

DECREE CONCERNING THE PASTORAL OFFICE OF BISHOPS IN THE CHURCH
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The original schema for this document, entitled “On the Bishops and Governance of Dioceses,” reflected the old notion that Bishops are primarily administrators, who serve the Pope more than the people of their dioceses. The Council Fathers stress the autonomy, authority, and pastoral responsibility of Bishops, in accord with the collegial vision of *Lumen Gentium*.

Bishops are described as true pastors of their sheep, who perform the office of teaching, sanctifying and governing. (#11) They are tasked with fostering holiness among the clerics, religious and laity under their care, mindful of their obligation to give a personal example of charity, humility and simplicity of life. (#15)

The Council Fathers also recommend the formation of regional associations of bishops, which can meet regularly to share ideas. (#37) In response, national and regional episcopal conferences were created shortly after the Council.