



IMMACULATE CONCEPTION PARISH

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Immaculate Conception Parish
Parish Pastoral Council Operating Model

Version 1.0

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Preface

The Diocese of Manchester issued Parish Pastoral Guidelines in July 2002 which gave a new model that focused the work of the Parish Pastoral Councils on MISSION and VISION. Every parish is expected to have a Pastoral Council and a Finance Council which serve in an advisory role with the pastor.

The purpose of this document is to outline the operating model under which the Parish Pastoral Council of the Immaculate Conception Church Parish operates. This guide has been developed with the diocesan guidelines from 2002 in mind. These guidelines are available via the Diocese of Manchester website at <http://www.catholicnh.org/assets/Documents/Parish/ParishPastoralCouncilGuidelines.pdf>.

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Article I: Purpose, Function and Scope

Section 1: The Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) shall be the instrument through which a representative body of the People of God, that is the Immaculate Conception Church (ICC) Parish, in an advisory relationship with the Pastor, enables the parish to experience itself as a community of faith called to proclaim the Good News of God's Kingdom present among us.

The PPC assists the pastor in his leadership role of planning, organizing, initiating, promoting, coordinating and reviewing the evangelization, worship, religious education/formation and service activities within the parish.

Section 2: As the primary visioning body of the parish, the PPC assists the pastor

- assessing adequately the needs of the whole parish and its members, and developing and implementing a pastoral plan which will promote the common good of the parish,
- fostering unity and a sense of community in the parish and coordinating all parish activities in a manner that will best serve the interests of the parish, and
- promoting programs and activities in the parish as recommended by the PPC, the Bishop, or diocesan offices.

An essential aspect of such visioning is the work of evangelization. *Evangelization* invites all people to a full and active life of faith, sharing in the mission of the Church.

Section 3: The PPC is not the body that implements the programs and activities to carry out the strategic plan for the parish. The role of the PPC is visioning, planning and supporting.

Section 4: The PPC in collaboration with the pastor, the parish staff and the Parish Finance Council when appropriate, shall be the discerning body in pastoral matters of the parish, including but not limited to spiritual, educational, social and financial concerns, except to the extent limited by church or civil law or diocesan policy/norms.

Section 5: The PPC shall assist the pastor in the responsibility for the development, coordination and oversight of the Parish Mission which embraces the total life and mission of the parish: *strive to love and trust God completely and unconditionally, evangelize with compassion, continue the works of Jesus Christ, and welcome all who seek Him.*

Article II: Relationship of Pastor to Council

Section 1: The pastor looks to his Parish Pastoral Council for consultation, support and prayer in

- a) making certain that the scope of the council's concerns reflects the entire mission of the Church,
- b) enabling the PPC to build a community of faith and an atmosphere of trust among PPC members,
- c) making certain that PPC members have adequate and continuous training,
- d) sharing in the dialogue that leads to the formulation of policy, and
- e) executing the policies formulated by the PPC and approved by the Pastor.

- Section 2:* If the pastor discerns that a PPC decision is contrary to Church teaching or discipline, violates a diocesan norm, or is not appropriate at a given time, the pastor will withhold implementation, explaining the reasons to the PPC.
- Section 3:* It remains within the prerogative of the parish pastor, after he has exhausted all efforts in working with the existing Parish Pastoral Council, to either disband the council or remove a member, if in his best judgment it is pastorally necessary for the good of the parish or the good of the council.
- Section 4:* The pastor presides over the PPC, but shall not chair PPC meetings. No PPC meeting shall be held without the pastor present.

