

**DIOCESE OF MADISON
ST. MARY PARISH, PLATTEVILLE, WI
PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL
CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS**

PREAMBLE

When Jesus heard this he said to them, 'It is not the healthy who need the doctor, but the sick. I came to call not the upright, but sinners.'

Mark 2:17

As Catholics, we are faced with secularism, the wisdom of the current age, that threatens to become a state sponsored religion denying the power of God. We are faced with Christian forms that would undermine the Truth of Jesus Christ, and we know Catholics who would prefer that the Church conform to the world rather than conform to Christ. And we have experienced scandal within our own Church.

But we are not discouraged because we stand on God's promises. We find hope in turning to Christ, Who is as always the source and the destination of the Catholic Church.

With Jesus Christ at the head of His Church, through the Offices of the Apostolic Succession – our Pope, our Bishops, our Priests, and our Deacons - guided by Scripture, Tradition and Church Teaching, following the will of our Bishop, with the aid of the Sacraments, particularly of Communion and Confession, we are called to be caught up in the fullness and joy of salvation through faith.

Through repentance and salvation, Jesus Christ asks us to “become fishers of men,” to go forth to evangelize our neighbors and our community.

To this end, St. Mary Parish has established a Council that shall be governed by the following Constitution and Bylaws:

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this organization shall be St. Mary Parish Pastoral Council, hereinafter referred to as the "Council."

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

Section 1: The Council is a living example of the unity and mutual respect that supports and guides partnerships in ministry among the pastor, staff and parish members through prayer, consultation and communication, leadership and pastoral action.

Section 2: The Council develops, reviews, and publishes a Mission Statement focused on shared ministry of proclamation of the Word, communal and private prayer, service to those in need, and expanding the bonds of community.

Section 3: The Council engages in a continuous process of pastoral planning that includes consideration of the mission needs of parishioners, the needs of the diocese, and our responsibilities to the broader community and world.

ARTICLE III: SCOPE

- Section 1:** The primary responsibility of the Council is to assist the pastor in his decisions concerning those matters that affect the life of the parish. The Council accomplishes this by providing advice and consultation. The activity includes but is not limited to the following areas of parish life:
- A. encouraging active participation in the parish prayer and liturgies;
 - B. providing catechesis and evangelization for members of all ages;
 - C. fostering Catholic family life;
 - D. encouraging community outreach;
 - E. working for justice and peace;
 - F. providing pastoral care for all members;
 - G. strengthening relationships with the Diocesan Bishop and Church

The Council is the policy oversight body in all pastoral matters of parish life, including but not limited to spiritual, educational, and social concerns, except to the extent limited by faith and morals, church or civil law, diocesan policy/norms, or parish finances.

- The responsibilities of the Council in cooperation with the pastor and staff include:
- A. discerning the strengths as well as the needs of the parish community;
 - B. developing and maintaining a mission statement
 - C. engaging in ongoing planning, goal setting and strategies for accomplishing goals;
 - D. assisting in the formation of parish policies which require the authority of the pastor to become effective;
 - E. providing for vital parish life by involving all baptized into the mission of the Church;
 - F. formulating pastoral care and community concerns programs of outreach and providing education to all parish members on the Church's teachings;
 - G. fostering hospitality and community for all members
 - H. working to establish and maintain communication among different parish entities;
 - I. evaluating programs and processes.

- Section 2:** In any case where any member of the Council interprets an action of the council or any of its committees to be outside the limits set forth in Section 1, that member shall present such interpretation no later than the next meeting of the Council and ask for reconsideration. Pending consideration, the effect of the action shall be suspended.

- Section 3:** In any case where reconsideration has failed to resolve the matter, any Council member may then take the matter to the Office of the Bishop or one appointed by him, for clarification or arbitration. Any decision resulting from such an appeal shall be final. In the meantime, the effect of the action shall remain suspended.

ARTICLE IV: MEMBERSHIP

- Section 1:** The Council shall be comprised of twelve (12) members, all of whom must be baptized, practicing Catholics, at least 18 years old, registered members of their parish, and participants in the parish worship life, especially Mass and the sacraments.

