**CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS**

**OF THE PASTORAL COUNCIL**

**of**

**Saint Joseph Catholic Church**

**Prattville, Alabama**

**PREFACE**

These By-Laws are not all-inclusive, but are meant to give guidance and direction to the Pastoral Council as they conduct the duties granted to them in the Constitution and by the parish pastor. The By-Laws supplement the Constitution and are not intended in any way to negate the Constitution itself.

**ARTICLE I: NAME**

The name of this organization shall be the Pastoral Council of St. Joseph Catholic Church of Prattville, Alabama. Hereinafter, referred to as the “Council.”

**ARTICLE II: ESTABLISHMENT**

The Council is established in accordance with Canon 536 of the Revised Code of Canon Law, which states:

1. If, after consulting the council of priests, the diocesan bishop considers it opportune, a pastoral council is to be established in each parish. In this council, which is presided over by the parish priest, Christ’s faithful, together with those who by virtue of their office are engaged in pastoral care in the parish; give their help in fostering pastoral action.
2. The pastoral council possesses a consultative vote only and is governed by the norms established by the diocesan bishop.

**ARTICLE III: AUTHORITY**

**Section 1.** The existence of the Council is derived from Canon Law, Chapter V and the guidelines set forth by the Archdiocese of Mobile.

**Section 2.** The authority of the Council is advisory to the pastor. The decisions and recommendations of the Council are valid only when accepted and ratified by the pastor. Within the law, the pastor may freely delegate decisions or tasks to the Council as a whole or to particular members. The pastor is to consider the Council’s advice in determining pastoral ministries (Canon 127 2-1). The Council cannot act independently of the pastor.

**Section 3.** The Council shall operate in accordance with the Laws of the Catholic Church (universal law of the Church and the particular laws of the United States Conferences of Catholic Bishops and the Archdiocese of Mobile) and the State of Alabama.

**ARTICLE IV: PURPOSE**

**Section 1.** The general purpose of the Council shall be to advise and assist the pastor in his duties as shepherd and canonical administrator of the parish while creating a vision for future goals.

**Section 2.** The relationship between the Council and the pastor is one of support and to create, inspire, and demonstrate leadership and enthusiasm in all matters relating to the best interest of the spiritual and temporal affairs of the parish.

**Section 3.** To serve as a resource so that all members, ministries, groups, and organizations of the parish may make known their views on any and all parish matters known before the Pastor and Council.

**Section 4.** To maintain open communication among all parish members, and groups through various forms, such as meetings, email, phone, bulletins, website, etc.

**Section 5.** To review and evaluate the overall experience of parish life and worship.

**Section 6.** To create a unified vision and goals for the parish through a strategic plan set forth and approved by the Council.

**ARTICLE V: MEMBERSHIP**

**Section 1.** Members of the Council are to be in full, visible communion with the Catholic Church, registered parishioners in good standing, and of good moral character. Each member is to be dedicated to the welfare of the entire parish and universal Church. Members should be actively engaged in parish life and activities. A parishioner cannot simultaneously serve on both the Finance Council and Pastoral Council.

**Section 2.** In addition to the pastor and deacon (if applicable), the membership of the Council shall be comprised of between seven to nine members. Membership is reserved to registered, active, participating parishioners who are at least eighteen years of age. Membership is limited to one individual per household.

**Section 3.** The Pastor may appoint up to three ex-officio members to the Council, representative of the community, in order to reflect the diversity in the parish community to include at least one military individual who will serve a term of at least a year or up to the length of their military assignment. The Parish Office Manager, Religious Education Director, and Youth Director will serve as non-voting members of the council in order to provide continuity and aid in scheduling of all functions within the parish.

**ARTICLE VI: NOMINATIONS, ELECTIONS, & TERMS**

**Section 1.** At the regular meeting held in the month of February, the chairperson will open the nominations process. The pastor will review and approve all candidates. Candidates shall be announced at the March Council meeting.

**Section 2.** All individuals nominated are to complete an application, to include at a minimum a biography, reason for wanting to serve, and current serving capacity in the parish. This application is also to have at least two sponsored parishioner signatures as references as well as approval of the pastor.

**Section 3.** Elections are to be conducted during the month of April. The elections shall be by secret ballot distributed to all members of the parish (18 years of age or older) attending the Masses on a Saturday and Sunday preceding the April Council meeting. Absentee ballots can be cast in advance of the scheduled elections in the parish office. The Pastor will review all of the votes on the returned qualified ballots and declare the new members to the Council. All voting results will remain confidential.

**Section 4.** The Council Chair shall notify the candidates of the results of the election. After all candidates have been notified, a suitable announcement will be made to the parish at large.

**Section 5.** All selected members shall take office at the first regular meeting of the Council following their election and shall serve a term of three (3) years, non-renewable. A period of at least one (1) year must elapse before a former member is eligible for an additional term. The pastor and deacon (if applicable) are not held by terms of office. Normally, not more than one-third of the Council’s membership shall be changed at one time.

**Section 6.** In the event of a vacancy, that seat on the council is to be replaced within sixty (60) days of notification or resignation. The existing members of the council will suggest possible candidates to be appointed by the pastor.