Article III: Membership and Terms of Office

- Section 1:* The ICC Parish Pastoral Council shall consist of 8 voting (at large) members.
- Section 2:* Ex officio members are determined by the pastor. The recommended guideline is to include parochial vicars and employed pastoral staff, e.g. pastoral associate, DRE, and similar ministers. The Pastor may also choose to add representatives from ministries like Evangelization, Finance, Christian Service, Stewardship and Worship commissions as ex officio members to the Parish Pastoral Council. They participate fully and equally in all PPC activities and decisions.
- Section 3:* PPC members should meet the following criteria:
- Every person who is a baptized practicing Catholic, eighteen (18) years or older, a registered member of the ICC Parish (ideally for at least 5 years) and participating in the ongoing life of the parish, especially Sunday Eucharist, is eligible to serve as a member of the Council. And, in addition to understanding God's word and demonstrating Christ like qualities, he or she should possess the following gifts necessary for pastoral leadership:
- A desire for spiritual growth through prayer and study of God's word for oneself and for the parish community.
 - Enthusiasm about the present and future directions of the parish.
 - Eagerness to participate in parish decisions about its direction.
 - Willingness to listen, to speak honestly, and to work toward consensus.
 - Integrity in articulating what one has heard and what one believes.
 - The ability to inspire and empower others and to delegate.
 - Cooperation, flexibility and openness with people and ideas.
- Section 4:* Terms of Office
- The term for at-large members shall be three years and shall be limited to two consecutive terms. The new members shall begin their terms with the conclusion of the annual transition meeting in May. If the Chairperson serves the first year of the two-year Chairperson term, in the final year of membership, that individual, if willing and with Pastor approval, may be granted one additional year of membership in order to fulfill the two year Chairperson term.

- Only one-third of the Council seats are to be open for selection or re-selection at one time.
- In a newly formed council, one-third of the membership serves
 - a three- year,
 - a two-year or
 - a one-year term,respectively. Those serving a one-year term in a newly formed PPC may serve for two additional consecutive terms.

Section 5: The pastor and parochial vicars assigned to the parish serve for the duration of their diocesan appointment(s). The deacon serves at the discretion of the pastor. Pastoral staff members will serve as a resource for the duration of employment by the parish.

Section 6: Every effort should be made to resolve conflicts in a manner that shows respect and consideration for all concerned. In the unlikely event that such efforts meet with failure, the pastor and the PPC will consult each other on that matter and the pastor can remove any member or officer of the council or any commission or committee. The person is to be given an opportunity to be heard, if they so desire. Notification will be to the discretion of the pastor.

Section 7: A member loses his or her seat on the PPC by resignation in writing, withdrawing from parish membership, by incurring an ecclesiastical censure or penalty, or committing a civil offense, which necessitates the loss of membership (as determined by the pastor).

Section 8: Whenever a vacancy exists, the Pastor will appoint a new member to serve out the unexpired term.

Section 9: Members of the Council must attend all regular and special meetings. If a member is absent from three regular meetings in a year or there is other concern about the member, the Council officers, with the pastor, will approach that member about his/her intention and ability to serve.

In addition to poor attendance, good cause can include physical or mental incapacity or failure to perform PPC duties. If the Council and the Pastor cannot receive assurances of continued commitment by the member, the pastor will have the discretion to remove that member and a vacancy is created.

Article IV: Nominations and Selections

Section 1: Parish Pastoral Council selections will be held annually in the spring.

Section 2: Nomination Process

At the January council meeting, the pastor, with the advice of the current PPC, appoints a selection committee of at least two PPC members. The Selection Committee's responsibility is to manage all aspects of the selection process including:

- a. Education of Parishioners: Parishioners are educated through bulletin, via the Parish Website and/or pulpit announcements about the PPC and the selection process for at least two weeks after Easter Sunday. Parishioners are asked to give prayerful consideration to nominating parishioners or themselves for the PPC.
- b. Nomination: Nomination forms are distributed, or published in bulletin, via the Parish Website, and at all liturgies on a designated weekend during the early Easter Season. Parishioners who feel called to serve as PPC members are encouraged to nominate themselves. Parishioners may also nominate someone they feel would make a good Council member subject to that individual's qualifications and acceptance. The Selection Committee strives for a slate of nominees that is representative of the diversity of the parish community
- c. Notification: Persons whose names were submitted by parishioners are contacted by Selection Committee members with the approval of the pastor to inform them of their nominations and of the required orientation.
- d. Orientation: The Selection Committee plans and hosts the local orientation meetings.
- e. Acceptance: After attending the orientation meeting(s), those nominees wishing to move forward confirm their acceptance to serve with the Selection Committee or pastor.
- f. Final Slate of Nominees: Nominees submit biographical information to the Selection Committee prior to the selection process.

