



PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

A Reference Handbook



The Catholic
Archdiocese
of Edmonton

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OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

November 2015

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

The Parish Pastoral Council is a vital component of every parish in the Archdiocese of Edmonton. The wisdom, experience, and gifts of council members help the pastor to become a better leader, help the parish to become a better spiritual community, and help us all to advance the universal mission of the Church.

In order to assist our council members in fulfilling their role, the Archdiocese has developed a formation program called Together in Ministry (TIM). The program includes Together in Ministry workshops, the TIM Manual, and this quick reference guide, which we hope will be particularly helpful to new members.

It is my personal hope that, whether you are a novice or veteran member of the parish pastoral council, your formation and service produces a renewed commitment to our fundamental mission to evangelize as Christ has commanded:

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you... (Mt. 28:19-20)

Thank you for collaborating with me in this mission. I am deeply grateful for your commitment to Christ and his Church, and I pray that your participation in your parish pastoral council will be faith-filled and fruitful.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

✠Richard W. Smith

Archbishop of Edmonton

Introduction



Welcome to Parish Pastoral Council! You have made a generous commitment of your time and talents to the parish, in the service of Christ and his Church. Now what can you expect? This reference guide has been prepared to provide you with an overview of the Archdiocese, the parish, and the role of the Parish Pastoral Council. It is meant to give you an initial understanding of PPC service as ministry and some background as to how our faith is rooted in both gratitude and generous response. It also offers practical guidance in various aspects of parish pastoral leadership. You will find more detailed information in the *Together in Ministry Manual*, which is used in the formation program for PPC members.

Abbreviations used in this guide

APC – Archdiocesan Pastoral Council

PPC – Parish Pastoral Council

TIM – Together in Ministry

CCC – *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

CIC – *Code of Canon Law*

CCCB – Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops

RCIA – Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

USCCB – United States Conference of Catholic Bishops



Definitions

Pastor

As the head of the local church (called “the particular church” in canon law), the bishop entrusts pastors with a particular parish. A pastor carries out “the offices of teaching, sanctifying, and governing, with the cooperation of other priests or deacons and with the assistance of the lay members of Christ’s faithful” according to the law. (CIC, Canon 519)

Archdiocesan Pastoral Council (APC)

The archdiocesan pastoral council is a consultative body (established according to Canons 511-514) whose purpose is to study and weigh matters concerning the pastoral works of the diocese. The council then provides practical considerations to the archbishop regarding those pastoral works.

Parish Pastoral Council (PPC)

Parish Pastoral Councils are established at the recommendation of the bishop (Canon 536) and, when established, they are presided over by the pastor. A pastoral council gives the pastor help and recommendations regarding the pastoral needs within the parish. A pastoral council is consultative and advisory in nature.

The Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton

Pastoral and Administration Offices

8421 - 101 Avenue NW
Edmonton, AB T6A 3H5

780-469-1010 | 1-844-469-1010 | Fax: 780-465-3003

Email archdiocese@caedm.ca

Office hours

Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Online

Website www.caedm.ca

Facebook www.facebook.com/archedmonton

Twitter [@CAEDM](https://twitter.com/CAEDM)



