

**St. Mary Catholic Church
Chillicothe, Ohio**

Pastoral Council Constitution

Amended January 6, 2010

MISSION STATEMENT

Inspired by the unique relationship of love that exists between Mary, Mother of God, and Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, we, the people of St. Mary Parish in Chillicothe, Ohio do herewith set forth our understanding of our role in and with Christ as “members of the household of faith” (Eph. 2:19).

We seek, together with Mary, Mother of the Church, to live out “with one heart and one mind” (Acts 4:32) the mystery of the Church. We strive in all things to act in and through Christ, guided by the Holy Spirit. We, priest and parishioners, commit ourselves to the Church’s mission of salvation, in the measure proper to each of us, in order to participate in the priestly, prophetic and kingly mission of Christ.

We seek the common good in all deliberations and actions by joining together our mutual baptismal gifts and talents, for building up the Body of Christ both locally and in the world around us. We do so in collaboration with our diocesan bishop and with the Pope.

We seek to serve all in the name of Christ so “that Christ may be all in all” (Col. 3:11). The Pastoral Council will cooperate with the pastor and any other parish clergy and other members of the Catholic faithful in the pastoral duties of sanctifying and healing, “that all may be one” (John 17:21), even as the Father and Son are one in the Spirit.

Modeled after Mary’s “Let it be done according to your word” (Luke 1:38), we herewith set forth the following document to be our Pastoral Council Constitution. This document supersedes and rescinds any and all previous pastoral council constitutions of St. Mary Parish.

ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this organization will be St. Mary Pastoral Council, Chillicothe, Ohio; hereinafter, the Council.

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

The Council will act and serve in an advisory capacity to the pastor (or pastoral administrator¹) in all areas pertaining to the spiritual, educational, financial and social matters of parish life. The Council is an advisory and consultative body. The Council will assist the pastor in long and short term planning in all these areas, including the operation and management of the parish properties.

Because Council models a faith community focused on the Crucified and Risen Lord, recommendations for policies, priorities, and implementation for the pastor's consideration, will be molded by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, guided by a trusting faith in the Holy Spirit and formulated by the principles of the Second Vatican Council and the directives of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, including any specific directive or policy of the diocesan bishop.

ARTICLE III - FUNCTIONS

On behalf of the parish, Council provides the pastor with appropriate recommendations, grounded in prayer, discernment and study, and arrived at through consensus. Specifically, Council will function in the following manner:

- A. Provide a frequent, regular dialogue among the People of God in the parish with their pastor; and to assist the pastor in the administration of the parish.
- B. Engage in a continuing renewal in Christ of parishioners and especially of the members of Council itself.
- C. Discern, study, set working priorities and recommend actions on the real needs, both spiritual and temporal, in the parish and when appropriate in the community and the world.
- D. Promote collaboration, cooperation, trust and understanding among all and do all things with Christian charity.
- E. Facilitate communication and co-ordination of all parish activities, including those that promote social justice.
- F. Equip the pastor and pastoral team with the resources to provide for the spiritual edification of all parish members in their journey of faith.

¹ In the event an appointed pastoral administrator were assigned to the parish by the bishop.

ARTICLE IV - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1 Membership of the Council is open to all registered, participating members of the parish who are eighteen (18) years of age or older and “are in full communion with the Catholic Church” (Canon 512.1), with the exception of the youth representatives who may be younger than eighteen.

No one except parish members of proven faith, good morals and outstanding prudence are to be selected or appointed to the Council (Can. 512.3).

Section 2 The Pastor shall be an ex-officio member of Council and shall preside over it (Can.536). Any other parish clergy will be ex-officio members of the Council.

Section 3 **Selected Representatives**

Twelve (12) members of the Council will be selected from the parish at large and will serve a three (3) year term.

Section 4 **Appointed Representatives**

A. The representative of each commission will be appointed to Council biannually by the pastor.

B. Pastoral Council may include one Youth Representatives, at least 16 years of age, and one “apprentice” to the Youth Representative who is either in or entering the junior year of the current high school academic year. Membership would be by pastoral appointment upon consideration of recommendations made by the Council. Appointed representatives will serve a one year term and may be reappointed for a second term. Normally, the apprentice will become the appointed Youth Representative in the second year of his/her appointment.

ARTICLE V - NOMINATIONS & SELECTIONS

Section 1 **Nominating Committee**

A. The nominating committee will consist of five (5) Council members; four (4) of them being the most recently selected and the fifth serving as chair appointed by the chairperson of Council. The committee will compile a list of eligible parishioners who are, by their affirmation, willing to serve on Council, if selected.

B. The nominating committee will be responsible for the selection process, soliciting a broad slate of candidates, arranging a gathering to explain the workings of Council and the selection process to nominees and notifying selected members to Council once they have been chosen. The committee will submit a full slate of candidates to the Council Secretary to be maintained until the next selection process.

Section 2 Nominations

Any eligible parishioner² may be nominated by writing a candidate's name or names on a blank sheet of paper and placing the sheet in the collection baskets at the weekend Masses three (3) weeks before the day of selection each year. A person may nominate him/herself and as many others as desired. All nominees will be contacted by a member of the nominating committee and informed of their nomination.

