

City of Rochester New York  
South East Rochester Catholic Community  
of Blessed Sacrament, St. Boniface and St. Mary's

Parish Pastoral Council Guidelines

I. Purpose

A parish is a definite community of the Christian faithful established on a stable basis within a particular church; the pastoral care of the parish is entrusted to a pastor as its shepherd under the authority of the diocesan bishop (c.515). The community shall include three parishes, namely, St. Mary's, St Boniface and Blessed Sacrament, who have chosen to act cooperatively for the purposes of the formation of their common Parish Pastoral Council, as if they were one parish with three worship sites.

Therefore, for the purposes of this document, the Southeast Rochester Catholic Community (hereafter: "the parish") will be treated as a single parish. As such, because the Southeast Rochester Catholic Community is a community of the Christian faithful, it is essential that the parish structures serve the community in carrying out the mission of the Church:

- 1) to proclaim the Gospel;
- 2) to form community;
- 3) to worship;
- 4) to serve those in need.

The parish organizational structures must never be simply ends in themselves but should always work to promote the mission of the parish, the diocesan Church and the universal Church.

As detailed in the Parish By-Laws, every parish in the Diocese of Rochester is to have a Parish Pastoral Council (hereafter: "The Council"). In the case of the Southeast Rochester Catholic Community of Blessed Sacrament, St. Boniface and St. Mary's, the three legally separate parishes have one collective Pastoral Council. The Council is a consultative body to the pastor (or pastoral administrator).

The specific purposes of the Pastoral Council are:

- 1) to develop a common vision and purpose, actively advocate for the poor and the powerless, and to extend Christian commitment to the surrounding neighborhoods and communities;
- 2) to orchestrate a statement of mission for the parish community and become the reference point for activity in the parish;
- 3) to provide recommendations for parish priorities, directions and policies through pastoral planning for worship, evangelization, outreach, stewardship, etc.;
- 4) to promote communication, understanding, and collaboration among parish organizations and between the parish, the bishop, the diocese and the universal Church.

Pastoral leadership is a ministry of service. Pastoral leadership and authority cannot be separated from the action of service which builds up the community and assists its members to reach their full stature in Christ.

## II. Membership

The Council should reflect parish membership. Members should be inclusive of the demographic realities of the community (e.g. gender, age, minorities, persons with disabling or handicapping conditions, etc.). This does not mean that members represent a particular constituency, but rather that the membership of the Council should reflect the diversity of the parish. There should be a balanced number of representatives from each of the worship sites.

The Council's primary gift is practical wisdom. The Council is made up of parishioners who have a vested interest in the life and development of the parish and want to help the pastor (or pastoral administrator) in this regard. The Pastoral Council is not a group of professionals, expert in catechesis, liturgy, pastoral care or education.

Accordingly, Council members must meet the following criteria:

- 1) be fully initiated Roman Catholics in good standing with the Church;
- 2) be registered and supporting members of the parish;
- 3) be participants in parish life and worship;
- 4) be committed to prayer, study, listening and dialogue;
- 5) be committed to giving the time needed for participation; and
- 6) be aware of and comply with the Parish Conflict of Interest Policy.

In addition, he or she should possess the following gifts necessary for pastoral leadership:

- 1) a desire for spiritual growth in oneself and in the parish;
- 2) eagerness to participate in parish decisions about its direction;
- 3) willingness to listen, speak openly and honestly, and to work toward consensus;
- 4) integrity in articulating what one has heard and what one believes;
- 5) the ability to inspire and empower others and to delegate; and
- 6) cooperation, flexibility and openness with people and ideas.

Parish employees are not members of the Parish Pastoral Council; they support the Parish Pastoral Council. Parish employees should be available as needed to answer questions regarding specific agenda items.

If fraud is suspected at any time, members should contact the Diocesan Fraud Hotline at 1-800-388-7177 x1266; where suspected malfeasance can be reported anonymously if necessary.

### III. Size

The size of the Council should be small enough to allow for and elicit active participation from each member. The complexity of the Council's agenda may be a factor in determining its size.

The Council shall be composed of:

- 1) Ex-Officio Members:
  - a) Pastor
  - b) Parochial Vicar(s)
  - c) One Parish Trustee from each worship site
- 2) Member-at-large:
  - a) Nine adult members of the laity of the parish representing three adult members from each worship site.
  - b) The pastor (pastoral administrator) may in his/her discretion appoint up to three youth members to the parish council, one from each worship site. A youth member is defined as someone between the ages of 14 and 18 and possesses the criteria set forth in this covenant and should possess the gifts for pastoral leadership.

### IV. Term of Office

Terms of Office are three years for adult members and one year for youth members (renewable once) and staggered so Council membership rotates. Council members are not eligible for re-selection to the Council until one year after the completion of their second three- or one-year term.