Cathedral Church

St. Joseph Basilica

10044 - 113 Street NW

Edmonton, AB T5K 1N8

780-488-7295

A Brief History

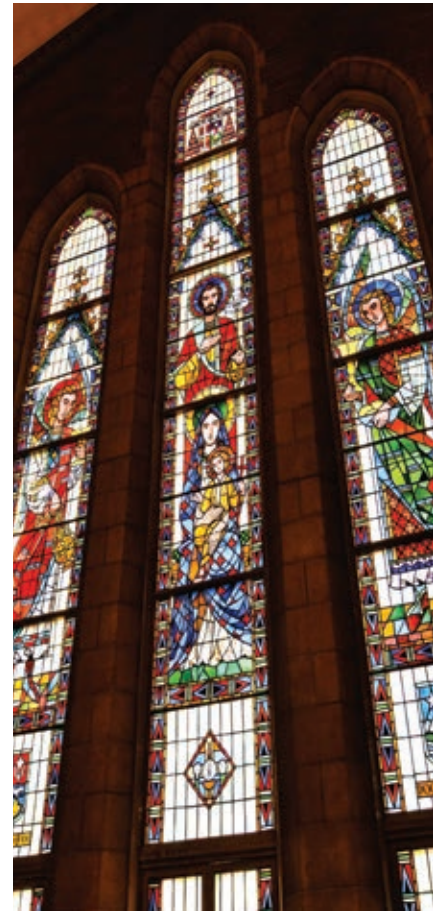
The Archdiocese of Edmonton traces its roots to the 1800s, when the first Catholic missionaries arrived at Lac Ste Anne. Father Albert Lacombe, an Oblate priest from Quebec, began his ministry to the Cree people there in 1852, and went on to serve at the St. Albert mission in 1863. In 1871, the vast Diocese of St. Albert was established. In 1912, the northern portion was raised to the status of Archdiocese of Edmonton, with Most Rev. Emile Legal, OMI, as its first Archbishop, and the southern part became the Diocese of Calgary. In 1948 the northern portion of the Archdiocese was carved out to create the Diocese of St. Paul.

Today the Archdiocese of Edmonton covers a geographic region stretching from the Rocky Mountains in the west to the Saskatchewan boundary in the east, from Olds in the south to Mayerthorpe in the north. It includes 125 parishes and missions in cities, towns, rural areas and indigenous communities.

Within its boundaries are nine Catholic school districts and one francophone district that offer Catholic religion classes, and 12 Catholic health facilities including hospitals, continuing care centres, and seniors' residences. Every Sunday, Mass is celebrated in 14 different languages.

The Lac Ste Anne Pilgrimage has been a major event in the Archdiocese, particularly for First Nations people, for over 125 years. Every July, thousands are drawn to the lake, where believers bathe in healing waters or pray from the shore.

Every August, another focal point for the faithful is the pilgrimage to Skaro, where Polish settlers in 1919 built a replica of the grotto found at the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes in France.



Deaneries

The Archdiocese is divided into eight deaneries, or groupings of parishes. Deaneries provide a means for parishes of a given geographical area to meet, to share, and to support each other in their particular mission and ministry. Within a deanery, parishes are able to collaborate on common parish programs and initiatives. Deaneries in the Archdiocese of Edmonton are:

Capital Region

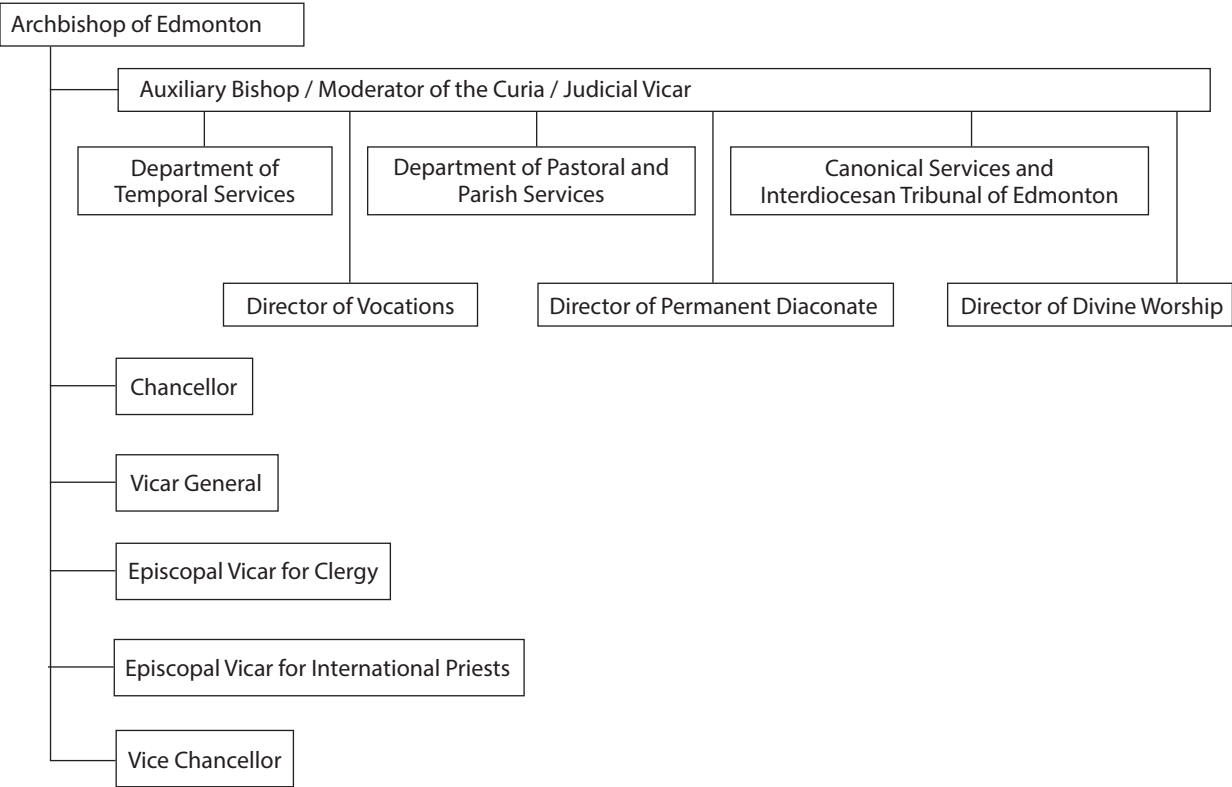
- Edmonton East
- Edmonton North
- Edmonton South
- Edmonton West

