

Pastoral Council Foundation Document (Rev. February 2014)

"We the People of God, welcome all to experience the nourishment and healing Spirit of Jesus Christ. Drawing life from the Sacraments, we reach out in charity and service so all may share in the gift of Christ's message of reconciliation, peace and hope. "

Introduction

Recognizing that sound pastoral decisions are informed by the wisdom of the People of God, Father Willie Hickey established the Pastoral Council of St. Brendan Catholic Church on November 17, 2003. The documents of the Second Vatican Council recommend the establishment of such councils, and state that Catholics have a right and duty to express their opinion on what pertains to the good of the church. Norms and guidelines for a Pastoral Council, listed above, are referenced herein, with appropriate elaboration included for the guidance of the Council.

The Pastoral Council will operate according to Atlanta Archdiocesan norms and policies as contained in this "FOUNDATION DOCUMENT with Norms and Guidelines for the St. Brendan Catholic Church Pastoral Council" (per Norm 1). The Pastoral Council will make available to parish organizations and to the parish community at-large a substantive version of this document.

Every parish in the Archdiocese of Atlanta is to have a parish Pastoral Council (Norm 1). Pastors should willingly consult their people and use their prudent advice. By establishing a Pastoral Council, the pastor acknowledges the wisdom of his parishioners and expresses his desire to share with them responsibility for the pastoral care and spiritual development of the parish community.

The parish Pastoral Council is a consultative body making recommendations to the pastor (Norm 2). The Pastor has the decision-making authority from the bishop to carry out his role of service and pastoral care within the parish community. The relationship of the Pastoral Council is consultative to the pastor rather than administrative.

Purpose

The purpose of the council is to promote the spiritual growth of the parish community and to plan ways for the parish to carry out the mission of the Church (Norm 5). The Pastoral Council studies pastoral matters, considers them thoroughly, and proposes practical recommendations about them. In this way the council fosters pastoral activity.

The council's task is, first of all, to study those matters brought to its attention and shed light on them. Its second task is to reflect on them thoroughly, to discern their true nature, to evaluate and to ponder them. Its final task is to draw sound conclusions. The council presents these conclusions to the pastor in the form of recommendations. This process is called pastoral planning. A pastoral plan:

- sets a basic direction and selects the best strategies to promote this direction
- provides a guide for future actions, particularly in areas that have a broad impact on the parish life
- provides clear direction while allowing room for creative, flexible action by those who will implement the policies.

The major task of parish pastoral planning, therefore, is to discern prayerfully God's will and plan for the parish community. The relationship of the Pastoral Council is consultative to the pastor rather than administrative, and the Council has no administrative duties. Council recommendations deal with pastoral plans and policies and not with acts of administration. After the pastor has accepted the recommendations of the Council, he delegates and directs their implementation by appropriate parish staff, commissions, committees, or ministries. Council members may function as Commission Chairs to assist the pastor with implementation responsibility as provided in Section 9.

The pastor will bring approved Pastoral Council recommendations to the staff for their support in implementation. The Pastoral Council should consider the expertise of parish staff during the process of developing final council recommendations. Before recommendations of council are enacted, they need to be accepted by the pastor. If the pastor and the councilors deal with issues openly and honestly from the beginning of the consensus process, in a consistent environment of mutual respect, then disagreement on issues will be minimized and an exceptional disagreement will not damage the relationship between pastor and council.

Scope

The pastor consults the Pastoral Council on matters of major pastoral concern (Norm 4). These may include everything that pertains to the pastoral ministries of proclaiming God's word, celebrating the sacraments, caring for the faithful, promoting the mission of the church to the world, and being a good steward of parish resources.

When major pastoral decisions are required, the Pastoral Council is to be consulted by the pastor with a majority of members present and consensus the goal. "Consultation" is a necessary part of the process for making shared pastoral decisions. Canon 127 establishes the seriousness of the consultative process: "Major pastoral concerns" would be those which affect the life and the mission of the parish – to proclaim the Word, to build up the community, to celebrate liturgy, and to serve all God's people.

The scope includes all the practical matters of parish life. Pastoral matters may be brought before the pastor and Pastoral Council from a variety of sources. There is nothing practical about which the pastor may not consult the council, apart from faith, orthodoxy, moral principles or laws of the universal church.

