

Constitution of the Parish Pastoral Council

Preamble

The Conciliar documents of Vatican Council II give both theological and practical support for the establishment of pastoral councils. A pastoral council is an institution which brings together lay people and religious, who together, with their pastor, work jointly to build the parish as a living Christian community.

The Archdiocese of Kingston recognizes each parish as a distinct community of the Christian faithful, and as the basic essential unit in which to realize the vision of the Church, in this vision, there are varied but complementary roles, allowing the Church to find its strength in the diversity of gifts exercised by its members. A pastoral council is a structure that serves the ministries which a living parish needs if it is to grow as a Christian community of faith, worship and service, caring for all the people of God.

In its day-to-day operations, the pastoral council has a consultative voice. It shares with other parish organizations, and with the pastor, who is ultimately answerable to the Archbishop, the responsibility for the spiritual and temporal welfare of the parish. The authority of the pastoral council consists in contributing to the formulation of decisions that will be taken by the pastor himself, through the nature of his office.

Article I. Name

The name of the association shall be "The Pastoral Council of St. Joseph's Parish, Kingston, Ontario" hereafter referred to as the "pastoral council" or "council".

Article II. Purposes

The purposes or aims of the council derive from the rationale outlined in the preamble. They are:

1. to assist the people of God, in union with their pastor, to exercise their role of living out and witnessing to the Gospel of Jesus Christ;
2. to set an example of unity and cooperation to both the parish and the entire community;
3. to bring all the elements of the parish together in order to foster the spiritual growth of all parish members and to build the parish as a living Christian community.

Article III. Objectives

The objectives of the council derive from the Purposes, and centre around promoting pastoral activity for the overall good of the parish. They are:

1. to assist the pastor in identifying the needs of the faithful, and in planning appropriate responses to those needs;
2. to procure within the community the resources, human and otherwise, needed to implement those responses;
3. to work in support of, and in cooperation with, all other legitimate parish organizations and structures, so as to encourage all and enhance the Christian life of the parish.

Article IV. Membership

1. Membership in the council is open to all registered and practicing Catholic parishioners.
2. The council will be comprised of:
 - a) the pastor, who is a permanent member; he may be represented at any meeting by his delegate;
 - b) the chairperson;
 - c) the vice-chairperson;
 - d) five other councillors;
 - e) any full-time associate pastor and ordained deacon (and wife) assigned to St. Joseph's Parish;
 - f) representatives from Catholic Women's League, Knights of Columbus, Parish School Council(s), Legion of Mary, as ex-officio members.
3. There shall also be a secretary, for recording and correspondence. The secretary, however, need not be a member of council.
4. No two members of the same household shall be appointed to, or sit on, the council during the same term or any portion of it.
5. Members of the council shall ordinarily be chosen by election.
6. The terms of office shall be for three (3) years, renewable once. Periods of service should be staggered, so that less than half the council will need replacement at the end of any one-year period. A member who has served two consecutive three-year terms may be re-elected after being off the council for at least three years.
7. A member of the council shall cease to be a member either by resigning, or by failing to attend three consecutive regular meetings without just cause. If a decision is necessary with respect to just cause, it shall be made by council.
8. If a vacancy occurs during the year, the council shall choose a member of the parish to fill the rest of the unexpired term.
9. At the first regular meeting each year, the council shall elect from among its members

the officers outlined in #2 above. The term of office for each officer shall be one year, renewable as long as that person sits on council.

These provisions do not apply, of course, to the pastor; see #2 (a).

Article V. Elections

1. Elections for parish council members shall be held annually. All registered and practicing Catholic parishioners are eligible for election.
2. The elections shall be held in May or early June each year. The term of office shall begin on July 1st and run until the following June 30th.
3. a) The parish council is responsible for holding the elections, and conducting them in accordance with the generally accepted practices: advance publicity; nomination procedures; opportunities for candidates to make themselves and their views known to the parish; voting day organization; and provision, distribution, handling and counting of the ballots;
b) To carry out these tasks, the council shall appoint an election committee. At least half of the committee members shall be present members of the parish council;
c) In case of a tie for the last position open, those involved in the tie shall be invited to serve one term on the council, but that term is not renewable.
4. The results of the election shall be announced to the parish on the Sunday following the election, if possible.

Article VI Duties of Officers

1. The pastor shall:
 - a) represent the teaching authority of the Church, in both its theological and canonical aspects;
 - b) have the final say in decision-making, exercising this authority at his professional discretion, and being answerable to the Archbishop;
 - c) as guardian of the council's raison d'etre, inspire and animate the council members to give their best efforts to their parish ministry.
2. The chairperson shall:
 - a) preside at all regular and special meetings;
 - b) prepare the agenda for all meetings, in consultation with the pastor;
 - c) represent the council, as required, in necessary communications, consultations and emergency situations between meetings;
 - d) exercise leadership in the assignment and coordination of council tasks, by mutual agreement with the councillors concerned;
 - e) prepare the year-end Annual Report, in consultation with the council as a whole.

3. The vice-chairperson shall:

- a) preside at meetings in the absence of the chairperson;
- b) carry out such other duties as the chairperson may assign.