Outside the Capital Region

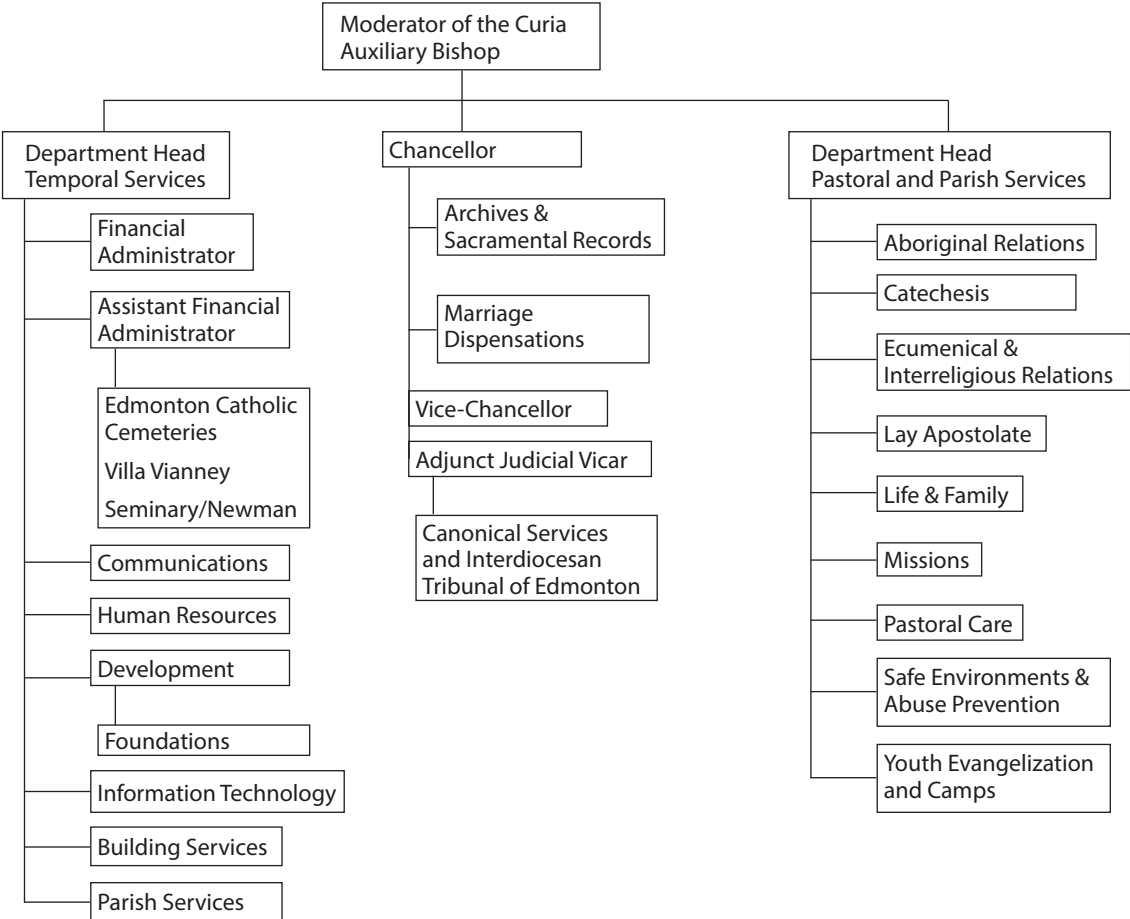
- Camrose
- Edson
- Red Deer
- Vegreville



