



Diocese of Bridgetown

Mission

‘To lead all people to unity, encounter and participation in Christ.’

Vision:

‘By 2019, the Roman Catholic church will be a leader in integral development, forming mature disciples who build strong Christian families and vibrant communities in the service of Christian Unity, the Common Good and the Kingdom of God.’

STATUTES OF THE PARISH FINANCE COUNCIL

Article I

Core Purpose

Core purpose of the Parish Finance Council: To manage, monitor, report and grow the temporal goods of the parish in support of the Parish achieving its purpose. The parish finance council oversees the Accounting, fundraising and maintenance activities of the parish.

According to the norms of the Diocese of Bridgetown, the Finance Council is co-responsible with the Parish Priest for the good governance of the temporal goods of the parish. The Parish Finance Council acts in conjunction with the Parish Priest. It must at all times act in accordance with (all) Diocesan policies and procedures with regard to finance. Its stewardship accountability is to their parishioners and the Diocesan Bishop.

This requires generosity of spirit and a desire to have the parish achieve its mission through its pastoral initiatives and plans. Healthy finance is vital in achieving the mission.

The Finance Council is consultative. It advises the Parish Priest who is the sole administrator of the parish goods and has ultimate responsibility to make final decisions concerning the operations of the parish. In the Diocese of Bridgetown this will be exercised through co-responsibility with the Finance Council.

Canon 537 states that in each parish there is to be a Finance Council which is governed, in addition to universal law, by norms issued by the Diocesan bishop and in which the Christian faithful, selected according to these norms, are to assist the Parish Priest in the administration of the goods of the parish without prejudice to the prescript of Canon 532.

The following are considered as the framework or norms of the Diocese of Bridgetown regarding Parish Finance Councils:

1. Every parish will have a Parish Finance Council that comprises the Parish Priest, an accountant, the coordinator of fund raising and the coordinator of maintenance/property administration, at a minimum.
2. The Parish Priest is the President, ex officio, of the Finance Council and the accountant is the chair person.
3. The Diocese of Bridgetown has adopted Pope Benedict's call for co-responsibility for mission. The Bishop exercises his ministry in co-responsibility with the priests and lay people. In the parish, the priest exercises his ministry in co-responsibility with the laity and in a special way with the Pastoral Council, the Finance Council and Vision Team member.
4. In the spirit of co-responsibility the Parish Priest will not act in financial matters without input from the Finance Council, nor will the Finance Council act without the knowledge and consent of the Parish Priest. The Parish Priest will have discretionary spending for urgent pastoral needs. The Parish Priest and chairperson of the Parish Finance Council will determine the annual amount that will form part of the parish budget. In the event of an impasse that is critical to mission, the Parish Priest or chairperson of the Finance Council could ask for an intervention from the Diocesan finance administrator. If this does not resolve the impasse; then an intervention from the Bishop will be required. The Bishop is the final arbitrator in all matters pastoral and financial.
5. The Parish Priest, the coordinator of the Pastoral Council, the chairperson of the Finance Council and the Vision team person form the "Parish Governance Council". This group ensures the smooth running of the parish affairs from the perspective of Governance and long-term planning.
6. The members of the Parish Finance Council and the Parish Priest are called to engage in genuine consultation and dialogue for the common good of the parish. This requires all parties to give serious consideration to the different perspectives, pastoral and financial, while making decisions that affect the parish goods.

Canon 532 prescribes that in all juridic affairs the Parish Priest represents the parish according to the norm of the law. He is to take care that the goods of the parish are administered accordance with (to the norm of) Canons 1281-1288. According to the norms of the Diocese of Bridgetown he exercises his rights and responsibilities in co-responsibility with the Finance Council.

Article II

Membership

The Finance Council should comprise of between three and seven members of the parish who are either appointed by the Parish Priest or serve ex officio.

The Parish Priest who, by virtue of his office, is the president of the Council and presides over the meetings of the Council.

If the parish is served by one or more Parochial Vicars, they serve as members ex officio of the Finance Council.