Section 3 Method and Date of Selection

- A. Names of eligible parishioners who agree to serve on Council will be chosen by lot (Acts 1:26).
- B. New members to Council will be chosen annually at a Mass³ on the Feast of Pentecost.

Section 4 Number of Newly Selected Members

One-third of the at-large representatives or four (4) members will be replaced each year. New members will be seated at the August meeting.

ARTICLE VI - VACANCIES & TERMINATIONS

Section 1 Attendance

Membership on Council requires attendance at all council meetings. Any member with more than two (2) un-excused absences during the Council year (August 1st through June 30th) will be immediately dropped from the Council. Council members must notify the pastor or an officer of the Council if they cannot attend a meeting.

Section 2 Vacancies

Whenever a vacancy of a selected parish council member does exist, Council will at the next regular meeting select another parishioner to serve the unexpired term. The Council will consider those who were nominated in the last parish selection process.

² Must fulfill requirements as outlined in Article IV, Section 1.

³The Constitution On The Sacred Liturgy, Chapter 1.No. 10., December 4, 1963.

ARTICLE VII - OFFICERS

The officers of the Council will be selected by lot, from the eight (8) returning council members at large,⁴ at the last regular meeting of the fiscal year. Officers will serve a term of one (1) year. The following council positions will be determined each year:

- Chairperson
- Vice-Chairperson
- Secretary

ARTICLE VIII - DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS

Section 1 Chairperson

The Chairperson of Council will facilitate all council meetings; be an ex-officio member to all committees of Council; serve as a member of the Executive Committee; and appoint special committees as deemed necessary.

Section 2 Vice-Chairperson

The vice-chairperson will perform the duties of the chairperson in his/her absence; will serve as a member of the Executive Committee; and directly assist the chairperson at his/her request.

Section 3 Secretary

The Secretary will perform the following duties:

- A. Keep faithful and true minutes of all meetings of the Council with copies to the parish secretary for publication, and each member of the Council for their records.⁵
- B. Maintain official list of the officers of the Council, members, and all commission chairpersons.
- C. Keep a current attendance record of all members.
- D. Be responsible for all Council correspondence.
- E. Be responsible for advance notification of Council meetings and agendas to all Council members and to those whose presence is required because of special agenda topics.
- F. Prepare a copy of the Constitution containing all Amendments and Policies for each member of Council.
- G. Serve as a member of the Executive Committee.

⁴ Commission chairpersons, the youth representatives, parish clergy and staff are not eligible for Council office positions.

⁵A recording secretary may be appointed by Council to record Council minutes and maintain the attendance record.

Section 4 The Executive Committee

The Executive Committee will be comprised of the Council Officers and the Pastor.

The responsibilities of the Executive Committee are:

- A. Prepare an agenda for Council meetings.
- B. Serve as interim consultation group for the pastor on behalf of Council during emergency situations.
- C. Call special meetings of Council as needed.

Executive meetings should occur prior to each Council meeting.

ARTICLE IX - Standing Commissions and Other Representation

Section 1 Deanery Representatives

The organizational year of the Deanery begins with September 1st of each year. Two members⁶ from Council will be selected by lot to the Deanery for a term of one year. At least one of the select members is expected to attend the scheduled Deanery meetings. The representatives will advise the Council on all matters of the Deanery meetings and take appropriate concerns to the Deanery from the parish. Deanery appointees will adequately represent the parish at all Deanery meetings.

Section 2 Standing Commissions

The Standing Commissions will be:

- A. Spiritual Life Commission
- B. Education Commission
- C. Social Concerns Commission
- D. Family Life Commission
- E. Administration Commission

Section 3 Duties of Commissions

- A. Collect, reflect and evaluate information.
- B. Report findings and make recommendations to Council.
- C. Coordinate activities within the scope of concern.
- D. Provide communications between various groups and individuals.
- E. Make decisions on any matters within the commission's scope of concern.⁷

⁶ Deanery representative can be selected from Council membership or Commission Chairs.

Commission decisions or recommendations are subject to review and approval by Council.

Section 4 Purpose and Committees of Standing Commissions

A. Spiritual Life Commission

Purpose: Coordinate and foster liturgical ministries for the sacramental life of the parish; Provide for the ongoing spiritual development of the parish community.

Committees: RCIA program, sacramental preparation (including Pre-Cana), retreat committee, prayer groups, liturgical ministries,⁸ liturgical art & environment planning. The Spiritual Life Commission will provide representation to the Ross County Ministerial Association and to The Ross County Council of Congregations.

B. Education Commission

Purpose: Provide all parishioners with opportunities for continuous Christian education in aiding the development of the faith community.

Committees: Evangelization, Scripture Studies, Bishop Flaget School Advisory Board Representatives, Parish School of Religion, Sunday Morning Preschool Program, Vacation Bible School Program, High School Youth Ministry, and Adult Faith Enrichment.

