

BYLAWS OF THE PASTORAL COUNCIL
OF ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC CHURCH BRYAN, TEXAS

RECITALS

WHEREAS, the laity have an active part in the life and activity of the Church and that without it the apostolate of the pastors is generally unable to achieve its full effectiveness;

WHEREAS, the laity's active involvement in the life of the Church is accomplished under principles of collaborative responsibility, consultation, and participation with the pastor;

WHEREAS, a noble duty of the pastor of a Parish is to shepherd the faithful and to recognize the faithful's service and charismatic gifts that all, according to their proper roles, may cooperate in a common undertaking with one heart;

WHEREAS, the laity are empowered, and sometimes obliged, to manifest their opinion in those things which pertain to the good of the Church and that, if the occasion should arise, this should be done through the institutions established by the Church for that purpose and always with truth, courage and prudence and with reverence and charity towards those who by reason of their office, represent the person of Christ;

WHEREAS, the faithful and the clergy have responsibility to work together in the building up of the Body of Christ;

WHEREAS, the pastor of a parish is to develop structures which incorporate the principles of collaborative responsibility and of consultation with staff and parishioners; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with the Diocese of Austin Policy on the Pastoral Council, the Bishop of the Diocese of Austin has determined that a pastoral council is to be established in each parish through which the faithful, along with those who share in the pastoral care of the parish in virtue of their office, give their help in fostering pastoral activity;

WHEREAS, the Pastoral Council and its commissions, committees, and liaisons are units of service and not of authority. The Council shall ensure that social justice starts at the Parish by striving for open communication with the Parish community, transparency and ethical accountability in its business and pastoral practices;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Pastor of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Bryan, Texas establishes a Pastoral Council and adopts these bylaws to govern the Pastoral Council.

ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of this body shall be the Pastoral Council ("Council") of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Bryan, Texas ("Parish").

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE AND CHARACTER

Section 1. The Council is established with the following character and purposes.

- (a) The Council is to be a representative body of the faithful whose focus is on the whole community - its beliefs, its hopes, its joys, its needs, its sorrows, its concerns, its gifts, and its pursuit of the mission of the Church.
- (b) The Council is to provide a means for uniting the Parish community in expressing its collective wisdom concerning pastoral plans and activities. The Council is to guard against serving special interest groups.
- (c) The Council is to read and reflect the "signs of the times" to those planning or implementing short-term and long-term pastoral policies and activities in the Parish.
- (d) The Council acknowledges and respects that ordinary administration of the Parish is the responsibility of the Pastor and his staff.
- (e) By the fact that it is convoked by the pastor, the Council responds to his call and questions and offers the best consultation possible.
- (f) The Council is to give counsel to the Pastor and to seek consultation. Inasmuch, the Council recognizes that good counsel is the result of full, holistic, and active consultation. Thus, the Council, along with the Pastor, is called to reflect and consider pastoral issues for the common good and for the future. The Council is to understand, to reflect carefully and prayerfully, and to seek consensus.
- (g) Recognizing that the Council possesses only a consultative voice, the Council, as a body, advises and makes recommendations to the Pastor in pastoral matters, pastoral policies, and, pastoral activities of the Parish.
- (h) The Pastor seeks the counsel of the Council on pastoral matters affecting the life of the Parish and seriously weighs and responds to the collective wisdom of the Council. If the Pastor acts contrary to the recommendation of the Council, the Pastor will provide proper explanation to the Council. The Pastor may not take any action that is contrary to the teaching or discipline of the Church, policies of the diocese, or canon law.

ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Members. The Council shall consist of at least five (5) and no more than twelve (12) lay representatives.

(a) Process for Election/Appointment of Council Members

(i) In September of each year, the Council shall notify the Parish by appropriate means of upcoming vacancies on the Council, the process for appointment/election of new members and provide a means and a timeframe for parishioners to nominate themselves or other candidates for consideration.

(ii) At its next Council meeting following the nomination period, the Council shall form a Nominations Committee consisting of at least two (2) and no more than four (4) members of the Council and shall designate a chairperson. At the same meeting, members who are eligible for re-election/re-appointment to the Council shall make known whether or not they wish to serve another term. Any elected member of the Council who is in good standing and desires to be re-elected shall be included in the slate of nominees presented to the Council. The Pastor may, but is not required, to re-appoint any appointed member for an additional term.