In exercising the scope of its duties, the Council is guided by principles described in Appendix 4 concerning spiritual formation, pastoral planning, collaborative policy development, and communication.

Criteria for Membership

The Pastoral Council members represent the interests and the pastoral needs of the parish community (Norm 6). Pastoral Council members are chosen, above all, for their ability to accomplish the main task of the council – the work of studying, considering, and recommending practical conclusions. Councilors have the ability to do the work of the council in prayer, study, discernment and dialogue, to work collaboratively with others, and to seek what will best serve the needs and contribute to building the parish community as the Body of Christ. They are baptized Catholics who are registered, active and participating in the parish. They are able to participate in the sacramental life of the Church, and they embrace and seek to follow the teachings of the Second Vatican Council. As a body, the Pastoral Council reflects the parish's various neighborhoods, social and professional groups, and ministries. Council members seek to avoid a narrow focus on personal interests or single issues. Councilors are parishioners noted for their faith, good morals, and prudence.

The Council as a consultative body (Norm 2) is to be a broadly representative group of the entire parish faith community, uniting laity and clergy in a community of prayer, leadership, service and pastoral planning. All councilors work together and share the decision-making as they seek to listen to the Holy Spirit in discerning what is best for the parish in light of the Gospel, the Church's teaching and the experiences and needs of parishioners and surrounding community. The council fulfills its role by encouraging a climate in which people can feel free to speak the truth in openness and love.

Further guidance on criteria & qualities for Pastoral Council leadership are described in Appendix 5.

Discernment & Selection

Seven (7) Pastoral Council members are selected for the Pastoral Council in an appropriate manner that allows for the participation of the parish community in a discernment / selection process. In addition, other members of the Pastoral Council are those who share in pastoral care by virtue of their office in the parish. (Norm 7; Canon 536).

The Pastoral Council membership will include:

- a. The Pastor, and
- b. Seven (7) members chosen through the participation of the parish community in a discernment / selection process;

Parish Staff who share in pastoral care by virtue of their office in the parish, such as Parochial Vicar(s), Spiritual Life Director, Deacon(s), are not “members” of the Pastoral Council, however, they are to be encouraged to attend and participate in the discernment process.

Adjunct representatives to the Council, while not “Members” of the Council, are to be invited to share in the experience of Pastoral Council work, and to provide the Council with advice; these adjunct representatives will [be](#) decided on by the Pastoral Council on an as needed basis.

Members of the Pastoral Council shall have limited terms. The purpose of a limited term is to generate fresh ideas, prevent stagnation and burnout, create leadership opportunities, and encourage volunteers to emerge as potential Pastoral Councilors who might otherwise decline a more lengthy commitment.

Seven (7) Pastoral Council members shall be chosen through the participation of the parish community in a discernment / selection process, and these are selected for staggered terms of three (3) years. Council members are not eligible for election to successive terms; however a member may be a candidate for a new three (3) year term if at least three (3) years have elapsed since the end of his/her term. Appropriate records shall be kept including the names of all those nominated for the Council, as well as those selected as Council members and their respective terms of office. In the event of the resignation or departure of a councilor chosen through the participation of the parish community in a discernment / selection process, then the Pastor, with the consent of the Council, may appoint an interim replacement councilor to fill such a vacancy for the unexpired term, with the appointment to be made either from among:

- a. other previously nominated individuals according to their gifts and talents;
- b. former council members if at least one (1) year has elapsed since the end of his/her previous term; or
- c. others determined appropriate by the Pastoral Council and Pastor.

To help assure Pastoral Council continuity and experience in succession, the terms of councilors shall be staggered so that no more than two (2) or three (3) council members’ terms will expire each year.

The Council and the Pastor may appoint an ad hoc “Selection Committee” to plan, conduct and oversee the discernment / nomination / selection process for new Council members. Selection Committee responsibilities are to arrange for nomination of potential Councilors, arranging for completion and publication of biographies and election.

“Discernment” may be understood as a process of arriving at a decision in accord with God’s will through prayerful reflection and deliberation. The Spirit guides this prayerful discernment.