### V. Selection

- 1) A Selection Committee of not fewer than three Council members will be named by the chair in consultation with the pastor.
- 2) The Selection Committee will:
  - a) Solicit nominations for candidates for members-at-large from the parishioners. Parishioners may nominate themselves or other parishioners.
  - b) Invite nominees to attend an informational meeting and discernment process.
  - c) Ask the nominees to affirm their willingness to be candidates to serve on the Council.
  - d) Present the list of candidates to the Council for review.
- 3) The members-at-large shall be selected by lot during the month of May/on Pentecost Sunday. Additionally, one adult alternate from each worship site and one youth alternate shall be selected by lot.
- 4) The Selection Committee will notify all candidates of the selection results within one week of the selection.
- 5) The members-elect will be installed at the regular June meeting of the Council.
- 6) Following their installation, the new members can, at their discretion, participate in the selection of officers.

Additional members (no more than one-third of the total membership) may be appointed by the pastor (pastoral administrator) as a way to ensure that the Council reflects the larger parish community. In the event of such an appointment, the pastor (pastoral administrator) must explain to the Council the need and reasons for the selection of additional members.

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Other Related Matters:

Attendance

Membership in the Council requires attendance at all regular meetings. Any member with more than one unexcused absence or three absences in a Council year may be dropped from the rolls of the Council upon review and vote by the Council. Any members so dropped may request Council for reinstatement. Reinstatement will be by consensus of the Council.

Procedures for Resignation

In the event that it becomes necessary for a Council member to resign, a letter of resignation addressed to the Council will be submitted to the secretary who will, in turn, place this item on the agenda for action at the next regularly scheduled Parish Pastoral Council meeting.

Vacancy

A vacancy on the Parish Pastoral Council will be filled first from the list of alternates based on worship site. In the event that the list of alternates is exhausted, selection will then be made by lot from those nominees who were willing and eligible to serve in the previous selection process. In the event this list is exhausted, an eligible parish member will be selected by consensus of the Parish Pastoral Council. The person selected will serve for the remainder of the unexpired term, provided such term is more than one year. In the event that the unexpired term is one year or less, the member will have the option of serving one additional three-year term, without submitting to the normal selection process. The Council may, however, by consensus, determine not to fill the vacancy.

VI. Executive Structure

The Council will have an executive structure composed of chairperson, vice-chairperson, and secretary. The chairperson and vice-chairperson will be elected by the full membership of the Council to serve a one-year term from July 1 to June 30 of the following year, with a three year term limit. Currently the Parish Secretary serves as the secretary to the Council. They serve at the pleasure of the pastor (pastoral administrator).

The Executive Committee:

- 1) works with the pastor (pastoral administrator) to develop a work plan for the year. The plan identifies the critical issues facing the Council and estimates when the Council will be dealing with the issue.

- 2) should cooperate with the pastor (pastoral administrator) before each Council meeting to prepare the agenda and design processes for each meeting to facilitate the agenda. The agenda with the date, time and location of the meeting should be sent out in advance. The agenda should include: opening prayer; revision and approval of the agenda; approval of the minutes from the previous meeting; reports; items to be discussed (old and new business) along with recommendations and actions necessary; and planning for the next and future meetings.
- 3) in consultation with the pastor (pastoral administrator) appoints chairpersons of taskforces.

## VII. Pastor (Pastoral Administrator)

The pastor (pastoral administrator) represents the parish in all juridic matters and is charged to administer the goods of the parish according to the norms of the universal and particular Church.

The pastor (pastoral administrator):

- 1) while not normally chairing the meeting, presides at all Pastoral Council meetings and actively listens to the Council's deliberations;
- 2) when appropriate, may assist the Council in developing consensus around a particular issue by sharing information, providing his/her perspectives, and/or identifying common elements or areas of agreement that seem present in the Council's discussion;
- 3) as minister of governance in the parish, is the final authorizer of any course of action;
- 4) should set the context for the Council's discussion by sharing Church teaching and/or setting the parameters for acceptable alternatives;
- 5) is the convener of the executive committee and is ultimately responsible for assuring the Council's effective operation;
- 6) may not dissolve the Pastoral Council without written approval of the bishop.

## VIII. Chairperson

The chairperson, elected by the council membership, is central to the effectiveness of the Pastoral Council.

The chairperson is responsible for:

- 1) organizing and coordinating the agenda in conjunction with the Executive Committee and the processes of the council;
- 2) chairing and facilitating the meetings of the Council (the chairperson may delegate facilitation of portions of the meeting to other members);
- 3) encouraging members and committees of the council to fulfill their specific responsibilities and delegations;
- 4) establishing an ongoing process of evaluation of the council's effectiveness.

