

**CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS  
OF  
CHURCH OF ST. MARY  
PASTORAL COUNCIL  
Adopted 3/2/2015**

**I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Parish Pastoral Council is to give counsel to the Pastor, or his equivalent in canon law,<sup>1</sup> concerning the pastoral activity in the Parish.<sup>2</sup> Under his authority, this Council investigates, considers, and proposes practical conclusions about those things which pertain to the pastoral works in the Parish.<sup>3</sup> The Parish Pastoral Council is a distinct and separate body from the parish Finance Council.<sup>4</sup>

Its purpose and activities shall in no manner replace, diminish, duplicate or infringe upon those of Church of St. Mary, a Wyoming corporation, or the members or officers thereof. Rather they shall be in supplement of, and subordinate to, those of said corporation and its members and officers.

**II. OPERATION**

- A. The Parish Pastoral Council shall submit its recommendations to the Pastor in the form of motions duly made, seconded and passed by a majority vote.
- B. If the Pastor, for grave reasons of fidelity to the Gospel, obedience to Church or civil law, or other serious financial or administrative considerations, feels that he cannot in good conscience carry out the recommendations of the Council, he shall fully and frankly communicate his reasons and reservations with regard to them to the assembled Council. If the Pastor does not communicate such reservations by the second next regularly scheduled meeting of the Council following the date on which the recommendations were submitted to him, the Council shall be entitled to assume their acceptance.

**III. MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF OFFICE**

- A. In order to serve as a member of the Parish Pastoral Council, a person must be:
  - 1. A fully initiated Catholic;<sup>5</sup>
  - 2. Outstanding in firm faith, good morals and prudence;<sup>6</sup>
  - 3. Free of any canonical penalties or impediments including an irregular marriage;<sup>7</sup> and,

4. Selected according to the norms that follow:

B. The Parish Pastoral Council shall be composed of thirteen (13) members, at least half of whom are to be elected.

C. The elected members of the Parish Pastoral Council, constituting at least half of the membership of the Council, shall be chosen according to the following norms:

1. The Pastor or his equivalent is to solicit from the members of the Parish nominations for the Parish Pastoral Council.

2. The Pastor will propose qualified and accepting nominees as candidates for positions on the Parish Pastoral Council, and an election is to be conducted during the Weekend Masses according to Canon Law.

3. Elected members serve for a term of three (3) years. Upon the completion of a term, they may be elected for one additional term. Terms shall be staggered so that each year no more than a third of the elected members are newly elected or re-elected members.

4. The Pastor, or his equivalent in canon law, may fill a vacancy at any time, by appointing a replacement for the vacant elected position and the newly chosen member shall serve for the remainder of the unexpired term.

D. At the discretion of the Pastor, or his equivalent in canon law, additional members of the Parish Pastoral Council, never to be more than half of the membership of the Council, may be selected according to the following norms:

1. The following individuals may be designated by the Pastor, or his equivalent in canon law, as representative members of the Council:

a. One (1) member may be chosen by the Cathedral Guild to serve a one (1) year term, and if this position becomes vacant, the Cathedral Guild may select someone to fill the vacancy and complete the remainder of the term.

b. One (1) member may be chosen by the Knights of Columbus to serve a one (1) year term, and if this position becomes vacant, the Knights of Columbus may select someone to fill the vacancy and complete the remainder of the term.

c. One (1) high school youth in his or her sophomore or junior year of high school or the Youth Minister may be appointed by the Pastor, or his equivalent in canon law, to serve as a member of the Council into or through the completion of his or her senior year of high school;

d. One (1) member may be chosen from the St. Mary's School Advisory Board to serve a one (1) year term, and if this position becomes vacant, the School Advisory Board may select someone to fill the vacancy and complete the remainder of the term.

e. One (1) member may be chosen from the Mall of St. Vincent De Paul Thrift Store to serve a one (1) year term, and if this position becomes vacant, the St. Vincent De Paul Thrift Store may select someone to fill the vacancy and complete the remainder of the term.

f. The Pastor, or his equivalent in canon law, may fill a vacancy at any time, by appointing a replacement for the vacant appointed position and the newly chosen member shall serve for the remainder of the unexpired term.