The discernment / selection of council members will be by self nomination followed by an election by the Parish members. If there are more than a manageable number of nominations, the Pastoral Council in conjunction with the Pastor will discern an appropriate number of candidates to be presented to the Parish for election.

The nomination process and election are to take place ~~between January 1 and March 31~~ so that the newly elected councilors can attend (as non voting participants) at least the June Pastoral Council meeting and take office April-July 1. The term of the Pastoral Council shall run from ~~April-July 1 – March 31~~June 30.

By marking printed ballots distributed at each liturgy, the members of the parish community (age sixteen [16] years or older?) will elect, in an atmosphere of prayer and discernment, the new councilors.

A majority of ballots will be necessary for election, and ballots shall be counted by the designated Selection Committee, or another committee of disinterested parishioners appointed by the Pastor. The Pastor will announce the results without reference to the number of ballots each candidate receives. The Pastor, or the designated Selection Committee on his behalf, will communicate the names of selected councilors to the community via the bulletin and website, and will write letters of appreciation to all nominees.

An appropriate parish liturgy at the beginning of the term of a new council, will include a commissioning ceremony and welcome the next council.

Pastor's & Council Officers Roles

By virtue of his office, the Pastor presides over the work of the Pastoral Council. (Norm 3) As presider, the pastor fully participates in the deliberations of the council and is involved completely in planning and policy development. The pastor is responsible for the final approval of council recommendations and for their long-term implementation. Council members may function as Commission Chairs to assist the pastor with implementation responsibility as provided in Section 9. The pastor consults regularly with the Pastoral Council, and he communicates clearly whether he accepts or declines to accept their recommendations.

If the pastor is not satisfied with a recommendation made by the council, he expresses his reservations and asks the council to clarify whatever remains obscure. When he is satisfied with the consultation, he formally accepts the council's recommendations. He may then ask the parish staff or other parishioners to implement the recommendations. (More detailed guidance concerning "veto" and "appeal process" are provided in Appendix 3).

The Pastoral Council will select a Chair and other officers from among its members (Norm 9). In a spirit of prayer, and with open discussion of each candidate's gifts and talents so as to discern the persons with the gifts needed for the various roles, the pastor and the councilors select three (3) officers from among the members of the Pastoral Council. Selection of Officers will be by secret ballot, with a quorum of councilors present. A majority of votes will be necessary for election. The pastor will announce the results without reference to the number of votes each candidate receives.

The officers are Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary. The pastor and the officers of the council form an Executive Committee, the meetings of which will be called as required by the Chair and / or the pastor, and normally for the purpose of establishing an agenda for the next scheduled council meeting; alternatively, Council agenda items may be confirmed by electronic mail among Executive Committee members.

The terms of officers shall be for one year. Installation of officers shall take place normally at the first meeting, and no later than the second meeting, of the Council year.

The Chair facilitates council discussions, making sure that everyone has an opportunity to speak and be heard in an atmosphere of trust and open communication. The Chair also monitors the work of the councilors between regular meetings. The Vice-Chair assists the Chair and facilitates meetings in the Chair's absence. The Secretary records the minutes to reflect the content and tenor of each Pastoral Council meeting, and ensures that copies

are sent, along with the agenda and supporting documents, to each councilor and to the pastor at least one week before every meeting. (Further examples of duties and responsibilities of council officers are contained in Appendix 6).

In addition to these Officers, the Pastoral Council may also select one or more of its members to serve and provide particular spiritual direction in order to foster the growth of Councilors, individually and as a Council.

At the transfer, resignation, incapacity, removal, or death of the pastor, the Pastoral Council continues to serve the parish community.

Relation to the Staff, Ministry Committees, and Finance Council

The pastor consults others besides the Pastoral Council about the parish. He relies upon the parish staff for their expertise and consults them daily about the management of parish operations. The pastor may occasionally ask parish staff members to attend council meetings in order to put their knowledge at the service of the Pastoral Council. The parish staff as a group is distinct from the Pastoral Council and may provide a valuable resource of expertise and experience for the council.

