

Parish Pastoral Council Handbook



Saint Martha Roman Catholic Church
Uniondale, New York

HANDBOOK FOR SAINT MARTHA PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

September 2022

OUR MISSION

We, the people of St. Martha's Parish, resolve to realize, in our midst, the unity for which Jesus prayed. Like Jesus, we embrace and celebrate our diversity of age, race, and culture. In the spirit of Jesus, we offer compassion and healing to the broken and impoverished. We seek to commit ourselves to quality relationships, recognizing the dignity of each person; creating a welcoming community of faith that dispels prejudice, distancing, and isolation; nurturing our multi-cultural relationships; caring for our young people by attending to their spiritual needs; creating and understanding that all life is worship and should be joyfully celebrated; pursuing opportunities to enrich ourselves in the knowledge of God and one another.

INTRODUCTION

"In every parish of the diocese, a Pastoral Council shall be established, if the diocesan Bishop, after consulting with the Council of Presbyters, so decides. The pastor presides over the Pastoral Council. The Pastoral Council is composed of members of the congregation together with those of the parish staff who have pastoral care by reason of their office. The Pastoral Council assists in promoting pastoral action in the parish." "The pastoral council has only a consultative vote, and it is regulated by the norms laid down by the diocesan bishop." (Canon 536 of the Code of Canon Law of the Catholic Church)

PURPOSE:

To assist the pastor in his leadership role of planning, organizing, initiating, promoting, coordinating and reviewing the evangelization, worship, religious education and service activities within the parish.

OBJECTIVES:

- To promote the Church's mission to live and communicate the love and values of Christ in our world.
- To shares in the responsibility for the ongoing life and development of the faith community, working together with parishioners to provide support for their efforts to live as followers of Christ.
- To assess adequately the needs of the whole parish and its members, and to develop and implement a pastoral plan which will promote the common good of the parish.

CONSIDERATION

Important elements that form the essence of parish life include:

- Evangelization
- Worship and word
- Community
- Service and stewardship
- Leadership

These elements constantly inter-relate in parish life, each nurturing and supporting the other.

Recognizing these essential elements and understanding their inter-relationship are central to the functioning of the Parish Pastoral Council. They are what make pastoral councils 'pastoral'.

ROLE OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

The Council's role is primarily to research, consider, and propose for action those matters considered to be truly 'pastoral'. Pastoral issues are those that impact on the lives of parishioners in the areas of:

- Integration of their faith into everyday life – home, work, community
- Nourishment and support of their faith as they strive to live as faithful disciples of Jesus
- Outward focus for the development of a vital Christian community, actively engaged in Jesus' mission of service and influence in the wider world.

A key element of the work of a PPC is to consider ways to provide opportunities for parishioners to:

- Discover, or rediscover, the personal and community call to mission that derives from their baptism
- Sustain their efforts to live as Catholics who effectively transform society.

The PPC exists as a consultative body to help the clergy consider pastoral and other works and to propose and co-ordinate practical measures for implementing them.

The parish pastor has the primary role of leadership in both the spiritual and temporal affairs of the parish. All decisions about the operation and direction of the parish need to carry his agreement and approval. The laity assists the parish priest in whatever way possible.

The PPC serves in an advisory role and the pastor should take into serious account their opinions and recommendations.

In order to fulfil its role, the PPC will:

- Search out and respond to the hopes, ideas, needs and concerns of parishioners
- Foster unity and a sense of community in the parish
- Grow in knowledge and awareness of what is already happening in the parish
- Encourage and support the good work of existing groups within the parish
- To promote programs and activities recommended by the bishop, diocesan offices and agencies as well as the pastoral council itself.
- Evaluate carefully information gathered in order to contribute towards the making of decisions that reflect the values of the gospel and the teachings of the Church
 - Set long-term and short-term pastoral goals for the parish
 - Provide opportunities for parishioners to grow in their relationship with God and with each other
- Develop, implement and improve parish initiatives that assist parishioners in their continuing efforts to live as effective Christians in society.

MEMBERSHIP

Members of the PPC should be:

- Baptized, practicing Catholics
- Registered members of the parish (ideally for at least five years)
- Participate in the ongoing life of the parish, especially Sunday Eucharist
- Be at least 18 years old.

