

BY-LAWS FOR THE SAINT FRANCIS XAVIER PASTORAL COUNCIL

ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this body shall be the Saint Francis Xavier Pastoral Council, hereinafter referred to as “the Council”.

ARTICLE II - PURPOSES

Section 1. The purposes of the Pastoral Council shall be:

- a) **Priorities & Planning** To determine priorities and plan with vision for the future.
- b) **Implementation** To ensure that programs and activities of the parish are carried out by Commissions.
- c) **Involvement** To involve everyone in the work of the parish.
- d) **Shared Decision-Making** To enable as many people as possible to contribute to the process of decision-making in the parish.
- e) **Cooperation with Diocese** To cooperate with diocesan departments and through the Deanery Cluster with other parishes and to carry out its work according to the priorities of the Diocese and under its guidance.
- f) **Contribution to Diocese** To contribute to the formulation of diocesan goals and programs.

ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Categories

- a) Any registered member of the parish, eighteen years of age or older, is eligible to be a member of the Council. This minimum age limit need not apply to youth representatives chosen according to local custom.
- b) The Pastor and Parish Catechetical Leader are ex officio members of the Council. Of the two, only the Parish Catechetical Leader has full voting privileges.
- c) At least nine members of the Council shall be selected by the parish, one-third of these being elected each year.
- d) Up to two persons may be appointed by the Pastor to the Council, in order to ensure a balanced representation from all groups in the parish, especially youth.

Section 2. Tenure

- a) The term of office for elected or appointed members shall last for three years.
- b) No selected or appointed member shall serve more than two consecutive terms, after which the member will be ineligible for one year. An appointment to fill a vacancy shall be counted as a term.
- c) Any selected or appointed member absent for three consecutive, regular meetings without having notified the chair in advance of the meeting shall lose his or her membership on the Council.

Section 3. To fill a vacancy on the Council the existing members shall appoint a qualified person to complete the unexpired term.

ARTICLE IV - ELECTIONS

At the regular meeting held in March, the Council shall appoint three persons, with their previous consent, to serve as a Nominating Committee. The duties of this committee are:

- a) to prepare a slate of candidates to be voted upon by the entire parish. The ideal number of candidates shall be at least twice the number of vacancies, although for serious reasons the candidates could be less numerous provided they exceed the number of vacancies.
- b) to inform potential candidates of what the Council is and how it operates before obtaining their consent to run as candidates
- c) to conduct the election according to Council policy.

ARTICLE V - THE PASTOR ON THE COUNCIL

(The roles listed below apply only to the Pastor's relationship to the Pastoral Council. They do not attempt to describe the Pastor's many other responsibilities toward the parish.)

Section 1. As one of the People of God, the Pastor joins with the other members to make the Council a special family of persons bound together in friendship and support, personal sharing and mutual respect.

Section 2. As the spiritual guide of the parish, the Pastor calls for the work of the Council to grow from the action of the Holy Spirit. Through common prayer with the other members and a tone of gentle presence to the Spirit, the Pastor helps the Council see all their work as a spiritual service.

Section 3. As the leader of the parish, the Pastor brings a sense of vision and direction to the Council. The Pastor calls for professionalism in the planning and conduct of programs, affirms the gifts parishioners have received for the common good of the Church, and by enthusiasm and care motivates people to be involved and responsible.

Section 4. Other members of the Pastoral Staff, according to their responsibilities in the parish, should share in this role of the Pastor.

ARTICLE VI - OFFICERS

Section 1. The officers of the Council shall be a Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary.

Section 2. The members of the incoming Council shall, at their first meeting after the election, vote among themselves for the three officers specified in Section 1 above. After nominations, voting shall be by secret ballot. The majority vote of members present shall determine the winners. Each office shall be taken individually, to permit candidates not selected to be nominated for another office.

Section 3. An officer of the Council should not normally serve as a commission chair. If necessary, however, the Vice Chair or Secretary may, with Council approval, serve as chair of a commission until the next regular election.

Section 4. The duties of the Chair focus upon the effective operation of the Council (while the Pastor's role focuses upon the whole parish). The duties of the Chair are:

- a) to facilitate at all meetings
- b) to work closely with the pastor in discharging the following responsibilities:
 - 1) to call special meetings
 - 2) to appoint, after consulting the Council, the chairpersons of Pastoral Council Commissions and the members of special committees
 - 3) to develop the agenda for all Council meetings
- c) to monitor the progress of programs being carried out through the Commissions

- d) to ensure that each Council member, except the officers, serves on a Commission.
- e) to continue to attend a minimum of four meetings in the year following term expiration, as Immediate Past Chair, in an advisory non-voting capacity, in order to ease the transition of leadership.

Section 4. The duties of the Vice-Chair are:

- a) to assume the duties of the Chair in their absence or at their request
- b) to work with the Chair in monitoring the work of the Commissions.

Section 5. The duties of the Secretary are:

- a) to keep accurate minutes of the Council meetings
- b) a week prior to the next Council meeting, to communicate in written format, the following materials to the members:
 - 1) minutes of the last Council meeting
 - 2) agenda for the next meeting
 - 3) any pertinent background information
- c) to be responsible for all correspondence of the Council.

Section 6. Vacancies

- a) If a vacancy occurs in the office of chair, the vice-chair will assume the office and serve the remainder of the term.
- b) If a vacancy occurs in the office of the vice-chair or the secretary, a successor should be selected from among the Council members to serve the unexpired portion of the term.

ARTICLE VII - COMMISSIONS

Section 1. The Standing Commissions of the Pastoral Council shall be: Church Life, Worship and Spirituality, Faith Formation, Social Justice and Peace, Family Life, and Finance and Administration. They should always strive to work with persons who have professional competence in the areas being addressed by a Commission.

