
- \_\_\_ 12. Members receive copies of agenda, minutes, and other needed background materials before the meetings.
- \_\_\_ 13. The atmosphere at the meetings is hospitable, conducive to sharing, reflection, and prayer.
- \_\_\_ 14. The Priests' Council understands and uses processes helpful to consensus building, especially where major issues are concerned.
- \_\_\_ 15. The chair keeps the agenda moving, tactfully returns to the point when discussion wanders, expedites sharing by all present, and facilitates in decision-making.
- \_\_\_ 16. Minutes are filed in the diocesan archive.

#### **OTHER**

- \_\_\_ 17. From time to time the Priests' Council evaluates its constitution, makes necessary changes, and resubmits the document for the approval of the bishop.
- \_\_\_ 18. The Priests' Council is influenced by the values and faith-life of the greater church, and is guided by directives of the U. S. Bishops and the universal church.
- \_\_\_ 19. When convened as the College of Consultors, the members are informed about the issues, and each has the opportunity for appropriate input in advising the bishop.



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## Appendix III – Duties Outlined in the Constitution

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### President (Bishop):

- ✓ Call meetings
- ✓ Preside over meetings
- ✓ Develop agenda
- ✓ Accept or reject recommendations of the Priests' Council
- ✓ Promulgate decisions

### Chairman:

- ✓ Preside when the president is not presiding
- ✓ Forward to the president proposals for the agenda from the Priests' Council and assembly

### Vice Chairman:

- ✓ Prepare the program and make arrangements for the assemblies
- ✓ Serve as chairman in his absence

### Secretary:

- ✓ Responsible for minutes of Priests' Council meetings and committee meetings
- ✓ Serves as archivist
- ✓ Calls roll at meetings
- ✓ Communicates with the Priests' Council and the presbyterate
- ✓ Responsible for other duties as assigned

### Treasurer:

- ✓ Responsible for financial records in accord with the diocesan fiscal officer
- ✓ Responsible for assembly financial transactions
- ✓ Responsible for assembly physical arrangements
- ✓ Responsible for financial reports to the Priests' Council and assembly
- ✓ Responsible for other duties as assigned

### ADDITIONAL DUTIES:

#### Chairman:

- Monitor term limits and conduct elections either during the fall assembly or by mail-in ballot if necessary
- Preside over the regular Priests' Council meetings and the assemblies

#### Vice Chairman:

- Communicate with speakers for assemblies and study days regarding transportation, lodging, hospitality needs, liturgical participation, etc.



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## Appendix III – Duties Outlined in the Constitution

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- ❑ Communicate with speakers regarding program details, biographical information, etc., and produce the brochures for assemblies and study days
- ❑ Disseminate the brochures as needed in a timely fashion, along with bulletin announcements, registration materials for laity, etc., if appropriate
- ❑ Communicate in writing with the treasurer regarding payment of fees, expenses, and reimbursements
- ❑ Communicate with meeting-place personnel in scheduling study days, assemblies, etc., making provision for lodging information, meals for participants, meeting room space, and other physical details
- ❑ Make provision for liturgical needs of study days and assemblies, or delegate necessary tasks to others
- ❑ Communicate with pastors regarding the schedule and use of facilities for liturgical events when necessary for study days and assemblies
- ❑ Arrange for the health-screening program for the winter assembly, communicating with the health care staff, meeting-place personnel, and the priests' council treasurer
- ❑ When necessary, work with the treasurer to conduct the registration process for study days and assemblies

### Secretary:

- ❑ Take minutes at the assembly business session
- ❑ Responsible for disseminating all minutes to the presbyterate and the diocesan archivist

### Treasurer:

- ❑ Responsible for preparing a complete fiscal-year financial report at regular Priests' Council meetings
- ❑ Communicates with the diocesan fiscal officer regarding payment of registration fees, dues, etc., for diocesan staff priests and retired/disabled priests
- ❑ When necessary, work with the vice chairman to conduct the registration process for study days and assemblies

### Standing Committee on Speakers for Study Days and Assemblies:

- ❑ Provide the vice chairman with names and addresses of speakers in a timely fashion; the vice chairman of the Priests' Council serves as the chairman of this committee
- ❑ Set the schedule for study days and assemblies, communicating through the chairman
- ❑ Responsible for preparing the evaluations for study days and assemblies



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- Responsible for compiling the evaluations and disseminating them to the presbyterate





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## Appendix IV – Presbyteral Assemblies, Permanent Deacons, Parish Life Coordinators & Funding Issues

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### Presbyteral Assemblies that are **OPEN**:

- Permanent deacons would be invited to attend...
  - o Presbyteral business session, especially if they are pastoral administrators
  - o The banquet(s) (for deacon and wife)
  - o and liturgical events
- Permanent deacons would pay the same registration fees as lay people in order to attend the presentations of the open session
- Volunteer deacons: negotiate with the parish regarding payment of all these expenses as well as travel and lodging expenses (See Policy on Deacons)
- Church-Employed deacons (either as a PA or as a parish minister): the parish would pay these expenses as well as travel and lodging expenses