**Section 7.** Council members accept the responsibility of attending meetings when they accept membership. A Council member shall not be allowed to miss more than two consecutive, unexcused absences. Three unexcused absences annually will result in: (a) possible removal of membership from the Council, or (b) request to the organization president to take corrective action.

**Section 8.** Any member of the Council that fails to maintain qualifications for membership stated in Article V, Section 1 of this Constitution and By-Laws could be removed from the council by unanimous vote of the council with approval of the pastor.

**Section 9.**  If a parochial administrator is appointed to a parish, he will assume the rights and responsibilities of the pastor in relation to the Council.

**ARTICLE VII: OFFICERS**

**Section 1.** The officers of the Council shall be the pastor, who is the president by reason of his position as pastor, a chairperson, vice-chairperson, and a secretary.

**Section 2.** Except for the president, these officers shall be from the elected representatives on the Council.

**Section 3.** The officers shall be selected by the consensus of the other members of the council and pastor at the first regular meeting in May. It is the responsibility of the pastor to oversee and approve the election of new officers. Only members who have served for one year or more are eligible for the office of chairperson. All members are eligible for the office of vice-chairperson and secretary.

**Section 4.** The elected officers shall serve in said position for one (1) year. Officers can be re-elected each year to serve in the same or different position.

**Section 5.** The officers constitute the executive committee, which shall prepare the agenda for meetings, publish the minutes, and guide the Council meeting.

**ARTICLE VIII: DUTIES OF OFFICERS**

**Section 1.** The Pastor may reserve the right to preside over meetings.

**Section 2.** The meeting will ordinarily be presided over by the chairperson. The chairperson is to provide an atmosphere of trust and open communication. The chairperson is to perform such other duties as may be assigned by the pastor.

**Section 3.** The vice-chairperson is to assist the pastor and chairperson with their duties to include serving a chairperson in his/her absence. He or she is to perform such other duties as may be delegated by the chairperson.

**Section 4.** The Secretary is to take minutes of all regular and special meetings of the Council. He or she is to provide copies within seven (7) days of the Council meeting to the members of the Council. Members of the Council must approve minutes within three (3) days of the minutes being sent by the secretary, which are then to be published for the parish. He or she is also to perform such other duties as may be delegated by the chairperson.

**Section 5.** Each officer, at the expiration of their term of office, is to pass on to their successor all books, papers, and other materials pertaining to their office ordinarily within two (2) weeks of the May meeting in which the new officers are elected.

**ARTICLE IX: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**Section 1.** The Executive Committee is to be composed of the officers of the Council.

**Section 2.** The Executive Committee is to coordinate and prepare the agenda for all meetings of the Council. It is also to conduct all urgent business of the Council between regular meetings.

**ARTICLE X: COMMITTEES (STANDING AND SPECIAL)**

**Section 1.** Various standing committees and liaisons shall be established as the pastor may direct. The thrust of these committees shall cover the parish needs is areas of Christian Formation, Parish Community, Outreach Ministry, Administration, and Worship and Spirituality. Ad Hoc committees may also be established as needs arise or as directed by the pastor.

**Section 2.** The pastor, by virtue of his office, shall be a member of every committee.

**ARTICLE XI: MEETINGS**

**Section 1.** The Council is to conduct regular meetings each month or at such time as the pastor may decide. Meetings without the presence of the pastor are to have his approval to be conducted in his absence.

**Section 2.** Advance notice of all regular meetings will be given publication in the parish bulletin or newsletter, stating time and place.

**Section 3.** Regular meetings of the Council are to be open to all parishioners and ministry/organization liaisons as observers. Any input must be recognized by the chairperson.

**Section 4.** Robert’s Rules of Order will be followed during all meetings to ensure organized transacting of business.

**Section 5.** It is the responsibility of each ministry, group, or organization of the parish to provide one (1) liaison that is to report at the council meeting of the group’s views, activities, and concerns.

**Section 6.** If there are acts to be voted on then each council member is entitled to one (1) vote. Other parishioners, attending as observers, at the meeting have no voting rights.

**Section 7.** The minutes of all regular meetings shall be published in the parish bulletin or newsletter, and/or website.

**Section 8.** Special meetings may be called by the pastor, the chairperson, or at the written request of any three members of the Council. The purpose of the special meeting is to be stated in the request. Except in cases of emergency, at least two (2) days’ notice is to be given.

**Section 9.** A simple majority of the Council membership shall constitute a quorum: 50% + 1 Council members. In the absence of a quorum, no official recommendations or counsel can be offered to the pastor in the Council’s name.

**ARTICLE XII: AMENDMENTS**

**Section 1.** The Constitution and By-Laws of this Council may be amended at any regular or special meeting of the Council by consensus of the members and the approval of the pastor.

Proposed amendments may be submitted in writing to the chairperson of the Council by any member. The chairperson will then present the amendment at the next meeting. Copies of the amendment should be distributed to the Council members at least one (1) week prior to the meeting during which the amendment will be considered.

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**Upon agreement of the Pastor, this replaced all previous Constitutions and By-Laws.**

**Adopted this \_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, by:**

**/SS/ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ /SS/ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**(Name) Rev. James N. Dean**

**Chairperson, Pastoral Council Pastor**

**St. Joseph Catholic Church St. Joseph Catholic Church**

**Prattville, Alabama Prattville, Alabama**