4. The councillors, including the executive shall:

- a) be responsible for liaison with various recognized parish organizations, in the manner developed and formally approved by themselves as a council, after consultation with the organizations concerned;
- b) choose, from their number if possible, a representative for the diocesan pastoral council;
- c) carry out such other duties as the chairperson may from time to time assign, after collective discussion and mutual agreement.

5. Council committees. The council shall have the following committees which will consist of a chairperson and ordinarily a maximum of five other members, of whom at least one shall be a member of, and liaison to, the Council.

- a) Liturgy;
- b) Social;
- c) Community Life/Family;
- d) Youth Group;
- e) Education;
- f) Seniors.

6. The council may establish additional committees as required to meet the needs of the parish.

7. Each committee shall report to the council on its own activities at every council meeting.

8. As a general rule, each committee should meet at least once between council meetings.

9. Each Committee chairperson shall be responsible for calling the meetings of that committee.

Article VII. Meetings

1 . The council shall hold a regular meeting every month, except July and August. Meetings in those two months are optional, at the discretion of the council.

2. A special meeting of the council may be called by the pastor or the chairperson, or at least one-third of the members.

3. At regular and special meetings, a simple majority of members, plus the pastor or his designate, shall constitute a quorum.

4. A written agenda shall be provided for all regular and special meetings.
5. At the end of each year, no later than 15 June, the council shall make a full written report to the parish of its year's activities. During the year as well, the council shall keep the parishioners periodically informed as to its progress.
6. All meetings of the council are open to any member of the parish. Wherever possible, meeting dates and times should be announced to the parish in advance.
7. Standard parliamentary procedure shall govern all meetings.
8. Because of its nature, the council should strive for consensus whenever possible. However, if a vote is needed, a two-thirds majority is required to carry a resolution. The pastor will not participate in the voting.

Article VIII. Amendments

1. Amendments to this constitution may be made twice a year, at the December or June regular meeting.
2. Any registered parishioner may propose and move an amendment, providing advance written notice has been circulated as stated in #3, below.
3. Notice of the amendment shall be circulated to all council members at least one week prior to the meeting at which it will be voted upon.
4. To ratify an amendment a two-thirds majority of all current council members is required. Non-council parishioners are not permitted to vote.

Bibliography and Sources

1. Pastoral Guidelines on the Parish and Parish Structure. Archdiocese of Kingston, 1984.
2. The Parish Pastoral Council. CCCB Laity Commission, 1984.
3. Constitution of Holy Family Catholic Church, Kingston, Ontario.
4. General reference to a number of other publications (available on request).

GUIDELINES FOR COMMITTEES

Purpose

1. The purpose of these guidelines is to amplify the Parish Pastoral Council Constitution of St. Joseph's Parish, Kingston, Ontario, and to set out conditions and procedures of a continuing nature. (See Constitution, Article VI for additional details).

2. The constitution identifies the following council committees:

- a) Liturgy
- b) Community Life/Family
- c) Social
- d) Youth
- e) Education
- f) Seniors

Liturgy Committee

The Liturgy Committee is responsible to council for the organization and conduct of liturgical practices within the parish. The duties may include co-ordination of:

- a) the preparation and celebration of the Sacraments;
- b) the organization of Lectors and Extraordinary Minister of Communion;
- c) the organization of altar servers;
- d) the organization of music ministries;
- e) the parish liturgy for children;
- f) art and environment of the church (decorations, flowers, banners, etc.);
- g) the organization of the ushers (welcoming and greeting people).

Community Life/Family Committee

Community Life/Family Committee is responsible to council for parish life. The duties may include:

- a) conducting parish surveys to determine needs and to provide input for the parish's long-range objectives;
- b) developing resources to facilitate maximum health and wellness of each person;
- c) welcoming newcomers to the parish;
- d) identifying and supporting those in need of pastoral assistance or other kind of support;
- e) visiting the sick and shut-ins;
- f) keeping the parish informed of the activities of the council.

Social Committee

The Social Committee is responsible to council for:

- a) developing, planning and conducting social events within the spirit of the constitution;
- b) conducting fundraising activities to support parish projects and missions;
- c) co-ordinating outreach projects such as food banks, Christmas baskets and Neighbourhood Sharing;
- d) identifying ways of working with local agencies and churches in social (civic) projects.

Youth Committee

The Youth Committee is responsible to council for the development and conduct of activities suitable and stimulating to the youth of the parish. The duties may include:

- a) faith development activities;
- b) social and sports activities;
- c) liaison with Kingston area Catholic schools;
- d) youth fundraising activities;
- e) liaison with youth programs of the Archdiocese of Kingston;
- f) communications to the youth of the parish.

Education Committee

The Education Committee is Responsible to council for providing timely, accurate and approved information and programs for the parish. The duties may include:

- a) developing and maintaining religious education programs;
- b) developing information programs and discussion groups of faith developments;
- c) providing information on Retreats;
- d) liaising with the Diocesan Office of Religious Education.

Seniors' Committee

The Seniors' Committee is responsible to council for the development and conduct of programs and support for parish seniors. The duties may include:

- a) maintaining a list of seniors'activities for the area;
- b) determining special needs for the seniors of the parish;a) maintaining a list of seniors'activities for the area;
- c) organizing activities for seniors.