

St. James Catholic Church Boonsboro, Maryland

Pastoral Constitution



ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of the body shall be St. James Parish Pastoral Council of Boonsboro, herein referred to as "the Council."

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

Section 1

As the collegial, consultative body representing the whole parish community, the purpose of this Council shall be:

- a) To maintain, as individuals and as a body, an active life of prayer and discipleship in response to God's call to ongoing conversion.
- b) To share responsibility with the pastor for the life, mission, and ministries of the parish.
- c) To assist the pastor in the assuring the mission effectiveness of the parish through recommendations and active cooperation in the setting of broad policy directions for the parish.
- d) To act as an authentic representative voice of the People of God; this includes all individuals and groups of the parish community.
- e) To provide an open, honest and respectful forum of communication and dialogue regarding parish affairs and to oversee the organization and operation of committees.
- f) To actively encourage by all available means the engagement of all parish members in the life and ministries of the parish.
- g) To participate, through active cooperation in regional and archdiocesan collegial bodies and events, in the total life and mission of the Church of the Archdiocese of Baltimore.
- h) To collaborate with other religious and civic groups in working for the common good of the broader community of Boonsboro and surrounding neighborhoods.
- i) To take whatever actions it may deem appropriate to fulfill the purpose set forth in Section 1 of this Article.

Section 2

Pursuant to the purpose set forth in Section 1 of this Article, the Council shall perform the following functions in making consultative recommendations to the Pastor:

- a) It shall annually review and reflect on the parish vision statement and mission priorities.
- b) It shall collaborate with the pastor and staff annually to review and update the parish plan, including a statement of the needs and goals of the parish, priorities among such needs and goals, and allocation of personnel, material, and financial resources for implementation.
- c) It shall review and recommend, with changes at its discretion, the proposed annual parish budget prepared by the Finance Committee including proposed budgets from all committee offices, and operations subsidized by parish funds.

Section 2 (continued)

- d) It shall review and recommend, with changes at its discretion, the proposed annual development goals and strategies prepared by the Finance Committee, identifying ways and means of increasing parish income and containing expenditures as well as necessary steps to provide for their practical implementation.
- e) It shall annually review the maintenance and upkeep of parish property and recommend any improvements or expansions to the property which may be deemed necessary, except where the decision in such matters is reserved to the Archbishop.
- f) It shall make recommendations to the Pastor regarding membership of the parish in any civic or professional organizations.
- g) It shall render to all parishioners, from time to time, but at least annually, a full report on the parish's ministries, material, and financial condition.

ARTICLE III – OPERATION

Section 1

The Council shall submit its recommendations to the Pastor in the form of conclusions resulting from the considered reflection and discussion by the Council. Ordinarily, the Pastor's determination regarding any recommendations by the Council is final.

Section 2

The Pastor shall communicate to the Council not later than the next scheduled meeting, a response to its recommendation(s). If the Pastor, for grave reasons of fidelity to the Gospel, obedience to Church or civil law, other serious financial or administrative considerations, or religious/spiritual reasons, feels that he cannot in good conscience accept or carry out the recommendation(s) of the Council, he shall fully and frankly communicate such reservations to the assembled Council.

Section 3

If, notwithstanding the reservations expressed by the Pastor, the Council determines, by two-thirds vote, to sustain its original recommendation(s), and all other means available at the parish level are exhausted and inadequate to resolve the situation, either the Pastor or the Council through its chair may petition the matter at issue to the Vicar Bishop for such action as he may deem fitting. In such instances, the decision of the Vicar Bishop shall be final.

ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP

(By-Laws Article II – Duties of Voting Members)

Section 1

The Council shall consist of no more than fifteen voting members and no fewer than eight. Membership shall be three types; *ex officio*, elective and appointive.

Section 2

Ex officio members of the Council shall include the Pastor, committee chairpersons, and staff person(s) involved in the direct pastoral care of parishioners. Said members shall have full voice in Council discussions but shall have no vote.

Section 3

Elected members of the Council, including youth members, are elected by the parish. Members of the parish at large shall be elected to serve on the Council according to the regulations specified in Article V, ELECTIONS.

ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP (continued)

Section 4

Appointive members of the Council are appointed by the Pastor. The Pastor shall name no more than four (4) lay persons to the Council for a two-year term of office. Such appointments shall endeavor to maintain a proper balance among sexes, ethnic groups, age groups, and areas of knowledge and competence desired on the Council.

Section 5

All members shall serve until their successors are duly appointed or elected and are qualified. No member shall be eligible to serve more than two (2) consecutive full terms. However, they can be elected, or appointed again after at least one (1) year off the Council.

Section 6

Parish lay corporators may serve on the Council as *ex officio* members with full voice, but shall have no vote.

Section 7

Council members with unexcused absences from three (3) consecutive regular meetings shall forfeit membership on the Council. A member will be allowed two (2) excused absences per Council year. The delinquent member will be notified in writing by the Council chair prior to forfeiture of membership. A replacement may be procured according to the procedure specified in Article V, Elections.

