

Pastoral Council By-Laws

I. Nature and Purpose

- A. The Pastoral Council is to be a representative body of the faithful whose focus is on the whole community – its beliefs, its hopes, its joys, its needs, its sorrows, its concerns, its gifts, and its pursuit of the mission of the Church.
- B. The council provides a means for uniting the parish community in expressing its collective wisdom concerning pastoral plans and activities. The Pastoral Council is to guard against serving special interest groups.
- C. By reason of its existence, the Pastoral Council must read and reflect the "signs of the times" to those planning and/or implementing short-term and long-term pastoral policies and activities in the parish. Ordinary administration of the parish will be the responsibility of the administrative staff.
- D. By the fact that it is convoked by the Rector, the Pastoral Council must respond to his call and questions and offer the best consultation possible.
- E. The Pastoral Council's task is to give counsel and seek consultation. Good counsel is the result of full, holistic, and active consultation. Thus, the members of this group, along with the Rector, are called to reflect and consider pastoral issues for the common good and for the future. Their role is to understand, to reflect carefully and prayerfully and to seek consensus. However, under certain circumstances, the pastor and council may choose to attain a majority through voting to decide a course of action.

II. Consultation

- A. Consultation acknowledges that all the Christian faithful share, in diverse ways, the mission of Christ.
- B. Consultation accepts that each of the Christian faithful is formed, reformed, and endowed by the Spirit with qualities and gifts that can strengthen the community.
- C. Consultation recognizes that both the ordained and the non-ordained have distinct roles.
 - 1. The ordained priesthood and the common priesthood of the faithful are different not only in degree, but in essence.
 - 2. The roles of each are complementary in community because of their common bond in the Body of Christ.
- D. Because of its representative nature and consultative role, because it has been uniquely provided by the Church and convoked by the Rector, and because of its consensus-seeking process, the Pastoral Council should be a distinct group.
- E. The Pastoral Council function should not be assigned to a group that has a different function within the parish.

III. The Rector

- A. The Rector, as the chief governing person and accountable to the Bishop, must preside at the Pastoral Council meetings and participate in its activities.

- B. The Rector is called to consultation by the Church. In this call, he must:
 1. In turn, call the Pastoral Council and seek counsel on pastoral matters affecting the life of the parish
 2. Experience and participate in the interaction that follows
 3. Be open, respectful, and receptive to the voice or voices of the parishioners
 4. Weigh seriously and respond appropriately to the collective wisdom or consensus of the Pastoral Council
 5. Make every effort to ensure the membership of the council is truly representative of the whole parish community
 6. Assist in the proper formation, training, and orientation of all council members (universal) and its mission
 7. Ensure that the council's concerns reflect the whole Church (diocesan and universal) and its mission
 8. Facilitate council members' building their own community of faith, trust, and respect
 9. Assist in the preparation of council agenda
- C. In the absence of the Rector, the Pastoral Council can discuss matters but cannot make final decisions.
 1. When a Rector leaves a parish through transfer, retirement, or death, all activity of the Pastoral Council ceases until the new Rector or assigned administrator reconvenes the council.
 2. A new Rector should seek counsel from the existing Pastoral Council to become more informed about the nature of the community. He should be reluctant to dissolve the Pastoral Council, even though it is his prerogative to do so.

IV. The Pastoral Council

- A. Each Pastoral Council is to formulate a parish vision/mission statement, goals, and objectives (after gathering input from the members of the parish). The vision/mission statement, goals, objectives, and norms will be readily available to the members of the parish and evaluated at least annually by the Pastoral Council.
- B. Each Pastoral Council should determine its leadership by an appropriate process. Such leadership should include a Chair, Vice Chair, and a Recorder.
 1. A Chair, Vice Chair, and Recorder shall be elected from among council membership each June.
 2. Terms of appointment shall be for one year, with a maximum of two (2) consecutive terms.
- C. Pastoral Council will meet periodically throughout the year, typically once a month. The Rector, in collaboration with the Chair, will issue a calendar of meeting dates.
 1. Pastoral Council Meetings are usually held the third Wednesday of the month at 6:30 p.m.
 2. Special meetings may be called with forty-eight (48) hours notice.
- D. Each Pastoral Council member must make a special effort to understand and to implement the consultative process.
 1. In this process, all members are to share their wisdom regarding the issues before the council.
 2. Although a common conclusion among the members is not required when functioning as a consultative body, the process of seeking consensus is

very helpful in providing quality consultation.

- E. Each member of the Pastoral Council must attend the necessary training that provides a full understanding of the functions of the council, its interrelationships with other parish organizations, and its responsibility to the Church as a whole.
- F. Agendas and accompanying documents will be sent to council members one week prior to the meeting date to allow council members and Rector the opportunity to review and consider matters prior to the meeting.
- G. Order of Business for regular meetings shall include, but not limited to the following:
 - 1. Opening Prayer
 - 2. Attendance (noted by Recorder)
 - 3. Approval of Minutes from last meeting
 - 4. Rector's Report
 - 5. Old Business
 - 6. New Business
 - 7. Schedule next meeting date
 - 8. Closing Prayer
- H. Amendments to the Pastoral Council By-Laws shall be approved by the Rector on recommendation of the Pastoral Council, and be in compliance with Diocesan norms. Recommendations shall be developed and made by consensus.
 - 1. Proposed amendments and changes to operational norms of the Pastoral Council shall be posted and available for review by all parishioners at least one month prior to consideration at a scheduled Pastoral Council Meeting.
 - 2. Should consensus not be attained, a simple majority of those members at the meeting shall prevail.

