

**CONSTITUTIONS AND BY-LAWS
OF
THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL
OF
ST. MARGARET OF SCOTLAND PARISH
SEAT PLEASANT, MARYLAND**

May, 2017

INTRODUCTION

The Church was founded for the purpose of spreading the kingdom of Christ throughout the earth for the glory of God the Father, to enable all people to share in His saving redemption, and that through them the whole world might enter into a relationship with Christ. All activity of the Mystical Body directed to the attainment of this goal is called the apostolate, which the Church carries on in various ways through all her members. For the Christian vocation by its very nature is also a vocation to the apostolate. No part of the structure of a living body is merely passive but has a share in the functions as well as life of the body: so, too, in the body of Christ, which is the Church, "the whole body . . . in keeping with the proper activity of each part, derives its increase from its own internal development" (Eph. 4:16).

In dioceses, insofar as possible, there should be councils which assist the apostolic work of the Church either in the field of evangelization and sanctification or in the charitable, social, or other spheres, and here it is fitting that the clergy and Religious should cooperate with the laity. While preserving the proper character and autonomy of each organization, these councils will be able to promote the mutual coordination of various lay associations and enterprises.

Councils of this type should be established as far as possible also on the parochial, interparochial, and interdiocesan level as well as in the national or international sphere. #26

Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, Vatican II

MISSION STATEMENT

"We, the culturally diverse Catholic Community of St Margaret of Scotland in Seat Pleasant Maryland, are called to live out together our baptismal commitment to the Person and Mission of Jesus Christ. We love God and one another by:

-A life of worship centered on the Word and Eucharist

-A life of Evangelization: sharing, teaching and the witness of our daily lives

- A life of Service, reaching out to all God's people in their rich diversity, particularity those who are most in need

We accept the Gospel challenge to be in mission in the world around us - to build the Kingdom of God, a Kingdom of justice, light and peace among all God's people.

ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of this body shall be the St. Margaret of Scotland Parish Pastoral Council, hereafter referred to as the Council.

ARTICLE II. RESPONSIBILITY (PURPOSES AND FUNCTIONS)

A. PURPOSES

The parish pastoral council is a consultative body for the pastor. Through reflection, prayer, planning, motivation and support, the parish pastoral Council serves the pastor by helping identify and encourage those ministries or services that are needed for the growth of a living parish community, evaluated and implemented on a regular basis. Thus the pastoral council must carefully consider the needs of the faithful and search within the community to recommend to the pastor ideas and means that will adequately respond to these needs. This responsibility of the parish pastoral council does not diminish the continued

mission and responsibility of the parish as a whole. Each baptized parish member remains responsible in his or her own way for the mission of the parish. In this way, the parish pastoral council is an instrument to help the pastor and the parish better discern, clarify, and communicate its responsibilities for proclaiming the Good News.

B. FUNCTIONS

The main objective of the parish pastoral council is **“to promote pastoral activity that will help the parish achieve its supreme purpose, the salvation of souls.”**

The parish council assists the pastor with discerning and achieving the overall good of the parish and its mission. The work is both contemplative and active. With the pastor, the council practices discernment. Through reflection, prayer, planning, setting goals and priorities it responds to the movement of the Holy Spirit in the life of the parish and to the Bishop’s pastoral vision for the archdiocese. In action, council members take leadership in the coordination, motivation, support, and evaluation of pastoral activities in the parish. Concerned with the overall pastoral development of the parish, the pastoral council will often serve as liaisons to the various parish groups or coordinate the implementation of specific initiatives at the request of the pastor.

ARTICLE III. POWERS

The power of the Council is vested in the pastor with a representative group of the people of the parish, as consultative support. The Council, inspired by the theological principle of shared responsibility and conceived as a ministerial community of faith, has neither canonical nor legal authority, nor does it need such powers to function effectively. The Council receives its formal ecclesiastical legitimacy and mandate from the pastor, who united with the Council, delegates the members of the Council to share with him the responsibility for achieving the pastoral mission of the parish community.

ARTICLE IV. LIMITATIONS

The pastor, consistent with the Roman Catholic tradition, bears the final responsibility for the total parish ministry. He cannot abdicate this responsibility given to him by the Bishop and the Canon law of the Church.

ARTICLE V. OFFICERS AND COUNCIL MEMBERS/RESPONSIBILITIES

OFFICERS

PASTOR-CHAIRPERSON

The pastor is the chair of the council. Since the council is his consultative body, he convenes the council, establishes the council's goals and guards the vitality and dynamism necessary for its proper functioning. Call a special meeting of the council, if he deems it appropriate.

