St. John of the Cross Cluster Finance Council Guidelines

I. Mission and Purpose

The Finance Council of the St. John of the Cross Cluster assists the pastor in the sound administration of the temporal goods of the Cluster parishes. Its mission is to ensure responsible stewardship, transparency, and alignment of all financial decisions with the pastoral priorities of the Cluster.

II. Nature and Scope of the Council

a. The Finance Council is **mandated by Canon Law (cc. 532–537)** and functions as a **consultative body** to the pastor.
b. The Council advises on financial planning, budgeting, annual reports, asset management, capital projects, and the safeguarding of parish resources.
c. Each parish within the Cluster is represented, but decisions are made for the **good of the entire Cluster**.

III. Membership

1. Composition

a. Members are appointed by the pastor based on expertise in finance, administration, law, accounting, business, management, or related fields.
b. Each parish should have at least one representative.
c. Members should be registered, participating Catholics in good standing.

2. Term Length

a. Members serve **three-year terms**, renewable once.
b. Terms are staggered to ensure continuity.

3. Officers

a. **Chairperson**: Facilitates meetings and collaborates with the pastor to prepare agendas.
b. **Vice-Chairperson**: Assists the chair and facilitates in the chair's absence.
c. **Secretary**: Records minutes and maintains documentation.

IV. Roles and Responsibilities

1. Finance Council Responsibilities

a. Review and assist in preparing the **annual Cluster budget**.
b. Review monthly financial statements from each parish.
c. Monitor internal controls to protect parish assets.
d. Assist with planning and execution of major capital projects.
e. Guide long-term financial planning for sustainability.
f. Conduct regular reviews of investments, loans, and savings.

g. Ensure compliance with Diocesan norms and policies.
h. Provide an annual public financial report to parishioners.

2. Pastor's Responsibilities

a. Presides over the Finance Council.
b. Approves agendas and ensures the Council receives all necessary information.
c. Makes all final decisions while considering the Council's consultative advice.
d. Signs checks and financial documents as required.

V. Meetings

a. Regular meetings should be held **monthly** or at least **quarterly**.
b. A quorum requires the pastor (or his delegate) and a majority of members.
c. Minutes must be kept for every meeting.
d. Extraordinary meetings may be called by the pastor or chairperson.

VI. Committees and Working Groups

The Finance Council may form specialized committees for: - Budget review - Capital improvements - Building and grounds - Internal controls - Fundraising oversight

These committees report back to the full Council.

VII. Required Documents and Reports

The following must be reviewed annually or as scheduled: - Cluster and parish budgets - Annual parish financial reports - Internal control review reports - Capital project proposals - Endowment or investment statements - Insurance and property assessments

VIII. Stewardship and Transparency

The Finance Council upholds a spirit of stewardship including: - Respecting donor intentions - Encouraging responsible giving - Ensuring all funds are managed ethically and transparently - Providing financial clarity to parishioners through reports and announcements

IX. Confidentiality

All financial information discussed in the Council is confidential. Members must: - Not disclose privileged information - Protect sensitive data - Report conflicts of interest immediately

X. Conflict of Interest Policy

Members may **not**: - Personally benefit from Council decisions - Bid on parish contracts in which they have financial interest - Participate in deliberation when they have a conflict of interest

XI. Relationship With Other Bodies

a. The Finance Council collaborates closely with the **Cluster Pastoral Council** to ensure financial decisions support pastoral priorities.
b. Works with parish commissions (e.g., Building & Grounds) for project planning.
c. Coordinates with diocesan financial offices for compliance and support.

XII. Accountability to the Faithful

The Council ensures the faithful are informed by: - Publishing an **annual financial statement** - Offering clarifications or presentations when needed - Promoting a culture of stewardship and gratitude

XIII. Amendments

These guidelines may be amended by the pastor after consultation with the Finance Council and in harmony with diocesan norms.

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Finance Council Guidelines
Revised Edition