### Presbyteral Assemblies that are **CLOSED**:

- Permanent deacons would have their own track
  - o All deacons would help defray the expenses of bringing in a speaker
  - o The diocese would cover the rest of the expenses for the deacon track, with consultation and approval from the bishop
- Permanent deacons would be invited to attend...
  - o Presbyteral business session, especially if they are pastoral administrators
  - o The banquet(s) (for deacon and wife)
  - o And liturgical events
- Volunteer deacons: negotiate with the parish regarding payment of all these expenses as well as travel and lodging expenses (See Policy on Deacons)
- Church-Employed deacons (either as a PLC or as a parish minister): the parish would pay these expenses as well as travel and lodging expenses

### **PARISH LIFE COORDINATORS – Non-Deacons**

- **Open** presbyteral assemblies, same as deacons (above)
- **Closed** presbyteral assemblies:
  - o PLC's would be invited to the presbyteral business session
  - o PLC's would be invited to banquet(s)
  - o The diocesan liaison would coordinate an organized, planned gathering to meet the needs of the PA (unfunded)
- As church employees, the parish would pay all expenses related to attending the presbyteral assemblies (meals, travel, lodging)



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## Appendix V – Election Protocol

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To facilitate open, free, and smooth elections for representation on Priest Council, and the officers required therein, this protocol has been adopted in accord with canons 164-179.

**1. Scope.** This protocol shall guide the election of:

- a. All elected representatives to the Priest Council, either by vicariate or at-large.
- b. The election of the (1) Chair, and (2) Vice-Chair.

**2. Notification and Preparation.**

- a. The Executive Assistant to the Bishop, in coordination with the Chair of the Priest Council, shall notify all priests eligible to vote of:
  - i. the upcoming election, and
  - ii. the positions open for elections.
- b. Per the constitution of the Priest Council, the priests who need to be notified are:
  - i. all incardinated priests of the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings, and
  - ii. all those priests residing in the Diocese and performing some work for the good of the Diocese.
- c. Prior to the fall assembly, the Secretary, in collaboration with the Chair and, if necessary, the Executive Assistant to the Bishop, shall prepare
  - i. a list of all eligible voters,
  - ii. a printout of the current Diocesan directory, and
  - iii. the necessary ballots. The ballots shall have no identifying marks, but shall be placed in envelopes with the names of the voters, one envelope for each voter. These envelopes will contain, depending on the open positions and the voter,:
    1. a ballot for the appropriate vicariate position,
    2. a ballot for the at-large position, and
    3. a ballot for the election of chair and vice-chair.
  - iv. The ballot shall be different colors of paper in order to more easily identify which election is being held at a particular time.



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## Appendix V – Election Protocol

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### 3. Voting.

- a. Elections are to be held by personal vote at the fall presbyteral assembly.
- b. Proxy votes are not permitted.
- c. Votes will be taken in secret.
- d. For votes for one position, election is achieved by receiving a majority of votes, i.e., 50% +1 of the voters present.
  - i. If no majority is acquired after the first vote, then a run-off between the top two contenders will be held.
  - ii. For votes for two positions, the two candidates with the top votes wins the election.
- e. Upon arrival at the assembly, eligible voters will report to the Secretary and Vice-Chair. The Secretary will mark the name of the voter on the list and give him his envelope.
  - i. Any voters who do not claim their envelopes prior to the beginning of voting shall be marked “absent” and their envelope will be held by the President until the voting is finished. At that point the envelopes will be discarded.
- f. The Chair will announce the beginning of the election, the Secretary will collect the ballots once completed, and the Secretary and the Vice-Chair will tally the votes, after which the Chair will announce the winner.
- g. A list of priests ineligible to be elected for the (1) vicariate or (2) at-large shall be noted upon a whiteboard or chalkboard at the front of the room prior to the beginning of the corresponding election. The elections shall be held in the following order:
  - i. Vicariates,
  - ii. At-Large,
  - iii. Officers. Prior to the election of officers, a list of the eligible priests who have been elected to the council will be written on the white/chalkboard.
- h. The elected shall receive the office upon reception of the election, which, if present at the election, can be done verbally. Otherwise, it must be accepted in writing.



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## Appendix V – Election Protocol

Diocese of Great Falls-Billings

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- i. The Secretary will take note of the results of the election and the reception of said election. These notes shall be included in the official record of the Priest Council. He will also be responsible of notifying the Executive Assistant to the Bishop so that he may update the directory.

#### **4. Non-conflict.**

- a. In the event of difficulties, the Code of Canon Law and the Priest Council Constitution shall control.