The pastor also designates various ministry committees and other volunteer groups to function within the parish. These ministries and groups may also provide a resource for the work of the Pastoral Council. Ministry committees are part of parish administration and are responsible to the pastor, directly or through designated parish staff. The Pastoral Council seeks to consider the needs of the various ministries in its work of pastoral planning, and may make recommendations to the pastor concerning parish ministries. Pastoral Council communication with parish ministries and committees will be conducted primarily through the "Commissions" established under section 9 of this document. Due to their important responsibilities that already require substantial dedication and focus, employed parish staff members and ministry leaders will not be eligible to be elected to serve on the Pastoral Council.

The pastor relies on the appointed parish Finance Council to develop, monitor, and report on the parish budget. Finance council members are chosen for their technical skill in realms of accounting and finance. The Pastoral Council, by contrast, is broadly representative of the parish and offers practical wisdom on pastoral matters; i.e., the Pastoral Council members have the ability to investigate pastoral matters in a general way, to reflect on them deeply in dialogue, and to propose conclusions appropriate to the parish. The Finance Council looks to the Pastoral Council for a statement of the mission of the parish, a pastoral plan and pastoral priorities of the parish. The Pastoral Council looks to the Finance Council for sound financial guidance and planning regarding the resources needed to develop and implement parish plans, programs and policies. Due to the important responsibilities that already require substantial dedication and focus, the current Chair of the Finance Council will not be eligible to be elected to serve on the Pastoral Council. The Finance Council will normally provide for the Pastoral Council a quarterly review of parish financial matters. A member of the Finance Council, not including the Chair of the Finance Council, may also be a member of the Pastoral Council if he/she possesses the qualities necessary as discerned by the parishioners through the pastoral council selection process.

Meetings; Agenda; Decision Process; Council committees; Goals

Council meetings will be held on a regular basis and conducted with simplicity and in a spirit of discernment (Norm 10). Council meetings will be held on the last Monday of each month at 7:00 PM. The council Secretary or the Chair will notify councilors of meeting date, time or location changes. Meetings are normally 1.5 to 2 two hours in length. Between the monthly meetings, council members are expected to follow up on the previous meeting and prepare for the next. This usually entails work on ad hoc committees. Special meetings of the council may be called by the Executive Committee as required.

Council meetings may be canceled by the Chair and rescheduled if it is known that a quorum will not be present. A quorum consists of 50% or more of the council membership. Councilors missing two (2) or more regular meetings without a proper reason shall be queried about the absences. Councilors who resign will notify the council Chair in writing.

The pastor develops the agenda with the council officers. The pastor will consult parish staff regarding agenda items and will discuss staff input with the Pastoral Council Chair. The agenda states the objectives for each meeting, the means and group process for reaching the objectives, and the materials needed to accomplish them. The agenda guides the meeting.

Each meeting of the Pastoral Council begins with some time for shared prayer and reading of Scripture led by the pastor or a member of the council. The agenda includes a review of the minutes of the previous meeting and the items to be addressed during the meeting. The agenda concludes with a brief evaluation of the meeting, followed by a period of prayer to close the meeting.

Council meetings are open to parish members, whose role will be one of prayerful observation and listening. Visitors who have something to communicate at the meeting should do so by contacting the Chair or other council member in advance of the meeting.

The first meeting of the new Pastoral Council is dedicated to the call and mission of the newly chosen members.. During the final meeting of each year, the councilors and pastor assess the progress of the pastoral planning work.

After prayer, study, and dialogue, the Pastoral Council should normally seek to decide by establishing and articulating a consensus statement. (A more detailed perspective of the meaning of “consensus” is contained in Appendix 1.)

The council may, if necessary, use a “Consultative Ballot” on significant matters in order to better understand each councilor’s position, in the event consensus has not yet been reached. (A consultative ballot form is included in Appendix 2.)

The Pastoral Council may adopt bylaws as needed, and when necessary in the judgment of the Chair, the council may decide a matter by vote of a simple majority of the council. In most circumstances, a substantive question must be considered for thirty (30) days after it is first presented to the council before a decision is made on the matter.

The Pastoral Council may create ad hoc committees or working groups of council members. Any committees made up of council members will be automatically dissolved when the term of the council members expire, unless dissolved earlier by action of the council.