- A chairperson should be appointed by the parish priest. The chair should normally be an accountant or someone with expertise in finance, budgeting and accounting.
- A secretary is elected from among the members of the Council by the members of the Council.
- Because the Finance Council requires persons who are skilled in financial affairs, the Parish Priest will appoint members who possess a fair degree of knowledge and experience in accounting, property management, fundraising, budgeting and personnel management.
- The chairperson of the fundraising committee will be an ex officio a member of the Finance Council.
- The chairperson of the maintenance committee will be an ex officio a member of the Finance Council.
- Paid or volunteer members of the parish staff are ineligible for membership on the Finance Council. If however, their expertise is useful to the work of the Council, they may serve as consultants from time to time.
- Members of the Finance Council are appointed in writing by the Parish Priest for terms of three (3) years, renewable by mutual consent.
- Members of the Finance Council, like members of all Councils in the parish, remain for the full term of office even if the Parish Priest has been transferred or dies.
- Any person who is related by blood or marriage of affinity to the Parish Priest cannot serve on the Finance Council.
- Membership on the Council and committees will be reviewed by the Governance Team annually or if it becomes apparent that a person is no longer able to fulfill the role and responsibilities undertaken.

Article III

Relationship with Parish Pastoral Council

The Parish Pastoral Council has the responsibility to focus on the Pastoral care and the development of all people in the parish's geographical space - the parishioners who attend mass and the Catholics living in the parish, who do not attend mass. The coordinator of the Parish Pastoral Council, the Chairperson of the Parish Finance Council, the Vision Team representative and the Parish Priest form the Governance Team. This team should meet at a minimum on a quarterly basis or more frequently as the needs of the parish require.

The Chairperson of the Finance Council, though not a member of the Parish Pastoral Council should be invited to meetings of the Parish Pastoral Council on a quarterly basis at a minimum, and finance should be an item on the Agenda.

The Parish Pastoral Council plays an integral role in the development of the annual budget which must be based on the Parish Pastoral plan to carry out the mission of the parish.

The Parish Pastoral Council is the custodian of the mission – it is responsible for ensuring that the parish achieves the church's mission. The Finance Council is of service to the Parish Pastoral Council and the mission.

Article IV

Responsibilities

According to Canon 537 and the norms of the Diocese of Bridgetown, the Parish Finance Council is responsible for the **Accounting, fundraising and maintenance activities. As such the Finance Council will:**

As part of the governance team, allocate financial resources for the pastoral priorities of the parish in accordance with the diocesan pastoral priorities and the pastoral and temporal needs of the parish.

Work with the Parish Pastoral Council to develop the parish's annual budget based on the Parish Pastoral plan.

Recommend approval of the Parish's annual budget and review and comment on the financial performance of the parish on a quarterly basis.

Ensure that proper procedures are followed in the receipt and disbursement of the parish funds including adhering to limits of authority guidelines issued by the Bishop.

Prepare financial reports of the parish on a monthly basis. These reports are to be sent to the Diocese Finance Council.

Prepare monthly stewardship reports providing updates on plate collections, fundraising events in the parish, Bishop's Appeal and stewardship covenants collected. These should be shared with parishioners and the Diocese Finance Council.

Monitor and control expenditure to ensure it is kept within budget. In the event of unforeseen expenditure, assist the Parish Priest in the reallocation of resources.

Review financial reports of the various parish ministries and assist in offering financial and management advice.

Offer counsel and monitor all the assets of the parish.

Together with the Parish Priest and Coordinator of the Parish Pastoral Council, prepare and submit an annual financial report of all parish activities to the Bishop, Parish Pastoral Council and/or to the parish at large within two months after the end of the calendar year. Also submit quarterly updates on the budget and financial performance of the parish.

Ensure that all finance related records including original receipts and invoices etc. are carefully stored by the Parish for a minimum of seven years.

Ensure that all finance related records including original receipts and suppliers' invoices etc. are carefully affixed to reimbursement statements to be submitted to the diocesan office for refund of the parish's imprest bank account.