CO-CHAIRPERSON

- a. To assist the Pastor in his tasks as Council Chairperson
- b. To chair all Council meetings and Executive Board meetings
- c. To make special appointments as authorized by the constitution.
- d. To participate as an individual member in Council decisions and activities and strive to make the council active.
- e. To record and distribute agenda that has been put together to all members for next meeting.
- f. To forward an updated Council membership list each year to the Diocesan Commission for the Councils.
- a. To relay notices of the time and place of each meeting to all members.

VICE-CHAIRPERSON

- b. To assume the duties of the Chairperson in the absence of the Chairperson.
- c. To serve on the Executive Board.
- d. To contact members who have been absent for two consecutive meetings concerning their intent to continue as active council members for the remainder of their term.

SECRETARY

- a. To maintain a list of names, addresses and telephone numbers of all Council members, as well as the date their term began and when it expires.
- b. To keep an attendance record of each Council meeting.
- c. To take minutes of every Council and Executive meetings.

- d. To provide copies of the minutes to each member in ample time that they may be read prior to the next Council meeting.
- e. To provide a bound copy of the minutes, at the end of her (his) term, to the new Secretary. The bound copies are to be kept in the parish files and should be accessible to Council members as needed.
- f. To be a member of the Executive Committee.
- g. To keep record of all votes and their ultimate accomplishments.

SERGEANT-OF-ARMS

- a. To serve on the Executive Board.
- b. To maintain the order of Council and Executive Board meetings.

MEMBERS

The pastoral council as an important consultative body for the pastor should reflect the face of the parish and represent the various pastoral activities that are carried out within the boundaries of the parish. The members of the council should be:

- representative of the parish,
- knowledgeable about the faith,
- committed practicing registered members of the parish,
- knowledgeable of the various programs, apostolate, and initiatives of the parish
- committed to the evangelizing mission of the Church.
(See appendix for suggested qualifications)

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Council should propose names to the pastor to serve as an executive committee--consisting of Co-Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary and Sergeant-Of-Arms. The Executive Committee will meet with the pastor and develop an agenda for meetings approximately 3 to 7 days prior to Council meetings. This may be re-evaluated and a different day may be set on a year-to-year-basis.

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

1. Associate Pastors, Parochial vicars and Permanent Deacons are ex-officio members of the pastoral council of the parish to which they have been assigned by the Archbishop. They should give a report to the Council, if warranted, on matters pertaining to the Religious Life and participate in all discussions.
2. "Senior Priests" or "Priests in Residence", Transitional Deacons and head of the Youth Ministry shall not be ex-officio members of the pastoral council but should be extended an invitation to participate at the pastor's discretion.

ROLE OF PARISH/SCHOOL EMPLOYEES

The following should not serve on the parish council:

1. Lay Employees of the parish
2. Lay Employees of the parish school
3. Lay Employees of a school, which participates in a regional school agreement, shall be allowed to serve on the parish pastoral council providing said council is not under the jurisdiction of the regional school's canonical administrator.
4. Permanent Deacons employed by the parish in a position covered by the Archdiocesan Employee Policies and Procedures.
5. Permanent Deacons employed by a school that participates in a regional school agreement, in a position covered by the Archdiocesan Employee Policies and Procedures, wherein the canonical administrator of the school is also the pastor of the parish at which the permanent deacon has received his parish assignment from the Bishop should not serve on the parish pastoral council.

SIZE OF THE COUNCIL

A rightful need for adequate consultation and efficiency suggests that a council not be fewer than six member and not exceed 19 members including the pastor.

All committees and ministries are encouraged to have a liaison present at Parish Council meetings.

TERMS OF OFFICE

LENGTH OF SERVICE

- a. The term of office for each council member, shall be for a period of three years, renewable once. Thus a member could be on the council for six consecutive years with the possibility of returning to the council after an absence of at least one year.
- b. The pastor may appoint ex-officio members from among the parish staff. They are to be appointed annually or re-appointed annually. If elections are to be held, ex-officio members are not part of the slate.
- c. So as to maintain stability and efficiency, it is best that not more than one-half of the members be replaced within a one-year period.
- d. A person who is called to fill a vacancy on the council shall serve the unexpired term and may be re-elected once, independently of how long the previous member had already served on the council.
- e. Youth members of council shall serve either a one or two year term. Youth is defined by ages 14 to 17 years of age.

ARTICLE VI. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS/SELECTION

CONSIDERATION OF THE COMPOSITION OF THE COUNCIL

- Women and men of different age groups and civil status
- People from different walks of life and different racial, ethnic, cultural and social conditions;

Members should be chosen on the basis of their varied expertise in matters worldly regardless of their varied cultures and occupations. Members of the council should be the first evangelizers of the parish always prepared to hear and

share the Good News of God's love with their whole lives in thought, word, and deed.