The PPC should reflect the diversity of the parish in terms of age, gender and ethnicity. Members should seek to represent the parish as a whole, not act as representatives of particular parish groups/organizations.

The PPC includes the parish pastor, parochial vicar(s) and 12 parishioners (4 from each community) who will represent the parish. Non-voting members could include deacons, staff members and parishioners.

One or more individuals may be invited to attend a PPC meeting when additional or specialist advice and information is needed.

TERM OF OFFICE

- The vice-chairpersons and secretary will serve for an undetermined term and will be replaced at the pastor's discretion. Replacements will be chosen from the existing members of the PPC.
- Members can serve for a maximum of three years, with possibility of re-election or reappointment. Members may serve only two consecutive terms.
- Every year one-third of Council seats are to be open for election or re-election at one time.

The Council may fill any casual vacancy by invitation the pastor. Before joining the Council, the proposed candidates will receive a short briefing on responsibilities and expectations as a member. After completing the remainder of the current term of membership for this casual vacancy, the new member will be eligible for recommendation for a second term.

ORGANIZATION OF THE PPC

The pastor of the parish is the chairman of the Parish Pastoral Council.

The vice-chairpersons meet with the pastor and secretary to prepare the agenda for each meeting. At the pastor's discretion, one of the vice-chairpersons or another member of the PPC may moderate the meeting of the PPC.

In the event of the pastor's absence from a regularly scheduled meeting of the PPC, one of the vice-chairpersons moderate the meeting.

In the pastor's absence, the council may not undertake new business, or business which is not included on the agenda.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

- Attend the regular meetings of the Council
- Provide input to deliberations of the Council
- Develop a spirit of enquiry and the ability to listen and understand the issues affecting the lives of parishioners
- Provide prayerful support and encouragement for other members of the Council
- Actively participate in the implementation of finalized plans of action

- Embrace opportunities for personal faith development and for gaining skills to assist with effective participation in the Council's operations
- Represent the Council when required, e.g. at other Parish meetings, deanery or diocesan meetings.
- Members of the PPC should be accessible to their fellow parishioners.

ADMINISTRATION AND COMMUNICATION

SECRETARY

It is the secretary's responsibility to:

- Agree meeting dates and advise the parish office of these dates for the bulletin and website
- Circulate agendas to PPC members in advance of each meeting
- Record the minutes of the PPC meetings
- Arrange the meeting place for the PPC
- Circulate meeting minutes for approval after each meeting.
- Attend to any correspondence
- Keep a file of records of PPC minutes, decisions, history, membership, development

CHAIRPERSON AND VICE-CHAIRPERSONS

It is the chairperson's and vice-chairpersons' responsibility to:

- Coordinate the business of the PPC between meetings
- Organize the agenda for each meeting in discussion with the parish priest and secretary
- Monitor timing for each agenda item
- Set realistic short-term and long-term goals for the PPC
- Ensure outcomes for each agenda item
- Encourage contributions from all PPC members

AGENDA

The agenda should include matters identified by individual PPC members and parishioners, parish groups and ministries, the Deanery, and the wider Community.

PPC/PARISH COMMUNITY

Effective, timely and regular communication with the parish community should be a priority: the parish should be kept informed of the membership of the Council, be advised of dates of meetings, and be given the opportunity to contribute to agendas.

Parishioners should be given a summary of the outcomes of PPC meetings in the parish bulletin and on the website of the Parish.

MEETINGS OF THE PPC

- Only the pastor may call a meeting of the PPC.
- A minimum of four regularly scheduled meetings of the PPC occur during the year.
- Meetings of the PPC are generally open to all parishioners.
- The parish staff who are not members of the PPC are encouraged to attend, particularly when their ministry is being discussed.
- The pastor may call for an executive session when appropriate.

In the event that the pastor of the parish dies, resigns, or is transferred, the primary function of the PPC, providing counsel to the pastor, ceases. However, during the vacancy of the pastorate, the PPC assists the senior parochial vicar or the diocesan-appointed administrator with the preparation of the materials for the parish profile for the consultation meetings. The PPC also helps in the welcoming of the new pastor. After the new pastor has been installed, he reconvenes the existing PPC within two months

REVIEW OF HANDBOOK

This Handbook will be reviewed every year. The Parish community should be consulted about any changes to this Handbook.