The chairperson must be the servant of the group. She/he should be an enabler and facilitator of the council, promoting inclusion and participation, keeping the meetings on track, being sensitive to conflict and helping to resolve conflicts positively.

IX. Vice-Chairperson The Vice-Chairperson:

- 1) assumes all of the above responsibilities in the Chair's absence;
- 2) serves as Chair of the Selection Committee;
- 3) assists the chairperson in providing continuity for the incoming council.

X. Secretary and Minutes

The secretary:

- 1) prepares summaries of the meetings of the Council;
- 2) maintains the membership roster;
- 3) assures the preparation and dissemination of materials for the Council meetings; and
- 4) is responsible for all Council correspondence.

Effective meeting minutes should include:

- 1) Date of the meeting;
- 2) Members who were present, excused and absent;
- 3) Items discussed with special attention to all recommendations of the council and decisions of the pastor (pastoral administrator);
- 4) Open Action Items;
- 5) Date, time and location of the next meeting.

XI. Meetings

The Pastoral Council should meet at a minimum of four times per year. Additionally, the Pastoral Council should determine its annual meeting calendar prior to the fall of each year.

Adequate time should be devoted to Council orientation, Council formation (prayer, community building, etc.), as well as Council business. Some councils hold special meetings for internal planning (setting annual Council goals and objectives), formation (retreats, opportunities to

strengthen the ministerial identity and spirituality of the Council) and education (study of Church documents, skill developments relative to Council work).

For the Council's operations to be effective it is important for Council members to develop an understanding of the components of a successful meeting (clear meeting objectives or outcomes, a realistic agenda and timeframe, consideration of how agenda items will be handled, adequate preparatory material made available in advance, etc.) and to evaluate the meetings from time to time.

## Meetings

- 1) The Council will hold regular meetings during the year between September 1 and June 30 and a quorum must be present to conduct business. The Council has the authority, if deemed necessary, to cancel any meetings during the year, especially during the Christmas and Easter Seasons.
- 2) Regular meetings will be scheduled monthly (excluding July, August and December). A schedule will be distributed to Council members, by the Secretary, prior to the first meeting of the Council year.
- 3) At special meetings, a quorum of the Council must be present, and the business must be limited to that stated in advance in order for it to be a valid meeting of the Council.

## Quorum

- 1) A quorum will consist of a majority of the members of the Council in office at that time with adequate representation from each worship site.
- 2) A consensus of those present is required for approval of each proposal before the Council.

## Ratification by the Pastor

The Pastor will take part in all deliberations of the Council. When, however, in the Pastor's judgment, Church Law, teachings of the Church, or known policy of the Diocese is departed from by a decision of the Council, the Pastor is obliged to take exception to the decision. When he takes exception, he must state the reasons. Council members must consider again all the important aspects of the question. If, after such consideration, two-thirds of the Council vote to appeal the Pastor's decision, the matter is then turned over to the Diocese for settlement by the Bishop using Due Process (Council of Conciliation and Board of Arbitration) that has been set up to handle these questions.

## XII. Pastoral Council Relationship to Finance Councils, Committees and Lay Trustees

Neither the Pastoral Council nor any of three Finance Councils is subordinate to the other; rather they are all consultative and responsible to the pastor (pastoral administrator). While each operates independently of the other, it is imperative to have good communication among them.

Additionally, to ensure proper alignment, all committees should be subordinate to either the Pastoral Council or the Finance Council.

## Parish Trustees

Look at this change

In accordance with Parish By-Laws and New York State Corporation Law, two lay trustees of the three separate Parish Corporations will be recommended for election by the Pastor (Pastoral Administrator) with input from the Parish Pastoral Council and shall be elected by the Ex Officio

Trustees of the Corporation. One Parish Trustee will serve on the respective Finance Councils of the three worship sites, and the Second Parish Trustee will serve on the unified Parish Pastoral Council.

#### Amendments to the Guidelines

Any Council member may propose an amendment to these Guidelines. Such amendments will be reviewed in written form at the next regular meeting of the Council and will take effect upon the consensus of the Council and the consent of the pastor (pastoral administrator).

With the adoption of these guidelines all previous parish documents governing these matters are abrogated, and these guidelines henceforth will govern the operation of the Parish Pastoral Council of South East Rochester Catholic Community of Blessed Sacrament, St. Boniface and St. Mary's in Rochester.

**These Parish Pastoral Guidelines were adopted by the unanimous voice vote of the Parish Pastoral Council of South East Rochester Catholic Community of Blessed Sacrament, St. Boniface and St. Mary's in Rochester at their meeting on October 15, 2018 and amended on by a unanimous voice vote of the same council at their meeting on November 26, 2018.**