Organizational Structure



Pastoral and Administration Offices Structure



The Parish

Catholic life is lived in a parish. Here is where the Gospel is proclaimed, the Sacraments are celebrated, where believers are formed and sent out to renew the earth. After the family, the parish is where believers first experience belonging to a community of faith. This is where one is formed and sustained in faith.

The parish is a community of the Christian faithful established on a stable basis within a particular diocese (see CCC, 2179, and *CIC* Canon 515, §1). The parish community is called together by God to participate in the common mission of the Church and to bear witness to the joy of discipleship by:

- Living a Christ-centered spirituality
- Being a hospitable and welcoming community
- Operating in an accountable manner
- Forming people of service and outreach
- Reflecting on and renewing the life of faith.

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

~ Matthew 28:19-20

A parish’s mission is to evangelize, proclaim, and witness to the joy of the Gospel.

Parishes form and call forth disciples of Christ, and bring Christ’s reconciling, healing, and saving presence to the specific needs and concerns of the people of the parish, the Church, and the world today. Parishes establish ministries to address the needs and priorities of the parish and the community according to their resources.

The pastoral care of the parish is entrusted to a priest (called its “pastor”) who is to shepherd under the authority of the diocesan bishop (Canon 515, §1). Your pastor is responsible and accountable to the Archbishop of Edmonton.

Most parishes are territorial, which means they comprise all Christ’s faithful residing within specific boundaries determined by the local bishop. In our archdiocese, there are also national parishes comprising people of a particular origin and language, regardless of where they reside (local examples: St. Boniface – German; Mary Help of Christians – Chinese).

Spiritual Foundations

Second Vatican Council

The Second Vatican Council provided broad themes that led to the formation of parish pastoral councils (PPCs).

The laity should accustom themselves to working in the parish in union with their priests, bringing to the Church community their own and the world's problems as well as questions concerning human salvation, all of which they should examine and resolve by deliberating in common. As far as possible the laity ought to provide helpful collaboration for every apostolic and missionary undertaking sponsored by their local parish.

Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, 10

Decree on the Laity

The *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity* refers to the relationship between lay people and pastors: "As sharers in the role of Christ, the laity has an active part to play in the life and activity of the Church."

Lay men and women hear and answer the universal call to holiness primarily and uniquely "in each and every one of the world's occupations and callings and in the ordinary circumstances of social and family life which, as it were, form the context of their existence. All of the baptized are called to work toward the transformation of the world. Working in the Church is a path of Christian discipleship to be encouraged by the hierarchy. (See Lumen Gentium, nos. 30, 33, 37).

Coworkers in the Vineyard, USCCB, 2005.

For the full text of the *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity*, please visit this link: http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651118_apostolicam-actuositatem_en.html



"To some, his 'gift' was that they should be apostles; to some, prophets; to some, evangelists; to some, pastors and teachers; to knit God's holy people together for the work of service to build up the Body of Christ."

~ Ephesians 4:11-12

Catechism

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* describes the faith which brings us together and by which we live:

Faith is a personal act - the free response of the human person to the initiative of God who reveals himself. But faith is not an isolated act. No one can believe alone, just as no one can live alone. You have not given yourself faith as you have not given yourself life. The believer has received faith from others and should hand it on to others. Our love for Jesus and for our neighbour impels us to speak to others about our faith. Each believer is thus a link in the great chain of believers. I cannot believe without being carried by the faith of others, and by my faith I help support others in the faith.