Section 2. The responsibilities of the Church Life Commission are:

COMMUNITY SPIRIT	To assist in making the parish a community in which persons can come to know one another, to share their lives and concerns, and to find support for their faith.
COMMUNICATION	To ensure good communications among all groups in the parish and to provide effective publicity for parish events.
ECUMENISM	To initiate and support the growth of mutual understanding and common action among the different Faiths.
REACHING OUT	To maintain active programs of reaching out to non-practicing Catholics and the unchurched.

Section 3. The responsibilities of the Worship and Spirituality Commission are:

SACRAMENTAL PRAYER	To plan the celebration of the sacraments, especially the Sunday Mass, with great care, so that they are occasions for communal prayer that nourish and uplift the assembly.
TEACHING PRAYER	To teach people how to pray, including the nature of prayer and the steps in its growth.

PRAYER THROUGH THE DAY	To encourage people to pray the Liturgy of the Hours with understanding and devotion.
RETREATS	To nourish the faith of parishioners in retreats, days of recollection, devotions and other programs of spiritual enrichment.

Section 4. The responsibilities of the Faith Formation Commission are:

TEACHING THE FAITH	To develop for every age group in the parish a religious education program of high quality, that transmits the teachings and customs of the Church.
TEACHING THE BIBLE	To teach everyone to read the Bible with understanding and fidelity.
PREPARATION FOR THE SACRAMENTS	To have good programs of catechesis for individuals and their families who are about to celebrate the sacraments.
SUPPORT FOR CATECHISTS	To offer workshops, meetings, spiritual enrichment and Social events.

Section 5. The responsibilities of the Social Justice and Peace Commission are:

EDUCATION ABOUT JUSTICE	To educate the parish in the teachings of the Church on social justice and in the ways that work for social justice forms an essential part of being a Christian.
EDUCATION ABOUT PARTICULAR ISSUES	To educate the people about particular problems of social justice and peace in their parish and about other social issues of wider concern.
OUTREACH	To investigate and coordinate the parish response to problems of social justice on the local, national, and global levels, especially to the needs of the poor, the sick, the oppressed and the imprisoned.

Section 6. The responsibilities of the Family Life Commission are:

MARITAL PREPARATION	To provide for those about to enter marriage, prolonged and substantive training in the dynamics of marital life and in the theology of marriage.
FAMILY ENRICHMENT	To offer a variety of programs that support and encourage the growth of family life, especially in the areas of communications, the sharing of self, and the spirituality of the family. These programs should also reach out to single parent families, the widowed, separated, and divorced persons.

Section 7. The responsibilities of the Finance and Administration Commission are:

PARISH PROFILE	To maintain an accurate profile of the parish, especially in the areas of population, economy, changing neighborhoods, and industrial growth or decline.
FINANCIAL EDUCATION	To educate the parish about financial priorities and needs.
FUND RAISING	To stimulate greater financial responsibility by the members of the parish.
BUDGET PREPARATION	To prepare the annual budget for the coming year.
FINANCE ASSISTANCE	To assist in the following matters: construction and repairs, disbursement of funds, the preparation of quarterly and annual financial reports, and the Catholic Charities Appeal.
PLANT MAINTENANCE REPLACEMENT	To provide necessary information for the maintenance and the replacement of the physical plant.

Section 8. Each member of the Council except the officers shall serve on one of the Commissions, but not on more than one.

Section 9. The chairpersons of the Commissions should be chosen for their competence and leadership abilities. It is not necessary that they be chosen from the Council membership; they may be taken from the parish at large. The Chair should choose the chairpersons. The Chair should work closely with the Pastor in making these selections, and may also consult the Pastoral Council.

Section 10. The chairperson of each Commission shall be free to recruit for his or her Commission parishioners who are not members of the Council. These parishioners should make up the great majority of each Commission.

Section 11. Each Commission should meet at least once between the meetings of the Council.

Section 12. All Commissions and committees are accountable to the Council and may only implement programs that have been previously approved by the Council either in the Pastoral Plan or through subsequent action.

Section 13. For the sake of accuracy, and to assist the Council Secretary, written reports of the Commission meetings should be prepared for the Council.

ARTICLE VIII - COUNCIL MEETINGS

Section 1. All meetings of the Council shall be open to the parish. Meetings shall be publicized in advance.

Section 2. Regular meetings of the Council shall normally be held monthly or as determined by the Council.

Section 3. With the agreement of the Pastor, special meetings may be called by the Chair or any four members of the Council acting jointly.

Section 4. More than half of the full membership of the Council must be present for the Council to have a meeting.

Section 5. The order of procedure at Council meetings shall be a matter of Council policy.

Section 6. The Council should strive to make its decisions through consensus (a decision to which all the Council members agree, even the few who do not endorse it fully). However, the Council may pass motions by majority vote, if necessary.

Section 7. As the Council conducts its business, the Pastor expresses opinion on the items, preferably toward the end of the discussion. As in Article III.1.b., the vote of the Pastor is not included in the motion.

Section 8. Since the Council serves in an advisory capacity, all decisions of the Council become authoritative, or final, only with the assent of the Pastor.

ARTICLE IX - DUE PROCESS PROCEDURE

Should there be a dispute between the Council and the Pastor, there first should be a sincere attempt at resolution through dialogue and prayer within the parish. If the dispute cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the parties involved, it may be appealed to the Dean by the Council or by the Pastor.

ARTICLE X - AMENDMENTS

These by-laws may be amended at any regular meeting of the Council by a two-thirds vote, provided that the proposal to amend was submitted in writing at the previous regular Council meeting.