

St Anthony of Padua Parish Pastoral Council By-Laws

PREAMBLE

Through Baptism and Confirmation all are called to exercise both their right and responsibility to participate fully in the life and mission of the Universal Church. This mission of the Church is rooted in the mission of Christ who commanded his disciples present at the time, and of us as well, to “Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature.” (Mark 16:15)

All members of the Church, laity, religious, and clergy, collaborate in the responsibility for fulfilling its mission according to their individual charisms and roles.

The Pastoral Council Handbook of the Diocese of Nashville includes several key guidelines including:

- The formation of the council should always include prayerful reflection.
- The role of the council is essentially pastoral and visionary.
- Parish Pastoral Councils are consultative in nature.
- Membership of the council is to be truly representative of the parish.
- The pastor is to *preside* over the Parish Pastoral Council, with management delegated to the officers.
- The Parish Pastoral Council and the Parish Finance Council are interdependent.
- The By-Laws of the Parish Pastoral Council should include only those officers needed for the efficient functioning of the council.
- The council should establish those committees or commissions which will directly assist in the work of the parish.
- This Parish Pastoral Council is linked to other consultative bodies of the larger Church.
- The By-Laws is a document which governs the operations of the council and should be presented to the diocese for approval.

SCOPE AND AUTHORITY

- In the event the pastor is transferred, resigns, or dies, the primary function of the Pastoral Council, which is to provide counsel to the pastor, ceases. The new pastor or administrator must authorize the continued function of the Pastoral Council.
- The Pastoral Council assists in the welcoming of a new pastor. After the new pastor has been installed he will make a determination as to whether or not the existing Pastoral Council will continue to function or if a new Pastoral Council will be formed.
- As a consultative body the Pastoral Council is responsible to the pastor. Its function is to assist and support him in his leadership role. It recognizes the varied gifts of the parishioners and invites them to use their gifts and talents to enhance the worship and ministries of the parish.
- The Pastoral Council should be an important means by which the pastor hears the voices of the parishioners.
- Through deliberations and consultations with the pastor, the Pastoral Council helps to unite the pastor and the parishioners. Together they help to discern the pastoral needs of the parish and ways that those needs can be best addressed.

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- The Pastoral Council does not function as a “board of directors” of the parish and its staff. Such governance authority belongs to the pastor alone. Parish employees answer to the pastor, not to a Pastoral Council.
- The Pastoral Council does not function as a “legislative body” for the parish to draft and approve policies related to parish life. Policy decisions belong to the pastor, who may consult his Pastoral Council and/or parish staff for input on such issues if he deems it appropriate.

We, the clergy, staff, and congregation of St Anthony of Padua Parish, hereby prayerfully establish these by-laws of the St Anthony of Padua Parish Pastoral Council in the Diocese of Nashville.

I. TITLE OF THE COUNCIL

The title of the pastoral council shall be St Anthony of Padua Parish Pastoral Council, hereafter called the Pastoral Council or the Council.

II. ROLE AND PURPOSE OF THE COUNCIL

The role of the Parish Pastoral Council shall be consultative. The meetings of the Pastoral Council are authorized by the pastor who approves the agenda. While it is expected that the pastor give due considerations to the advice of the council, the pastor, in concert with the pertinent regulations of the Diocese, is responsible for all decisions affecting the life of the parish.

III. THE FUNCTIONS OF THE COUNCIL

- A. To assist the pastor in setting direction, mission, vision, and values for the parish
- B. To participate in pastoral planning
- C. To collaborate with the parish Finance Council
- D. To review and promote the service and ministry activities of the parishioners to foster unity and a sense of community in the parish and an awareness of the place of the parish in the diocese and the universal Church
- E. To support diocesan initiatives (e.g. diocesan synods)
- F. To create and reorganize standing and ad-hoc working committees of the parish as the needs of the parish change.

IV. MEMBERSHIP

- A. The Pastoral Council is composed of the Pastor, elected parishioners, and those appointed by the Pastor. The Pastor will appoint members as needs arise and to ensure representation of parish demographics, but not more than the number of elected members.
- B. Qualifications for Membership: Council members should be active members in good standing of St Anthony Parish, and supportive of the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. They should be dedicated to the mission of the Church and the values and goals of the parish. They should possess the skills to assess needs, evaluate, plan, think logically and creatively,

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communicate clearly and work collaboratively. A commitment to regular and punctual attendance in monthly Pastoral Council meetings, as well as the willingness to commit time to be trained for the work of the Council is necessary. A member who fails to attend three meetings in a year may be asked to resign from the Council.