The Pastoral Council may establish goals for the manner in which it will seek to function, and/or goals for addressing specific pastoral matters that it may seek to address. These goals will be consistent with the Pastoral Council’s purpose.

Parish Commissions

The Pastoral Council works with existing parish groups and forms new groups as needed to promote the spiritual growth of the parish and foster the mission of the Church, local and universal (Norm 11).

The Council will work with existing parish groups and may also form new structures – Commissions and Committees, as the Council may need to assist it in fulfilling its purpose. The Council in consultation with the Pastor may delegate certain responsibilities to specific commissions and committees. In other cases, the council may coordinate its work with other parish organizations and groups.

Commissions:

1. Commissions are small group structures organized by the council and are designed to help the council develop pastoral goals and policies in specific areas of need or concern.
2. Commissions will normally be organized to support the work of the Council in connection with several

parish ministries that share common features or are related to one another in purpose, focus, or primary participants.

3. The council will periodically evaluate each commission and its objectives and responsibilities in light of new circumstances in parish life and the council's changing priorities and make adjustments where needed.

Establishing Commissions:

1. Commissions will be identified and formally established by the council. The Pastoral Council will have jurisdiction over Commissions (except for financial commissions of the Finance Council).
2. Generally, Council members will also function as Commission Chairs to assist the pastor with implementation responsibility. Where staff heads up a commission, a parishioner will serve as vice-chair in order to alleviate the workload.
3. New service groups and ministries may be proposed under a commission. The commission chair will be contacted first to study the need and determine individuals who may want to be involved. The commission chair will arrange for and propose a liaison person if the new group requires communications with the Archdiocese, and will submit the proposal to the Pastoral Council Chair for the next meeting agenda.

Commissions established by the Pastoral Council will be listed in the Appendix.

APPENDIX 1

PERSPECTIVE ON “CONSENSUS”

Consensus Method: “Consensus” is the process by which the Pastoral Council will make recommendations affecting the future directions of parish and pastoral activity.

1. Consensus Method guidelines:
 - a. The proper attitude for consensus requires a desire to arrive at a common conclusion and willingness to compromise. This compromise is not yielding to an inferior solution, but recognizing the validity of another point of view. Members may disagree but should avoid being argumentative.
 - b. Determining the areas of agreement and isolating the areas of disagreement will minimize the level of polarization in the group.
 - c. Dealing with the interests behind a declared position of disagreement will help to reach a general consensus.
2. The aim of consensus is to reach a common conclusion after the members have had a fair opportunity to discuss options and opinions.
 - a. The ability of individuals to lead and unify the group is a dominant factor in achieving consensus.
3. Further Guidance on Consensus
 - a. One statement of consensus:
 - ❖ A group process of seeking substantial, though not necessarily unanimous, agreement on a significant matter. The group strives to attain a conclusion which all can support, even if some still disagree. Consensus can be described in the following way: “I understand what most of you would like to do. I personally would not do that, but I feel that you understand what my alternative would be. I have had sufficient opportunity to openly share my thoughts and feelings. I feel that I have been listened to, but clearly have not been able to sway you to my point of view. Therefore, I will support what most of you wish to do.”
 - ❖ In seeking consensus, the key value is to reach an optimal level of agreement and support. This contrasts with the concern to make a decision expediently, however divided people might be.
 - ❖ The concern to reach consensus has a profound impact upon how a group goes about its work. The desire for consensus leads to seeking participation by all members of the group and by others who will also be impacted by the outcome. Input is used to shape and reshape a proposal based upon what is said.
 - ❖ If we choose to build consensus, we first need to build relationships that will enable consensus to happen. Building an atmosphere of openness and truth is essential for a group seeking consensus. Otherwise, people often end up with a false consensus. For example, if one asks “Does everyone agree?” or “Does anyone disagree?” it may be that few people respond. However, there may well be people who do not feel comfortable expressing disagreement, especially if an atmosphere of honesty has not been created.
 - ❖ A consultative ballot may be used in order to understand each person’s position on a proposal after it has been discussed, and revisions can then be explored at the next meeting.
 - ❖ One further test for consensus is to ask each person to say the word ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to the proposal under study. If anyone says anything other than ‘yes’, they often mean some degree of ‘no’. People who feel reluctant to openly disagree may implicitly express their reluctance by using words like ‘yeah’, ‘sure’, ‘ok’, ‘um’ and so forth.