(iii) The Nominations Committee shall meet with the Pastor to determine the needs of the Council with respect to diversity of members as herein defined, and as to gifts, talents, professions, or other characteristics of potential candidates for Council membership that may benefit the Council in its work. Involvement of active and interested parishioners, who are open to the needs of the whole Parish community, has to be a high priority. Then the Nominations Committee will consider nominations received from parishioners but shall not be limited to consideration of only those nominees.

(iv) The Nominations Committee shall develop a list of prospective nominees in consultation with the Pastor. Each of the prospective nominees shall meet the eligibility criteria for Council membership as herein defined. The Nominations Committee shall then contact each prospective nominee, in the order determined by the Pastor and the committee, regarding their willingness and availability to serve.

(v) The Nominations Committee shall present a slate of nominees equal to the number of vacant elected positions to the Council within 30 days of the closing of the nominations.

(b) In addition, the pastor may supplement the council by appointing other members for balanced representation of the parishioners. The number of such appointments may not exceed one-third of the number of council members determined by the parish community.

Section 2. Diversity of Members. The Council shall strive to elect and the Pastor shall strive to appoint members so that the membership of the Council is representative of the whole Parish community, consistent with the eligibility criteria as herein defined and in accordance with the teaching of the Church. Although each Council member represents the whole Parish, the Council as a whole shall be as near a possible representation of all ages, ethnic groups, and genders of the Parish. In no event shall this section be construed so as to mandate strict representation of any group or special interest. The Council shall prayerfully exercise sound judgment to reflect sensitivity to the diversity and representation issue while providing for what is most important and best for the operation of the Council in carrying out its mission.

Section 3. Eligibility of Members. To be eligible to be appointed, elected, or to continue to serve as a Council member, a person must: (i) be a baptized Catholic; (ii) be a registered parishioner at the Parish; (iii) have demonstrated a commitment to the Parish community; (iv) be committed to spiritual growth; (v) be committed to skills development as part of the Christian leadership process; (vi) be willing to commit the necessary time and energy to offer effective consultation; (vii) be familiar with programs of various Parish and diocesan commission or standing committees; and (viii) be compliant with all required Diocesan training and formation; i.e. Ethics in Ministry (EIM).

Section 4. Members' Term of Office. Each Council member's term shall be Three (3) years, beginning in January 1 and ending December 31. Terms shall be staggered with one-third (1/3) of the Council members being elected and appointed as herein provided each year. To provide for staggered terms, the Pastor may, at any time, call for the assignment of or drawing of 1, 2, or 3 year terms (by any reasonable means) and shorten the length of a Council member's term for this purpose. Council members in good standing may be re-elected or re-appointed as herein provided to a second three (3) year term. A Council member who serves two consecutive terms is not eligible to serve another consecutive term; but may, after one year from the date the member last served, be eligible to again serve as a Council member.

Section 5. Vacancies.

(a) A vacancy is created when: (i) a Council member resigns (which should be submitted in writing); (ii) a Council member is not capable of continuing to serve for any reason; or (iii) when the Council member is removed under Section 6 of this Article.

(b) The Pastor, in his sole discretion may appoint someone to fill a vacancy. He may, but is not required to, seek the advice of the Council regarding potential candidates.

Section 6. Removal. A person may be removed as a Council member if: (i) the Pastor, in his sole discretion, determines that removal of a member is necessary for the good of the diocese, the Parish, or the Council; or (ii) the Council member is persistently absent, as defined by the Council, by policy, from Council meetings. The Pastor shall promptly give notice of removal to the Council member who is removed and the removal shall be effective upon the giving of such notice.

Section 7. Limitations. No Council member has the power to hire, fire, purchase or in any way obligate the Parish. All Council members serve without pay. A Council member has no authority as an individual. Only when the Council or one of its committee meets as a group, does the person function as a Council member.

Section 8. Liability. The Parish shall indemnify, save, defend, and hold harmless all current or past members of the Council for any actions arising either directly or indirectly out of their actions as Council members; provided that such actions were taken in good faith and within the scope of the authority of a Council member.