SELECTION OF MEMBERS

The pastor will develop a list of candidates nominated by the parishioners and within the various ministries. The pastor will speak with each candidate and if suitable and free to serve on the council, the Pastor and Council will appoint new members to the council.

The new council members will be presented to the parish at a vigil or Sunday Mass, and their names published in the parish bulletin and posted on the Council bulletin board.

ARTICLE VII. MEETINGS

- A. The Council shall normally meet monthly, on the second Saturday of each month. However, the council may agree on a different day on a year-to-year basis.
- B. When members are unable to attend a council meeting they are to notify the Chairperson as far in advance of the upcoming meeting as possible
- C. The Vice Chairman shall contact all members who are absent for two consecutive meetings of the council in order to be informed of the reason for the member's absence and his/her intentions for future attendance.
- D. All parishioners are welcome to attend sessions of the Pastoral Parish Council as observers and may make a request, through the Secretary, to attend a Council meeting and may speak when recognized by the chair. Special meetings may be restricted to Council Members only, depending on their purpose.
- E. In addition to, or in place of, Council meetings, the Council may schedule special meeting for such purposes as: Educational, Orientation, Planning, Social and Renewal meetings, for the purpose of strengthening personal and communal spirituality, as well as council interaction.

- F. All meetings are to include a time for prayer and/or reflection. The Council shall appoint members as prayer leader for each meeting, preferably on a rotating basis.
- G. Emergency meetings of the Council may be called at the request of the Pastor, normally with at least five days' notice.
- H. The pastor may call for an executive session when appropriate.

ARTICLE VIII. CONSULTATION

CONSULTATION AND SUGGESTIONS

The ability to come to consensus is one sign of a healthy vital parish.

The following are a few examples of the kinds of consultation that best serve the Pastor:

- The parish council should reflect on and discuss items brought to them by the pastor.
- The Parish Pastoral Council offers their view of how the Holy Spirit is active in the parish.
- Reporting to the Pastor about the events and works of the various apostolate in the parish is one very important function of the Council.
- Taking responsibility for groups of parishioners as communicators and representatives of the parish's ministry is yet another type of counsel that can be offered. In this way, the members serve as vehicles for communicating the work of the council to and soliciting input and ideas from the particular group to which they are assigned.
- The Pastor may desire a council that also implements the plans of the parish in service to the New Evangelization. Successful consultation happens when the efforts of the members are used to aid in the

implementation of the parish's pastoral plan. In some cases leading and a coordinating implementation.

CONSENSUS AS AN EXPRESSION OF COMMUNION

How proposals for the pastor's consideration are to be put forward in the Parish Pastoral Council may differ depending on the nature of the consultation the pastor desires. He may request a vote, or an expression of unanimity. The ability to come to consensus is one sign of a healthy vital parish. Consensus means a uniting of wills for the same purpose.

Members may differ in their opinion about a plan or decision but they unite their will with the rest of the council because they know it is for the good of the parish.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

A synopsis of the meeting should be made available to the parish either in the bulletin or on the parish website. Discretion is important and the synopsis need not be overly detailed.

ARTICLE IX. AMENDMENTS

Council members at a Council meeting can introduce amendments to the constitution and bylaws; however, the amendment(s) is to be submitted in writing and voting on the amendment(s) shall not take place until the next regular meeting. Each amendment to the constitution and bylaws will require a two-third vote of voting members to pass.

ARTICLE X. INTERIM STATUS-OK

A. STATUS

A Council, immediately upon the transfer, resignation, retirement, leave or death of the Pastor, shall assume the status of an "Interim Council."

An Interim Council receives its temporary legitimacy and mandate from the Priest Administrator appointed by the Bishop.

The Administrator shall be a member of the Council and shall assume all the authority and responsibilities normally held by the Pastor.

B. MEMBERSHIP

When the Council reverts to the status of an Interim Council, membership on the Council shall be immediately frozen. All members shall retain their membership with their current responsibilities.

No nominations or elections shall take place until the Council assumes its ordinary status.

The Council shall revert to its ordinary status upon the appointment by the Bishop or Pastor (or Administrator).

C. FUNCTION

During its interim status, the Council shall continue to concern itself with pursuance of parish goals, sensitive to the transitional circumstances of the parish.

The Interim Council shall be available as the representative leadership community of the parish for dialogue, as needed, with the Bishop, the Priests Personnel Office or any other diocesan personnel delegated by the Bishop for matters relating to the future directions of the parish.

ARTICLE XI. OPERATIONS

The Council shall not be considered a church fundraising organization; however, the Council in its normal functioning will be concerned with the financial resources of the parish as they affect the parish effort to achieve its mission.