E. A member loses membership on the Parish Council by:

1. The notification to the member by the Pastor, or his equivalent in canon law, of the expiration of the member's term;<sup>8</sup>
2. The completion of the high school member's senior year or his or her discontinuation of high school studies;
3. The withdrawal of sponsorship of the member selected by the women's organization, the men's organization, or the Knights of Columbus, or the loss of membership in said organization.
4. The acceptance by the Pastor, or his equivalent in canon law, of a letter of resignation;<sup>9</sup>
5. The removal by the Pastor, or his equivalent in canon law, because the member has lost domicile in the Parish, has failed to attend three (3) consecutive meetings without a reasonable excuse, has entered into an irregular marriage, has lost the clerical state, has publicly defected from the Catholic faith or from the communion of the Church, is a cleric who has attempted marriage even if only civilly, or other grave reason;<sup>10</sup>
6. The privation of the office as the penalty for the commission of an ecclesiastical offense when imposed according to the norms of the penal laws of the Catholic Church;<sup>11</sup>and,
7. Death.

#### IV. OFFICERS

- A. The President of the Parish Pastoral Council is the Pastor, or his equivalent in canon law.<sup>12</sup> As President, he or his delegate presides over the meeting.
- B. The Chairperson will be elected from the members of the Parish Pastoral Council according to the norms of canons 119, 1° and 164-179 of the Code of Canon Law. The Chairperson serves for a term of one (1) year and may be reelected. The Chairperson will administer and direct the meetings and activities of the Council in cooperation with the Pastor.
- C. The Vice-Chairperson will be elected from the members of the Parish pastoral Council according to the norms of canons 119, 1° and 164-179 of the Code of Canon Law. The Vice-Chairperson serves for a term of one (1) year and may be reelected. The Vice-Chairperson will assist the Chairperson in administering and directing the meetings and activities of the Council, and will in the absence of the Chairperson temporarily assume the role of Chairperson.
- D. A Secretary will also be elected from the members of the Parish Pastoral Council according to the norms of canons 119, 1° and 164-179 of the Code of Canon Law. The Secretary serves for a term of one (1) year and may be reelected. The Secretary will take minutes, keep a copy of the records of the Council, and oversee the communications to the members of the Council.

#### V. MEETINGS

- A. The Parish Pastoral Council will meet in regular session four (4) to twelve (12) times a year (e.g., quarterly to monthly), according to the authorization of the Pastor, or his equivalent in canon law, and delivered to each member. At the discretion of the Pastor, or his equivalent in canon law, additional meetings may be scheduled or called. All members, however, are to be notified of the meeting at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance. In order for a meeting to be convened, there must be a majority of the members of the Parish Pastoral Council present.<sup>13</sup> The agenda for each meeting is to be set by the Pastor, or his equivalent in canon law, who may consult with the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, members of the Council, and others in its preparation. The Parish Pastoral Council cannot meet without the Pastor, his equivalent in canon law, or his delegate attending.<sup>14</sup>
- B. Meetings are normally to be held in person. When this is not possible, consultation by a conference call, video conferencing, or other electronic means is permitted so long as the members can actively participate in the discussions and interact with one another, thus preserving the collegial nature of the consultation. When conducting a meeting through electronic means is not possible and the matter is urgent, the consultation may be conducted by mail, electronic mail, or facsimile; but if at least a third (1/3) of the members of the council desire a meeting, then the matter must be

delayed until a meeting to discuss the matter can be convened, which is to be done as soon as possible. Advice constitutes the recommendations of the members of the council. A vote is to be taken and recorded in the minutes in order to document the consensus of the council.<sup>15</sup> The results of a consultation conducted without a meeting are to be recorded in the next meeting's minutes.

- C. When necessary and appropriate in the judgment of the one moderating the meeting, *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* will be followed.
- D. Members of the Parish pastoral Council are to be provided the materials necessary to adequately prepare for each meeting, are to appropriately prepare themselves for each meeting,<sup>16</sup> and are to offer their opinions sincerely.<sup>17</sup>
- E. The Pastor, or his equivalent in canon law, can require that matters discussed be kept confidential and secret.<sup>18</sup>
- F. The Pastor, or his equivalent in canon law, when appropriate, is to make public the actions and deliberations of the Parish Pastoral Council.