Section 3: Selection Process

- a. The Pastor interviews nominees and makes the final selection in consultation with the PPC.
- b. Once a "slate" of candidates is determined, information should be published by the Selection Committee with the approval of the pastor for all at-large PPC members. If possible, candidates' photos should also be published. This should be done prior to inviting the final candidates to present themselves to the PPC and the Pastor. After the presentation meeting, the PPC will provide the Pastor with feedback on the candidates to make a final selection. Great care must be taken to ensure that all involved are treated fairly and equitably.
- c. Once completed, the new roster of PPC members is presented to the parish via the standard parish communication system.

The pastor, with the advice of the PPC may establish further regulations to carry out the selection process whenever necessary.

Section 4: Appointed members: The pastor may appoint members to the PPC. Since the selection process may result in a membership not sufficiently representative of the total parish community, the pastor may appoint members to the council to achieve this goal. The number of appointed members is not to exceed twenty-five percent of the total number of members.

Section 5: All new at-large PPC members, appointees and special representatives will attend their first PPC meeting at the Annual Transition Meeting in May. At the Annual Transition Meeting,

the PPC with the approval of the pastor, may elect to add, eliminate, or alter the responsibilities of the special representatives. No appointee shall serve more than 3 consecutive terms.

Article V: Officers

Section 1: The Parish Pastoral Council will select from among its at-large members the following:

- Chairperson
- Vice-Chairperson
- Secretary

Section 2: The officers of the PPC shall be selected by and from the PPC at-large members at the Annual Transition Meeting in May. Offices shall be filled in the following order: Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Secretary. At this transition meeting, only those members who continue to serve on the PPC for the next year, along with newly selected members, are eligible to vote for officers or be elected as an officer. Outgoing members whose term ends with the May meeting do not vote for officers. Officers shall serve for a one-year term beginning with the conclusion of the transition meeting, with the exception of the Chairperson who shall serve a 2-year term. If the Chairperson serves the first year, of the two-year Chairperson term, in the final year of membership, that individual, if willing and with Pastor approval, may be granted one additional year of membership in order to fulfill the two year Chairperson term. Ex officio members of the PPC as well as paid staff are ineligible to serve as PPC officers. The pastor may, at his sole discretion, choose to replace PPC officers.

Section 3: The Chairperson shall have the following duties:

- call and chair all meetings of the Council,
- assure no decisions are being reached without the Pastor present, and
- oversee all activities of the Council to convene the Executive Committee in order to prepare Council meeting agendas and when special assistance or decisions are required on parish business.

Section 4:

The Vice-Chairperson shall have the following duties:

- chair meetings in the absence of the Chairperson,
- assist the Chairperson in overseeing Council's activities, and
- succeed the Chairperson in case of resignation or disqualification.

Section 5: The Secretary shall have the following duties:

- take minutes and maintain written records of minutes of all Council meetings,
- maintain an attendance record of all Council members,
- maintain a current record of the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of all Council members,
- distribute prior to Council meetings the agenda of the forthcoming meeting and the minutes of the previous meeting, and
- coordinate the posting of the approved minutes on the ICC Parish web-site.

Article VI: Areas of Ministry

Section 1: The ICC PPC shall have the following minimum standing commissions along with Evangelization:

- Education and Formation,
- Christian Service,
- Stewardship & Development, and
- Worship

Section 2: In order to ensure that all ministries are well represented on the PPC, the Council, where necessary, shall select from its members a liaison to each of its standing commissions or ministries at the annual transition meeting following the selection of new officers.

Liaisons shall serve for a one-year term beginning with the conclusion of the transition meeting.

