

Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

Model Statutes

Preamble

The second Vatican Council, in its Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity (#10) states:

“Participators in the function of Christ, priest, prophet, and king, the laity have an active part of their own in the life and action of the Church. Their action within the Church communities is so necessary that without it the apostolate of the pastors will frequently be unable to obtain its full effect.”

The 1983 Code of Canon Law states:

“After the diocesan bishop has listened to the Presbyteral council and if he judges it opportune, a pastoral council is to be established in each parish; the pastor presides over it, and through it the Christian faithful along with those who share in the pastoral care of the parish in virtue of their office give their help in fostering pastoral activity.” (canon 536,1)

THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

The Parish Pastoral Council should help the pastor develop a “mission focused” parish, rather than a parish driven by only programs or finances. This approach can energize a parish to address matters that accomplish more than just fill the annual calendar. Both the Parish Finance Council and the Parish Pastoral Council are to be meeting regularly in each parish of the Diocese.

ARTICLE I: GOALS

Although the Parish Pastoral Council does not make binding decisions, the recommendations of this Council, made with prayer and communal wisdom, can provide valuable guidance for the Pastor and Parish.

The Pastor presides over the Parish Pastoral Council. While not obliged to follow the recommendations of the Pastoral Council, the discussions and deliberations of the council should inform and provide insights for the Pastor in his role as shepherd, guide and leader.

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE AND DUTIES

The purpose and duties of the Parish Pastoral Council include:

1. Drawing all persons into a believing, loving, serving, evangelizing community which, guided by the Holy Spirit, gives glory to God the Father through Jesus Christ.
2. Following the teachings and ministry of Jesus Christ as revealed through the Roman Catholic Church in communion with the Bishop of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.
3. Continual Parish spiritual renewal and outreach.
4. Helping set Parish direction while listening to the needs of Parish members followed by

prayerful reflection.

5. Communicating and supporting the policy and programs of the Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend to the people.
6. Exercising its consultative role in support of the Pastor who has sole responsibility to the Bishop for the spiritual and temporal welfare of the Parish.

Under the leadership of the Pastor, who is the presider of the Parish Pastoral Council, the Council is the primary advisory body with responsibility for the life and welfare of the parish. The Pastor and Parish Pastoral Council shall work together, under the Holy Spirit's guidance for the good of the parish community.

ARTICLE III: PARISH ORGANIZATION AND COOPERATION

The Parish Pastoral Council is to support and encourage planning, creativity, and accountability in parish organizations, committees and boards. The Parish Pastoral Council will evaluate activities, recommend changes and encourage new programs which are responsive to the needs of the Parish and offer opportunities for parishioners to become involved in various phases of Parish life.

The Parish Pastoral Council must respect the distinction between policy and administrative decisions. The daily operation of the Parish is clearly the responsibility of the Pastor and his staff. The role of the Parish Pastoral Council is to propose priorities and guiding principles for the Christian community. While seeking to draw forth and utilize the talents, energies, and insights of the parishioners, the Pastoral Council should communicate regularly with the Parish at large. A summary of each meeting is to be published and available in some form (e.g. Parish bulletin, bulletin board, website).

ARTICLE IV: MEMBERSHIP

Members of the Parish Pastoral Council must be practicing Catholics with a deep commitment to the faith as well as concern for the needs of the Parish. Since the Council is representative of the community, it should be diverse in constitution while unified in mission. Members must be at least 18 years of age and registered active members of the Parish. Paid employees of the Parish and their immediate family may not serve as voting members of the Parish Pastoral Council to avoid possible conflicts of interest.

1. Members and Terms of Membership

The Parish Pastoral Council members may include ex-officio, elected and appointed members. Ex-officio, non-voting members, include the Pastor, other clergy assigned to the Parish, School Principal, Director of Religious Education, a member of the Parish Finance Council (and possibly a representative of the Youth Group) and any other staff members designated by the Pastor.

If desired by the Pastor, elected members serve three-year terms, renewable once, and would be elected at large from the parish.

Appointed members would be chosen by the Pastor to provide a needed talent, fill a specific need or achieve a needed age, gender, or ethnic balance in council membership. Appointed members are also to serve three-year terms, renewable once.

A worthy practice is a turnover of one-third of the membership each year.

