

**St. Mary's Parish Pastoral Council Constitution**  
**December 2010**

**Article I Name**

**Section I**

The name of this ministry shall be **St. Mary's Parish Pastoral Council**.

**Article II Purpose**

**Section I Purpose of St. Mary's Parish Pastoral Council**

The Parish Pastoral Council is a body of the lay faithful, clergy and religious who are members in good standing in the parish. The role of the Parish Pastoral Council is **advisory** to the Pastor and they, "along with those who share in the pastoral care of the parish in the virtue of their office give their help in fostering pastoral activity." (cf. Cannon 536). They do this through prayer, gathering information, reflection, evaluation and formulation of pastoral plans that will affect the appropriate ministries for the viability and vitality of the parish community and its service to the People of God.

**Section II Mission Statement**

St. Mary Parish Pastoral Council is a group of individuals representing the parish community with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The pastoral council engages the parish community and advises the leadership of the parish about activities and decisions which will enhance our Roman Catholic faith, spirituality and education.

**Section III Belief Statements**

We believe...

- we are an extension of our parish community
- we share a common concern for the spiritual good of all our parishioners
- we are advisory in nature to the Pastor/leadership of the parish
- we have educational concern for all our parishioners
- in vision planning for the future of our parish
- in listening to and respecting the diversity of others

**Article III Membership**

**Section I Number**

1. 12 total members
2. Of the 12 total members, five (5) members are the individuals in the following positions: Pastor, Associate Pastor, Principal, Business Manager, and Youth Ministry/Director of Religious Education.
3. Of the remaining seven (7) members, three (3) are elected by the parish community and four (4) are appointed by the Pastor.
4. The following should be considered committee's of the council: social justice/pro-life, parish life, Christian formation, worship/liturgical planning, and building/grounds.

## **Section II Selection Process**

Discernment Process:

1. Prior to nominations, announcements are to be made to the parish community about the Parish Pastoral Council mission and purpose, the criteria that must be met to consider membership, and a date and process by which parishioners can nominate others or themselves for the discernment process.
2. Once the deadline for nominations has passed, the Parish Pastoral Council (or the Parish Pastoral Council Steering Committee for the first time of this process) will review nominations and ensure that each nominee meets the established criteria for membership and is interested in pursuing the discernment process.
3. All nominees who meet the established criteria and are interested in the discernment process will meet with the Parish Pastoral Council (or the Parish Pastoral Council Steering Committee for the first time of this process) to gain a better understanding of the role and expectations of being a member of the Parish Pastoral Council.
4. After the individual meetings, nominees that are still interested will have their names submitted for a selection process that will occur during one of the regularly scheduled Sunday Masses.
5. The selection process will involve the names mentioned in the previous step being placed into a bowl and the appropriate number of names (number of positions open; the first time this will be three (3)) will be randomly selected, placed into a dish and announced by the Priest.
6. The selection process will occur the first weekend of September each year. Those selected through the discernment process will attend the September Parish Pastoral Council meeting and officially take their position at the October meeting (the March 2011 meeting for the first Parish Pastoral Council).

## **Section III Criteria**

The following shall be considered the minimum criteria to be eligible for the discernment or appointment process:

1. Baptized
2. Registered Parishioner
3. Must be a participant in the ongoing life of the parish especially Sunday liturgy. Should feel

that they would benefit by and be a benefit to the worship, faith life, and ministry of the Parish.

4. If married, must be valid as determined by Canon Law.

5. Canonically able to receive Holy Communion.

6. Willingness of giving time, talent, and/or treasure.

7. Minimum age of 18.

8. Of good moral conduct and reputation

#### **Section IV Length of Terms**

Terms will be for three (3) years. Once the transition occurs from the steering committee to the Parish Pastoral Council, all members with term limits will have one (1) year and six (6) months that do not count toward their term limit to enable the council to get up and running. Once the initial year ends, term limits begin. For the first Parish Pastoral Council, terms will be staggered, as follows (once new members are discerned or appointed by the Pastor after the initial Council their term would be for three (3) years):

Discernment Process Individual A: Term of three (3) years

Discernment Process Individual B: Term of two (2) years

Discernment Process Individual C: Term of one (1) year

Pastor Appointment Individual A: Term of three (3) years

Pastor Appointment Individual B: Term of three (3) years

Pastor Appointment Individual C: Term of two (2) years

Pastor Appointment Individual D: Term of two (2) years

Members may not exceed two (2) consecutive terms. If a member reaches the two (2) term limit, he/she must sit off one (1) term before eligible for the discernment process or Pastor appointment again.