Section 9. Deacons and Staff. Deacons and staff of the Parish may not serve on the Council, but may provide assistance to the Pastor and to the Council as directed by the Pastor. Generally, deacons, and staff do not attend Council meetings except as requested by the Pastor.

Section 10. Parochial Vicars. As parochial vicars share in the pastoral care of the parish and assist the pastor in his pastoral duties, it is important that parochial vicars, participate in council meetings.

ARTICLE IV. OFFICERS

Section 1. Officers. The officers of the Council ("Officers") shall consist of a Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary/Recorder. Together, the Officers shall form the Council Communications Committee with responsibility for Pastoral Council communications with/among the Pastor, the Council, and the Parish community.

Section 2. Duties of the Chair. The Pastor shall preside at all Council meetings, but may delegate the function of presiding to the Chair. The Chair shall serve as spokesperson and primary point of contact for the Council. The Chair shall develop the agenda in consultation with the Pastor and shall ensure that all members of the Council are notified of all meetings and special meetings. Notification of regular meetings should include a written agenda and minutes of the previous meeting. Upon formation of a committee by a majority vote of the Council, the Chair may make appointments to any such committee, ensure that the functions of the committees are being properly performed, and assign additional duties to Council members. Between the November meeting in which the prospective Chair for the following year is elected and the January meeting, the prospective Chair and the Pastor shall meet with the newly elected or appointed members of the Council whose terms are to begin in January to acquaint them with the Council's Bylaws, current activities and future plans.

Section 3. Duties of the Vice Chair. The Vice Chair shall perform the duties of the Chair in the Chair's absence. The Vice Chair shall be responsible for activities that support the on-going spiritual formation and development of the Council as described in Article VII, Section 2 hereof.

Section 4. Duties of the Secretary/Recorder. The Secretary/Recorder shall take and record minutes of all meetings of the Council, submitting them to the Chair for circulation to the members of the Pastoral Council

not later than one week following the meeting. The Secretary/Recorder shall maintain the official book of the Pastoral Council, maintain and circulate Council membership contact information, maintain a list of the commissions, committees and liaisons and the membership thereof. The Secretary/Recorder shall receive and maintain in the official book of the Pastoral Council all written reports and communications received by the Council. The Secretary/Recorder shall ensure that notices of Council meetings, agendas, minutes and reports are posted, published, and/or available electronically to the Parish community.

Section 5. Selection of the Officers. The officers shall be chosen from the members of the Council by election to be held annually at the November meeting of the Council. In order to be eligible to hold an office, a Council member must have served on the Council at least one year prior to assuming office. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the Pastor. The Nominations Committee shall develop a slate of officers in consultation with the Pastor. Prior to presenting the slate of officers to the Council, the Nominations Committee shall confirm that the member is willing to serve in the proposed capacity.

Section 6. Vacancies. Vacancies that occur shall be filled from the membership of the Council through a majority vote of those present at a duly called meeting of the Council. If no Officer is present at a meeting, the Pastor will appoint a member to chair the meeting and a member to take minutes of the meeting. If all Officer positions are vacant at any one time, the Pastor will appoint members to perform the functions of the Officers until new Officers are elected to fill the vacancies.

Section 7. Terms. The term of office for each Officer is one (1) year beginning on January 1 of each year. An officer may not serve more than two consecutive terms in any one office; but may, after one year from the date the Officer last served in a particular office, serve again in that same office.

Section 8. Removal. The Pastor may remove an Officer if he determines that removal is in the best interest of the Parish, the diocese, or the Council.

ARTICLE V. MEETINGS

Section I. Number. The Council shall meet at least one (1) time per quarter and may meet more frequently as recommended by the Pastor or upon simple majority vote of the Council members. One meeting each year may be a "Town Hall" or "Open Forum" meeting to provide information and to solicit input and feedback from the entire Parish community. One meeting may be a "retreat" for the Council members for planning and spiritual formation.

Section 2. Meeting Dates. The Chair, in conjunction with the Pastor, shall set the first meeting of each year. At the first meeting of each year, all other meetings for the remainder of the year shall be set.

