



April 6, 2011

Parish Pastoral Council Procedures and Selection Process

Introduction

The Diocese of Richmond published guidelines for parish pastoral councils in the 2010 edition of *Called to Serve*. In *Called to Serve* the diocese defined the mission of the parish council, stating that, the “primary purpose of the parish pastoral council is advisory, making recommendations to the pastor about the spiritual well being of the parish. As a ‘visionary’ council, it concerns itself with where the parish wants to be in three to five years and not with the administrative aspects of running the parish” (8).

Saint John the Apostle Parish Pastoral Council fully complies with the guidelines as set forth in *Called to Serve*. Therefore, *Called to Serve* will be the primary governing document for the Saint John the Apostle Parish Pastoral Council. This document serves only to specify the procedures, terms, duties and membership selection process as germane to Saint John the Apostle.

Membership

The parish pastoral council will consist of twelve diversified members from the congregation, eligibility requirements specified in *Called to Serve* (22).

Each council member will serve a three-year term. After completing a term and a one-year mandatory hiatus, council members may be re-elected for an additional term following the normal discernment process. Unexpected vacancies during the year will be filled from those parishioners nominated during discernment. The Chairperson shall preserve the total recorded nominations and select any necessary replacements based on the next highest number of votes garnered during discernment.

All members of the parish council will sign and submit to the Pastor, via the parish secretary, a statement of confidentiality.

Duties and Responsibilities of Council Leadership

Council members will elect from among their company officers to serve the following functions Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Convener.

1. Chairperson – the term of the Chairperson is one-year, at which point he/she will automatically be succeeded by the current Vice-Chairperson. The Chairperson shall:
 - Facilitate all council meetings
 - Attend executive committee meetings as requested by the pastor

- Develop the monthly meeting agenda
 - Act as the pastoral council representative to outside groups as necessary
 - Oversee the orientation of new council members
 - Perform other tasks assigned by the Pastor
2. Vice-Chairperson – the council members will select the Vice-Chairperson via a private nominating ballot at the second to last regularly scheduled meeting of the fiscal year (May). The Vice Chairperson shall:
- Act in the absence of the Chairperson
 - Automatically assume the Chairperson position at the last regularly scheduled meeting of the fiscal year (June)
 - Prepare and maintain the PPC annual budget
 - Solicit, collate and submit ministry/committee budgets as necessary
 - Coordinate activities for the council’s annual retreat
 - Perform other tasks as requested by the Chairperson
3. Convener – the council members will select the Convener via a private nominating ballot at the second to last regularly scheduled meeting of the fiscal year (May). The Convener shall:
- Reserve the meeting space and prepare needed materials
 - Prepare correspondence and other clerical tasks, including disseminating the agenda and meeting reminders as necessary
 - In coordination with the Chairperson, maintain the annual calendar, and any necessary council records or files
 - Perform other tasks as requested by the Chairperson

The Chairperson may request members of the council not elected to one of the above leadership positions to serve as a liaison to other parish ministry groups.

Council may decide to solicit the assistance of a volunteer Recorder. The Recorder is *not* a member of the Council and may *not* vote on any council agenda item. The duties of the Recorder are to document and submit meeting minutes for the council’s approval. Any parishioner may volunteer to act as the Recorder but it is recommended that a parishioner nominated but not discerned onto the council fill the position. The Recorder will serve a standard three-year term and is eligible for election to the council via the normal discernment process.

Meetings

Parish pastoral council general meetings shall convene on the second Wednesday of each month at a pre-announced time/location. The council does not meet during the months of July and December. A monthly agenda will be provided to all members prior to the regular meeting. A simple majority of members is sufficient to establish a quorum. Minutes from the previous meeting, documented by the Recorder and reviewed by the Chairperson, should be distributed to council members prior to the meeting at which approval will take place. Approved minutes are posted on parish web site.

Naming and Discernment Process

Each calendar year during the month of June new members will be discerned on to the council. The parishioners, through the discernment process, shall choose the members of the parish pastoral council. In this selection process, care should be taken to assure that the membership of the council reflects the plurality of viewpoints, ethnicity, and economic reality of the parish community (*Called to Serve*, 22 & 40). If by chance, the diversity of the parish is not reflected on the council via the normal discernment process, the Pastor may name new/additional members, as he deems appropriate.

Discernment is the process used to help identify and select individuals with the gifts, talents, and leadership skills needed on the council. It is an opportunity for parishioners to reflect upon themselves, other parishioners and the gifts of each and how they may best be used on the parish council. Discernment is more than an election. It is more than a process. It is a special time for parishioners to open themselves up to the working of the Holy Spirit.

It will be the responsibility of the council to provide the parish with information regarding the mechanics of the discernment process, the role and purpose of the council, and the qualities expected of its members (via the parish bulletin, announcements, etc.).

Conclusion

“The parish council must have the courage and foresight to set the direction for the parish community, challenging the parish to grow in response to the gospel. Council members should read the signs of the times and interpret the path the parish should follow on its faith journey, communicating this forthrightly to the Pastor” (*Called to Serve*, 14). Under the supervision of the Pastor and with the aid of the Holy Spirit, we seek to be a model of prayer, ministry, and faith sharing within the community for the service of Saint John’s and the Catholic Church.