Ensure imprest bank accounts are reconciled monthly and submitted to the parish priest and chair of the finance council.

Where there is no fundraising committee in place the Finance Council work with the Parish Priest to:

- Establish a fundraising committee that operates within the Diocesan framework to ensure the parish has the financial resources to fulfill its mission.
- Conduct the fund-raising activities to generate the additional resources needed for the mission of the Church. The fundraising committee must authorize all fundraising activities on behalf of the parish and they shall adhere to such guidelines as are issued by the Diocese.

Ensure the upkeep of all the assets of the parish (canon 537)

Establish a maintenance/property management team to ensure the good maintenance of the physical plant.

Allocate sufficient resources to ensure the good maintenance of the physical plant which should be part of the annual budget.

Ensure that all capital expenditure over \$20,000 (Barbados dollars) is treated as a special project which is sent to the Diocesan Finance Council for approval. It should demonstrate involvement of qualified personnel for design, transparency in tendering and sufficient funds for execution.

Work with the Diocesan Office to ensure that guidelines established by the Diocesan Office are used for the employment and termination of the parish salaried employees including compensation (salary and fringe benefits) and that recruitment, contracts and job descriptions are

in alignment with Diocesan policy. Adherence to guidelines established by the Diocesan Office are also applied to volunteers and persons in ministry, including payment of any stipend.

Article V

Meetings

1. The Finance Council will meet no fewer than four times annually. If needed, special meetings can be called by the Parish Priest or chairperson on behalf of the Parish Priest. Every meeting must have a prepared agenda which is circulated ahead of the meeting.
2. A quorum shall consist of the presence of a majority of the total members of the Finance Council and the presence of the Parish Priest, or in his absence, a Parochial Vicar (another priest attached to the parish). When the Finance Council is to provide the Parish Priest with consultation or consent, then the Parish Priest must be present to receive the Council's input.
3. The Finance Council is a consultative - not deliberative - body. With the goodwill and participation of the members, it operates effectively for the good of the parish. Therefore, the Council shall strive to work towards consensus in its meetings. When an advisory vote is taken however, a simple majority of those members present shall carry the vote. Should it become necessary, the latest edition of *Roberts' Rules of Order* shall govern the proceedings. A copy of these Rules must be retained by the Parish Priest.
4. A record of every meeting of the Finance Council is kept in the minutes that are taken by the Council Secretary or a person appointed for that meeting. In addition to recording who was present and absent, the minutes are to provide a synopsis of the discussion of agenda items, summarizing the major points raised and any consensus reached. Detailed minutes will be especially important for agenda items requiring that the Parish Priest receive the consultation or consent of the Council, since a copy of the minutes will have to be forwarded to the Bishop. Copies of the minutes of the Finance Council meetings are to be kept in the parish archives with a copy posted on the finance council's page on the diocese's collaboration software tool such as 'Teamwork'.

Article VI

Committees

1. As needed and with the approval of the Parish Priest, the Finance Council may establish standing or *ad hoc* committees which must report to the Finance Council.
2. The committee chairpersons are chosen from among members of the Finance Council by the Parish Priest in consultation with the Council chairperson.
3. Membership on a committee is open to any parishioner possessing the required skills.

4. The standing committees shall be the budget committee, fundraising committee and the maintenance committee. Members shall serve terms of three (3) years which are renewable with the agreement of the person and the Parish Priest in consultation with the Council chairperson.

Article VII

Amendment Process

1. Amendments desired by the Finance Council to these statutes can be proposed in written form and submitted to the Diocesan Bishop.
2. Amendments can only be approved by the Diocesan Bishop and take effect from the date identified by the Bishop.



Approved: 26 April, 2017

Charles Jason Gordon
Roman Catholic Bishop of Bridgetown

APPENDIX I

Relevant Canon Law

Can. 532 In all juridic affairs the pastor represents the parish according to the norm of law. He is to take care that the goods of the parish are administered according to the norm of ⇒ cann. 1281-1288.

