

# **ST. MARY'S VISITATION PARISH ELM GROVE, WISCONSIN**

## **PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL CONSTITUTION**

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

We, the people of St. Mary's Parish, form a community of disciples dedicated to a shared faith and common life which exemplifies the life works, and teaching of Jesus Christ as reflected in the Sacred Scriptures and the Roman Catholic Tradition. Our parish life and mission are to proclaim the Gospel, to foster and strengthen the faith, and to evangelize. Our covenant of discipleship with Jesus Christ is fulfilled through worship, education, and service.

### **ARTICLE I: NAME**

The name of this organization shall be St. Mary's Parish Pastoral Council, hereinafter referred to as the "Council."

### **ARTICLE II: PURPOSE**

- Section 1:** The Council shall strive to unite all members of the parish in a community of prayer, leadership, service and pastoral action.
- Section 2.** The Council shall develop and maintain a parish mission statement which embraces the total life and mission of the parish: word, worship and service.
- Section 3.** The Council shall engage in a continuous process of pastoral planning which takes into consideration the needs of its own parishioners and the needs of the archdiocese, the broader community and the world.

### **ARTICLE III: SCOPE**

- Section 1.** The Council shall be the policy formulating body in all matters of the parish,

including but not limited to spiritual, educational, social and financial concerns, except to the extent limited by faith and morals, church or civil law or archdiocesan policy/norms. **The Parish Finance Council has oversight of the Parish Endowment, a separate corporation.**

**Section 2.** In any case where any member of the Council interprets an action of the council or any of its committees to be outside the limits set forth in Section 1, such member shall present such interpretation no later than the next meeting of the Council and ask for reconsideration. Pending consideration, the effect of the action shall be suspended.

**Section 3.** In any case where reconsideration has failed to resolve the matter, any Council member may then take the matter to the Office of the Archbishop or one appointed by him, for clarification or arbitration. Any decision resulting from such an appeal shall be final. In the meantime, the effect of the action shall remain suspended.

#### **ARTICLE IV: MEMBERSHIP**

**Section 1:** The Council shall be comprised of 13-16 members, all of whom must be baptized, practicing Catholics, at least 18 years old, registered members of the parish, and participants in the parish worship life, especially Mass and the sacraments.

**Section 2.** The Council shall have the following ex-officio members: the pastor, the associate pastor, and the two lay trustees. Ex officio members participate fully and equally in all Council decisions.

**Section 3.** 9 at-large members shall be selected from and by the membership of the parish 18 years of age or older. Each year 3 will be selected. A potential number of 3 members will be selected through the 3 committees of the Council annually.

**Section 4.** The term for at large members shall be three years and shall be limited to two consecutive terms. Committee chairs will be selected annually and limited to three consecutive years. The new members shall begin their terms with the conclusion of the annual transition meeting.

#### **ARTICLE V: OFFICERS**

**Section 1.** The officers of the Council shall be a chairperson, a vice-chairperson and a secretary. They shall be selected by and from the at large members of the Council at the annual transition meeting. They shall serve for a one year term beginning with the conclusion of the transition meeting. Ex officio members of the Council are ineligible to serve as Council officers or committee chairpersons.

**Section 2.** The council chairperson shall serve as the parish delegate to the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council (APC). The Council vice-chairperson or secretary may be delegated to perform this function.

#### **Article VI: MEETINGS**

**Section 1.** Regular Parish Council meetings shall be held **six times a year at a minimum, September, October, November, January, February, March.**

**Section 2.** Special meetings may be called by the chairperson, pastor, or a quorum. A quorum consists of two-thirds of the members.

**Section 3.** A transition meeting shall be held at the next regular Council meeting following the annual selection of Parish Council members. At this meeting the newly selected members shall join the existing Council for the purpose of selecting Council officers for the following year.

**Section 4.** **The Parish Pastoral Council and The Parish Finance Council shall meet annually, in either May or June, as the Parish Leadership Conference.**

**Section 5.** **The Parish Leadership Conference shall convene a meeting of the parish membership annually.**

**Section 6.** **The Parish Leadership Conference shall sponsor an Annual Day of Prayer for the members.**

#### **ARTICLE VII: RELATIONSHIP OF PASTOR TO COUNCIL**

**Section 1.** The pastor presides at the Council by:

- A. Attending all council meetings.
- B. Making certain that the scope of the council's concerns reflects the entire mission of the Church;
- C. Enabling the council to build a community of faith and an atmosphere of trust among council members,
- D. Making certain that parish council members have adequate training;
- E. Assisting in formulating the Council agenda;
- F. Sharing in the dialogue that leads to the formulation of policy;
- G. Serving as chief administrative officer of the parish; and
- H. Executing the policies formulated by the Council.

If the pastor judges that the decision is contrary to Church teaching or discipline, or violates a diocesan norm, the pastor may withhold execution, giving to the Council the reasons. In such case the Council may appeal to the Office of the Archbishop or one appointed by him for clarification or arbitration. Any decision resulting from such an appeal shall be final. In the meantime, the effect of the action shall remain suspended.

**Section 2.** The pastor does not chair Council meetings.

**Section 3.** Before requesting a proxy from the archbishop, the pastor will consult with the council. The consensus of the council shall be represented in the request for proxy.

### **ARTICLE VIII: MANNER OF OPERATION**

**Section 1.** The Council's manner of operation shall be communal discernment which includes prayerful reflection, gathering of information, dialogue and sharing of conclusions. The usual method of reaching decisions shall be consensus.

**Section 2.** The Parish Pastoral Council and Parish Finance Council shall share quarterly reports for the first 3 quarters each fiscal year (7.1 – 6.30).

**Section 3.** All major decisions for the parish, such as new parish priorities and building projects, shall be made by the joint Parish Leadership Conference.

### **ARTICLE IX: STANDING COMMITTEES**

**Section 1.** The Council shall have the following standing committees:

- A. Prayer and Worship
- B. Christian Formation & Service
- C. School

**Section 2.** Matters pertaining to budget, personnel, stewardship and building and grounds, shall be guided by Ad Hoc Project Committees, called into existence, as needed. The Ad Hoc Project Committees will report to the Parish Finance Council.

### **ARTICLE X: AMENDMENTS**

This constitution may be amended at any regular or special meeting by consensus or a two-thirds vote of the Council and thereafter by approval of a majority of the parishioners participating in the parish approval process.

Date of Approval by the Archdiocese: \_\_\_\_\_

Parish Pastoral Council Constitution

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Date of Approval by the Parish:

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Date of Most Recent Amendment:

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Date of Next Full Review:

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