Section 3: The standing commissions represent all aspects of parish life. All committees, groups, and organizations within the parish shall have a relationship to the approved standing commissions.

Section 4: Through the pastoral planning process, the pastor and pastoral council lead the parish in the discernment and expression of its mission. In communication and cooperation with all members of the parish, the parish pastoral council, with the pastor, focuses the vision of the parish on the essential elements of parish life. A service of leadership that is rooted in the Spirit has the potential to continually pour the new wine of God's Word into the wineskin that is the parish. By re-visioning the parish through the ministry of the Parish Pastoral Council, the entire parish joins together in fulfilling its unique role within the local and universal church.

Article VII: Meetings

Section 1: Regular PPC meetings shall be held monthly, except in July and December on the third Wednesday of the month at 7:00 PM at the Parish Hall (Double room if not otherwise communicated). Prayer shall be an integral part of the meeting.

Section 2: Notification of intended meeting absence including an explanation for the absence should be given to the PPC Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson or Secretary prior to the meeting.

Section 3: A thoughtfully prepared agenda should facilitate the ongoing formation of the Parish Pastoral Council through prayer, study/reflection, sharing, business, and evaluation. Meetings should not exceed two hours. Every meeting should include time for prayer and formation, focusing on Church teachings, Scripture, or articles that pertain to the work of the council or commissions. *These two elements, prayer and formation, are key to*

successful ministry. The prayer and formation segment of the meeting should be about 15 minutes in length to allow adequate time for reflection, processing and discussion.

Section 4: Advance notice of the time and place of the meetings of the PPC shall be published in the parish bulletin and posted on the parish web site. All members of the parish shall be entitled and welcome to attend as observers. The PPC may open any meeting to discussion by parish members on such subjects and under such rules as the PPC may announce.

Section 5: Special meetings may be called by the Chairperson, pastor or a quorum. A quorum consists of two-thirds of the membership of the PPC. Notice of special meetings shall be given to all members within at least 72 hours before the meeting, stating its time, place and purpose. No other business shall be conducted except the stated purpose of the special meeting.

Section 6: An issue may arise at a PPC meeting that the PPC believes should not be discussed in a public forum. For example, the issue may relate to a person's right to privacy. The PPC may declare a closed session and excuse all visitors for that portion of the meeting. The content of the closed session is not part of the formal minutes of the meeting and is not made public.

Section 7: A transition meeting shall be held at the regular May PPC meeting (annual Transition Meeting). At this meeting the new PPC for the upcoming year shall form for the purpose of selecting PPC officers and other special representatives.

Section 8: The PPC's manner of operation shall be communal discernment, which includes prayerful reflection, gathering of information, dialogue and sharing of conclusions. The Pastor must be present at all PPC meetings.

Article VIII: Decision-Making

Section 1: The usual method of reaching decisions shall be consensus. Members strive to reach substantial, though not necessarily unanimous, agreement on all matters of direction and policy. A consensus exists when there is a clear alternative to which most members can subscribe and if those who oppose it have had their chance to influence the discussion. Decisions of the council will be final, only by consent and approval of the pastor.

Section 2: We recognize that, due to technology, there are many means available to PPC members to organize and attend meetings. Among them are: in-person, tele- or video-conferencing, and on-line meetings. The method(s) by which we gain consensus should be flexible. Therefore, Consensus by Proxy may be submitted by expedited mail, facsimile, or email. No Consensus by proxy may be submitted orally.

Article IX: Amendments and Revisions

Section 1: This Constitution may be amended at any regular or special meeting by a two-thirds vote of the PPC.

Section 2: Amendments and revisions must be presented in writing to all members of the Council at least ten (10) days prior to any meeting. Any amendment or revision submitted to the Council shall be discussed at the meeting at which it is presented but not formally accepted until the next regular meeting.