APPENDIX 2

CONSULTATIVE BALLOT

Title of Proposal: _____

Proposal Number: _____

Date: _____

Name: _____

Please check one:

_____ Yes, I am in favor of this proposal as it stands (strong yes)

_____ I am generally in favor of this proposal. (weak yes) but would recommend that the person presenting this proposal consider the attached points. I don't consider it necessary to bring the proposal back to the group after the points I made have been considered.

_____ I am somewhat in favor of this proposal but (neutral) would like to see the attached changes made before I give my support. I would like to see the proposal reviewed by the council after these changes have been made.

_____ I am generally opposed to this proposal (weak no) for the attached reasons. If the proposal has to be implemented temporarily, I will expect that a new proposal will be developed and presented as soon as possible.

_____ No, I do not accept the proposal as it stands. (strong no) Attached are my reasons and/or my suggested alternative proposal.

Additional comments:

APPENDIX 3

Veto and Appeal

Before recommendations of council are enacted, they need to be accepted by the pastor. If the pastor and the councilors deal with issues openly and honestly from the beginning of the consensus process, in a consistent environment of mutual respect, disagreement on issues will be minimized and an exceptional disagreement on issues will be minimized and will not damage the relationship between pastor and council.

Veto Power:

Veto power over council decisions is reserved to the pastor. The pastor may exercise his veto power if he considers the proposed policies, plans or decisions are not in the best interest of the parish community or are in violation of canon law and lack serious purpose. The pastor will express his reasons for not approving council recommendations to the council, unless confidentiality prohibits such expression.

Appeal Process:

When the council continually seeks to build consensus in its deliberations, rarely would a pastor not approve a council recommendation. Differences of opinion which may arise are resolved ideally at the local level when they occur. However, the following procedure is offered as an appeal process when major disagreements exist:

- ❖ If the pastor decides after prayer and reflection not to approve a council recommendation or to withhold implementation, he expresses this decision to the council and gives his reasons as fully as possible.
- ❖ If the council has serious difficulty with accepting the pastor's decision, the chair may poll the council as to whether it wishes to accept the decision and drop the matter.
- ❖ If the council wishes to pursue the matter, it is placed on the agenda for the next meeting. The pastor and all concerned persons and prepare further relevant data or insights.
- ❖ At the next meeting, the council prayerfully reviews the issue and the additional information required. The recommendation may be revised in response to what has been said. If the recommendation in question is passed again by two-thirds of the members present (providing there is a quorum) and is still not approved by the pastor, the issue can be referred to the Archbishop. Either pastor or chair can initiate the referral.

APPENDIX 4

Spiritual Formation, Pastoral Planning, Policy Development, Collaboration & Communication

The purpose of the Pastoral Council is to promote the spiritual growth of the parish community and to plan ways for the parish to carry out the mission of the Church, local and universal. (Norm 5)

- A. The parish is called to support the spiritual growth of its members and enable full participation of the laity in the mission of the Church in the world. The pastoral planning work of the Pastoral Council focuses upon how the ministries and activities of the parish can foster the spiritual development of the parish and enable its outward mission to the world.
- B. The Pastoral Council promotes the spiritual growth of the parish and plans ways for the parish to carry out the Church's mission through four interdependent functions:

1. Spiritual Formation

The primary concern of the council is the spiritual growth of the parish community. In order to contribute to this ongoing spiritual renewal, councilors need to commit themselves to regular times of prayer and study centered on Jesus Christ and the teachings of the Church. They should strive to build a Christian community with mutual trust and understanding among members. Ideally, they form a core group, which serves as a model of prayer, co-operation, celebration and service, and a model for other parish groups and the parish at-large.

