

St. Anthony Pastoral Council By-Laws

Name

The name of the organization shall be "St. Anthony Pastoral Council," hereinafter called Council.

Preamble

The Pastoral Council, drawn from active parish membership and representative of the People of God, is an approved structure by which all members of the faith community assume and exercise their proper responsibility in the mission of the Catholic Church. The following selection from the Documents of Vatican Council II speak of this mission as shared by laity, religious, and clergy in the local parishes:

Like all Christians, the laity have the right to receive in abundance the help of the spiritual goods of the Church especially that of the work of God and the sacraments from the pastors. To the latter, the laity should disclose their needs and desires with that liberty and confidence which befits children of God and brothers and sisters of Christ. By reason of the knowledge, competence or pre-eminence which they have, the laity are empowered -- indeed sometimes obliged -- to manifest their opinion on those things which pertain to the good of the Church. If the occasion should arise, this should be done through the institutions established by the Church for that purpose and always with truth, courage and prudence and with reverence and charity towards those who, by reason of their office, represent the person of Christ. The pastors, indeed, should recognize and promote the dignity and responsibility of the laity in the Church. They should willingly use their prudent advice and confidently assign duties to them in the service of the Church, leaving them freedom and scope for acting. Indeed, they should give them the courage to undertake works on their own initiative. They should, with paternal love, consider attentively in Christ initial moves, suggestions and desires proposed by the laity. Moreover, the pastors must respect and recognize the liberty which belongs to all in the terrestrial city.

Constitution on the Church, 37

The Second Vatican Council, conscious of the responsibility of the laity in this regard, promoted the establishment of councils on the parochial level to cooperate with the priests in the apostolic work of the Church.

Decree on the Laity, 26

Article One: Objectives

As a body of representatives of the People of God in the parish community, the Council seeks:

- A. To *foster* the unity of the parish.
- B. To *assess* adequately, under the leadership of the Pastor, the spiritual and temporal needs of the parish.
- C. To *develop and assure* implementation of a unified program of renewal according to the Second Vatican Council and the teaching and discipline of the Church which will promote the common good of the parish.
- D. To *co-ordinate* all parish activities in a manner that will serve the best interests of the people of the parish.
- E. To *encourage* participation by all members of the parish in the spiritual and apostolic life of the parish.
- F. To *provide* a forum for constructive dialogue among all members of the parish and between the individual parish community and the community at large.
- G. To *promote* programs and activities recommended by the Diocese, as well as by the Council itself.

Article Two: Nature and Role

- A. The Council shall exercise a vital role in the decision-making process on the parish level.
- B. By the decision-making process is meant the open and free dialogue of the Pastor and representatives of the parish community on all matters pertaining to the life of the parish as together they seek a *consensus* of thought and action.
- C. The deliberations and conclusions must take into account, and be in accord with, the requirements of Church teaching and law as well as existing diocesan policy.
- D. The Council shall make decisions by *consensus*. If the President sees that a consensus cannot be reached in a particular case, he/she shall call for a vote. A simple majority of those present shall be required for a decision to be made.
- E. The Pastor assigned to this parish shall retain the ultimate decision-making responsibility within the parish.
- F. Any action by the Council shall become final and binding only when ratified by the Pastor.
- G. The Pastor, before disapproving an action taken by the Council, shall clearly indicate his reasons to the Council.
- H. If two-thirds of the total voting membership of the Council disagree with the Pastor's veto of an action of the Council, an appeal may be made to the Bishop.

Article Three: Membership

- A. The Council shall be comprised of the following voting members:
 - 1. There are between six and nine voting members. Six voting members are elected by the parish; the pastor may appoint up to three voting members.
 - 2. All priests, deacons, and Sisters and shall be non-voting members. These shall not hold office within the Council.
- B. Members must be registered members of St. Anthony Parish.
- C. Members must be at least eighteen years of age by the time they are seated on the Council.
- D. Only one voting member per household will serve on the Council at any one time.

- E. Membership of an elected member shall be automatically terminated when such ceases to be a member of the parish or resigns by written notice to the President.
- F. Any member who is absent from three regular meetings in a calendar year without a valid excuse shall be replaced on the Council.
- G. Staff members will not serve on the Pastoral Council due to conflict of interest.

Article Four: Elections and Officers

- A. Election to membership on the Council shall be in the following manner:
 - 1. The President, with the consent of the members, shall appoint a Nominating Committee of three parishioners whose duty shall be to select at least two qualified nominees for each place on the Council to be filled.
 - 2. Any registered member of the Parish may offer names to the Nominating Committee.
 - 3. A slate of nominees shall be publicly announced two weeks before the elections.
 - 4. Election shall take place after the weekend Mass on a Sunday in April.
 - 5. The Nominating Committee will supervise the election process, count the ballots and report the results to the Executive Board.
 - 6. In the event of a tie, the election shall be decided by drawing lots.
 - 7. Members of the Nominating Committee shall not run for membership on the Council while they serve on the Nominating Committee.
- B. Elected and appointed members shall serve staggered terms of three years.
- C. The newly elected members will attend the May and June Council meetings as observers to familiarize themselves with the procedures of the Council. Terms of membership shall begin July 1.
- D. Any vacancy of an elected member shall be filled by the Council with the approval of the Pastor, for the remainder of the un-expired term. Vacancies shall be filled at the first meeting following such vacancy. The Executive Board proposes two names and the Council elects one of the two to fill the vacancy.
- E. No elected member shall serve more than two consecutive terms; after an interim of one year following active membership, that member shall be eligible for election again.
- F. The Council shall provide training for the new Council members.
- G. "Officers consisting of President, Vice-President and Secretary shall be elected from the Council membership at the June meeting for a term of one year. Council members are not eligible for election to office until after they have served on the Council for one year. Although the new Council members are not eligible to vote on other matters until taking office, they are allowed to vote for the Council officers."
- H. The officers' duties shall be:
 - 1. The President shall sign all documents and instruments requiring the Council President's signature. He/she will also maintain proper orderly procedures at all meetings. He/she will appoint the Chairperson to any committee approved by the Council.
 - 2. The Vice-President shall perform all duties of the President when the President is unable to do so for any reason. He/she shall coordinate public relations for the Council.
 - 3. The Secretary shall advise all members of meetings, record the attendance at the meetings, keep minutes of all meetings, take care of all correspondence, and submit within one week of the meeting a copy of the minutes for the bulletin.
- I. Any vacancy in one of the offices shall be filled for the remainder of the term by an election within the Council at the first meeting following such vacancy.