Section 3: Approvals and Reviews

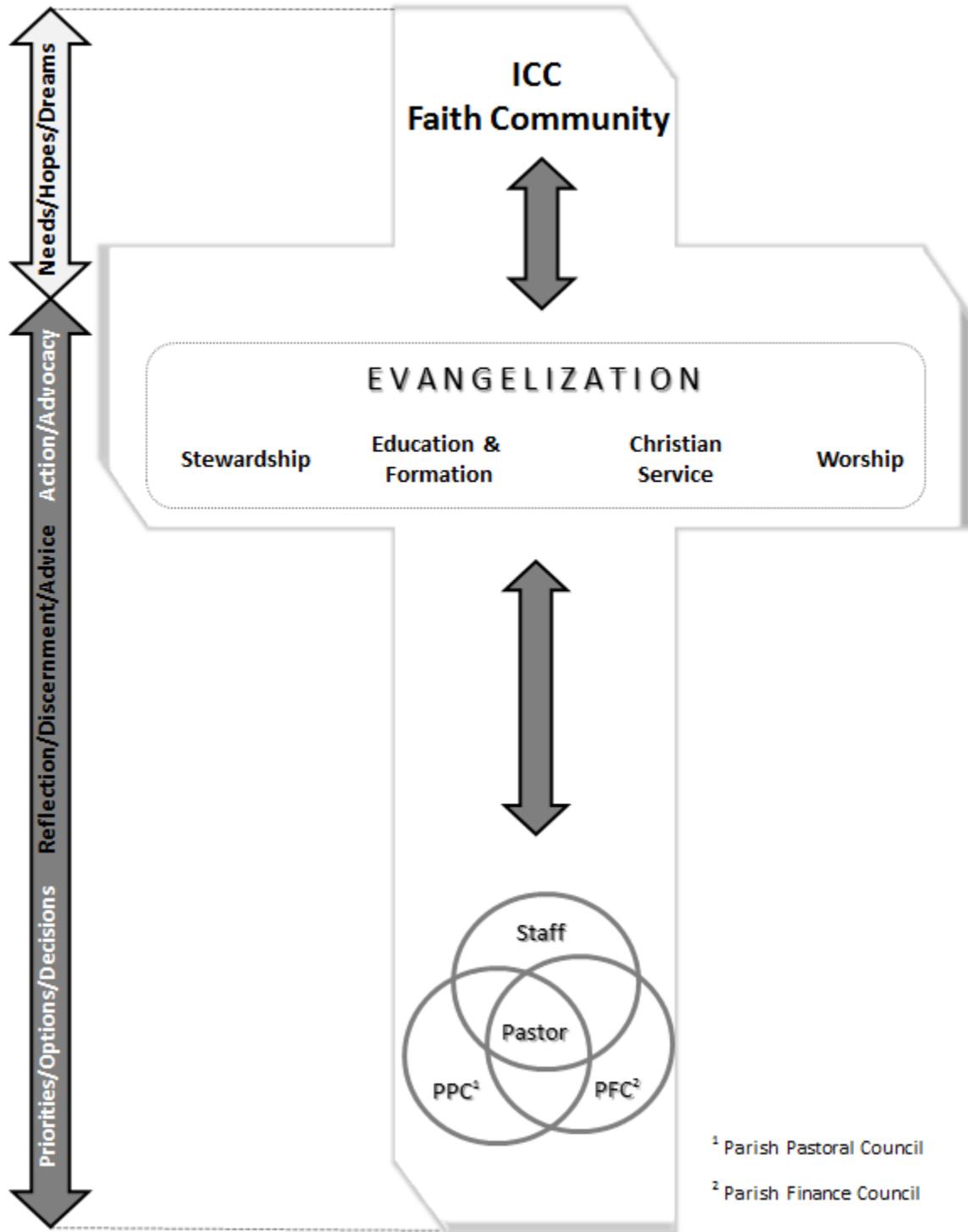
Version 1:

Date of Approval by the PPC members: May 18, 2016

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Date of Next Full Review: May 17, 2017

Appendix A: Immaculate Conception Church - Journey to Christ



Appendix B: Immaculate Conception Church – Parish Structure