## **VI. COMPETENCE**

- A. The Parish Pastoral Council is competent to investigate, consider, and propose practical conclusions concerning pastoral works in the Parish.<sup>19</sup> This competence extends to, but is not limited to, the following areas:
  - 1. Pastoral planning;
  - 2. Catechetical, missionary, and apostolic initiatives;
  - 3. Improvement of doctrinal formation and the sacramental life of the members of the Parish;
  - 4. Pastoral activities;
  - 5. Means of raising public awareness regarding concerns of the Church;
  - 6. Reviews of studies and recommendations of the Parish Staff and Ministries;
  - 7. In certain cases, important financial matters; and,
  - 8. To meet with the Bishop of Cheyenne, or his representative, when he is conducting a pastoral visit to the parish.<sup>20</sup>
- B. The Parish Council ordinarily is not competent to deal with the following areas:

1. Most financial matters, which are primarily the competence of the Parish Finance Council;<sup>21</sup>
2. Questions bearing on faith, orthodoxy, moral principles, or canon law;<sup>222</sup>
3. Corporate law pertaining to the Bylaws of the Corporation.

## **VII. INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENTS AND COMMITTEES**

- A. Individual members of the Parish Pastoral Council can be assigned tasks to complete between meetings in order to assist the full Council in the investigation, consideration, and development of practical conclusions concerning the pastoral works in the Parish.
- B. From time to time, the Parish Pastoral Council can form committees to assist the full Council in the investigation, consideration, and development of practical conclusions concerning the pastoral works in the Parish. These committees can be standing committees, whose existence is indeterminate, or *ad hoc*, whose existence is for a specified time or is until a specified project is completed.

## **VIII. EXPERTS AND OTHERS**

In order to thoroughly investigate, consider, and develop practical conclusions concerning pastoral works in the Parish, the Parish Pastoral Council may seek the services of experts and of those whom are ministering in the pastoral work.

## **IX. ADOPTION AND AMENDMENT**

- A. This constitution may be amended at any regular meeting of the Council by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present, provided that there shall have been appended to the agenda for such meeting a copy of the proposed amendment.
- B. With the ratification of this constitution, any prior or previous Bylaws or Constitution are null and void.

## End Notes

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<sup>1</sup>The equivalent to a “Pastor” in canon law are the Moderator, when the pastoral care of the parish has been assigned to a team of priests *in solidum* (see *Codex Iuris Canonici auctoritate Ioannis Pauli PP. II promulgatus [CIC]* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1989) cc. 517 §1; 543 §2, 3°), or when there is no pastor or the Pastor is impeded from functioning, the parochial Administrator, the senior Parochial Vicar by assignment, or the Priest Director (see *CIC*, cc. 517 §2; 533 §3; 539-540; 541, 548 §2; 549).

<sup>2</sup> See *CIC*, c. 536; confer c. 514 §1; Congregation for the Clergy, et al., instruction *Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priests*, August 15, 1997, art. 5 §2: AAS 89 (1997) 867-868.

<sup>3</sup> See *CIC*, c. 536 confer c. 511; Congregation for Bishops, Directory for the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops *Apostolorum Successores*, March 9, 2004 (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2004) nn. 210; 211.

<sup>4</sup> See *CIC*, cc. 536 §1: *Apostolorum Successores*, nn. 210; 211.

<sup>5</sup> See *CIC*, cc. 149 §1; 205; confer c. 512 §1.

<sup>6</sup> See *CIC*, c. 149 §1; confer c. 512 §2.

<sup>7</sup> See *Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priests*, art. 5 §2: AAS 89 (1997) 868; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2d ed. (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 2000) n. 1650.

<sup>8</sup> See *CIC*, cc. 184 §§1 and 3; 186.

<sup>9</sup> See *CIC*, cc. 184 §§1 and 3; 187-189.

<sup>10</sup> See *CIC*, cc. 184 §§1 and 3; 192-194; *Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priests*, art. 5 §2; AAS 89 (1997) 868; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 1650.

<sup>11</sup> See *CIC*, cc. 184 §§1 and 3; 196.

<sup>12</sup> See *CIC*, cc. 517 §1; 532; 537; 543 §2, 3°.

<sup>13</sup> See *CIC*, c. 119, 2°.

<sup>14</sup> *Certain Questions Regarding the Collaboration of the Non-Ordained Faithful in the Sacred Ministry of Priests*, art. 5 §3; AAS 89 (1997) 868.

<sup>15</sup> *CIC*, c. 127 §1.

<sup>16</sup> See *CIC*, c. 119, 2°.

<sup>17</sup> *CIC*, c. 127 §3.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> See *CIC*, cc. 532; 537; 1280.

<sup>20</sup> See *Apostolorum Successores*, n. 221 d).

<sup>21</sup> See *CIC*, cc. 493; 494 §§1-2; 1263; 1277; 1280; 1291-1295; 1305; *Apostolorum Successores*, nn. 210; 211.

<sup>22</sup> See *Omnes Christifideles*, n. 9; *Canon Law Digest*, 8:286.