

## **SAMPLE CONSTITUTION FOR PARISH PASTORAL COUNCILS**

### **Article I: Name**

Section A: The name of this body shall be St. XXX's Parish Pastoral Council.

Section B: The Parish Pastoral Council is established in accord with the Code of Canon Law and Diocesan norms concerning parish pastoral councils with which the articles of this Constitution must be in accord.

### **Article II: Purpose**

The purpose of the Pastoral Council is to provide consultation to the pastor and parish staff concerning pastoral activity and initiatives. The Council shall strive to reach consensus concerning those issues which it addresses and the ordinary disposition of the pastor shall be to act in accord with the recommendations of the Council, unless there are overriding reasons which are to be made clear to the Council.

### **Article III: Functions**

Section A: Through prayer, reflection and discussion within the Council and among the members the parish, the Pastoral Council formulates a mission statement and develops a pastoral plan of action for the parish. At least every 2 years, the Council reviews this plan and revises or rewrites it according to the changing needs and circumstances of the parish. The Council shares this pastoral plan with the parish at large and with the Bishop.

Section B: The Pastoral Council develops and reviews parish policies and recommends them to the pastor. These policies are to be in harmony with the universal law of the Church and Diocesan norms and policies.

Section C: The Pastoral Council coordinates the work of parish committees and organizations by receiving reports of their activities and by calling forth cooperation of those groups in support of pastoral concerns and initiatives. The Pastoral Council may delegate one or more members to attend meetings of these groups and may request delegates from them to take part in the Pastoral Council meetings.

Section D: The Pastoral Council receives a recommended budget from the parish's Finance Council and collaborates with this Council to plan the pastoral program of the parish.

### **Article IV. Membership**

Section A: The members of the Pastoral Council are to be Catholics of the parish who are mindful of the common good, compassionate, prudent, faithful in the stewardship of time, talent and resources and regular participants in the worship of the parish.

Section B: The Council shall consist of 6 to 8 members.

Section C: The members of the Council are selected by means of a Nominating Committee and by appointment by the pastor:

1. The pastor shall appoint a nominating committee of 3 persons.
2. The qualifications and responsibilities of Council members having been presented, all members of the parish are invited to place names in nomination.
3. Persons may nominate themselves.
4. Parish staff members are not eligible for nomination.
5. Having received the names of nominees, the Nominating Committee shall discuss the candidates and prayerfully select the six persons whom it judges as best suited to serve on the Council taking into account the social and economic conditions of the parish and the diversity of points of view within the parish.
6. The pastor may not reject anyone presented by the Nominating Committee without a serious reason.
7. The pastor is free to appoint one or two additional members to the Council even if they have not been nominees. He may invite the Nominating Committee to select all members of the Council.
8. A member serves for a term of 3 years and cannot serve more than 2 consecutive terms by the means of the nomination process. Having served 2 consecutive terms on the Council, a person is again eligible for nomination after a year's absence. Persons appointed to the Council by the pastor are not limited in terms of service.

## **Article V. Meetings**

Section A: The Pastoral Council shall meet 4 times a year and at other times when called by the pastor.

Section B: Meetings of the Council are open to parishioners and staff members unless the pastor has determined otherwise prior to a particular meeting.

Section C: The pastor presides over the Council.

Section D: The members of the Council shall elect a chair to plan the agenda with the pastor, to conduct meetings of the Council, and in general to facilitate the work of the Council.

Section E: Secretarial duties may be assigned to a parish staff person or the Council may select a secretary.

## **Article VI. Ratification**

Section A: This Constitution becomes valid upon approval by a majority of the Council and acceptance by the pastor. A copy is to be sent to the Office of the Bishop.

Section B: Amendments to this constitution are subject to the same process of ratification.

Section C: By-laws or those more detailed procedures by which the Council carries out its responsibilities must be approved by a majority of the Council and accepted by the pastor.

## **VII. Suspension and Dissolution of the Council**

Section A: Unless directed otherwise by the Bishop, the Pastoral Council ceases to function when the parish is without a pastor. A new pastor or administrator will call the Council into session within 1 month after appointment to office.

Section B: The Pastoral Council can be dissolved only with permission of the Diocesan Bishop.

N.B. This sample constitution serves only as a model in applying the Norms for parish pastoral councils (c.f. [2.07.04](#)). Care must be taken to adapt the Norms to the local situation.