2. Attendance at Meetings

Total membership can range from 7 to 16 (*elected and*) appointed members. Ex-officio members are not included in this total.

Any member absent without excuse for two consecutive meetings should be contacted by the Pastor regarding continued fulfillment of that member's commitment. Three consecutive absences, without an excuse accepted by the Pastor, will be considered a resignation. Any resignation will be filled for the remainder of that person's term by appointment of the Pastor.

ARTICLE V: NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS (*If the Pastoral Council includes elected Members*)

1. Nominating Committee

The Parish Pastoral Council may establish a Nominating Committee, which will include the Pastor. The committee secures the names of candidates for service to the Parish Pastoral Council.

2. Nominating Committee's Responsibilities

The Parish Pastoral Council Nominating Committee's responsibilities are:

- a) to inform the Parish of the duties and responsibilities of the Parish Pastoral Council membership before any parishioner makes a commitment to have his or her name placed on the ballot,
- b) to interview each potential candidate. A potential candidate must understand the role of membership on the Parish Pastoral Council, the commitment to service, and the requirements for membership before he or she is accepted for nomination
- c) to prepare a slate of candidates for election and receive each individual candidate's written reasons for desiring to serve,
- d) to inform the Parish at least two weeks before election by way of bulletin announcement who is nominated for the Parish Pastoral Council,
- e) to conduct the election by secret ballot at Masses on one weekend.
 - i) Ballots will not be counted until after the last Mass.
 - ii) After counting ballots the committee will publish the election results in the weekly bulletin.
 - iii) Absentee ballots may be obtained in the parish office during the one-week period before the weekend of the election.

3. Elections

Any practicing registered parishioner is eligible to vote in the election.

4. Election Time Table

The Nomination Committee should be appointed in the spring and present the nominees and their qualifications to the parishioners in late spring.

The election of the Parish Pastoral Council members should occur between April and July. Newly elected members will be installed at or shortly before the first meeting of the new fiscal year.

ARTICLE VI: OFFICERS *(If the Pastor decides that the Parish Pastoral Council should include officers)*

1. Terms of Service

The Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary are elected annually by the Parish Pastoral Council members from the appointed or elected membership at the first meeting of the fiscal year.

Terms of office will be from July 1 through June 30. Any appointed or elected member of the Parish Pastoral Council may participate in the nomination and election of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary. These three officers, with the Pastor, will form an Executive Committee which will set the agenda for each meeting.

2. Chairperson

The Chairperson shall:

- a) facilitate the Parish Pastoral Council Meeting and will:
 - i) provide time for prayer and reflection,
 - ii) state the issue or question,
 - iii) maintain order, attention, and regulate the length of discussion,
 - iv) develop ideas and express the sentiment of the Pastoral Council by restating, summarizing, or contrasting the various statements of the members,
 - v) make sure meetings are concluded in a timely manner.
- b) assure free and open communication between the Parish Pastoral Council and the parishioners. Minutes and reports of the work of the Pastoral Council committees should be published on a regular basis.

3. Vice-Chairman

The Vice-Chairperson performs the duties of the Chairperson in the latter's absence and serves as an aide to the Chairperson in conducting the Parish Pastoral Council's work.

4. Recording Secretary

The Recording Secretary documents the business of the Parish Pastoral Council (minutes, reports) maintaining attendance and other records.

ARTICLE VII: MEETINGS

1. Regular Meetings

The Parish Pastoral Council meetings will be held 4 to 10 times a year as needed and determined by the Pastor.

2. Special Meeting

In the event a special meeting is required, (*the Chairperson and*) the Pastor will establish the time and place of the meeting and notify all members. Notification should be at least 48 hours before the meeting and should also include the specific subject to be discussed. Special meetings will follow the same general operating rules of order as at a regular meeting. However, the agenda of the special meeting should be limited to the specific matter at hand.

3. Conduct of Business

(*In the absence of both the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson*) the Pastor will chair the meeting. In the absence of the Pastor, a meeting of the Parish Pastoral Council cannot be held and will be rescheduled.

4. Quorum

Two-thirds of the voting membership of the Parish Pastoral Council shall constitute a quorum for transacting business.