V. SELECTION PROCESS

A. Every year 1/3 of the elected members of the Council shall be replaced by the following process.

1. Members of the congregation are asked to recommend fellow parishioners, or themselves, based on the qualifications established for membership.
2. A nominating committee, appointed by the Pastor and Council Chair, compiles a slate of candidates based on the committee's discernment, nominations received, the qualifications of the candidates, and their willingness to run. The committee will strive to select at least two candidates for each office.
3. Candidates shall be representative of these categories:
 - a. Age 18-30
 - b. Age 31-50
 - c. Age 50+
 - d. Families with children ages 4-18
 - e. Single adults
 - f. Hispanic community
4. There shall be no fewer than three (3) nor more than seven (7) elected members.
5. Each May, after a process of education and discernment, all members of the Parish shall elect the new members of the Council. Every registered adult parishioner in good standing, 18 or older, shall be eligible to vote once for each office. Voting is to take place in person during the hour immediately following every weekend Mass in May. Vote counting shall commence after the last voting session of the month and be completed, and results reported to the parish, no later than one week following elections. Newly elected member's service shall begin at the start of the Parish year the following July or the first meeting thereafter.

B. Additional members of the Council may be appointed by the Pastor at his discretion.

C. The Director of Religious Education and Chair of the Finance Council are advisors to the Pastoral Council.

D. Should a member be unable to complete his term he may be replaced by interim appointment or special election to fill the unexpired term. If the vacated term is less than 50% complete the interim member will be counted as having served a full term.

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E. The Pastoral Council will arrange a liturgical installation of the new council members , and reinstallation of continuing members, by the Pastor at a Sunday Mass in June following elections and appointments.

VI. TERMS OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

A. Members are elected or appointed for a term of three (3) years, once renewable.

B. Members who have served one term on the Council must be re-nominated and re-elected if they wish to be considered for an additional term. Members serving two (2) consecutive terms, elected or appointed, can be re-nominated only after sitting out for three (3) years.

VII. OFFICERS

A. The officers of the Council serve as the Executive Committee for conducting the internal work of the council. At the first scheduled council meeting of each Parish year, the outgoing Chair shall conduct an election of new officers. All members are eligible to serve as officers. The Council will receive nominations and elect officers from its membership by secret ballot and plurality vote. Cumulative voting is not permitted. Officers elected shall serve a term of one year through the next election. By special election, the Council may fill officer vacancies during the year and for the unexpired term. The standing offices are:

1. Chair – Coordinates the work of the Council and shall affect the intentions of the by-laws. He or she shall manage meetings, exercise general and active management of the operations of the Council, prepare the agenda for the meetings with the Pastor and the Executive Committee, delegate tasks and assignments, represent the Council at Church and civic functions, and represent the Council to the Parish Finance Committee.

2. VICE- Chair – Acts in place of the Chair in his absence. He or she is responsible for monitoring progress on all tasks and assignments.

3. SECRETARY – Records all minutes of Council meetings and ensures that a copy is kept on file in the Parish office. He or she shall give notice of all meetings of the Council, keep minutes of all proceedings and records of all votes, prepare the minutes for distribution to the membership and parish staff, prepare, maintain, and distribute the Pastoral Council Roster to the membership and parish staff. The Secretary is the custodian of all Pastoral Council records and ensures that these are maintained in the parish office.

B. Members of the Executive Committee are selected for office by the Council, at the first meeting of the church year, to serve for one year. An officer may serve in a particular office, if selected, for only two (2) consecutive years.

C. The Pastor is also a member of the Executive Committee.

VIII. MEETINGS

A. The regularly scheduled meetings of the Council will be once a month. Special meetings can be called at the discretion of the Executive Committee. Regular meeting dates will occasionally

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be changed due to holidays or other schedule conflicts. Decisions at the Council meetings are made through the consultative or consensus process.¹

B. Reports of the activities of the standing and ad-hoc operating committees shall be made to the Pastoral Council at each meeting. At the request of this Council, reports may be in person or submitted in advance of the Council meeting.

C. All decisions of the Pastoral Council shall issue on majority vote of the members in attendance. No meeting shall convene with less than a quorum present, which is 2/3 of the members.

D. At any meeting, with the approval of the Pastor, the Chair may call the Pastoral Council into executive session, which shall be closed to non-members.

IX. AMENDMENTS

Subject to the approval of the Pastor, the Pastoral Council may amend these by-laws by regular decision.

X. APPROVAL

The St Anthony of Padua Parish Pastoral Council shall exist from the approval of these by-laws by the Pastor and concurrence of the Diocese.

Approved: _____ Date: _____

Pastor's Signature

¹ "Canon Law has determined that Parish Councils and Finance Councils are only consultative, thereby reserving all decision making authority to the Pastor."