- Section 2:** The Council shall have three (3) *ex officio* members: the pastor and the two lay trustees

from the parish. *Ex officio* members participate fully and equally in all Council decisions.

Section 3: The Council shall have nine (9) at-large members; unless the pastor feels it would be appropriate to appoint up to two (2) members, nine (9) shall be selected from, and elected by, the registered members of the parish who are 18 years of age or older.

Section 4: 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.

ARTICLE V: NOMINATION AND SELECTION OF NEW MEMBERS

Section 1: At each annual selection, one-third of the members shall be selected for a term of three years to fill the vacancies caused by the members whose terms are due to expire.

Section 2: At least 60 days prior to each annual selection of new members the chairperson shall appoint the parish Secretary Trustee to lead the Selection Committee. The Selection Committee's responsibility is to manage all aspects of a common selection process in the parish, including:

a) Education of Parishioners:

Education is done through bulletin and pulpit announcements about the Council and the selection process for at least two weeks. Ask parishioners to give prayerful consideration to nominating other parishioners or themselves for the Council.

b) Nomination:

Make nomination forms available at all liturgies on one or two designated weekends. Parishioners should write down the names of persons they feel have the essential characteristics of a Council member.

c) Notification:

Selection Committee members inform persons, whose names were submitted by parishioners, of their nominations and of the required orientation. At least 30 days before the date of selection, the Selection Committee publishes in the parish bulletin the names of those who have agreed to continue in the nomination process.

d) Orientation:

The Selection Committee plans the local orientation session and may require nominees' attendance at a Diocesan orientation.

e) Acceptance:

Those who accept nomination as Council members participate on the final slate of nominees or discernment session. The Selection Committee ensures that the slate of nominees is representative of the parish community. In no event shall any persons be deemed nominated unless the Selection Committee receives an expression of willingness

to serve. If a member of the Selection Committee becomes a nominee, that person ceases to be a Selection Committee member.

f) Final Slate of Nominees:

Nominees submit biographical information and their statement of parish vision to the Selection Committee.

g) Facilitation:

The Selection Committee facilitates the actual selection process and informs the parish of the results.

Section 3: The selection of new members of the Council shall be by election or, in the case that the pastor wishes to create appointees, by discernment of the pastor

The Selection Committee provides ballots for all parishioners. The Selection Committee administers, supervises, tabulates and keeps records of the election. A tie vote is resolved by lot.

Article VI: VACANCIES AND REMOVALS

Section 1: Any member of the Council may resign by filing a written resignation with the pastor, with a copy to the chairperson.

Section 2: At any meeting of the Council, any at-large member may be removed for good cause by consensus or by an affirmative vote of three-fourths of the Council. Any member whose removal has been proposed shall be given an opportunity to be heard at the meeting. Good cause includes missing two consecutive meetings without good reason, physical or mental incapacity, or failure to perform duties as a Council member.

Section 3: A vacancy among the at-large members shall be filled by one appointed to serve the remainder of the term. The pastor will make appointment, after consulting the particular parish council members. Consideration should be given to previous nominees.

ARTICLE VII: OFFICERS

Section 1: The officers of the Council shall be a chairperson, a vice-chairperson and a secretary. They shall be selected by and from the Council at the annual transition meeting. They shall serve for a one-year term beginning with the conclusion of the transition meeting. *Ex officio* members of the Council are ineligible to serve as Council officers or committee chairpersons.

Section 2: The pastor is the president of the council.

Section 3: Selection of Council officers shall be by election or discernment from and by the Council members present at the annual transition meeting. Offices shall be filled in the following order: chairperson, vice-chairperson and secretary.

Section 4: At the annual transition meeting following the annual selection of new Council members, both newly selected members and existing Councilors meet together for the purpose of selecting Council officers for the following year.

Section 5: No Council officer may serve more than three consecutive 1 year terms in any one office.