Section 3. Specific Location and Time of Meetings. The Council in consultation with the Pastor shall set the location and time of each Council meeting.

Section 4. Quorum. A quorum means a majority of all members of the Council. Even though the Council's function is only consultative, a quorum must be present for consultation to be considered completed or given. If a quorum is not present at a meeting, those present at a duly called meeting may engage in discussion and record their discussion provided that the record reflects that a quorum was not present.

Section 5. Official Action. Official action of the Council shall be through the vote of a majority of those present and voting at any duly called meeting.

Section 6. Executive Session. All meetings of the Council are open to members of the Parish except the designated Executive Sessions. When members of the Parish are present, the Chair shall provide for their recognition and the opportunity to address the Council. However, active participation in Council meetings and in the consultative and consensus building functions of the Council are reserved to Council members. Executive Sessions shall be restricted to discussions involving legal, financial, personnel or other matters that may significantly affect the good of the Parish in the Diocese. Executive Sessions are confidential and no minutes shall be taken.

Section 7. Meeting Agendas. The Pastor and Chair will set the agenda. The Council shall post the agenda at least one week prior to the council meeting in a manner such that the Parish Community is properly advised.

Section 8. Notice of a Meeting. The notice of a Council meeting shall be given to all Council members in writing or by e-mail no less than one week in advance of the meeting. A schedule of meetings provided to the Council members for advance meetings constitutes written notice under this section. The notice shall include the agenda for the meeting. Furthermore, where possible, the notice shall include a copy of the draft minutes of the prior meeting and committee reports to be presented to the Council. The Council shall strive to engage the Parish community in dialog, inform the Parish community of its work and plans, and establish various effective means of communication between the Council and the Parish community.

Section 9. Conduct of Meetings. General decorum or consensus shall govern the conduct at Council meetings.

Section 10. Emergency Meetings. Emergency meetings may be called without the notice requirements required by Section 8 of this Article, by the Chair, in consultation with the Pastor. The notice of an emergency meeting shall be through such methods as are reasonable and practical given the circumstances.

Section 11. Confidentiality. The Council shall adopt a policy of confidentiality related to its discussions and deliberations. The Council acts in an atmosphere of openness and transparency, but it also recognizes that, in certain situations and matters, confidentiality is appropriate and expected. Additionally, to encourage open communications among the Council members, the Council's confidentiality policy should provide that while recommendations and the basis for such recommendations are openly made, except for matters in Executive Session, the statements of the Council during deliberations should not be made public unless the Pastor determines necessary.

Section 12. Communicating Council Proceedings. Minutes of Council Meetings will be posted within two weeks after the council meeting in a manner such that the Parish Community is properly advised.

ARTICLE VI. COMMITTEES OR COMMISSIONS

Section 1. Formation of Committees or Commissions. In consultation with the Council, the Pastor may establish committees or commissions. A committee or commission shall have and exercise the authority granted to it by the Pastor. The structural configuration of commissions of the Council can vary depending on the explicit needs of the Parish. Council may consider two possible alternatives presented in Section XII.B of the Diocesan Policy. The Pastor is an ex-officio member of all commissions.

Section 2. Committee or Commission Membership. Each committee or commission shall be made up of at least two members of the Council. Additional committee or commission members must voluntarily agree to serve without pay, must agree to comply with the bylaws of the Council as if they were Council members, and shall be selected by the Chair in consultation with the Pastor. The Pastor may remove a committee or commission member if he determines that removal is in the best interest of the Parish or the Council.

Section 3. Vacancies. The Pastor, in consultation with the Council, may fill vacancies on a committee or commission.

Section 4. Committee or Commission Action. Recommendations of a committee or commission shall be made by consensus.

Section 5. Committee or Commission Chairs. Each committee or commission shall have a chair, who must be a member of the Council, and who is appointed by the Pastor.

Section 6. Committee or Commission Rules. Each committee or commission may adopt rules for its own governance not inconsistent with the bylaws or with other rules adopted by the Council.

Section 7. Reports. Each commission or committee shall regularly report to the Council by filing a written quarterly report and the Chair of the committee or commission shall appear before the Council as requested and not less than twice each year.

