

Bylaws for St. Mary's Pastoral Council  
Effective as of 11/01/19

**NAME**

The name of the body shall be known as the Pastoral Council of St. Mary Parish of North Grafton, MA.

**PURPOSE**

The Pastoral Council shall be an apostolic people of God in St. Mary Parish in North Grafton, MA in communion with one another and with their Pastor. The goal of the pastoral council is to provide guidance, feedback and support to the pastor to make St. Mary's the best place to: worship; live out the mission of the church; make all feel welcome; and show community caring.

The purpose of the Pastoral Council shall include but is not limited to the following:

1. To search out, discuss and respond to the hopes, ideas, needs and concerns of parishioners;
2. To develop a sense of community in our parish and beyond;
3. To involve parish members, communicate the vision for fulfilling the parish mission;
4. To provide leadership and encouragement in fulfilling the vision of the pastor;
5. To strive for a consensus vision among its members and to help the Pastor and the Parish meet the challenge of being a church in the modern world.
6. To assist the pastor in his leadership role of planning for evangelization through outreach, worship, religious education, service.

**AUTHORITY**

1. The Pastoral Council is the primary consultative and advisory body in the Parish that assists the Pastor in the administration of his vision and the mission.
2. As a member of the Parish Community and by virtue of his office, the Pastor is automatically a member of the Council and engages in its discussions. As the bishop's representative and the Parish's spiritual leader, the Pastor bears ultimate responsibility for and authority in the Parish community.
3. Pastoral Council Members (either via the Discernment Process or appointed by the Pastor) should ensure they are active participants at all Council meetings and conscientiously undertake tasks that may be required as part of the investigation stage of matters brought before the Council.

**SELECTION OF PASTORAL COUNCIL MEMBERS AND LENGTH OF TERMS:**

1. All terms shall be three-year terms except for appointed members. Appointed member terms shall end with the appointed year. In order to create a proper rotation, the initial Pastoral Council was made up of two three-year term members, two two-year term members, and two one-year term member.
2. Installation of new Pastoral Council Members will be held during a regularly scheduled Mass on Pentecost Sunday

3. Nomination of new Pastoral Council Members:

- Notice of available positions on the Pastoral Council and nomination forms shall be published at least five weeks prior to the installation on Pentecost Sunday and in each subsequent bulletin until one week before the installation.

Selection/election will be made only from the list of nominees who have agreed to accept the nomination.

A selected or appointed Pastoral Council member can be Chair, Vice-Chair, or Secretary, or any combination, during each three-year term.

1. Officers will be selected and confirmed annually, in September, at the first meeting after the installation of new members.
2. When an officer's seat is vacant, the Pastor will nominate a replacement from the Council by the next scheduled meeting at which time the Council will confirm the appointment.

## **ORGANIZATION**

1. The membership of the Pastoral Council is open to all confirmed and registered parishioners in good standing.
2. The Pastor, Pastoral Associate, Deacons, and professional staff (i.e. Business Manager, Director of Religious Education, Director of Music, etc), may occupy an ex-officio position on the Council.
3. The Pastor consults with the Council, on the way to implement his vision and the mission
4. Secretary keeps the minutes; ensures they are sent (along with the agenda and supporting documents) to each Councilor in advance of each meeting.
  - Business Manger will keep on file a history of minutes.
  - Chair will meet with the Pastor to develop and disseminates the agenda.
5. Chair facilitates Council discussions to ensure that everyone speaks and is heard, monitors the work of the Pastoral Council Members between regular meetings.
6. To assess adequately the needs of the whole parish and its members, and to develop and implement a pastoral plan which will promote the common good of the parish.
7. To foster unity and a sense of community in the parish and to coordinate all parish activities in a manner that will best serve the interests of the parish.

## **VACANCY**

When a Pastoral Council Member seat is vacant, the seat shall be filled by a member appointed by the Pastor.

## **MEETINGS**

1. All meetings of the Pastoral Council are open to any parishioner whose attendance is that of an observer. Meetings shall be published in the bulletin.
2. The Council does reserve the right to hold executive (closed) sessions whenever the Council deems it is necessary.
3. The Pastoral Council shall meet monthly, unless there is no business as determined by the Pastor and Chair.

4. Any parishioner may bring a matter for deliberation to the attention of the Council through a Council member.

#### **ENACTMENT AND AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS**

1. These Bylaws shall be posted online, and in a book/binder in the gathering space. Copies thereof shall be given to any parishioner requesting it.
2. The Bylaws shall be enacted by consensus of the Pastoral Council members present.
3. Any proposed amendment to these Bylaws shall be submitted to the Pastoral Council in writing. The proposed amendment may be acted upon and approved by consensus.