2. Pastoral Planning

- a. The council is the pastoral planning body of the parish. It ensures ongoing collaboration in developing and renewing a pastoral plan for the ministries and life of the parish. This pastoral plan must promote the full mission of the Church – the priestly, prophetic and royal mission of Jesus. While other groups may focus on a specific area of mission and ministry, the pastoral council is responsible for determining how the parish can most be effective in fulfilling its total mission. The council discerns what needs to be supported, changed or developed to make the parish more faithful to the call of God.
- b. To fulfill its pastoral planning responsibility, the council:
 - 1. listens to and evaluates the overall experiences, needs and quality of life of the parish community.
 - 2. develops (or updates) parish pastoral plans and priorities for the calendar year and beyond.
- c. The planning itself may include:
 - 1. developing or reviewing parish commission/ministries mission statements;
 - 2. listening to parishioners (by means of meetings, surveys, interviews, visitations);
 - 3. Identifying key needs and concerns;
 - 4. synthesizing parish goals and priorities into an ongoing pastoral plan and annual

calendar planning event;

5. recommending flexible strategies and supporting follow-up related to the parish goals and priorities;
 6. evaluating progress in achieving the parish pastoral plan and related goals.
- d. Parish planning should address the needs and goals of the parish in the context of Church teaching and overall mission. The St. Brendan Mission Statement provides a frame of reference for developing parish goals.
 - e. The council also serves as a planning review body. It provides consultation to the pastor regarding proposed goals, pastoral policies or programs as developed by the Staff or other groups, especially those proposals that may involve significant change in or impact on the life of the parish community. This consultation process is to include an evaluation of such proposals in light of existing pastoral plans, goals or plans of other parish groups.
 - f. In fulfilling its planning responsibilities, the council may find that the ongoing coordination of various activities is better accomplished through the pastoral Staff or some network of organizational leaders. For example, a separate committee of leaders could meet to develop and update a parish calendar of events.

3. Pastoral Policy Development:

- a. The council develops, reviews, and recommends pastoral policies. a. "Resolutions" are the written documents that may be brought to the council stating a policy developed through the planning process. A resolution would include a statement, resolution, approval, review process and frequency.
- b. Proposals by staff / others: The pastor is responsible to ensure that major pastoral policy proposals developed by the Staff and other individuals or groups are brought before the council for review and recommendation.
- c. Subsidiarity Principle:

The Pastoral Council develops and recommends policies. Council Commissions may also recommend policy to the council in their areas of expertise using the principle of subsidiarity. Commissions also implement policies of the council.

"Subsidiarity" is a principle of authority whereby decisions are entrusted to the appropriate body and not assumed by a higher authority. Issues are dealt with and policies are established at the lowest proper level of responsibility and competency. A judgment which can be made at the subcommittee level should not be made by the commission/committee to which the subcommittee is related. The same is true with commission/ committees related to the pastoral council.

- d. Collaboration – A Participative Policy Development Process:

"Collaboration" is the process of working together in a joint effort. Its basis is the Church's teaching that every baptized person is gifted and is called to release those gifts through ministry. It has been defined as "the identification, release and union of the gifts of all the baptized."

1. Council, Commissions, and Staff with input from parishioners, participate in research, data gathering and needs assessment.

2. Pastoral Councilors need to be in regular communication with the pastoral staff primarily through Commission leaders, working constantly to develop a climate of trust, support, and creative collaboration.
3. Commissions and staff, with input from council, determine several alternative actions.
4. The Pastoral Council recommends a policy. A policy is a guide for future action in a particular area of parish life, almost always deals with broad commitments to goals for the community, and is supported with objective and strategies to reach these goals.
5. Action plans emanating from policy are then implemented by the pastor, staff and committees.
6. Critique of the action steps after each occurs will reveal barriers to further progress. Overcoming these barriers make following actions easier to accomplish.

4. Communication

- a. The council is responsible to communicate regularly with members of the parish community. The council also enables the community:
 1. to relate their experiences, needs and hopes to the planning process of the parish;
 2. to recognize their gifts and talents, and their sharing a role in the ongoing pastoral work of the parish.
- b. The council also will communicate with the Church of North Georgia and the universal Church through deanery, cluster and regional gatherings, and with the Archbishop and his administration.
- c. Because the mission of the parish extends to all people living within its area, the council will support and encourage communications with other faith communities and the local civic community.