ARTICLE VIII: OPERATING PROCEDURES

1. Climate of Prayer

The Parish Pastoral Council meetings should open with a prayer and time should be allowed for reflection. Maintaining a prayerful climate throughout the meeting will provide an optimal atmosphere for the Pastoral Council to fulfill its mission.

2. Participation

- a) It shall be the practice that all Parish Pastoral Council members will have the opportunity to express their views on all items covered during the meeting.
- b) Visitors may be recognized by the Pastor (*or Chairperson*) to address the Parish Pastoral Council on an agenda item.
- c) In the event that a parishioner wishes to address the Parish Pastoral Council concerning a specific subject, that parishioner must notify the Pastor one week in advance of the Pastoral Council meeting and receive approval by the Pastor for a presentation.

3. Executive Session

In the event that there arises an issue which is very sensitive or confidential, the Pastoral Council will go into executive session. This means that only Pastoral Council members may be present, they are to maintain confidentiality, and no minutes will be taken for that portion of the meeting.

4. Consensus Process

Ordinarily, the recommendations of the Parish Pastoral Council shall be the result of a process of consensus rather than from a majority rule used in parliamentary procedure. The process of consensus provides the opportunity for various aspects of an issue to be considered in the hope that a proposal can be formulated which all may support.

Pastor and Parish Pastoral Council should work together for consensus, but the Pastor's assent is an essential element of any consensus.

- 5. Agenda Committee** *(If the Pastor sees this committee as helpful it may be established.)*
An Agenda Committee of the Pastoral Council shall consist of the Pastor, the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson, and Recording Secretary.

The Agenda Committee shall:

- a) determine the agenda for each meeting of the Pastoral Council. An agenda shall be sent to the members during the week prior to regularly scheduled meetings. The agenda for regular meetings shall be posted for the weekend prior to the meeting,
- b) set the schedule for agenda items, indicating the sequence and time allotted for each item,
- c) establish procedures for parishioners to speak at the Pastoral Council meetings if requested.

ARTICLE IX: MISSIONS

The Parish Pastoral Council will be responsible for these six Missions.

1. Mission for Evangelization.

Evangelization is the fundamental mission of the Church and, therefore, the primary mission of the Parish Pastoral Council. It embraces the Church's urgent call for "a new evangelization", not new in content, but new in ardor, methods, and expression. Attentive to the ongoing evangelization of active members of the parish, the Council also promotes evangelizing outreach to inactive members and to the unchurched of the community.

2. Mission for Education.

In the spirit of the New Evangelization, the ongoing catechesis of the faithful as well as the RCIA are promoted as Parish priorities. The Mission for Education insures that the Parish provides its members with opportunities for growth in knowledge of the faith through strong catechetical formation of adults, youth, and children.

The Catholic School Board and the Religious Education Board are part of this Mission for Education.

3. Mission for Pastoral Ministry.

The Mission for Pastoral Ministry encompasses all the programs and activities of a Parish that strengthen its identity as an active and vibrant community of faith. Parish organizations that further this mission are supported and promoted.

4. Mission for Liturgy.

This Mission promotes the liturgical life of the parish, in accord with the Church's liturgical norms, and the active participation of the parishioners in liturgical celebrations.

5. Mission for Social Concerns and Outreach.

This Mission focuses on the parish as a community that practices the faith through works of charity. This Mission involves promoting respect for human life, outreach to the poor, service to those in need, and the practice of the corporal works of mercy.

6. Mission for Ecumenism and Interfaith Relations

This Mission fosters good relations and cooperation with other Christian communities, and also reaches out to non-Christian communities for the good of society. The Mission may sponsor events of common prayer, in accord with the norms of the Church, service projects, and other activities that promote unity and cooperation.

The Missions operate with support provided them by the various programs in the Parish. Standing committees, parish organizations, and other mission units of the Parish are all to be included organizationally under one of the six Missions.

(The Parish Pastoral Council Chairperson, in consultation with and the concurrence of) the Pastor, may name Pastoral Council members as representatives for each of the six Missions.

ARTICLE IX: AMENDMENTS

These Parish Pastoral Council Statutes may be amended by two-thirds vote of the membership of the Council, provided the amendment has been recorded and been presented at two Parish Pastoral Council meetings. Any amendment must meet with the approval of the Pastor.

January 8, 2013