ARTICLE V – ELECTIONS

(By-Laws Article I – Election of Members)

Section 1

Parishioners who:

- a) Have attained the age of eighteen years by the date of elections, except youth members;
- b) Are baptized, confirmed, and registered members in good standing of the parish;
- c) Maintain a public posture not inconsistent with Church teaching;
- d) Are contributing members of the parish.

Parishioners meeting the qualifications above shall be eligible to serve on the Council as elected or appointed members. All persons meeting these same qualifications shall likewise be eligible to vote in elections.

Section 2

The Nomination / Election Committee shall be selected in March of each year and shall consist of the Council Chair, Vice Chair, and two (2) members selected together by them. Committee members need not be members of the Council. The committee shall actively seek and identify qualified parishioners and obtain their consent to stand as candidates for the Council. The ideal situation would be to have more candidates than open positions and every effort should be made to cause this to happen.

Section 3

Three new members shall be elected annually to the Council for a three-year term of office. Elections shall be held on the third weekend in May by secret ballot. Results of the election shall be kept by the Parish Council Secretary. In the event of a tie, the candidate shall be chosen by coin toss.

ARTICLE V – ELECTIONS (continued)

Section 4

The Council shall be commissioned annually at a Eucharistic Liturgy following the election and shall take office at the September Council meeting. In the event that a vacancy occurs among the elected membership during the Council year, the person who received the next highest number of votes in the most recent Council election shall be asked to fill out the remaining term of the vacating member; and in the event that he/she declines, the remaining candidates shall be similarly asked, and in the order of the number of votes which each received. If no candidate is available, the Pastor may appoint someone to complete the term.

Section 5

In the case of an appointed member who resigns or is removed, the Pastor shall appoint another person to fill out the remainder of the vacated term.

Section 6

In the case of an elected person who resigns or is removed, the Council and the Pastor shall appoint another person to fill out the remainder of the vacated term.

ARTICLE VI – OFFICERS

By-Laws Article III – Duties of the Officers / Chairpersons

Section 1

Whereas the Pastor presides over the work of the Pastoral Council, the chairing and facilitation of the Council meeting is delegated to elected Council officers. The Officers of the Council shall be **Chair**, **Vice-Chair**, and **Secretary** and will be elected by the Council at the June meeting.

Section 2

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 appoint the chairs of all ad hoc committees of the Council. The Chair shall be an *ex officio* member of all parish committees except the Nominating Committee. The Chair of the Council 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 that customarily devolve upon the office of the Chair, not specifically mentioned herein.

Section 3

The Vice-Chair, in the absence of the Chair or in the event of the latter'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 serves as the Head of the Nomination / Election Committee, as the liaison (point of contact) from the various committees to the Parish Council, and as "keeper" of the Parish's Mission Statement, Goals, and Objectives. The Vice-Chair shall also perform such other duties as may be delegated to it by the Chair.

Section 4

The **Secretary** shall be responsible for maintaining minutes of all regular and special meetings of the Council; preserving them in a permanent record and distributing copies of such minutes, along with the agenda for that meeting, to all members of the Council at least one week prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting. The Secretary shall ensure that copies of the minutes are made available for all parishioners. The Secretary shall forward in writing to the Pastor all council resolutions and recommendations. The Secretary shall prepare and send out all correspondence necessitated by the work of the Council and shall maintain permanent files of such correspondence.

ARTICLE VI – OFFICERS (continued)

Section 4 (continued)

The Secretary shall also prepare notes to appear in the parish bulletin pertaining to the work of the Council, as well as any other publicity material that is desired for use in various media. The Secretary shall be assured of support and assistance from the parish staff in carrying out these duties.

Section 5

In addition to the officers named above, two (2) members of the Council shall be designated by the Chair and Pastor as liaisons from the Parish to the Regional Council. These representatives shall maintain regular communication between the Parish and Regional Council. Should a council member hold office on the Regional Council when the Parish council term expires, that member shall still represent the Council on the Regional Council until the next Regional Council election. At that time, the member shall be replaced by a newly designated representative.

Section 6

In the event of a vacancy in any office except that of the Chair, the Council shall elect someone from among its own membership to fill the office, until the next regularly scheduled election. In the event of a vacancy in the office of the Chair, the Vice-Chair shall automatically succeed and fill out the unexpired portion of the term.

Section 7

Each officer shall, at the expiration of his/her term of office, turn over to his/her successor all books, papers, and other records and property pertaining to the office not later than ten (10) days after said expiration.

ARTICLE VII – EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Section 1

The Executive Committee shall be composed of the officers of the Council and the Pastor.

Section 2

The Executive Committee shall carry out the duties defined in Article IV Section 4 (a) of the By-Laws.

ARTICLE VIII – PARISH MINISTRIES AND CORRESPONDING COMMITTEES

Section 1

The Parish shall be organized by ministries that are supported by corresponding committees, organizations and groups. The ministries shall be: (1) Liturgy, (2) Evangelization, (3) Religious Education, (4) Stewardship, and (5) Service. The Council, in consultation with the Pastor, shall appoint a coordinator for each respective ministry and establish supporting committees, organizations and groups that shall have such powers as may be delegated to them by the full Council and Pastor. Because of its canonical importance, the Finance Committee (Stewardship) shall be named in consultation with the Pastor or may be appointed in full by the Pastor.

