



## DIOCESE OF WHEELING-CHARLESTON

• P.O. Box 230, Wheeling, WV 26003 •

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Thursday, February 4, 2021

*“It is greatly desired that in each diocese a pastoral commission will be established over which the diocesan bishop himself will preside and in which specially chosen clergy, religious and lay people will participate. The duty of this commission will be to investigate and weigh pastoral undertakings and to formulate practical conclusions regarding them.”*

Decree on the Bishops’ Pastoral Office in the Church  
Vatican II Document, *Christus Dominus* Ch II, Sec III, n 27

### **Diocese Increases Role of Laity through Diocesan Pastoral Council**

WHEELING – Most Rev. Mark E. Brennan, Bishop of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, will be conferring with lay and religious representatives from across the diocese, as he has reestablished the Diocesan Pastoral Council that Bishop Joseph H. Hodges originally established in 1968.

The council will assist Bishop Brennan in outlining and developing priorities, initiatives, and plans to fulfill the mission of the Church. The full mission of the council is five-fold.

- 1) To assist the Bishop, through consultation and cooperation, in developing pastoral priorities, initiatives, and plans to fulfill the mission of Jesus Christ within the Diocese in the light of its existing social, economic, demographic, and cultural circumstances and resources;
- 2) To act as an authentic and reflective voice of the people of God;
- 3) To provide an honest and open forum of dialogue and communication regarding pastoral affairs among the Bishop, laity, religious, and clergy;
- 4) To collaborate with the Presbyteral Council, Parish and Vicariate Pastoral Councils, Vicariate leadership, and Diocesan offices in furthering the mission of the Diocesan Church;
- 5) To be a visible sign of the unity of the people of God in the Church at Wheeling-Charleston.

Beginning in 1968, the council served a vital role in the life of the diocese and the spiritual formation of the faithful. Under the guidance of Most Rev. Bernard W. Schmitt, seventh Bishop of Wheeling-Charleston, this council helped form the four major documents of the Ninth Synod of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. Those documents are available [here](#).

Bishop Brennan noted, “I look forward to having a Diocesan Pastoral Council that can bring to my attention concerns and ideas to enhance the spiritual and apostolic life and work of the Diocese and react to plans and issues I may bring up.”

The Diocesan Pastoral Council includes three elected members of the laity from each of the Diocese’s six Vicariates (regions) for a total of 18; plus the Diocesan Bishop, the Vicar General, the Chancellor of the Diocese, the Vicar for Clergy, the Chair of the Presbyteral Council, the Delegate for Consecrated Life, and several appointed members.

The election process for lay membership is as follows:

—Each parish, with any mission it may have, elects two laypersons to form, with those elected from other parishes, a Vicariate Council.

—The Vicariate Council then elects three persons from its membership to serve on the Diocesan Pastoral Council making each member an elected member from among the faithful.

Parishes and Vicariates of the Diocese conducted their elections late in 2020 with the following lay members being selected:

—Beckley Vicariate: Gina Boggess, Darleen Whelan, Jim Copolo

—Charleston Vicariate: Mac Bailes, Kim Enders, Susan Bossie-Maddox

—Clarksburg Vicariate: Jim Archer, Charlotte Vester-Velloso, Perri DeChristopher

—Martinsburg Vicariate: Paul Buede, Kathleen Brockett, Linda Abrahamian

—Parkersburg Vicariate: Denise Laurine-Klug, Linda Nedeff, Colleen Newhart

—Wheeling Vicariate: Kevin Britt, Jerod Buck, Denis Wilson

Additional members will be added by the Bishop and include a Deacon of the Diocese, a person from one of the religious communities serving in the diocese, and two young adults of the Diocese.

Monsignor Eugene Ostrowski, Vicar General and Chair of the Diocesan Pastoral Council, stated he is “eager to work with a representative group from the Diocese to plan for the future and address significant issues.”

The group will meet three times a year with its first meeting set for February 19-20. The Charter for the Diocesan Pastoral Council can be found on the diocesan website [here](#).

#### **Media Contact**

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