Section 6: The chairperson:

1. Is aware of the tasks and responsibilities of the Council and communicates these to the Council, commissions/committees and parish community.
2. Organizes/coordinates activities and processes of the Council. Develops and maintains an annual Council calendar consistent with the parish calendar.
3. Prepares the meeting agendas with the Executive Committee for publication in the parish bulletin the weekend before the meeting or posted for parishioners to review. Submits the agenda to Council members at least 3 days before the meeting.
4. Provides formation/education for Council members, utilizing the parish staff and offerings at the Diocesan levels.
5. Conducts meetings by assisting the Council members to work together effectively and arrive at appropriate decisions through consensus.
6. Monitors implementation of all Council decisions.
7. Ensures that a Council budget is established and communicates budget information to the Finance Council.
8. Assists the next chairperson in understanding the Council's history, responsibilities and resources. Transfers all Council materials to the new chairperson.
9. Performs duties consistent with the office as the Council may direct.
10. Represents the council at any special designated diocesan meetings.

(The chairperson must be skilled at leading meetings and be able to facilitate council meetings in such a way that all members are heard and allowed to give their input. The chairperson is also responsible for maintaining order and attention at council meetings, and makes sure time is spent in prayer and faith formation. The positions of chair and vice-chairperson are time-consuming. These persons should not be asked to assume other duties on the council or in the parish.)

Section 7: The vice-chairperson:

1. Conducts meetings in the absence of the chairperson.
2. Becomes chairperson in the event of vacancy.
3. Performs duties consistent with the office as the chairperson or the Council may direct.

Section 8: The secretary:

1. Oversees the accurate recording of the minutes of each meeting and sees to it that the minutes and the agenda are made available to the Council members, commission/committee chairpersons, and the parish. Provides a condensed report of the meeting for publication in the parish bulletin.
2. Takes attendance at meetings and records absences.
3. Maintains the official list of all Council and standing commission/committee officers and members and their terms, the list of all ad hoc commission/committee chairpersons and members and keeps these lists current with regard to addresses and phone numbers.

In addition, if needed, the secretary:

4. Works with the parish web administrator to keep the Diocesan registry current. Completes the Diocesan registry form following each annual selection and keeps this list current by informing the Diocese of all changes. The Diocesan parish council registry form is up-dated whenever a change in membership on council occurs. This is done on-line through the Diocesan Extranet.
5. Reports to the Council all communication. Handles correspondence for the Council, including agendas, minutes, notification of regular and special meetings, notes of thanks, etc.
6. Performs such duties consistent with office as the chairperson or Council may direct.

ARTICLE VIII: MEETINGS

- Section 1:** Regular Council meetings shall be held monthly, with a break in June and July.
- Section 2:** Special meetings may be called by the chairperson, pastor, or by quorum. A quorum consists of two-thirds of the total membership and includes the pastor.
- Section 3:** A transition meeting shall be held at the May Council meeting, after the annual selection of new Council members. At this meeting the newly selected members join the existing Council for the purpose of selecting Council officers for the following year.
- Section 4:** Regular meetings of the Council shall be held at such time, place and date as the Council may designate. Prayer shall be an integral part of the meeting.
- Section 5:** The agenda shall be developed in advance of the meeting based upon the proposals from commissions/committees, liaison reports, the Council annual calendar, strategic/mission goals, ongoing needs and concerns of the parish. Parishioners may submit items for consideration to the parish office one week before the meeting. The executive committee will consider them as it prepares the agenda.
- Section 6:** Advance notice of the time and place of the meetings of the Council shall be published in the parish bulletin, and all members of the parish shall be entitled and welcome to attend as observers. The Council may open any meeting to discussion by parish members on such subjects and under such rules as the Council may announce.
- Section 7:** Absence. Notification of intended absence should be given to the Council Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, or Secretary before the meeting.
- Section 8:** Special Meetings. Notice of special meetings shall be given to all members within a reasonable time before the meeting, stating its time, place, and purpose. No other business than that stated as the purpose of the meeting shall be conducted at that meeting.
- Section 9:** Closed Session. When a question arises at a council meeting that relates to a person's right to privacy, the council may request the absence of visitors for that portion of the meeting. The content of the closed session is confidential, neither part of the formal minutes of the meeting nor made public.