CCC, 166.

To read more of the Catechism, please visit

http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM



Prayer and Spiritual Reflection

Each baptized person is called to holiness, to the fullness of the Christian life by following in the Lord's footsteps, conforming themselves to Christ's image and seeking God's will at all times. As well, everyone is called to devote themselves to the glory of God and the service of their neighbour. (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, 40)

As parish leaders, PPC members are models to the parish community of continual renewal: ongoing, lifelong growth in faith. Members of parish pastoral councils need opportunities to pray together in order to deepen their individual and communal holiness.

Gatherings of parish pastoral council members must be permeated with prayer to discern God’s will and listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit:

- Open with prayer and reflection on the Word of God
- Pray before making decisions
- Pray to close the gathering



Parish Pastoral Council

Leadership

As part of the Council, all members are called to take on a leadership role, and this calls for a discernment process. Throughout the process, a person needs to ask: What talents, virtues, and limits do I possess that indicate my ability to serve God’s people through a commitment to lay ministry?

Members of the PPC are reminded that prayer and collaboration are at the basis of their service on the council. Members are called to witness and to collaborate with the pastor, for the spiritual welfare of the parish community.

When approached to be a potential member of Parish Pastoral Council, it’s easy to hesitate. We might doubt that we are not good enough or qualified enough to sit on council. Regardless, all of us are gifted in one way or another and are called to share those gifts with the parish community.

“... But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. ”

~ Mark 10:43-45

Roles

Pastor and Parish Pastoral Team

The pastor presides over the PPC meeting but does not chair the meeting. The pastor must be present at all PPC meetings. Associate pastors and deacons should also be present. Associate pastors and deacons support the pastor in the design and implementation of a comprehensive pastoral program for the parish. This involves collaboration with the pastor, other staff, parish pastoral council, and finance committee in the overall pastoral care of the parish.

The pastor is responsible for listening to the advice of the PPC and the pastoral team, and makes the final decision. The pastor then entrusts the PPC or committee(s) to implement the decision. The pastor is responsible for all decisions.

PPC Executive

In the PPC terms of reference, the executive members of the PPC are identified by position. Some responsibilities for the executive members include the following:

Chair

- together with the pastor, schedules meetings and prepares the agenda
- organizes and coordinates activities and procedures for the PPC
- chairs regular and special meetings
- maintains regular contact with pastor
- communicates with the PPC committee leaders
- communicates with members between meetings
- ensures communication between the PPC and the parishioners is maintained

Vice-Chair

- assumes duties in the Chair's absence
- serves as an aide to the Chair in conducting PPC responsibilities
- could, on behalf of the council, be involved in the selection of PPC committee chairs
- assists in forming of PPC committees
- serves as liaison with committee leaders

Secretary

- maintains a roster of members and records of attendance
- records minutes of regular and special meetings
- provides for necessary physical arrangement of meetings
- handles all PPC correspondence
- communicates with Chair and Vice-Chair
- ensures that minutes are appropriately filed

Training

PPC members have an obligation to acquire the formation and knowledge necessary for their role on the council.

All prospective members must be made aware of the commitment they are undertaking before they accept a position on the council. The PPC executive, together with the pastor, will review the PPC procedures with the new member(s).

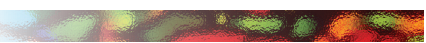
The Archdiocese of Edmonton offers a continuing program of development and support for all PPC members. The program consists of the Together in Ministry (TIM) Manual and TIM workshops on the nature and role of the PPC. The workshops are offered by teams of trained volunteer facilitators. **It is the responsibility of the parish to request these workshops.**

The archdiocesan Coordinator of the Office of Lay Apostolate is available to offer guidance and to suggest resources for those who plan additional PPC formation and training.

Contact us at 780-469-1010 ext 2134 or layapostolate@caedm.ca.



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The Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton
8421 - 101 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T6A 0L1
780.469.1010
www.caedm.ca