

St. Margaret Mary Parish

Naperville-Lisle, Illinois

Pastoral Council Constitution

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Article 1 -- Name

The name of this body shall be the St. Margaret Mary Pastoral Council, hereinafter referred to as the Pastoral Council.

Article II -- Responsibilities

Section 1. The responsibilities of the Pastoral Council shall be:

- A. To accept responsibility, with the Pastor, for the spiritual mission of the Church in the parish. The Pastoral Council shall:
 - 1. Provide for the dignified, reverent celebration of the Sacred Liturgy;
 - 2. Foster Evangelization:
 - 3. Encourage by all available means a vigorous and effective la apostolate involving as many as possible in the pastoral ministries of the Church.
- B. To assist the Pastor in the administration of the parish through advice, recommendations and cooperative decisions.

The Pastoral Council shall:

- 1. Support all parish activities through the Principle of Subsidiarity;
- 2. Determine, in union with the Pastor, priorities with respect to the allotment of parish resources and authorize appropriate programs. Decisions should be limited to those that have a major effect on a large number of people, have a major financial impact, establish a new ministry, or significantly change an existing ministry;
- 3. Review and approve the proposed budgets or operating plans of all parish operations and organizations.

- C. The Pastoral Council shall act as an authentic representative voice of the

parishioners. The Pastoral Council shall provide an open and honest forum of communication and dialogue regarding parish affairs among the clergy, religious and laity.

The Pastoral Council shall:

1. Establish effective lines of communication within the parish community;
 2. Prepare, annually, a statement of the spiritual, educational, social and financial status/needs/goals of the parish.
- D. The Pastoral Council members shall work in open and prayerful cooperation with one another.

Article III -- Authority

Section 1. The Model of Authority is Christ Himself washing the feet of the Apostles. Therefore, authority in the church exists solely as a means of service.

Section 2. The Pastoral Council shall be guided by the policies and directives of the Diocese of Joliet.

Section 3. The Pastor shall give due consideration to the advice and recommendations of the Pastoral Council and shall not disregard same without reasonable and justifiable cause.

Section 4. If the Pastor, for grave reasons, feels that he cannot in good conscience accept and carry out the recommendations of the Pastoral Council, he shall communicate his reservations to the assembled Pastoral Council.

If, after all ordinary means of compromise have been exhausted, and the Pastoral Council members feel that the original decision was a valid one, then the matter should be referred to the Dean of DuPage for a decision.

If the Council is unwilling to accept the Dean's recommendations, it may appeal to the Diocesan Due Process for conciliation and arbitration.

Article IV -- Composition of the Council

Section 1. **Qualifications:** The Pastoral Council members should have leadership abilities and a willingness to commit time, energy, talents toward building a community of faith, worship and love. Any person shall be eligible for discernment or appointment to the Pastoral Council who:

- A. Has attained the age of 16;
- B. Is a registered member of the parish;
- C. Is willing to represent and foster the ideals and goals of the parish;
- D. Has the ability to inspire others;
- E. Is able to listen and to convey parishioners' points of view;

Section 2. **Responsibilities:** Pastoral Council members must attend and participate in meetings, be willing to serve on task forces and ad hoc committees when need arises, be knowledgeable of the Pastoral Council Constitution and goals set by the Pastoral Council and Diocese, review Pastoral Council minutes, support consensus when it is reached.

Section 3. **Membership:** The Pastoral Council will be composed of:

- A. The Pastor
- B. The Associate Pastor or Pastor-designated staff member.
- C. Christian Education Commission Representative(s)
- D. Christian Service Commission Representative(s)
- E. Christian Worship Commission Representative(s)
- F. Administration Commission Representative(s)
- G. Six (6) at-large members, two (2) to be selected each year for three (3) year term of office

Article V -- Discernment

Purpose of Selection Committee: Oversee discernment process to successful completion; insure safe and prayerful environment for discernment. The committee should include at least two Council members; and optionally other persons with relevant skills and experiences.

