

C. 24 The Council

The council is responsible for

- the general oversight of Conversi,
- assuring the pastoral care of members.

St. 24.A Pastoral Responsibilities

The first responsibility of Council is to foster the community's openness to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The second is to facilitate the Cistercian/contemplative character of the community in all its endeavours. The third is to encourage the members in the development of good zeal (RB 72) in living the Cistercian charism in their lives.

The Council will ensure that the community remains connected to and informed by the Cistercian charism, and the customs and culture of the monasteries of Our Lady of Mississippi and New Melleray.

- Ensure the pastoral care of members insofar as it relates to participation in the Conversi community.
- Oversee the development and coordination of initial and ongoing formation.
- Oversee the planning and facilitation of the Annual Retreat
- Oversee the application for and profession of various levels of commitment.
- The council may appoint members to assist in the administration and pastoral care of members, as needs warrant.

St. 24. B Governance/Community Life

The Council will maintain good order and the common good.

- Develop policies, procedures and guidelines in the spirit of the Constitution & Statutes, for the good of the community and oversee the application of

them, drawing on the resources, experience and advice of New Melleray and Mississippi Abbeys.

- Establish [and enforce] such statutes, etc. as may be necessary for the good of the community.
- Periodically review all governance documents. Proposals for revisions of or amendments to the Constitution must be approved by the membership. Other documents may be amended and/or revised by the Council.
- Oversee the financial health of Conversi and appoint the treasurer.
- oversee the development and maintenance of the website and associated resources.
- Plan & oversee the election of Council members
- Develop, maintain, and use appropriate channels of communication with the membership, other organizations, and the monasteries.
 - Every six month a summary report shall be sent to the Abbot and Abbess of New Melleray and Mississippi Abbeys.
 - A monthly report of the activities of Council shall be sent to the monastic liaisons inviting their guidance and advice.
 - There shall be regular communication with the members, advising them of any announcements, or business regarding the welfare of the community.
- Represent Conversi at regional and international lay Cistercian meetings and to other monasteries and associate groups.

St. 24.B.1 Composition of Council

The Council is made up of four elected senior members and one appointed junior member, plus the coordinator who is ex-officio.

St. 24.B.2 Term of Council

Senior members of Council serve for four years. Junior members serve

until the next election, or until such time as they make their senior commitment, whichever comes first.

St. 24.B.3 Requirements for Council Eligibility

1. In order to be eligible for election to Council a senior member must:
 - have made his or her senior commitment.
 - have demonstrated consistent active participation in Conversi as required in Statutes 26.A through 26. E.
 - Is willing and able to participate consistently in Council meetings and the work of Council.
 - Note: If there are fewer than ten (10) members of Conversi, eligibility for election to Council requires at least three years active membership and junior commitment.

2. In order to serve as the appointed junior member on Council an individual must:
 - have participated in the community for at least one year,
 - have made a junior commitment but not the senior commitment,
 - have been recommended to the Council by the Formation team.

St. 24.B.4 Election

1. Council elections will take place every two years, beginning in September 2011, at which time two senior Council members will be elected for a four-year term. Thereafter, two senior positions will be available each election, so that Council terms are staggered.

2. The junior member will be appointed by the Council in the month following the election. It will be the Formation Committee's responsibility to recommend suitable individuals for appointment.

St. 24.B.5 Eligibility for voting

Any member who has made at least two junior commitments is eligible to vote in elections for Council.

St. 24.B.6 The process of election

1. The Moderator will serve as scrutator¹ of the election.

2. At the June Council meeting, Council will identify both those eligible to stand for election and those eligible to vote. Within two weeks of that meeting the Moderator will notify individuals eligible for election and ask them if they wish their names to stand. Early in August the Moderator will notify members by email of the election date and the list of candidates. The Moderator will also post the slate of candidates on the Announcements section of the Conversi website. Ballots will be sent out to eligible voters by individual email on or before September 1st, and must be returned no later than September 8th by reply email. Each person may vote for two distinct candidates.

3. A person must receive a simple majority of votes to be elected to Council.
 - a) If only one candidate receives a majority of votes on the first ballot, that person is elected to Council, and a second ballot will go out containing the names of the top three remaining vote getters. Members will vote for only one candidate for the second position.
 - b) If only two candidates receive a majority of votes on the first ballot, those two are elected.
 - c) If three candidates receive a majority of votes on the first ballot, the top two vote getters are elected.
 - d) If the first round does not give a majority of votes to any candidate, the names of the top four vote getters will be submitted for a second round. Each voting member may again vote for two distinct candidates.

¹ The monastic term for the person who counts the votes and monitors the election.

4. In any case, if a second round of voting is needed, ballots will be sent only to those members who voted in the first round. This second ballot will be sent out on or before September 10th, to be returned no later than September 18th.
5. If after the second round, two candidates have not been elected, a third round of elections will be held. If it is necessary to fill both Council positions, the names of the top three vote getters from the second round will be on the ballot.
6. If it is necessary to fill only one position, the names of the top two remaining vote getters will be on the ballot. Voting members may vote for one candidate only.
7. If after three ballots, two candidates have not been elected, the moderator will draw lots from among those whose names appeared on the third ballot.²

St. 24.B.7 The need for special elections

If, for any reason a member of Council resigns or is otherwise unable to serve his or her complete term, a special election shall be called within two months, in order to fill the position vacated.

² Following the procedure by which the initial Council was chosen.