

SAINT ELIZABETH ANN SETON PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I. PURPOSE AND FUNCTION

Section 1. The Parish Pastoral Council shall be the instrument through which a representative body of the People of God (Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish), in a relationship of shared responsibility with the Pastor, enables the parish to experience itself as a community of faith called to proclaim the Good News of God's Kingdom present among us.

Section 2. The Parish Pastoral Council shall strive to fulfill its purpose by:

- a. acting as a liaison between the Pastor and his parishioners
- b. discerning the personal, material and spiritual needs of the parish as well as how to deal with them
- c. displaying leadership within the parish
- d. encouraging and motivating parishioners to become more involved in parish life
- e. helping to foster an atmosphere conducive to worship and fellowship within the parish
- f. taking an active interest in the lives of the parish, diocese, local community and universal Church

ARTICLE II. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Every person who is a fully initiated practicing Catholic over the age of 16 (and is a registered member of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish) shall be eligible to serve as a member of the Parish Pastoral Council.

Section 2. The Pastor and/or Associate Pastor or Deacon shall be members of the Parish Pastoral Council.

Section 3. The Parish Pastoral Council shall also include twelve (12) members who are nominated at large by the parishioners according to the nomination policy of Article III.

ARTICLE III. NOMINATIONS/SELECTIONS AND TERMS OF OFFICE

Section 1. Nominations to the Parish Pastoral Council shall be held annually. Four (4) new members shall be selected at that time through discernment/lots.

Section 2. The term of office of all selected members to the Parish Pastoral Council shall be three (3) years. Members shall be replaced on a staggered basis (4 members per year). A member may serve no more than two consecutive terms. Members may accept a nomination after a one year absence.

Section 3. In the event of a vacancy with an unexpired term of more than six (6) months, the Parish Pastoral Council shall discern through consensus who among those not selected by lot in the previous selection process will be asked to serve out the remaining term. If the unexpired term is less than six (6) months, the vacancy shall remain unfilled until the next regularly scheduled selection process. Details may be found in Article VIII.

ARTICLE IV. OFFICERS

Section 1. The Parish Pastoral Council shall be presided over by the Pastor or his delegate. At the first meeting of the Council following the selection process, members shall elect a Chairperson and Co-Chairperson from their own membership. The Chairperson shall be selected through process of consensus from among those members who are currently serving in at least their second year of service on the Council. A Co-Chairperson shall be selected by the same process from among any of the remaining members. These officers, together with the Pastor, shall constitute the Agenda Committee.

Section 2. The Chairperson shall have the following duties:

- a. convening and chairing all meetings of the Council
- b. overseeing all activities of the Council
- c. convening the Agenda Committee in order to prepare Council's meeting agenda
- d. convening the Council when special assistance or decisions are required on parish business

Section 3. The Co-Chairperson shall have the following duties:

- a. chairing meetings in the absence of the Chairperson
- b. assisting the Chairperson in overseeing the Council's activities
- c. succeeding the Chairperson in case of resignation or disqualification

Section 4. The Pastor shall preside over the Parish Pastoral Council by:

- a. making certain that the Council's concerns reflect the Church's entire mission
- b. enabling the Council to build a community of faith and trust among its members, and ensuring that they have adequate training
- c. assisting in formulating the Council agenda
- d. participating in dialogue that leads to formulation of policy
- e. serving as chief administrative officer of the parish
- f. executing the policies formulated by the Council

ARTICLE V. COMMISSIONS

Section 1. The Parish Pastoral Council shall be assisted in its duties by parish committees, boards and organizations which are categorized within five (5) Commissions:*

- a. education
- b. parish life
- c. spirituality/worship
- d. social justice concerns
- e. stewardship and administration

Section 2. A Parish Pastoral Council member shall serve as a liaison to each parish Commission.

Section 3. Within each Commission, committees shall be established to assist in accomplishing the objectives for each area.

Section 4. Committees, boards and organizations within a particular Commission shall determine their specific objectives in accord with the goals and directives of the Parish Pastoral Council and diocesan policy-making bodies.

Section 5. A brief summary report (scheduled in advance) shall be submitted to the Council on the activities and proposals of committees, boards and organizations by the Commission Chair or representative on an as-needed basis.

Section 6. Special *ad hoc* committees may be established from time to time to meet specific objectives by agreement of Council membership. Such committees will be established as defined by the Council.

ARTICLE VI. MEETINGS

Section 1. Regular meetings of the Parish Pastoral Council shall be held monthly.

Section 2. Other meetings of the Council may be called by the Chairperson upon written or verbal notice being given to all members at least 48 hours prior to the date of the meeting.

Section 3. Council meetings shall be open to all members of the parish.

Section 4. If a member of the Parish Pastoral Council misses three (3) meetings during the "Pastoral Council term year", it shall result in an automatic dismissal (unless such absences were determined by the Chair to be excused).

ARTICLE VII. DECISION-MAKING

Section 1. The decision-making process of the Parish Pastoral Council shall be by consensus.

Section 2. A minimum of two thirds (67%) attendance of Council members shall be required for a quorum.

Section 3. The Pastor shall "ratify" the decisions and actions of the Council by his participation in all discussions which are leading toward a consensus. He should express his reservations or cautions during the evolution of the discussion and not after a

consensus has been reached. The Pastor's role is to assure that decisions adhere to the following criteria:

- a. faith or morals
- b. general Church law
- c. diocesan policy as established by the Bishop and duly recognized boards and commissions with which he shares responsibility
- d. pastoral and administrative needs of the parishioners
- e. general good order of the parish

ARTICLE VIII. MEMBERSHIP DISCERNMENT

Section 1. Membership on the Council is a ministry. Thus, members shall serve the needs of the community, be accountable to that community, and be in the public eye and public spirit of that community. Members are as the New Testament defines Ministers – a service offered in genuine love for the common good in the name of the Lord.

Section 2. Two (2) months prior to Council selections, the Council Chairperson, in consultation with the Pastor, shall appoint a Nomination Committee.

Section 3. The Nomination Committee shall establish a process to elicit names. When such a list has been established, the Committee will contact the proposed nominees to affirm their interest in serving on the Council.

Section 4. Selection of candidates shall be by discernment/lots of all those involved.

Section 5. The Formation process that leads to Parish Pastoral Council membership discernment is as follows:

- a. Parish Pastoral Council Inquiry – a time of discovery
- b. Parish Pastoral Council Formation – a time of enlightenment
- c. Parish Pastoral Council Discernment – a time of ministry evaluation (Lots will be drawn if there are more candidates than openings)
- d. Parish Pastoral Council Commitment – a time of ministry commitment

ARTICLE IX. AMENDMENTS AND REVISIONS

Section 1. This Constitution may be amended and/or revised at any regular or special meeting of the Parish Pastoral Council.

Section 2. Amendments and revisions must be presented to all members of the Council in writing at least ten (10) days prior to any meeting. Any amendment or revision submitted to the Council shall be discussed at the meeting in which it is presented and can only be approved by consensus at the next regular meeting.

Note: Each Parish Pastoral Council shall develop its own by-laws to accompany the articles of its Constitution. These by-laws must be in conformity with the diocesan Parish Pastoral Council guidelines.

Approved and promulgated by:

Revised December 1, 2009

Reverend Douglas Mayer, Pastor
& the Parish Pastoral Council

* Committees, boards and organizations within a particular Commission will vary according to the size and needs of the parish community (and shall be determined locally) but should be related to one of the five Commissions listed in Article V, Section 1.