ARTICLE IX: RELATIONSHIP OF PASTOR TO COUNCIL

- Section 1:** The pastor serves as president of the Council. He does not facilitate the Council meetings. That is the role of the chair. The pastor presides at the Council by:
- a. Attending all council meetings.
 - b. Making certain that the scope of the council's concerns reflects the entire mission of the Church;
 - c. Helping the council members become a community of faith and build an atmosphere of openness and trust among them;
 - c. Making certain that Council members have adequate training;
 - e. Working with the officers to develop the Council agenda;
 - f. Sharing in the dialogue that leads to the formulation of policy;
 - g. Ensuring the implementation of policies formulated by the Council.

If the pastor judges that a council recommendation is contrary to Church teaching or discipline, or violates a diocesan norm, he may withhold implementation, giving the Council the reasons. If, after the explanation, the council unanimously disagrees, the Council may appeal to the Office of the Bishop or one appointed by him for clarification or arbitration. Any decision resulting from such an appeal shall be final. In the meantime, the effect of the action shall remain suspended.

- Section 2:** Before requesting a proxy (permission to “build”, borrow money, etc.) from the Bishop, the pastor will consult with the Council. The consensus of the Council shall be represented in the request for proxy.

ARTICLE X: MANNER OF OPERATION

The Council shall make recommendations to the pastor through a process of communal discernment that leads to consensus, if possible. The discernment process includes prayerful reflection on the matter, gathering of information, group dialogue and sharing of conclusions. The preferred final step in reaching a shared conclusion shall be consensus.

ARTICLE XI: STANDING COMMISSIONS/COMMITTEES

- Section 1: The Executive Committee:**
The executive committee shall be comprised of the pastor, chair, secretary and one parish trustee. It is the responsibility of the executive committee to meet prior to the Council meeting to review minutes from the previous meeting to be sent to members for review and to establish the agenda for the upcoming meeting
- Section 2: Purpose of Common Standing Commissions/Committees:**
Each standing commission/committee implements the Council's priorities and goals in its own areas of responsibility in the collaborative spirit of working together to accomplish the parish's stated mission. All commission/committee work leads to building a faith community, proclaiming the Word of God, calling people to prayer and motivating people to serve others.
- Section 3: Scope:**

All commissions/committees are accountable to the Council. Commissions/committees make decisions in their areas of responsibility following the principle of subsidiarity, which means making decisions at the most appropriate level in the parish commission/committee structure.

(All parish groups and organization should relate to the Council through the standing commissions and committees, and be accountable for how their work is furthering the missions of the parishes.)

Section 4: Functions:

The basic functions of each council standing commission/committee are to:

1. Identify needs of the parish within its areas of responsibility.
2. Establish priorities among the needs and communicate how these needs can realistically be addressed and where inter-commission/committee collaboration might be effective.
3. Formulate long-range and short-term goals and objectives.
4. Research and investigate options to implement goals.
5. Submit the proposed programs to the Council for support.
6. Communicate with the pastor and pastoral staff about the implementation.
7. Maintain communication with the parish concerning programs, encouraging active support and involvement.
8. Maintain communication with the respective Diocesan offices and agencies for guidelines and resources.
9. Provide on-going formation of commission/committee members in its areas of responsibility through workshops, study, spiritual formation, etc.
10. Determine budget priorities in the area of the commission/committee's responsibility and make recommendations to the Council through the Finance Council processes.
11. Periodically evaluate existing programs and activities.
12. Provide the council with regular, oral or written reports of the work of their commissions/committees.