ARTICLE VII. VISION AND MISSION STATEMENTS & SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Section 1. Vision and Mission Statements. The Council shall, from time to time, formulate a vision and mission statement, as well as goals and objectives. The formulation of such statements shall be based on input from the Parish community and other sources as the Council determines. The vision and mission statements should be made readily available to the Parish community and should be reviewed annually.

Section 2. Spiritual Development. Each Council member must take time to develop spiritually so as to be keenly aware of the Spirit's presence and functioning within the Council and the Parish Community. As a whole, the Council shall encourage spiritual development of the Council as a group and as individuals.

ARTICLE VIII. INTERACTION WITH FINANCE COUNCIL and OTHER GROUPS

Section 1. Interaction with Finance Council. The Council shall interact closely with the Parish Finance Council to assure the Pastor and the parishioners that finances are available to support the Councils goals and objectives. Accordingly, the Council shall annually at the January meeting designate a lay Council member as the liaison to the Parish Finance Council for that year. The liaison shall attend and observe the meetings of the Finance Council and report back to the Council.

Section 2. Interaction with Other Boards, Committees and Ministries of the Parish. The Council may designate liaisons to any other board, committee or ministry of the parish. Any such liaison shall be designated at the January meeting and serve as liaison for one year, attending meetings of their respective board, committee or ministry and reporting back to the Council.

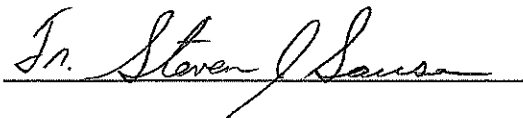
ARTICLE IX. AMENDMENTS

These bylaws may be altered, amended, or repealed, at any time, by the Pastor, who shall first seek consultation with the Council before altering, amending, or repealing these bylaws.

ARTICLE X. VACANCY OF PASTOR

If the Pastor leaves the Parish because of a transfer, retirement, or death, all activity of the Council shall cease until a new, duly-appointed Pastor or an administrator, takes possession of the Parish. Under diocesan policies, the new Pastor should first seek counsel from the existing Council and should be reluctant to dissolve the Council, but after careful deliberation may do so.

Approved effective September 11, 2019.



Fr. Steve Sauser

10-30-2019

Date

Pastor of St. Joseph Catholic Church

THE PASTORAL COUNCIL OF ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC CHURCH PERSISTENT ABSENCE POLICY

In accordance with the Bylaws of the Pastoral Council of St. Joseph Catholic Church effective MMDDYYYY, Article III. Membership, Section 6. Removal, Subparagraph (ii), the Council hereby establishes, by policy, the following definition of Persistent Absence from Council Meetings:

1. Two (2) consecutive absences without notification, OR
2. Three (3) consecutive absences with or without notification, OR
3. Four (4) absences with or without notification within twelve (12) months.

For the purposes of this policy, "Council Meetings" shall include all meetings of the Council as defined in Article V. Meetings of the Bylaws for which notice has been properly given in accordance with Section V. 8. Notice of a Meeting, but not including Emergency Meetings, if any, as defined in Section V.10 Emergency Meetings.

Notification is defined as a telephone conversation with, or a message by voicemail, text or email to the Chair and/or Secretary/Recorder at least one (1) hour prior to the scheduled start of the meeting.

The Secretary/Recorder shall report attendance at Council Meetings in the Minutes, listing Members Present, Members Absent without notification, and Members Absent with notification.

Upon determining that a Member has met the definition of Persistent Absence, the Chair shall notify the Pastor. The Pastor may delegate to the Chair the task of notifying the Member that they have been removed from the Council in accordance with this policy.

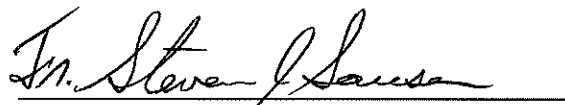
This policy is effective on 09/11/2019. Absences which have occurred prior to this date will not be used to determine whether a Council Member is persistently absent.

Continued approved by the Pastoral Council September 11, 2019.



Judy K. Nunez, Chair

Accepted



Fr. Steve Sauser, Pastor