

Pastoral Council Norms

Holy Family Parish – Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin

A. Introduction

After the family, the parish is the most important form of community within the diocese. In the parish Christ's faithful are gathered together into one, under the headship of the pastor, who represents the bishop among them. Each parish represents the diocese and, therefore, the Catholic Church throughout the world. The parish faithful assists the pastor in the pastoral care of God's people and in the administration of the temporal goods of the Church.

To this end, the Pastoral Council of Holy Family Parish follows diocesan norms and adapts them to the particular circumstances of the parish according to the parish's mission statement. The parish mission includes welcoming all who seek God's love, striving to worship God with devotion and celebration while fostering spiritual growth, nurturing the parish family while providing a challenging and high-quality Catholic educational program and achieving all this through stewardship, acts of service and utilizing parishioner talents to their greatest potential.

The mission of the Pastoral Council is to assure that the parish can achieve its overall mission as fully as possible by meeting regularly with the pastor to discuss and act on issues that promote the spiritual and physical well being of the parish. The Pastoral Council is, therefore, both a consultative and decision-making body depending on the circumstances under consideration.

B. Membership

1. Members of the Pastoral Council are members of the parish in full communion with the Catholic Church. All members participate in a program of orientation for service on parish consultative bodies.
2. The number of members of the Pastoral Council will be a minimum of ten and a maximum of twelve.
3. Parishioners will elect at least two-thirds of the members. Elections will be during the 2nd quarter of the calendar year.
4. Up to one-third of the members can be appointed by the pastor with special attention to the representation of the different aspects of pastoral work in the parish, and of the different states of life, and social and professional conditions of the parishioners.
5. Membership of the Pastoral Council will be made known to all parishioners.

C. Term Of Membership

1. All members will serve a two-year term, which can be renewed twice.
2. In the case of a vacant pastorate, the members under the previous pastor will assist the Dean and the Diocesan Bishop during the interim. The new pastor is to reconvene a Pastoral Council as soon as possible after his appointment to the parish.
3. The Pastoral Council and the pastor will fill any vacancy on the Pastoral Council as soon as possible through appointment.

D. Meetings

1. The Pastoral Council will meet monthly except for the month of July. The council and the pastor will determine the day and time for meetings.
2. An agenda and any pertinent study materials will be communicated before the meeting.
3. The pastor and a majority of the members constitute a quorum necessary to have an official meeting.

E. Officers and Their Duties

1. The pastor of the parish presides over the Pastoral Council and may designate another person (usually the council president) to act as chairperson.
 - a. The pastor maintains openness to the guidance of the Holy Spirit at all meetings and fosters consultation by seeking the counsel of, and encouraging an understanding hearing of, all members, and by responding, according to his pastoral judgment, to the expressed counsel of the members.
 - b. The pastor maintains the necessary communication between the Pastoral Council and its committees, the parish Finance Council and other parish organizations.
 - c. The pastor may invite non-members to attend meetings as he sees fit.
2. The Pastoral Council will annually at the August meeting elect a member as president, who helps the pastor in his responsibilities for the council. The president will work with the pastor to set meeting agendas and communicate those, and any study materials required, to members about one week in advance of meetings.
3. The Pastoral Council will annually at the August meeting elect a member as vice-president, who will fill in for the president as necessary.
4. The Pastoral Council will annually at the August meeting elect a member as secretary.
 - a. The secretary will record minutes for each meeting, send a copy of them to each member about a week in advance of meetings and make sure they are published on the parish web site as soon as possible after approval.
 - b. If a council operating budget is set the secretary will prepare it for inclusion in the general parish budget and maintain a record of income and expenditures.

F. Responsibilities

1. The Pastoral Council is a consultative body by which the Christian faithful of the parish, together with the pastoral authority in the parish, help foster pastoral activity.
2. The Pastoral Council fulfills its responsibilities by the spiritual growth of its members; by judging the relationship of the pastoral activity of the parish to the real needs and hopes of the parish community; by helping to establish priorities in the pastoral activity of the parish; and by forming policy and developing programs of pastoral activity.
3. A clear distinction between policy formation (the proper work of the Pastoral Council) and administration (the proper work of the pastor and parish and school staff) should be maintained. At the same time, members of the parish staff should offer to the Pastoral Council their knowledge and judgment regarding questions under discussion.

G. Relationship to the Parish Finance Council

1. The parish Pastoral Council and the parish Finance Council are distinct bodies by virtue of their distinct purposes, responsibilities and qualifications for membership on each.
2. To facilitate communication between the two parish councils, it is recommended that, at least periodically, one member of each council attend the meetings of the other council.

H. Committees

1. The following may be permanent members of the Pastoral Council: the Family Life Committee and the Catholic Education Committee.
2. Other committees directed to the pastoral work of the parish can be formed under the auspices of the Pastoral Council.
3. Temporary (or permanent) sub-committees consisting of members of the Pastoral Council can be formed.

I. Finances

The Pastoral Council will review the parish budget as developed by the parish Finance Council for awareness and input.

These policies have been reviewed by the Holy Family Pastoral Council and are approved on this 17th day of January, 2013.

Holy Family Parish Pastor

Holy Family Parish Pastoral Council President