

Pastoral Council Guidelines

Basis for the Establishment of the Pastoral Council

The Pastoral Council is established by invitation from the Pastor of St. Jude Roman Catholic Church, as recommended by the Bishop of Palm Beach Diocese and consistent with Catholic Theology and Canon Law. The pastor presides over the Council, and through it the Christian Community faithful -- along with those who share in the pastoral care of the parish in virtue of their office -- give their help in fostering pastoral activity.

(C 536) *Code of Canon Law*.

Definitions

Parish – A parish is a definite geographic community of the Christian faithful established on a stable basis within a particular church; the pastoral care of this parish is administered by the Carmelite Community under the leadership of a pastor and under the authority of the diocesan bishop. (C515, n.1)

Christian Community – A Christian Community is built up, grows and hinges on the celebration of the most Holy Eucharist. *Presbyterorum Ordinis* (PO) paragraph 6. A local community ought not merely to promote the care of the faithful within itself but should be imbued with the missionary spirit and smooth the path to Christ for all. It must regard as its special charge those under instruction and newly converted who are gradually educated in knowing and living the Christian life (PO, 6).

Pastor – As the proper shepherd, the pastor is the administrator of this parish entrusted to the Carmelite Community, exercising pastoral care in the community. In accord with the norm of law he carries out for his community the duties of teaching, sanctifying, and governing, with the cooperation of other presbyters or deacons and the assistance of lay members of the Christian faithful (C519).

Pastoral Council – The Pastoral Council is a distinct group; it is consultative to the pastor on matters of importance to the parish and is a representative body of the faithful, focusing on the whole community.

Consultative – “To act in an advisory capacity, to deliberate together, to confer with.”
(*Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*).

Consensus -- A state of mutual agreement among members of a group where all legitimate concerns of individuals have been addressed to the satisfaction of the group. Consensus is achieved when all the members of the Council can publicly support the decision, believing it is a decision they can live with.

Discernment – A process of searching for a solution or making a decision that is in accord with God’s will. Prayer and Reflection is key to the process. To engage in discernment is to acknowledge the belief that God is at work in our lives at all times, especially when making important decisions. Prayerful discernment helps people form an attitude that frees the mind and spirit from vested interests and distractions. The ultimate goal is a decision that best reflects God’s light and guidance (Acts of the Apostles 1:15 – 27).

PASTORAL COUNCIL OF ST. JUDE CHURCH BOCA RATON, FLORIDA CONSTITUTION

Article 1 – Name

Section 1. This group of parishioners is the Pastoral Council of St. Jude Church, Boca Raton, Florida, hereinafter called the “Council.”

Article 2 – Purpose

Section 1. The purpose of the Council shall be to:

- a. Assist the pastor in the administration of the parish through recommendations concerning policy directions for the parish, and share responsibility with the pastor and parish staff for the mission of the Church in the parish;
- b. Identify key needs and concerns of the parish and serve as a consultative body to the pastor by making evaluations and recommendations; and to provide an effective vehicle for planning and communication within the parish;
- c. Provide an open and honest forum of communication and dialogue regarding parish affairs and to provide an effective vehicle for planning and communication within the parish;
- d. Act as a representative voice of the parish to the pastor, the pastoral staff (parochial vicars, deacons, and pastoral associate), and the parish staff (department heads.)
- e. To set goals and objectives annually for the parish and to prioritize those goals and objectives so that personnel, time, and financial resources of the parish can be apportioned properly.
- f. To work effectively with the Finance Council and parish organizations in a spirit of mutual cooperation for the good of the parish and to lend guidance and support to them by communicating pastoral priorities and goals.
- g. To refine and approve the proposals made by parish committees and organizations.
- h. Be a visible witness of the message and service of our church to all people.

Article 3 – Membership and Selection

Section 1. The Council will consist of three types of members: ex-officio, appointed, and selected.

- a. Ex-officio members: The pastor and other members of the pastoral staff (parochial vicars, permanent deacons, pastoral associate, and director of development) shall serve as ex-officio members, having voice and vote.
- b. Appointed members: The pastor shall appoint three members one each from the finance committee, the school, and the youth, all of whom have voice and vote.

- c. Selected members: Selected members shall be selected through a discernment process of the candidates suggested to the pastor by the present Steering Committee (and of others of his own choice) for the first Pastoral Council. Thereafter, the new members shall be discerned by the existing Council members on a three-year rotating basis, described below.
- d. The suggested candidates shall agree to meet prior to the final discernment to review the principles, goals, and operation of pastoral councils, as determined by the pastor and to read and review these guidelines prior to their agreement to being active candidates.

