

St. John Capistran Pastoral Council By-Laws

Purpose:

The Pastoral Council is a group of lay parishioners who assist the Pastor, Parish staff and fellow parishioners in planning and implementing goals and objectives designed to help the St. John Capistran Parish fulfill its Mission Statement as a parish of the Diocese of Pittsburgh under the leadership of the Bishop, and as a member of the Upper St. Clair and surrounding communities. The Pastoral Council regularly listens to, and dialogues with, parishioners at various levels, parish staff and Parish Finance Council, and provides input, reflection and recommendations to the Pastor on issues involving parish life and the parishioners at large. The Pastoral Council is responsible for establishing short and long-term parish goals and objectives to address and enhance the spiritual growth of the parish through the five essential qualities of parish life: Eucharist, Evangelization, Catechesis, Formation and Stewardship.

Membership:

In order to be appointed for a term on the Pastoral Council individuals must be:

- Women and men of prayerful faith who are fully initiated Catholics in good standing with the Church;
- A member of St. John Capistran Parish for at least two years;
- Motivated by the desire to grow in faith, and to see similar spiritual growth in the parish;
- At least eighteen (18) years of age;
- Optimistic and enthusiastic about the future of the parish;
- Committed to working collaboratively within a model of shared leadership to reach consensus through open dialogue and interpersonal communication; and,
- Willing to invite, delegate and encourage parishioners to bring the parish pastoral plan to fruition.

Selection:

The formation of the Pastoral Council is established through a process of discernment as described in the “Discerning Members” section of the *One Body, One Mission*, Parish Pastoral Guidelines published by the Diocese of Pittsburgh on June 6, 2010, with a goal of maintaining diversity of experiences in the membership reflective of the diversity of experiences of our parishioners.

Size:

The Pastoral Council consists of a minimum of seven (7) and a maximum of ten (10) members, although it shall be the goal of the Council and Pastor to maintain membership at ten (10) if possible.

Length of Service:

The length of service for appointed members is four (4) years. Provided however, that for the nine-member Pastoral Council that was appointed in September 2011, five members -- as determined through a consensus of the Pastoral Council and the Pastor -- shall serve for an initial term of six (6) years.

Membership will be staggered with five new members being appointed after year four (by September 2015), five new members after year six (by September 2017), and on two year cycles thereafter, with each new member being appointed for a term of four (4) years to begin no later than September of the year appointed, following orientation and distribution of new member materials. Based upon the needs of the Parish, and the consensus of all of the other Pastoral Council members and the Pastor, members may be appointed to serve one additional term of four (4) years after his or her initial four (4) year term expires.

Roles:

There are no formal officers of the Pastoral Council. Rather, members shall fill the following roles on a voluntary basis for a term of two (2) years (unless otherwise noted) upon the consensus of the Pastoral Council:

Prayer Leader – Recognizing the vital role of communal prayer to the effectiveness of the Pastoral Council, members shall take turns each meeting on a rotating basis serving as the Prayer Leader for that meeting, preparing opening and closing prayers for the Pastoral Council and the Pastor to read and reflect upon for that meeting.

Recorder – The Recorder is responsible for taking notes and recording all decisions achieved during all Pastoral Council meetings, and disseminating them to all members of the Pastoral Council promptly following the meeting.

Communication Director - The Communication Director will publish summaries of key Parish Council activities and decisions on the Parish web-site and Parish bulletin. All formal communications between the Pastoral Council and the Parish will be coordinated by the Communication Director.

Facilitator – The Facilitator organizes the Pastoral Council's work toward the timely completion of each meeting/event agenda, and ultimately the process parts of pastoral planning. The Facilitator is not the chairperson of the Pastoral Council, but rather someone who is able to listen, respond appropriately, and move the agenda towards its end(s).

Meetings:

Meetings of the Pastoral Council shall be held at least four to six times per calendar year, and may be scheduled more frequently

based upon the needs of the Parish, and upon the consensus of the Pastoral Council and the Pastor.

In order for there to be a quorum sufficient for the Pastoral Council to conduct official business at a meeting, no less than fifty per cent (50%) of the then-present Council membership must be in attendance at the meeting in addition to the Pastor. So if the then-present membership stood at ten (10), five (5) members would have to be in attendance in addition to the Pastor in order for Council to conduct official business.

Three persons, the Pastor, the Facilitator and the Recorder comprise the Agenda Team and shall collaborate on preparing agendas for Pastoral Council meetings and events. The Facilitator or Recorder shall distribute the agenda to the Pastor and all Pastoral Council members, and any Parish Staff or others invited to attend a particular meeting, at least one week prior to all meetings/events if possible.

The Pastor shall preside at all Pastoral Council Meetings, assisting the Pastoral Council in developing consensus around particular pastoral issues by sharing information, teaching ecclesiastical principles, or providing perspectives from his own experiences. He authorizes any final course of action in relation to the Pastoral Plan, and is the chief spokesperson for that vision to the Parish.

Pastoral Council may formally meet with Parish Staff and the Parish Finance Council as needed in order to help discern parish needs and available resources.

Task Groups:

The Pastoral Council shall form task groups and sub-task groups as deemed necessary to meet independently of the Pastoral Council, and facilitate and streamline the parish planning process, reporting later to the entire Pastoral Council on the progress that they have made on their tasks.

Consensus:

Decisions of the Pastoral Council are made through dialogue between the Pastor and the Pastoral Council designed toward discerning God's will and reaching substantial, though not necessarily unanimous commitment, to move forward with certain pastoral initiatives. This dialogue is held with a spirit of consultation and collaboration, at the end of which it is important that all agree to support the decision.

Draft