OPERATIONAL NEEDS

- A. The expenditures incurred by the internal operation and functioning of the Council shall be assumed by the Church as part of the Church budget. These

expenditures shall normally include clerical supplies, printing, registration *fees*, stipends for speakers and consultants, refreshments and other items needed for the effective functioning and development of the Council.

- B. Executive Committee meetings shall consist of the Pastor, Executive committee members and Secretary. Council members who wish to discuss potential items for the agenda should petition the Chairperson as early as possible prior to the next Executive Meeting.
- C. Copies of the Agenda and Minutes of the previous regular Council meeting shall be sent to the Council members prior to the next regular meeting.
- D. The agenda and the full minutes will be made available to any parishioner who requests them in writing, subject to confidentiality and the Privacy Act. A copy of these documents should be posted on the bulletin board as soon after the meeting as possible.
- E. In the event that an item is not placed on the agenda because it was submitted too late for the Executive Committee's consideration, or because the Executive Committee denied the request, it may be placed on the agenda of the Council, by majority vote, during the course of a meeting under new business item.

ARTICLE XII. COMMITTEES AND MINISTRIES

A. STANDING COMMITTEES

There shall be one Standing Committee: Social Justice Committee

B. PARISH MINISTRIES

Parish Ministries are an expression of the parishioners involvement in the parish's desire to assist the community and to assist the Council fulfill the needs of the parish.

APPENDIX

A. THE VOCATION AND MISSION OF THE LAITY

INCORPORATED INTO THE LIFE AND THE MISSION OF JESUS THROUGH BAPTISM, Confirmation and Eucharist, the Laity are full members of the Universal Church. Nourished in the Eucharist, lay women and men are called to go out into the world and carry the message of the Good News; in their homes, on the job and in the world.

The Laity in Baptism have been entrusted with a three-fold charism for evangelization. As members of the universal priesthood of Christ, men and woman are called to offer the daily activity of their lives to God as a sacrifice of thanksgiving—knowing that every gift comes from God. They are to make daily prayer a practice and live conscious that always and everywhere they are in the presence of God. Secondly, lay women and men are called to be prophetic, to give witness in word and in the manner in which they live to the Christian way of life. Thirdly, as a kingly people, the laity are people of hope. Assured of their inheritance, a share in eternal life with Our Lord in heaven they live confidently that God's kingdom will come, they work to make evident in charity the merciful love of the Lord, building communities where the dignity of the human person and the common good is nurtured.

Lay men and women are also called to give of their time, talent and treasure to the parish and to the local Church. In fact, in the Decree on the Laity promulgated at the Second Vatican Council, the Council Fathers wrote, "Their [the laity's] activity within Church communities is so necessary that without it the apostolate of the Pastors is generally unable to achieve its full effectiveness."

B. ESTABLISHMENT OF PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

The Second Vatican Council recommended the structure of diocesan and pastoral councils as one way to establish a working collaboration of Bishop, Pastor and laity. In the Vatican II's "Decree Concerning the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church," it states, "It is greatly desired that in each diocese a pastoral commission will be established over which the diocesan bishop himself will preside and in which specifically chosen clergy, religious and lay people will participate.

The duty of this commission will be to investigate and weigh pastoral undertakings and to formulate practical conclusions regarding them. The Archdiocesan Pastoral Council which consists of lay members of the faithful and religious meets four times per year to provide counsel to the Archbishop of Washington.

C. PARISH PASTORAL COUNCILS, THE CODE OF CANON LAW AND ARCHDIOCESAN NORMS

In the new Code of Canon Law, promulgated by Blessed Pope John Paul II in 1983, it is mandated that every parish have a parish finance council (Canon 537). With regard to parish pastoral councils, it is a decision of the local Bishop. If the bishop establishes parish councils, their purpose is to assist in fostering pastoral activity. The Parish Pastoral Council, over which the pastor presides, assists the Pastor in his pastoral planning for the parish with expert opinion and advice for the good of the Church.

In keeping with the organic nature of the parish as an expression of the local church, united to the Bishop, a pastoral council is not a decision-making body rather it possesses a consultative vote only and is governed by the norms established by the diocesan bishop”(The Code of Canon Law, 511-514). As such, the establishment and on-going work of a pastoral council is normative for parishes in the Archdiocese of Washington

D. SUGGESTED MEMBER QUALIFICATIONS

- Participation at Mass on Sundays and Holy Days, believe or assent to the teachings of the Church,
- A willingness and ability to commit to prayer and study for Council activity and business,
- An ability to be a non-defensive listener and a willingness formation to work towards consensus,
- Support the recommendation of the Council when it is accepted by the Pastor

- Fully initiated member of the Catholic Church and a member St Margaret of Scotland Catholic Church.
- Committed to being prepared for meeting, giving necessary time, and
- Able to maintain confidentiality when necessary.