Section 2. The term or office for all of these members is three years. A Council member may serve two consecutive terms but must allow one year to elapse prior to serving for another term.

- a. In the event that a vacancy occurs among the selected members during the Council year, the existing council shall discern from those previously considered until all vacancies are filled. If a vacancy occurs among the appointed members, the Pastor shall appoint a member to take his/her place.
- b. Of the nine selected members, in order to provide a staggered rotating three-year membership, the first three leaving the board after serving only one year will be determined by lot (with the exception of the Chair or /Vice-Chair – See Article 5, Section 2.) Those leaving the board are eligible to be discerned to be selected members by the current Council to fulfill a new three-year term. (And so on, for the remaining of the first three years of the Council.)
- c. All of the above and on a yearly basis thereafter, the members shall be appointed or discerned by the existing council by December of the year, so that the first Annual Meeting of the Council shall occur during the second week of January of the new year, after having been installed at a parish-wide Mass on the first weekend of the year. The first Annual Meeting shall include the election of officers.

Section 3. Qualifications of Council Members

- a. must be 18 years of age (except for youth representative who must be at least 16 years old) and a practicing member of the parish who prays, regularly attends Sunday Eucharist, and enjoys a good reputation.
- b. must be registered in the parish and not related to any staff member or employee of the parish.
- c. must be dedicated to the mission and spiritual welfare of the parish;
- d. willing to listen and to be open-minded to the ideas of others;
- e. able to voice opinions clearly and offer constructive assessment while respecting different ideas;
- f. willing to work in a group process of prayer, consensus building and planning, using the discernment approach to decision-making.

Article 4 – Officers

Section 1. The Officers are the Chair, Vice-Chair, and Administrative Secretary, who will be elected by the council and approved by the Pastor at its first annual meeting. These three officers constitute the Executive Committee, and all have voice and vote..

Section 2. After a Chair has served one year, the Vice-Chair will become Chair. The past Chair will remain on the Council for the following year in order to maintain continuity.

Section 3. (After the first year) only those members who have served on the Council for one year or more are eligible for the offices of Chair and Vice-Chair All members are eligible for the office of Administrative Secretary.

Section 4. In the event of any vacancy in any office except that of the Chair, the Pastoral Council shall select one of its members to fill the office until the next regularly-scheduled election. In the event of a vacancy in the office of Chair, the Vice-Chair shall automatically succeed and fill out the unexpired portion of the term.

Section 5. Each officer shall, at the expiration of his or her term of office, turn over to his or her successor all books, papers, and other records, pertaining to the office.

Article 5 – General and Specific Duties of the Officers

Section 1. The Chair: The Pastor presides over Council meetings but may delegate the facilitating of such meetings to duly selected Pastoral Council officers, normally to the Council’s Chair. The Chair shall facilitate meetings of the Council, and in consultation with the Pastor, shall call such special meetings as may be necessary. The Chair shall render periodic reports to the Pastor and the parishioners on the completed and projected work of the Council and shall perform all other duties customarily performed by the office of Chair. The Chair shall coordinate and prepare the agenda for all regular meetings of the Council, and make the agenda available to the administrative secretary for mailing prior to the meeting.

Section 2. The Vice-Chair, in the Chair’s absence or in the event of the Chair’s inability for any reason to carry out the functions of the office, shall assume, during such absence or disability, the duties of the Chair. The Vice-Chair shall also perform such other duties as may be delegated by the Chair.

Section 3. The Administrative Secretary shall take minutes of all regular and special meetings of the Council, reduce such minutes to writing, preserve them in a permanent record, and distribute copies of such minutes to all members of the Council and post them on the website within seven working days after the meeting. Additionally, the Administrative Secretary shall distribute copies of the agenda to the council members and post the agenda on the website at least one week prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Article 6 – Specific Roles of the Officers

1. Role of the Pastor:

- a. Consults with the Executive Committee, responsible for the agenda.

b. Presides at Council meetings (Canon Law 536) and actively listens and participates in Council's discussions and deliberations. Ordinarily, he delegates to the Chair the task of Chairing the Council meeting. If the pastor must be absent, a Council meeting will take place as scheduled or the pastor will reschedule at his discretion.

c. When appropriate, assists Council in its deliberations by sharing relevant information or his own perspective on the issue being discussed.

d. The Pastor shall communicate to the Council his response to any recommendation made by the Council. If the Pastor feels that he cannot in good conscience accept and carry out a recommendation of the Council, he shall fully and frankly communicate his reservations with regard to the recommendation to the assembled council.

e. Makes the final decision regarding any course of action, safeguarding the proscriptions of Article 9.