C. Social Concerns Commission

Purpose: Reflect the love and mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ by responding to the human needs and rights of individuals, particularly the poor and marginal in our community, vicariate, diocese, and efforts of the Church in the world.⁹

Committees: St. Vincent de Paul, Respect for Life, CCI Visitation Group, provide representation to St. Margaret Cemetery Board, Habitat for Humanity, Ross Co. Social Service Council, and Adena Regional Medical Center Board. The Social Concerns Commission will inform Council of any requests for assistance from The Good Samaritan Network, The Homeless Shelter, The Coalition Against Domestic Violence, and other human social service agencies as they arise.

D. Family Life Commission

Purpose: Provide opportunities for parish families to share fellowship in all aspects of family life in the parish.

Committees: Family Life, Bereavement, Widow-Widowers, Single-Again, Marriage Enrichment, Hospitality and Social Activities.

E. Administration Commission

Purpose: Provide and implement sound business management, financial integrity and advice for the daily operations of the parish and maintenance of the physical plant.

Committees: Finance,¹⁰ Stewardship, BAA, Building & Grounds, Maintenance, Office Volunteers.¹¹

⁸Liturgical ministries include: lectors, extra-ordinary ministers of the Eucharist (including visitation to hospitalized and shut-ins), greeters, ushers, musicians, and servers.

⁹Samples of activity include Catholic Relief Services, Campaign for Human Development, Propagation of the Faith, etc.

¹⁰**Can. 537** - Each parish is to have a finance council which is regulated by universal law as well as by norms issued by the diocesan bishop; in this council the Christian faithful, selected according to the same norms, aid the pastor in the administration of parish goods with due regard for the prescription of can. 532.

¹¹ Office volunteers include collection counters, clerical assistants for bulletin publication, bulk mailings, etc.

ARTICLE X - COUNCIL MEETINGS

Section 1 The Council will meet on the first Wednesday of each month. No regular meeting may be postponed or transferred to another date without the consent of the Executive Committee.

Section 2 The normal order of Council meetings will be:

- A. Call to Order - Chairperson
- B. Moment of Silence to Reflect on the Presence of the Lord
- C. Opening Prayer
- D. Roll Call - Recording Secretary
- E. Recognition of Visitors
- F. Spiritual Reading, Reflection, and Faith Sharing
- G. Reading of the Rule of the Parish Council Constitution
- H. Approval of Minutes
- I. Chairperson's Remarks
- J. Commission Reports
 - i. Spiritual Life
 - ii. Education
 - iii. Social Concerns
 - iv. Family Life
 - v. Administration
 - vi. Youth Representative
 - vii. Deanery Representative
- K. Pastor's Report
- L. Old Business
- M. New Business
- N. Correspondence
- O. Secret Collection for St. Vincent de Paul
- P. Moment of Silence
- Q. Closing Prayer

Section 3 A quorum, if ever necessary, will consist of two-thirds or twelve (12) of the total members of the Council.

Section 4 Recommendations to the Pastor from Council and/or adoption of proposals before Council will be arrived at through consensus.

Section 5 Special meetings may be called by the Pastor or the Chairperson. Members should be notified at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance. No business except that stated in the notice will be considered or acted upon.

Section 6 Any member of the parish may attend and/or speak at Pastoral Council meetings. There will be a five minute limit on remarks, unless waived by Council. Persons with new business must consult with the presiding officer prior to the meeting to place an item on the agenda at that meeting.

ARTICLE XI - AMENDMENTS

The Constitution may be amended by consensus of Council. There will be a reading of the proposed change at three (3) consecutive meetings. Following the third reading of the proposed change at this third meeting, upon reaching consensus, the change will be adopted.

Amended January 6, 2010

(Chairperson of Council's Signature)

(Pastor's Signature of Acceptance)

Attachment I
St. Mary Pastoral Council Opening Prayer

All: In the name of the Father, ...

Leader: Ever-living God,
You gather us together
As the parish of St. Mary's
To carry the Gospel of Christ to all people.

All: Bless the members of this pastoral council.
Let your Spirit enlighten our minds
And guide our actions
That we may be renewed in faith,
United in love,
And bring to fulfillment the work of your Church
To your greatest honor and glory.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Leader: Let us reflect on the words of our Lord Jesus Christ,
Recalling His unity and presence among us:
“Where two or three are gathered together in my name,
There am I in the midst of them.” (Short silence)

Leader: Let us pray,

All: That we accept with new enthusiasm our calling to unity in Christ
by working together in service to St. Mary's Parish.

All: Hail Mary...

All: In the name of the Father, ...

Attachment II
St. Mary Pastoral Council Closing Prayer

**Leader: Lord God,
Whose blessings reach to the ends of the earth,
You show us your love in the life, death, and resurrection
Of Jesus, Our Savior and Lord.**

**All: Confirm us in our common faith
That we may walk together with you and one another.
Send your blessing upon your Church
That what we have begun in the Spirit
May be brought to completion by Your power.**

All: Our Father, ...

All: To You be glory and honor, now and forever. Amen.

**Leader: May the gifts of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, unite
us in faith, hope, and love, now and forever.**

All: Amen.