

ST. BRENDAN PASTORAL COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

The parish is a community of the people of God, entrusted to an ordained priest for pastoral care under the authority of a bishop; his ministry is to gather people in the Spirit of the Gospel and Eucharist for the sake of the Kingdom. *“The mission and the Second Vatican Council’s vision of the role of each and every one of us in its fulfillment calls us to stretch ourselves to yet unimagined limits. This would be impossible if it were not that the grace of God everywhere abounds.”* (p. 13, Collegial Church, by Bishop F. Joseph Gossman, 1982)

ARTICLE I

PURPOSE

The Pastoral Council is seen as a structure of consultation and consensus. It is a planning council not a coordinating council nor a legislative body. It is where cooperative planning occurs. The Pastoral Council is a consultative planning group, planning the mission of the Parish with the Pastor.

The consultation of the Pastoral Council is essential in the decision-making process, but the decisions are those of the Pastor.

ARTICLE II

MEMBERSHIP

Eligibility. Any registered parishioner who is in full communion with the Catholic Church and has reached eighteen years of age shall be eligible for election or appointment by the Pastor.

Representation. The Pastoral Council shall consist of up to twelve (12) elected members. In addition, the Pastor may, but does not have to, appoint four (4) others. All members of the council whether elected or appointed shall be considered full voting members. (Numbers keeping $\frac{3}{4}$ & $\frac{1}{4}$ ratio).

Elections. Elections are to take place annually sometime around the Advent season.

Terms of Office. An elected member serves for a three-year term, renewable for a second consecutive three-year term, but not more than two consecutive terms.

End of the Term may be due to death, voluntary resignation, change of address, justified removal, inability to fulfill responsibilities for an extended period, or other pertinent reasons at the Pastor's discretion. The replacement (elected or appointed at the pastor's discretion) occupies the position just for the remaining period.

President of Finance. By diocesan regulation, the President of the Finance Council is an automatic member of the Pastoral Council. This does not mean that the Pastor must choose a member of the Pastoral Council to preside as President of the Finance Council, but rather, having appointed the Finance Council (Canon 537 and Diocesan Guidelines), the President of the Finance Council becomes an automatic member of the Pastoral Council. This person is not to be considered as a pastoral appointee.

ARTICLE III

ORGANIZATION

Officers. Officers of the council shall consist of a President, Vice President and Secretary. These officers will be elected from within the total council membership. Pastoral appointees may not be excluded from holding office.

Meetings. The council shall meet on a regular basis, preferably once a month but no less than every other month.

Meeting Minutes. The Diocesan Retention Policy for managing Pastoral Council minutes: They are permanent. Meeting Minutes are archived on the parish website under the Pastoral Council section.

Committees. The following are standing committees of the Council:

- a. Communications Committee
- b. Faith Formation
- c. Liturgical Committee
- d. Buildings and Grounds
- e. Outreach Committee
- f. Social Committee
- g. Special Projects Committee

ARTICLE IV

BY-LAWS AND AMENDMENTS

Provided that they do not contravene any of the provisions of these Articles, By-Laws may be established by the Pastoral Council with the approval of the Pastor. By-Laws may be amended or repealed in the same manner. Copies of the By-Laws must be sent to the Bishop's office for the parish file. Amendments to this Constitution must be approved by the Council and the Pastor. Constitutional amendments must be approved by the Bishop before they take effect.

1. It is mandatory that each Parish have a Pastoral Council. It is up to the discretion of the Pastor whether a Mission is to have a Pastoral Council.
2. The Pastoral Council is to be governed by a written Constitution which must be submitted to the Chancellor for the approval of the Bishop.
3. At least three-fourths of the Pastoral Council is to be selected by the Parish at large in an annual election, preferably held on the 2nd Sunday of Advent. The Pastor may, but does not have to, appoint up to one-fourth of the members to ensure balance on the Council and to see that all cultures of the Parish are represented.
4. The President of the Parish Finance Council is an automatic member of the Parish Pastoral Council and cannot also serve as an officer of the Pastoral Council or chair a Standing Committee.
5. Terms of office are to be designated in the Constitution or By-laws.
6. Meetings of the Council are to be held with regularity, preferably once a month, but no less than every other month.
7. It is the function of the Pastoral Council to “investigate everything pertaining to pastoral activities, to weigh them carefully, and to set forth practical conclusions concerning them so as to encourage conformity of the life and actions of the People of God with the Gospel.” (Motu Proprio, *Ecclesiae Sanctae*).
8. The Council is to elect a President and conduct business according to established procedures. Proposals by the Council must be ratified by the Pastor/Administrator. If it is the Pastor/Administrator’s considered decision that a proposal should be refused, he/she may do so. By a two-thirds vote, the Pastoral Council may appeal the rejection to the Dean. If the Dean’s decision is not satisfactory to the Pastor or to the Pastoral Council, it may be appealed to the Bishop, whose decision is final.
9. It is the responsibility of the Pastoral Council and the Pastor to submit a Parish Plan according to Guidelines established by the Chancery to the Chancellor by 30 June of each year.
10. No group or office may interfere with the working of the Pastoral Council. All Boards, Commissions and Committees of a Parish except for the Parish Finance Council, are responsible to the Pastoral Council.
11. Pastoral Council Meeting Minutes may be communicated to Pastoral Council Members for their review and approval prior to the next meeting. This is to allow for quicker publication to the parish at large.