2. Role of the Chair:

a. Consults with the Executive Committee to organize and coordinate the agenda along with any group processes to be used at a Council meeting.

b. Chairs the meetings of the Executive Committee.

c. Chairs all meetings of Council as delegated by the pastor.

d. Makes sure that the Council meeting agenda is sent out at least one (1) week before the meeting.

e. Is the recipient of any agenda items from Council members, staff, other individuals, or organizations within the parish.

f. Participates as an active member of Council in all its discussions.

g. Stimulates and involves all members in discussion and facilitates Council in formulating its goals and methods for achieving them.

h. Leads Council in an annual evaluation of its proceedings and effectiveness

i. Assists in preparing the Vice-Chair to succeed him or her.

3. Role of the Vice-Chair:

a. Consults with the Executive Committee which develops the meeting agenda.

b. Chairs the Council meeting if the Chair is absent or should the Chair want to temporarily assign the Chairing of the meeting in order to participate more fully in the discussion.

c. Assists the Chair in conducting Council's work.

d. Becomes Chair at the end of the term as Vice-Chair.

4. Role of the Administrative Secretary:

a. Consults with the Executive Committee which develops the meeting agenda.

b. Sees to the preparation and distribution of Council minutes and agenda prior to a Council meeting.

c. Is responsible for recording the minutes of all meetings.

d. Maintains roster and attendance records of Council members.

e. Keeps on file, records of Council's history, development, minutes, resolutions and names of members.

f. Serves as directed by Council in the administration of its matters.

g. May request the assistance of a person who is not a member of the council to ensure that the secretary's ability to participate in council discussions will not be limited.

h. Reserves a meeting room on the parish calendar and prepares the necessary physical arrangements for the regular and special meetings of the council.

i. Prepares and files correspondence delegated by the Chair.

j. Receives and files all Council correspondence.

5. The roles of appointed and selected council members; any other parish cleric; lay, pastoral staff members; invited presenters are described in Appendix 1.

Article 7 – Committees

Section 1. In order to promote the spiritual growth of the parish and to carry out the Mission of the church, the Council collaborates with parish committees (ministries, organizations) and other groups that exist in the parish. These parish ministries or groups collaborate with the parish staff in meeting the needs of the parish community and in implementing the recommendations of the Council. Permanent council committees may be established to deal with ongoing areas of responsibility. Ad hoc council committees may be established to address specific tasks and are temporary by nature. Council committees may be established by the pastor and/or the council and/or the executive committee with the approval of the pastor.

Section 2. Any standing or *ad hoc* committees of the Council shall be determined based upon priorities established by the Council.

Section 3. Any committees shall convene meetings as often and at such times as may be necessary, and shall be prepared to render a report on the work of the Committee at all regular meetings of the Council.

Article 8 – Meetings

Section 1. The regular meeting of the Pastoral Council shall be held monthly,

Section 2. A simple majority of members of the Council shall constitute a quorum.

Section 3. In order to provide an atmosphere of trust and confidentiality necessary for the proper functioning of the council, these meetings shall normally be closed. Parishioners are encouraged to voice their needs and concerns to members of the council, who shall present these needs and concerns to the council. Anyone who wishes to present an issue for discussion must provide a written statement of his or her concern to the council Chair or secretary at least 10 days prior to the scheduled meeting. A summary of the major recommendations of the council shall be included in the bulletin, and placed on the website.

Section 4. Special meetings may be called by the Pastor, by the Chair, or at the written request of five members of the Council. Except in cases of emergency, at least three days' notice shall be given of any special meetings.

Section 5. The first meeting held in the second week of January shall be known as the annual meeting, and shall be for the purpose of organizing, electing officers, educating and appointing members to specific committees.

Section 6. Council meetings will be run in an efficient and orderly fashion according to these Guidelines and any supplemental Ground Rules (See Appendix 3).

Section 7. Council strives to work in a spirit of consensus building. The group seeks to reach a point where all feel they can support a proposal, even though some may not totally agree. Reaching consensus requires that the council build good relationships and strives to be an effective work group or team.

Section 8. If, after a reasonable amount of time, the pastor and/or Chair believe that consensus on a particular issue is not possible, one or both may poll the group for a simple majority vote. The pastor and/or the Chair may also determine that a matter is of such importance that a two-thirds majority vote is required. Each member of the council shall be entitled to one vote.