Section 1. Selection Committee: The President shall appoint a selection Committee. The Selection committee shall be responsible for:

- A. Inviting nominations from parishioners through the bulletin.
- B. Recruiting parishioners interested in becoming potential candidates for the Pastoral Council. The Selection Committee shall seek and consider names for candidates.
- C. Orientation of potential candidates concerning the role of Pastoral Council; Pastor will give overview; Selection Committee will review current needs, issues, projects.
- D. Inquirer statements appear in bulletin, and invite parishioner responses that will assist individual discernment. Responses will be shared only with the Selection Committee and individual inquirer. Selection Committee may omit inappropriate responses at their discretion.
- E. Publishing the results of the discernment process.

Section 2 Discernment: Inquirers will be invited to discernment session. Final selection will be made by the inquirers themselves. Discernment session will be led by facilitator, with Selection Committee present.

- A. If discernment is not complete after one session, another session will take place until a satisfactory completion is reached.
- B. Those not selected will be invited to meet with members of the Selection Committee or other parish leaders to assist further discernment on their parish participation, as appropriate.
- C. Those selected will meet with the Selection Committee or other parish leaders for further orientation, if needed.
- D. No discerned member may serve two consecutive terms.
- E. The newly-elected Pastoral Council members shall take office at the end of the regularly scheduled June meeting.
- F. Selection Committee and Pastoral Council evaluate process, and consider any alterations.

Article VI -- Vacancies

- Section 1. In the event of a vacancy occurring among the:
- A. **Discerned Members:** A Nominating Committee shall be appointed by the President to consider qualified candidates to fill the vacancy until the next general election. The Committee will consider first runner up from the Pastoral Council discernment. The Pastoral Council shall vote on the committee's recommendation.
 - B. **Officers:** The Pastoral Council members shall vote among themselves from among the discerned members to fill the vacancy until the next June. A member appointed to fill the vacancy of a discerned member is not eligible for election to the office of President or Vice President.

Article VII -- Officers

- Section 1. The Pastoral Council officers shall be:
- A. President
 - B. Vice President
 - C. Secretary
- Section 2. The members of the Pastoral Council shall, at the end of each year's June meeting, select from among themselves for the offices specified in Section 1 above.
- A. Only discerned members shall be eligible for the offices of President, Vice President and Secretary.
 - B. Each office is filled individually, thus permitting candidates not previously selected as President to be nominated for Vice President and Secretary.
 - C. Nominations for each office shall be made and seconded. The individual nominated shall be asked if he/she accepts the nomination. After all nominations for the office have been made, the selection shall take place. An absent Council member will be allowed one absentee ballot for the office of President. If the individual on the ballot is nominated, the vote will be counted.

Section 3. The term of office for the President and Vice President and Secretary is one year. The individuals may be re-elected for the offices for one additional term. In no case may an individual hold the office of President or Vice President for more than two consecutive years.

Article VIII -- Responsibilities of Officers and the Pastor

Section 1. **The President shall:**

- A. Be responsible for the effective operation of the Pastoral Council.
- B. Be responsible for preparation and publication of agenda for each monthly meeting. Agenda will be mailed in advance to each member of the Pastoral Council and published. Individual persons in the parish shall have the right to submit suggestions for items to be placed on the agendas. Minutes of Pastoral Council meetings will be available to any parishioner requesting to see them.
- C. Appoint a Nominating Committee as needed.
- D. Preside at all meetings of the Pastoral Council and shall have the authority to call special meetings with at least three days notice.
- E. Facilitate participation of all Pastoral Council members in the decision-making process.
- F. Act as liaison with Diocese by representing or delegating a representative to Diocesan meetings.
- G. Appoint ad hoc committees as necessary.
- H. Perform all other duties that customarily devolve upon the office of President, not specifically mentioned herein.

Section 2. **The Vice President shall:**

- A. Perform those duties as delegated to him/her by the President.
- B. In the absence of the President, serve as President pro tem.

Section 3. **In the absence of the President and Vice President, the Secretary would preside as President pro tem. The Secretary shall:**

- A. Supervise the Pastoral Council Aide who shall:
 - 1. Take minutes of all regular and special meetings of the Pastoral Council, reduce such minutes to writing, preserve them in permanent record and send copies of such minutes to all members of the Pastoral Council at least one week prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting;

2. Prepare and send out all correspondence necessitated by the work of the Pastoral Council.
- B. Maintain a permanent file of minutes and correspondence of all regular and special meetings of the Pastoral Council.
- C. Capsulize Council meeting minutes for publication in the bulletin.
- D. Maintain an official list of all Pastoral Council members, their term of office and responsibilities with the Pastoral Council.
- E. Keep a current record of attendance at all Pastoral Council meetings.

