

# GUIDELINES FOR PARISH FINANCE COUNCILS

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## **Canon 537 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law reads:**

**Each parish is to have a finance council which is regulated by universal law, as well as by norms issued by the diocesan bishop: in this council the Christian faithful selected according to the same norms, aid the pastor in the administration of parish goods with due regard for the prescription of Canon 532.**

**Canon 532 states that the pastor represents the parish in all juridic affairs according to the norm of the law, and is responsible for administering the goods of the parish according to Canon 1281-1288.**

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After consulting with the Presbyteral Council, the Chief Financial Officer of the Diocese and the Diocesan Finance Council, Bishop John M. D'Arcy promulgates the following norms effective July 1, 2009.

1. Each pastor is to establish a Parish Financial Council over which he presides, and which is advisory to the pastor.
2. The purpose of the Parish Finance Council is to advise the pastor in administering the ecclesiastical goods of the parish according to universal and particular law.
3. This Council is composed of at least three (3) members of the Christian faithful truly skilled in financial affairs and of outstanding integrity.

4. The members of the Parish Finance Council are selected by the pastor, and are appointed by the pastor for a term of five (5) years, which term is renewable.
5. Members of the Parish Finance Council are not to be members of the Parish Pastoral Council.
6. No parish employees or individuals with a conflict of interest are permitted to serve as a member of the Parish Finance Council. Parish employees may serve as support for the Parish Finance Council. Accordingly, people like a business manager should attend in a consultative, non-voting manner.
7. The Parish Finance Council does not cease if the pastorate becomes vacant through transfer or death.
8. When a new pastor is appointed to a parish, he should convene the Parish Finance Council within three months of his appointment.
9. The Parish Finance Council's responsibilities include:
  - Assisting the pastor with preparation of the parish budget.
  - Reviewing the income and expenditures of that budget quarterly.
  - Reviewing the parish school budget and the actual expenditures and income quarterly.
  - Advising the pastor concerning the parish balance sheet.
  - Advising the pastor regarding school tuition and all other parish charges.
  - Advising the pastor regarding fundraising activities within the parish.

- Advising the pastor regarding financial feasibility of proposed building projects.
- Advising the pastor regarding salaries and hourly rates of pay for employees.
- Advising the pastor regarding review and repayment of any parish debt.
- Advising the pastor on all contracts which are not cancelable within thirty (30) days of notice and which exceed a total payment of \$5,000.
- Advising the pastor prior to the acquisition or alienation of any parish property with an estimated value in excess of \$5,000.
- Being available as a resource to the parish pastoral council.
- Being familiar with and advising on all diocesan guidelines for banking, fundraising, building and accounting.
- Helping the pastor establish and manage a parish endowment program.

10. The Council should determine that proper accounting practices and internal control procedures are in place. The Council is to discuss and evaluate the report of the regular diocesan audit that is sent to each member. Advice should then be given to the pastor.

11. Council meeting minutes should be kept to maintain a record of business conducted.

12. Parish Finance Council members are to sign annually the statement sent from the Bishop, stating the dates meetings were held in a fiscal year and that the Council members were adequately informed on the parish financial status.

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**DIOCESE OF FORT WAYNE - SOUTH BEND**

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**Bishop John M. D'Arcy**

June, 2009

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Sound fiscal management of a parish is a responsibility of the pastor and is linked closely to his pastoral care of the parish.

It is carried out properly when it includes the advice and help of devoted parishioners with experience in financial matters. Consultation should be marked by transparency and mutual respect.

All meetings of the Parish Finance Council should begin with a prayer.

Sincerely yours in our Lord,

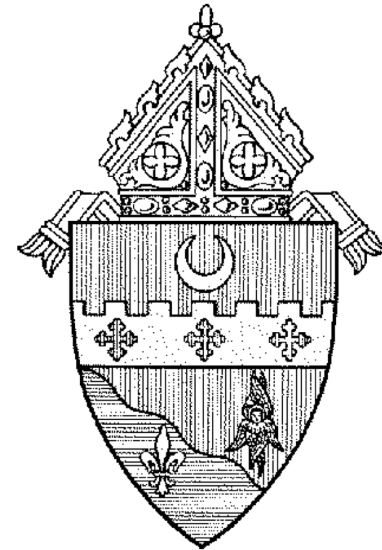


Most Reverend John M. D'Arcy

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Diocese of  
Fort Wayne – South Bend

Promulgated by  
Bishop John M. D'Arcy  
July 1, 2009  
Diocese of Fort Wayne – South Bend  
Fort Wayne, Indiana  
[www.diocesefwsb.org](http://www.diocesefwsb.org)