Section 9. The pastor is expected to give due consideration to the advice and recommendations of the Council and not act contrary to such advice without reasonable and justifiable cause. The pastor is not bound by any act or recommendation of the council. (See Appendix 2 for additional options when consensus cannot be reached.)

Article 9 – Appeal Process

Section 1. If the pastor decides after prayer and reflection not to approve a Council recommendation or to withhold implementation, he should express this decision to the council and should give his reasons as fully as possible. If the Council has serious difficulty accepting the pastor's decision, the following procedure should be followed:

a. The Chair may poll the Council members as to whether they wish to accept the pastor's decision;

b. If the Council wishes to pursue the matter, it is placed on the agenda for the next meeting. The pastor and all concerned persons study the issue further and prepare any relevant data or insights.

c. At the next meeting, the Council prayerfully reviews the issue and the additional information provided. The recommendation may be revised in response to what is said. If the recommendation is passed again by two-thirds of the members present and is still not approved by the pastor, the issue can be referred as a *last resort* to the bishop, *providing that the issue in question presents a moral, legal, or serious financial issue*. Either the Chair or the pastor can initiate the referral.

Article 10 – Ratification and Amendments

Section 1. A copy of the Pastoral Council Constitution shall be made available on the website for any parishioner requesting a copy.

Section 2. This Constitution may be amended at any regular meeting of the Council by a two-third's vote and approval of the pastor, provided that a copy of any proposed amendment is furnished to members of the Pastoral Council at least one week in advance of the meeting.

Appendix 1 – Other Roles

1. Role of members:

Envisions parish life in its broad aspects and ministries.

Assists the pastor in his ministry of serving the faith and spiritual development of parish members, families and households.

As a new member, attends the training that will be provided.

Attends and takes part in Council meetings.

Is willing to serve as Vice-Chair immediately or as Chair after one year on Council.

Participates in pastoral planning, Council's principal activity.

Contacts parish members when directed.

May serve as Council's liaison to a commission or organization at the request of the pastor.

Serves as otherwise asked and able.

Has voice and vote.

Will lose membership if absent without cause, as determined by the pastor, for three (3) Council meetings within a year.

2. Role of parish staff (department heads):

Is not a member of Council and thus does not vote but is available to Council as a resource person.

Attends meetings and/or participates in Council's ministry as asked by the pastor or as dictated by issues and needs.

Receives all paperwork such as agenda, minutes, reports, etc. in a timely manner.

May serve as Pastoral Staff's liaison to a ministry or organization at the request of the pastor.

3. Role of an invited presenter:

Addresses Council when recognized by the Chair.

Limits participation to pertinent and topical discussion only.

Does not vote.

Will be excused by the Chair after his/her business is over.

Appendix 2 – Ground Rules

1. After the first year, there will be an annual, spiritual gathering early in January and, prior to it, an Orientation Process for all new members.
2. The Executive Committee will computerize and periodically distribute or e-mail, a 12-24 month-by-month projected work plan. This plan will be referred to in the construction of detailed monthly agendas. The plan will be periodically adjusted.
3. A Council member may have *emergency items only* added to the printed agenda by notifying the Chair by 7:20 p.m. on the meeting night but preferably before the meeting day itself. As a courtesy to the Council, such additions should only be requested for urgent matters.
4. Copies of the agenda will be in members' and department heads' hands seven (7) days before a scheduled meeting. The upcoming agenda and condensed form minutes will be made available to the parish.
5. Minutes are to focus on:
 - discussion summaries
 - resolutions\recommendations
 - pastor's approval\disapproval
 - action steps and achievement time lines.
6. There is no voting on reports at Council meetings. The Chair will simply note: "The report is accepted and will be filed." Any recommendation will be processed by consensus.
7. An issue may be initiated and decided at the same meeting unless the pastor (or Council with his approval) chooses to delay.
8. When consensus is not reached, options include:
 - stopping and praying for a period of time
 - naming the issue
 - if time is a factor, taking a two-thirds or simple majority vote
 - the pastor's taking the lack of consensus under advisement and deciding the direction that needs to be taken
 - taking the proposal back for additional work
 - examining more alternatives and consequences

- tabling the issue until greater consensus can be built for the proposal.

- last resort -- appeal process

9. The Vice-Chair will summarize all action items (Who? What? By when? etc.) at the end of the meeting. The Vice-Chair Summary will be a standard item on the printed agenda.

10. The Chair or any member may request a meeting evaluation before adjournment. This is a brief verbal assessment of the meeting.

11. These Ground Rules are in effect when accepted by the pastor upon recommendation of Council. They may also be amended when approved by the pastor upon recommendation of Council.