Can. 537 In each parish there is to be a finance council which is governed, in addition to universal law, by norms issued by the diocesan bishop and in which the Christian faithful, selected according to these same norms, are to assist the pastor in the administration of the goods of the parish, without prejudice to the prescript of ⇒ can. 532.

Can. 1281 §1 Without prejudice to the provisions of the statutes administrators act invalidly when they go beyond the limits and manner of ordinary administration, unless they have first received in writing from the Ordinary the faculty to do so.

§2 The statutes are to determine what acts go beyond the limits and manner of ordinary administration. If the statutes are silent on this point, it is for the diocesan Bishop, after consulting the finance committee, to determine these acts for the persons subject to him.

§3 Except and insofar as it is to its benefit, a juridical person is not held responsible for the invalid actions of its administrators. The juridical person is, however, responsible when such actions are valid but unlawful, without prejudice to its right to bring an action or have recourse against the administrators who have caused it damage.

Can. 1282 All persons, whether clerics or laity, who lawfully take part in the administration of ecclesiastical goods, are bound to fulfill their duties in the name of the Church, in accordance with the law.

Can. 1283 Before administrators undertake their duties:

1. They must take an oath, in the presence of the Ordinary or his delegate, that they will well and truly perform their office;
2. They are to draw up a clear and accurate inventory, to be signed by themselves, of all immovable goods, of those movable goods which are precious or of a high cultural value, and of all other goods, with a description and an estimate of their value; when this has been compiled, it is to be certified as correct;

3. One copy of this inventory is to be kept in the administration office and another in the curial archive; any change which takes place in the property is to be noted on both copies.

Can. 1284 §1 All administrators are to perform their duties with the diligence of a good householder.

§2 Therefore they must:

1. Be vigilant that no goods placed in their care in any way perish or suffer damage; to this end they are, to the extent necessary, to arrange insurance contracts;
2. Ensure that the ownership of ecclesiastical goods is safeguarded in ways which are valid in civil law;
3. Observe the provisions of canon and civil law, and the stipulations of the founder or donor or lawful authority; they are to take special care that damage will not be suffered by the Church through the non-observance of the civil law;
4. Seek accurately and at the proper time the income and produce of the goods, guard them securely and expend them in accordance with the wishes of the founder or lawful norms;
5. At the proper time pay the interest which is due by reason of a loan or pledge, and take care that in due time the capital is repaid;
6. with the consent of the Ordinary make use of money which is surplus after payment of expenses and which can be profitably invested for the purposes of the juridical person;
7. Keep accurate records of income and expenditure;
8. Draw up an account of their administration at the end of each year;
9. Keep in order and preserve in a convenient and suitable archive the documents and records establishing the rights of the Church or institute to its goods; where conveniently possible, authentic copies must be placed in the curial archives.

§3 It is earnestly recommended that administrators draw up each year a budget of income and expenditure. However, it is left to particular law to make this an obligation and to determine more precisely how it is to be presented.

Can. 1285 Solely within the limits of ordinary administration, administrators are allowed to make gifts for pious purposes or christian charity out of the movable goods which do not form part of the stable patrimony.

Can. 1286 Administrators of temporal goods:

1. In making contracts of employment, are accurately to observe also, according to the principles taught by the Church, the civil laws relating to labour and social life

2. Are to pay to those who work for them under contract a just and honest wage which will be sufficient to provide for their needs and those of their dependents.

Can. 1287 §1 Where ecclesiastical goods of any kind are not lawfully withdrawn from the power of governance of the diocesan Bishop, their administrators, both clerical and lay, are bound to submit each year to the local Ordinary an account of their administration, which he is to pass on to his finance committee for examination. Any contrary custom is reprobated.

§2 Administrators are to render accounts to the faithful concerning the goods they have given to the Church, in accordance with the norms to be laid down by particular law.

Can. 1288 Administrators are not to begin legal proceedings in the name of a public juridical person, nor are they to contest them in a secular court, without first obtaining the written permission of their proper Ordinary.