Section 2

The ministry coordinators shall be responsible for overseeing the successful implementation of the mission, goals and objectives of the committee(s) under its purview.

**ARTICLE VIII – PARISH MINISTRIES AND CORRESPONDING
COMMITTEES (continued)**

Section 3

The Council Chair, in consultation with the Executive Committee, may create any special or ad hoc committees, which may from time to time be deemed necessary, and to designate the members thereof.

ARTICLE IX – COMMITTEE DUTIES

Section 1

Each ministry shall have one member from the various committees, organizations, groups attend the Pastoral Council meetings for representation. If this person is not the chair or head, he/she shall actively collaborate with the chair or head to facilitate timely and appropriate communication with the Council.

Section 2

Each committee shall present to the Council, written or oral reports when requested. Each committee shall meet as necessary (but at least quarterly), to implement the work of the Council and shall report to the Council the progress or limitation of such work as required over the course of the year.

Section 3

Each committee shall be responsible for submitting a budget estimating its overall annual expenses as well as estimates of any annual income derived from fundraising activities, fees or other means to the Chair of the Finance Committee in February.

Section 4

The chair or head of each committee, organization, and/or group shall submit the names of all members to the Council for review and publication, if deemed appropriate. This shall be done no later than the scheduled meeting following their appointment.

Section 5

The chair or head of each committee, organization, and/or group shall see they are (1) provided a written vision/mission statement outlining its function in cooperation with any staff persons associated with them and (2) shall be responsible for submitting an annual plan; including financial requirements, to the appropriate ministry coordinator.

Section 6

The chair or head of each committee, organization, and/or group shall submit an annual review of their work in conjunction with the Council's annual planning effort so it can be included in the Pastoral Council's Annual State of the Parish Report.

ARTICLE X – MEETINGS

Section 1

The regular meeting of the Council shall be held on the third Tuesday of September, November, January, March, May and June, unless another day is selected with advanced notice and agreement upon a majority of the members.

Section 2

The meeting held in the month of September, shall be known as the annual meeting, for the purposes of receiving reports, and for any other business that may arise. Any such matters left unfinished at the adjournment of the annual meeting shall constitute the first order of business at the next regular meeting.

ARTICLE X – MEETINGS (continued)

Section 3

The Council shall present the Pastoral Council's Annual Report to the Parish in the month of January.

Section 4

Special meetings may be called by the Pastor, the Chair, the Executive Committee, or at the written request of a simple majority of the members of the Council, the purpose of which shall be stated in the call. Except in cases of emergency, at least five (5) days notice shall be given.

Section 5

Regular meetings of the Council shall be open to all parishioners as observers. It shall be left to the discretion of the Executive Committee as to whether any special meetings shall be open.

Section 6

A simple majority of the voting members of the Council shall constitute a quorum. A simple majority vote shall be necessary to carry any motion (except where 2/3 is necessary) before the Council.

Section 7

Chairpersons of the committees shall attend Council meetings or send a representative from their committee in the event they cannot be present at the Council meeting. Such representatives shall report for their Chairpersons the highlights of their monthly Committee Activities Report (CAR).

ARTICLE XI – AUTHORITY AND DECISION MAKING

Section 1

In matters of serious consequence to the parish community, the Council shall make every effort, in union with the Pastor, to arrive at a decision through consensus. Every member of the Council must be involved in the consensus building process and is urged to speak to the assembled Council his or her consent or reservations regarding the matter under discussion. The discussion must continue, addressing any reservations until every member is either in favor of the decision or is willing to support the decision even though it may not be the preference of the individual. However, if a consensus cannot be reached, a two-thirds vote of the members present shall be required for a decision.

Section 2

In all other matters not requiring a consensus decision, the rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the Council in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with this Constitution and any special rules of order the Council may adopt.

Section 3

The Chair of the Council may appoint a parliamentarian, who need not be a member of the Council, to assist and advise in presiding at all meetings.

ARTICLE XII – RATIFICATION AND AMENDMENTS

Section 1

The draft of this Constitution shall be made available to all parishioners. Its approval shall be by Pastor and ratified by the Council.

Section 2

This Constitution may be amended at any regular meeting of the Council by a two-thirds vote of the membership of the Council.

- a) Proposed amendments to this Constitution shall be submitted in writing to the Council at any regular meeting and voted on at the next regular meeting or at a time agreed upon by the Council.
- b) The Chair shall appoint a committee to review the amendment. The committee shall mail a written report on its recommendations to all Council members two weeks prior to the next regular meeting.
- c) The Council shall review the amendment and committee recommendations and shall approve or disapprove said amendment.
- d) A copy of the final document shall be placed in a permanent file with the Pastor and all members of the Council shall be given an updated final copy version as well.
- e) The Constitution and By-Laws shall be posted on the St. James website and bulletin board along with a notice of changes.