Section 4. **The Pastor shall:**

- A. Help the Pastoral Council hear and proclaim the Word of God.
- B. Listen to and share responsibility with the Pastoral Council.
- C. Build unity between the local parish church and the large Church-Diocese.
- D. Be concerned with the development of community within, and the spiritual enrichment of the Pastoral Council.
- F. Communicate to the Pastoral Council any appropriate Church legislation and/or concerns of the Bishop.

Article IX -- Commissions

Section 1. The following Commissions of the Pastoral Council shall be established whose representative(s) shall be a member of the Pastoral Council:

- A. Administration Commission
- B. Christian Education Commission
- C. Christian Service Commission
- D. Christian Worship Commission

The Commissions shall function according to Diocesan Guidelines and be consistent with this Constitution and the Principle of Subsidiarity.

Section 2. Responsibilities of each Commission Chairperson:

- A. Provide monthly progress reports to the Pastoral Council.
- B. Present program, financial and personnel plans for Pastoral Council review.
- C. Bring all major recommendations to the Pastoral Council for approval. A major recommendation is one that:
 - 1. Has a major effect on a large number of people;
 - 2. Has a major financial impact;
 - 3. Establishes a new ministry;
 - 4. Significantly changes an existing ministry.
- D. Communicate all pertinent Pastoral Council information and directives to respective commission and organization members.
- E. Determine a designated proxy who, in the absence of the chairperson, shall represent the Commission at Council meetings. This proxy must be an active Commission member. The selection of the proxy is to be ratified by the Commission. The commission representative to Council should not serve more than three (3) consecutive years.

Article X -- Meetings

- Section 1. As a minimum, a combination of ten (10) regular, executive, or special meetings of the Pastoral Council shall be held annually.
- Section 2. An Annual Parish meeting shall be held and shall be for the purpose of accountability to the Parish membership on the vision, mission, goals and objectives of the Parish and receiving feedback from the registered members of the Parish.
- Section 3. Executive Meetings may be called by the President or Pastor, and shall be open only to Pastoral Council members and guests invited to address the Pastoral Council on specific issues. The purpose of any executive meeting shall be stated in the call.
- Section 4. Special Meetings may be called by the President or Pastor. The purpose of any special meeting shall be stated in the call.
- Section 5. Regular Meetings of the Pastoral Council shall be open to all parishioners. It shall be left to the discretion of the President as to whether any individual or group may address the Pastoral Council. The President will indicate approval by placing the individual or group on the meeting agenda.
- Section 6. A majority of voting members of the Pastoral Council shall constitute a quorum.
- Section 7. Prayer is an integral part of every meeting.

Article XI -- Decisions

- Section 1. Decisions shall be made by consensus when appropriate so all members of the Pastoral Council can feel a sense of ownership with decisions. Not all decisions need to be made by consensus.
- Section 2. It is the right of any Pastoral Council member to call for a ballot vote, if a consensus form of decision making is not appropriate on a given matter.

Article XII -- Appendix

- Section 1. This constitution shall be made available to any parishioner upon request.
- Section 2. This Constitution may be amended at any regular meeting of the Pastoral Council by a two-thirds vote, provided that there shall have been appended to the call for such meeting a copy of the proposed amendment. This document should also be reviewed by a committee designated by the President at least every three years.
- Section 3. In drawing up this Constitution, it is our intention that there be nothing contained in it contrary to Canon Law or the Diocesan Synodal Statutes.
- Section 4. We recognize that St. Margaret Mary Parish exists legally as part of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Joliet, a Trust, whose property and funds are held by the Bishop or Successor Trustee under certain trust, dated December 31, 1949, and the Pastor is the duly appointed agent of the successor trustee and that his duties are spelled out in Canon Law and in the Diocesan Statutes.

**Approved November 5, 1996
Revised March 2005
Revised October 2008**