#### **Article IV Selection and Duties of Officers**

##### **Section I Council Officers and Council Subcommittees**

The officers of the Council are: Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and Secretary. The subcommittees of the Council are: social justice/pro-life, parish life, Christian formation, worship/liturgical planning, and building/grounds.

##### **Section II Duties of Officers**

The Chairperson shall be responsible for setting the agenda for all meetings with the Pastor and leading the meeting with him.

The Vice Chairperson shall be responsible for leading the meetings with the Pastor in the

absence of the Chairperson.

The Secretary shall be responsible for the meeting minutes, as described in Article V, Section III of this constitution.

## **Section II Selection of Officers**

Selection of the three (3) officers is through the discernment of the 12 Council members.

## **Section III Terms of Officers**

Each term for the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and Secretary will be for two (2) years with the ability to be discerned for no more than two (2) consecutive terms.

## **Article V Meetings**

### **Section I Frequency and Length**

Meetings will be scheduled the third Thursday of the each month (with the exception of July and August when no meetings will occur unless necessary), will begin at 7:00 p.m. and will last no longer than 90 minutes; any changes to the meeting schedule or time will be made by the Council as needed.

### **Section II Attendance**

Regular attendance by all Council members is expected. If attendance is irregular, the Council member in question will be contacted by the Pastor and/or Chairperson.

### **Section III Minutes**

Minutes will be recorded by the secretary and distributed via e-mail or standard mail to the council no later than one (1) week prior to the next meeting. The minutes will be detailed enough to explain what occurred at the meeting. The minutes will be updated on the Parish website after they are approved at the next meeting.

## **Article VI Resignations/Vacancies**

### **Section I Resignations/Removal**

1. If a member needs/desires to resign, he/she must submit the request in writing to the Pastor.
2. If a member no longer meets the established criteria (Article III, Sec III) and he/she has not submitted a written request of resignation as in 1. above, the Council or the Pastor shall declare him/her removed.

## **Section II Filling a Vacant Council Seat**

The Parish Pastoral Council will look at the list of who was part of the discernment process and not selected and the Council will discern to decide which person will fill the remainder of the vacant term. If there is no one left on the list, the Pastor will appoint an individual to serve out the rest of the term.

## **Article VII Communicating the Work of the Parish Pastoral Council to the Parish**

Various avenues will be used to keep the Parish community updated on the work of the council. Those avenues include, but are not limited to, the bulletin and Parish website.

## **Article VIII Amendments to Constitution**

This constitution can be amended at any regular meeting of the council by a two-thirds vote of the entire council provided that the amendment has been submitted in writing and discussed at the previous regular meeting and has the concurrence of the Pastor.

## **Appendix**

### **Description of Subcommittees of the Parish Pastoral Council**

#### **(A) Social Justice/Pro-Life**

This subcommittee focuses on social justice issues of national, diocesan and local concerns, e.g. Habitat for Humanity.

#### **(B) Parish Life**

This subcommittee focuses on activities for parishioners (e.g. parish dinners, pilgrimages) and things we do to become more active and involved parishioners.

#### **(C) Christian Formation**

This subcommittee focuses on evangelization of the church and programs for parishioners (e.g. RCIA, retreats).

#### **(D) Worship/Liturgical Planning**

This subcommittee focuses on communal celebration of the sacraments, seasonal art and

environment of the Church.

**(E) Building and Grounds**

This subcommittee focuses on maintenance, gardens, and the cemetery.