APPENDIX 5

Criteria & Qualities for Pastoral Council Leadership

The members of the Pastoral Council represent the interests and pastoral needs of the parish community. (Norm 6)

- A. The council will include a broad and balanced cross-section of the parish community
- B. Membership on the Pastoral Council is open to registered Catholic members of the parish.
- C. Qualities for potential council members include:
 - 1. Being in full communion with the church (exception only by pastor's permission.)
 - 2. Willingness to participate in an orientation process.
 - 3. Willingness to listen and be open-minded towards the ideas of others and the good of the whole parish.
 - 4. Dedication to the mission and spiritual welfare of the parish.
 - 5. Commitment and ability to give time to attend meetings and to prepare for them.
 - 6. Willingness to work with the pastor, who is the spiritual leader of the parish.
 - 7. Commitment to work in a group process of prayer, consensus-building and planning.
- D. The character and style of ministerial leadership exercised by councilors are significant factors in creating high involvement and shared commitment by the parish community. Leadership elements practiced by the council and spiritualized by prayer and reflection can result in outstanding teamwork and be a stimulus to the parish community. Key leadership elements are:
 - 1. Initiative – vigorous effort by the councilors in the pastoral policy development/planning process.
 - 2. Inquiry – searching for and validating information needed for arriving at a sound consensus.
 - 3. Advocacy – expressing convictions and responding to ideas sounder than one's own.
 - 4. Conflict resolution – seeking out through discernment reasons to resolve conflicts and disagreements.
 - 5. Decision-making – placing high values on arriving at sound decisions – “fruit that will endure.” [Jn 15:16]
 - 6. Critique – encouraging two-way feedback after each major action to identify barriers that may have arisen and eliminate them in future actions.

The Pastoral Council participates in the development, revision and update of parish goals and needs each year. Current councilors have an on-going obligation to review and evaluate goals and needs outstanding from prior years and either see them through or adjust them to changing situations.

APPENDIX 6

EXAMPLES OF DUTIES OF COUNCIL OFFICERS

1. Chair:

The Chair will work closely with the pastor to animate the council and assist councilors to actively collaborate. The Chair attends to the organizational aspects of the council. The Chair needs to have an understanding of group process and have facilitating skills in order to fulfill this role with freedom and impartiality.

Duties include:

- Provide significant time for prayer and reflection at meetings.
- Chair all meetings.
- Appoint chairs to commissions/committees with approval of the Executive Committee.
- Monitor time frame for each agenda item.
- Encourage and motivate councilors to participate.
- Clarify council procedures.
- Identify and clarify consensus reached by the council.
- Set up evaluation processes.
- Identify topics placed on the agenda.
- Schedule periodic parish assemblies.
- Set up opportunities for councilors to meet with parishioners to elicit concerns and opinions.
- Encourage and support communications between the council and parishioners by
- publishing council reports on a regular basis.

2. Vice-Chair:

The Vice-Chair performs the duties of the Chair in the latter's absence and also serves as an aide to the Chair in conducting the council's work.

3. Secretary:

Duties include:

- Record minutes of meetings. This should not prevent participation in discussions. If it does, a non-council member may perform this service.
- Maintain a roster of members and their attendance.
- Arrange for facilities for meetings.
- Continually update council documents.

- Distribute information

APPENDIX 7

GOALS OF COMMISSIONS

Chief goals for each commission are:

1. Build a faith community among members of the commission.
2. Identify the needs of the parish community in the commission's area of responsibility, and establish committees as needed.
3. Study the policies and priorities of parish and the Archdiocese
4. Prioritize the needs and formulate long-range goals and objectives.
5. Discern with council and staff those needs that can be addressed realistically in view of personnel, resources and time. Identify where inter-commission collaboration might be effective.
6. Develop policies consistent with the Catholic teaching and current Archdiocesan policies to implement goals.
7. Recommend proposed policies to the council for affirmation and support.
8. Communicate with council and staff about implementation of these policies.
9. Designate times and criteria for the evaluation of progress in goal achievement and program effectiveness, and involve staff in developing the criteria.
10. Maintain communication with the parish community concerning policies and programs and encourage active support and involvement.
11. Maintain communication with Archdiocesan offices and other organizations for guidelines, policies and resources.
12. Provide on-going education and formation of members in areas of concern through seminars, workshops and recommended readings.
13. Participate annually in the development of the Parish Activity Planning Calendar