Section 5: The parish shall have the following Common Standing Commissions/Committees accountable to the Council:

a) **Worship and Spiritual Life:**

This commission/committee is established to assist the pastor and the parish in attaining a full, conscious and active participation in the Mass and the prayer life of the parish. It cultivates and gives direction to the liturgical aspect of parish life. Members of the commission/committee provide opportunities for parishioners to deepen their faith through a variety of prayer experiences and coordinating liturgical celebrations within the cluster. They identify the spiritual needs of parishioners and maintain an on going program of education and training for liturgical ministers.

b) **Religious Education and Formation:**

The role of this commission/committee is to develop the awareness that the parish community shares responsibility for promoting the educational/formation aspect of the mission of the Church. Formation is a lifelong process aimed at personal conversion and growth in faith. This commission/committee is advisory to the educational administrator(s) in the design, implementation and evaluation of the total Christian educational/formation programs in the parish, which include: sacramental preparation, adult and family ministry, youth ministry, school ministry and child ministry.

c) **Parish Life:**

This commission/committee supports the over-all vibrancy of parish life. It may plan social activities, spiritual retreats, and other needed activities or programs that foster community and add to quality of parish life. It is responsible for assisting the parish pastoral staff in hospitality, new member registration and orientation as well as recommending pastoral care policies and procedures.

d) **Stewardship:**

The stewardship commission/committee promotes parishioners giving of their time, talent and treasure, through a scriptural understanding of stewardship. It makes the needs of the community known and organizes ways to solicit people to use their talents and time for the good of the community. It appropriately promotes the giving of financial resources to empower the parish to live out their mission and goals. The stewardship commission/committee encourages the conservation of God-given natural resources.

e) **Human Concerns/Social Justice:**

This commission/committee discerns needs of persons in the parish and wider community, especially the poor, and identifies resources to meet those needs enlisting the active cooperation of parish members. This commission/committee fulfills the justice dimensions of scripture and our church tradition acknowledging that every Christian is called to service and to work for justice, including Respect Life efforts. The commission/committee's scope of responsibility is two-fold: 1) to meet immediate needs and 2) to work for changes in the structures of society that are oppressive. Commission/committee members are not responsible to do all of the commission/committee's work but rather to involve others in actively accepting the responsibility of their baptism. The commission/committee supports those in the parish who are already involved in service, advocacy, justice education, and empowerment of people. This commission/committee works with community groups and other parishes to help solve related problems. They keep parishioners aware of issues relating to justice, peace, hunger and the homeless on local, national and international levels so that appropriate Christian action on such issues can be determined.

f) **Vocations:**

This commission/committee works with the Diocesan vocation office and does whatever it can to foster vocations to the priesthood, diaconate, religious life and lay ministry. The commission/committee engages in prayer and awareness building of the need for vocations. It sponsors programs and retreats, which help people, discern their call to ecclesial ministry through education, formation, recognition and response to God's call.

g) **Evangelization:**

Section 6: All standing commissions/committees operate under a set of common *Standing Commission/committee Guidelines* established by the Council and reviewed by the Council every five years. Each commission/committee chairperson shall meet with the

Council at least once a year. A commission/committee is able to make decisions only if a quorum is present which means a majority of its members.

Section 7: Commission/committee Officers. The chairperson of each commission/committee shall be discerned by and from the commission/committee members, based on competence, leadership ability and knowledge of the commission/committee's area of ministry. The term of office for the chairperson is one year. Other officers determined by the commission/committee, e.g. secretary, are selected in a similar manner. Neither an employee of the parish nor an *ex officio* member of the council shall be eligible to be an officer.

Section 8 Council Commission/Committee Liaison:

The Council shall select from its at-large members a liaison to each of its standing commissions/committees 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. *Ex officio* members of the Council are ineligible to serve as liaisons.

Section 9: The parish shall have separate Finance Council accountable to their pastor. Canon law requires that each parish maintain its own Finance Council. See separate document for Finance Council. Finance Council is a stand-alone council and not a sub-committee/commission of the Council.

ARTICLE XII: AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION AND THE BYLAWS

This constitution and bylaws may be amended at any regular or special meeting by consensus or a two-thirds vote of the Council at two consecutive meetings of the council, and thereafter by approval of a majority of the parishioners participating in the parish approval process.

Date of Approval by the Parish: _____

Date of Approval by the Diocese: _____

Date of Most Recent Amendment: _____

Date of Next Full Review: _____