V. Membership Qualifications

Members must:

- A. Be baptized Catholics (in rare circumstances an exception can be made with the approval of the pastor)
- B. Be registered member of Saint Mary Cathedral parish
- C. Have demonstrated a commitment to the parish community through participation in Cathedral ministries
- D. Commit themselves to spiritual growth
- E. Commit themselves to skills development as part of the Christian leadership process
- F. Be willing to commit the necessary time and energy to offer effective consultation
- G. Be familiar with programs of various diocesan commissions or standing committees
- H. Be willing to participate in group training and formation

VI. Determination of Council Members

- A. For adequate representation and effective operation, the Pastoral Council should consist of twelve (12) lay representatives.
 - 1. Nominations—Each spring, the Rector shall receive nominations for filling expiring terms on the council. Names of nominees may come from the council itself and/or individual members of the Cathedral.
 - 2. Prospective members should attend the discernment meeting held in May to gather a better understanding of the function and needs of the Pastoral Council.
 - 3. Election of new members will be held in the June council meeting.

4. Vacancies—Should a vacancy on the council occur, a replacement from the same ministry will be sought to fill the term of the council member; if a no cannot be secured,
- B. Pastoral Council members are to be determined by the parish community using an appropriate process as specified in the parish norms.
- C. Although each council member represents the whole parish, each Pastoral Council should be representative of all ages, ethnic groups, and genders.
 1. In addition, the pastor may supplement the council by appointing other members for balanced representation of the parishioners. The number of such appointments may not exceed one-third of the number of council members determined by the parish community.
 2. In regard to representation, involvement of active and interested parishioners, who are open to the needs of the whole parish community, has to be a high priority.
 3. A strict representation of all age groups or certain special interest areas seems to place emphasis in popular vote rather than what is most important and best for the operation of the council in carrying out its mission.
 4. Sound judgment needs to be exercised to reflect sensitivity to the representation issue.
- D. The Pastoral Council may be formed through a process of discernment, election, or by a combination of appointed and elected members provided that the number of appointed members does not exceed one-third of the membership. The members should be people that are willing to commit themselves toward improvement in parish life.
- E. Each Pastoral Council will include in its norms a procedure for dealing with council members who fail to uphold their responsibilities. Meeting attendance—Members with unexcused absences from three (2) consecutive meetings may be asked to submit their resignation from the Council. An unexcused absence is failure to inform the of his/her inability to attend before the actual meeting.
- F. It is important that the parochial vicars (associate pastors) participate in these council meetings.
 1. Their roles are distinct from that of the parish staff persons employed by the Rector due to appointment by the Bishop. “As co-workers with the pastor and sharers in his solicitude, they are to offer service in the pastoral ministry by common counsel and effort with the pastor and under his authority.” (c. 545, § 1)
 2. The parochial vicar shares in the pastoral care of the parish and assists the pastor in his pastoral duties.
- G. The Pastoral Council provides consultation and support to the parish staff.
 1. Staff members assist the Rector in the administration of various parish programs.
 2. In light of their administrative role, it is inappropriate that they would also serve as members of a body whose express purpose is counsel and consultation.

VII. Terms of Office

- A. Terms of service shall be for a period of three (3) years. Terms will run from September to September of each year
- B. Pastoral Council members' terms may be staggered by year.

- C. The specifics of the terms of office and the number of consecutive terms that a Pastoral Council member may serve should be addressed in the parish norms.

VIII. Openness and Confidentiality

- A. Meetings of the Pastoral Council should, to the extent possible, be open to parishioners who may wish to attend as observers unless their input is requested from the council. Active participation in the consensus building process during the meeting is reserved for the Pastoral Council members.
- B. For some circumstances requiring confidentiality, the council may choose to meet in a "closed" or "executive" session.

IX. Communicating Council Proceedings

Each Pastoral Council will establish a procedure of reporting to the parishioners the results of the council meetings. This may be accomplished through the weekly bulletin and the parish website.

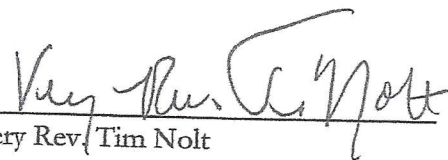
The foregoing By-Laws were adopted by the Rector on **September 18, 2012** after consulting with Pastoral Council Members.

Agreed and approved:

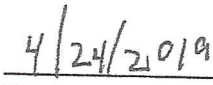
Very Rev. Albert Laforet, Jr.
Rector

Date

Agreed and Approved



Very Rev. Tim Nolt



Date