Article Five: Structure

- A. Standing Committees shall consist of the following:
 - 1. Worship
 - 2. Religious Formation
 - 3. Parish Life
 - 4. Christian Service
 - 5. Evangelization
- B. The Council shall devise a job description for the standing committees.
- C. A representative from the committees shall be present at Council meetings when called by the President.
- D. The Executive Committee shall be composed of the Pastor, Parochial Vicar and the Council's three officers. It shall be responsible for:
 - 1. The appointment of the persons to serve on the standing committees.
 - 2. The preparation of the agenda for all meetings.
 - 3. The calling of executive sessions of the Council.
- D. The Pastor, Parochial Vicar and President of the Council shall be ex-officio members of each standing committee.
- E. The work of the standing committees shall be directed by the Council and all matters of policy should be referred to the Council by the chairperson.

Article Six: Meetings

- A. Regular meetings shall be the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. and are to end by 8:45 p.m.
- B. Special meetings may be called only by the Executive Committee or the Pastor as need arises.
- C. Notice of a special meeting and an agenda should be provided for all Council members at meetings.
- D. Meetings of the Executive Committee shall be held prior to each scheduled Council meeting to prepare the agenda and distribute it to the Council members at the weekend Masses prior to the meeting.
- E. A quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting shall be sixty percent (60%) of the total voting membership of the Council.
- F. Each meeting shall open with prayer and reading and shared reflection on the Holy Scripture or some meditative reading.
- G. All regular Pastoral Council meeting shall be open to any and all members of the parish. Only those parishioners recognized by the chair may speak.
- H. Anyone wanting to place an item on the agenda shall contact a member of the Executive Committee one week prior to the Council meeting. Items and/or individuals not on the agenda will not be recognized.
- I. Copies of the by-laws will be made available to parishioners upon request.
- J. There will be a day of recollection for all Council members once a year.

Article Seven: Amendments

The Council may amend the Constitution and By-laws by a vote of two-thirds of the voting members present at a regular Council meeting. Notice of the proposed change must be presented at the preceding meeting. Each member shall be provided a copy of the proposed amendment. Such amendments shall be sent to the Diocesan Pastoral Center for approval.

Appendix A: Who Should Serve As Parish Councilors?

Parish Councilors are directed to be leaders in the parish community. It is important to set some criteria for service on a Council.

First, *a candidate is to be a person of prayer*, one who sees the value of private prayer for personal growth in Christ and the value of communal prayer for growth in Christ's community of faith and love. This suggests a willingness to spend time in prayer with other council members for the purpose of growing together in love and trust and thereby becoming an example of unity and co-operation to the entire parish, but becoming especially a living sign of the presence of Christ in the community.

A candidate needs some knowledge of what it means to be Church today (shared responsibility). To be Church means that all of God's people (Pope, bishops, priests, religious, laity) share the life of God through and in Christ, and are guarded and guided by the Holy Spirit. It means speaking and listening to one another to discern what the Spirit is saying as necessary to meet the needs of our times.

A candidate needs to also have some knowledge of the history and tradition of the Church, particularly the Vatican II documents -- their purpose, spirit, direction, theology -- or at least, be open to learning about them. This is necessary if one is to recognize that structural reforms without the corresponding spiritual renewal soon become hollow and empty shells. Otherwise, gospel values and genuinely Christian concerns never surface to truly challenge one's Christianity, and councilors become immersed in trivia.

A candidate has a sense of mission -- bringing Christ to people and people to Christ. This implies: *a)* an awareness of shared responsibility for the work of the Church; *b)* a recognition of differing roles and a plurality of ministries within the Body of Christ; *c)* a recognition of and need to use the variety of talents and charisms for the building up of the Church; *d)* a sense of accountability. If the priest's accountability is two-way, i.e., to the Bishop and to the people he serves, a council member ought to be accountable to the pastor and to the people he or she serves.

A candidate ought to be willing to become considerably involved in the parish, in its life and activities, i.e., he or she must be seen. The person who wishes to make no greater commitment in time and energy than attendance at the monthly meetings should not run for council membership. Council members need to be listening to people, which is essential to the dialogue process, and to discover the real issues.

A candidate ought to be able to offer a talent or a skill to council ministry. Often such skills as listening, facilitation, etc., can be acquired through programs offered.

In order to insure that the membership of a council is representative of the parish, it is very important that men, women, minorities and young people are included among the candidates. Age groups and area representatives, if the parish is large, may also be considered. These qualifications would seem to be basic and reasonable eligibility requirements for parish council membership. The parish is thereby enriched by the commitment of such dedicated people, helping to make it a true community of believers who accept the challenge of discipleship.

from *The Call Process*

These by-laws were approved by the St. Anthony Pastoral Council on March 2, 2004 and were sent to the Diocese of San Angelo on March 4, 2004. A verbal approval was given by Fr. Bill DuBuisson on April 2, 2004.