

The Role of the Pastoral Council

The Pastoral Council has a unique role in collaborating with the pastor. It is not a committee that does hands-on work in the parish like decorating the altar or cleaning linens or stacking the food pantry or teaching as a catechist. Rather the Pastoral Council has the ministry of long-range planning. This planning is most effective when Council members are continually in contact with the hopes and dreams; needs and concern of their fellow parishioners. They accomplish this through their personal networks of phone, email and text connections; and through informal and formal surveys of parishioners, person-to-person. It is their responsibility to see that the local parish that they serve stays on track to accomplish what the Vision and Mission Statements make clear. They meet monthly with the pastor and occasionally with the Pastoral Team made up of the trained parish leadership in faith formation, Parish Social Ministry, liturgy, spirituality and administration.

“The Council serves as a form of consultation for the pastor and members, primarily by engaging them in ongoing dialogue about the needs, feelings, hopes and reactions of parishioners. The purpose of this interaction is to foster the process of pastoral planning and decisions, in the light of the Parish Mission and Vision.” (Guidelines for Pastoral Councils, Diocese of Rockville Centre, 2002)

The Pastoral Council members are listed in our parish bulletin and on our website. Soon we will be publishing brief autobiographical sketches and photos. The purpose of this is that you might make your needs and concerns and dreams known to them.

The term of service on the Pastoral Council at St. Kilian will be for three years, renewable for an additional three-year term. The meetings occur once a month and approximately nine times per year. The criteria for selection:

- a] Every Council member should be an active, believing parishioner.
- b] Each member should be a participant in the ongoing life of the parish, especially Sunday Eucharist.
- c] Members should see their work on the Council as their major contribution to the life of the parish during the term of office. Members ought not to be so overly involved in the day-to-day parish work that it would interfere with their Council work.
- d] Each member should accept the responsibility to attend diocesan and parish training program to enable new member to come to the Council with some orientation and background.” (Guidelines for Pastoral Councils)

Characteristics of Council members: “A desire for spiritual growth in oneself and in the parish. Enthusiasm about the future directions of the parish. Willingness to listen, to speak honestly, and work toward consensus. The ability to inspire and empower others and to delegate. Flexibility and openness with people and ideas.

In addition to collaborating with the pastor on pastoral planning, the Council will also meet from time to time with the entire Pastoral Team and Deacons of the parish (their names are listed in our bulletin and

on our website.) While the Pastoral Team and the Deacons have their own regular meetings with the pastor, a Team member may be invited by the pastor to participate in the Pastoral Council meeting even when he or she is not an actual Council member.

“It is also advisable for the entire Pastoral Team and Deacons to meet with the entire Pastoral Council at least once each year (preferably for a whole day) to discuss the areas and concerns of mutual importance.” This kind of meeting would be useful for evaluating how well we’re doing in accomplishing the components of our Vision Statement and setting or reaffirming goals for the coming year.

Peace, Father Bruce