

**Sacred Heart Church  
Parish Pastoral Council By-laws**

Article I: Section 1

The name of the parish council shall be Sacred Heart Parish Pastoral Council.

Article I: Section 2

The By-laws of said council shall be made public in a timely manner by publishing them on the parish website in both English and Spanish versions and having paper copies made available to all registered members of the parish upon request. All regular meetings shall be announced in the bulletin at least one week prior to the meeting and parish members shall have the right to attend as observers only.

**ARTICLE II: PURPOSE AND FUNCTION**

Article II: Section 1

The Parish Pastoral Council is a consultative body that represents the voice of the Parish, working with the Pastor who is the administrator of the Parish and, as such, is responsible to the Bishop. The Council and the Pastor define the vision of what the Parish is called to become.

Article II: Section 2

The Parish Pastoral Council shall work in a consultative role with the pastor in the mission of evangelization. They will work together to develop a pastoral plan which embraces the diocesan Mutually Shared Vision, and promotes, implements, and evaluates the three diocesan priorities: Holiness, Discipleship, and Witness. This shall be done while integrating the “Seven Signs of a Vibrant Parish:”

1. Encountering the Person of Jesus Christ
2. Noble simplicity in celebrating the Sacraments
3. Welcoming
4. On-Going Faith Formation and Catechesis
5. Personal Discipleship
6. Outreach to the Marginalized
7. Stewardship

The Diocesan Mutually Shared Vision is characterized by the values of prayer, generous service, and zeal. Its priorities are: a) growing in holiness, b) forming intentional disciples, and c) being sent forth to witness.

### Article II: Section 3

The Parish Pastoral Council shall assist the Pastor in assessing the spiritual and temporal needs of the Parish. In doing this, the Parish Pastoral Council must be mindful of the parish's relationship with the Diocese and the community at large, and set forth policies and objectives aimed at those needs. Once a pastoral plan has been developed, then the Parish Pastoral Council should assist annually in establishing goals and objectives aimed at fulfilling the plan.

### Article II: Section 4

The Parish Pastoral Council's distinctive function is to participate in the planning process and in the establishment of policy for the parish. It shall not in any way interfere with the internal administration of the Parish, or the function of any organization within the Parish.

### Article II: Section 5

The Parish Pastoral Council shall serve as a permanent, yet flexible, structure for constructive dialogue among the laity, Pastor & other clergy, and religious of the parish in order to cooperate as a Christian community and fulfill Christ's saving mission. Consensus through dialogue is the desired process for decision-making with a Parish Pastoral Council. To be most effective, the process requires that:

- a. the consultation process should be accepted by all participants;
- b. the dialogue involves listening as well as speaking on the part of all; and
- c. the pastoral staff may actively participate in the discussion process leading to consensus.

### Article II: Section 6

The Parish Pastoral Council shall enable the people of this community of God to express their dreams, needs, and opinions. Once the dialogue has been completed and consensus on an issue has been formed, it then becomes a recommendation to the Pastor. In the majority of cases, experience indicates, the Pastor accepts Parish Pastoral Council recommendations. When a Pastor does not accept a particular recommendation, he should give his reason(s) to the Council.

Should the relationship between a pastor and the Parish Pastoral Council become strained, either may appeal to the Dean of the Deanery. Subsequently, and only when truly necessary, an appeal in writing may be made to the Vicar

General or the Bishop. The reasons for such an appeal should be noted in the minutes of the Parish Pastoral Council.

### **ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP**

#### Article III: Section 1

The Parish Pastoral Council shall consist of (9) voting members: six (6) at-large members selected by the parish (and nominated by current or former members of Parish Pastoral Council) and three (3) appointed by the Pastor. Of the nine (9) total members, a minimum of three should be from the Spanish-speaking community.

Representatives from standing committees shall be *ex-officio* members and if such representatives are lacking, the Council should assign one of its members to serve as a liaison to that committee unless a member of a standing committee is already on the Parish Pastoral Council, in which case they shall assume the role of liaison for that committee. Members of the Parish Pastoral Council shall also serve as liaisons with parish organizations.

#### Article III: Section 2

The Term of Office is three (3) years for all elected members beginning in the elected members' first meeting following installation on the second Sunday in September. Appointed members shall serve one (1) year, with an option for unlimited renewal.

Vacancies due to resignations, etc. in appointed and elected members shall be filled by the pastor, with those replacing appointed members serving out the rest of annual appointed members' terms and those replacing elected members serving out the rest of the elected members' terms.

### **ARTICLE IV: NOMINATIONS AND SELECTION PROCEDURES**

#### Article IV: Section 1

The Nominating Committee shall consist of all current and former members of Parish Pastoral Council, through whom names of candidates for election must be submitted. Submissions must be received in the parish office by Candlemas.

#### Article IV: Section 2

After the submissions deadline of Candlemas, a special session (convened by the President of the Parish Pastoral Council) of the Nominating Committee shall be held no later than Maundy Thursday (Holy Thursday). At this special session, a slate of candidates shall be officially nominated. Following the

submission of this slate of candidates by the Nominating Committee and its approval by the pastor, the slate shall be submitted to the parish for their consideration. The special session of the Nominating Committee shall be announced in the parish bulletin and be open to all parishioners to attend as observers only. To be eligible for selection to the Council, one must be:

- a. An active Catholic, registered in the Parish.
- b. Age 18 or over, except for the youth representative.

A list of minimum qualifications, allowing for flexible interpretation, follows:

- a. believing, praying Christians committed to building a spirit of unity within the parish;
- b. persons having adequate knowledge about the parish;
- c. persons willing and able to serve and accept responsibility;
- d. persons with a desire to serve the Church;
- e. persons who participate in promoting the teachings of Vatican II; and
- f. a minimal understanding of the English language is necessary to facilitate the meeting process because the council meetings are conducted in English

#### Article IV: Section 3

The selection process shall include:

- a. Educating the parish on the selection process, through publications as well as from the pulpit;
- b. Nominating suitable candidates;
- c. Publishing information about the nominees;
- d. Selecting new members of the Council; and
- e. Public installation of the new and existing members.

Elected members shall be elected by public elections announced and explained in detail from the pulpit and in the bulletin. Candidates for election shall be listed in at least three (3) consecutive parish bulletins prior to the election. Provisions for absentee ballots shall be made. Elected members will constitute six (6) of the nine (9) total members. Accordingly, given the three-year terms of elected members, elections will occur two out of every three years, viz.:

- 2022: No election
- 2023: Open seats: 3
- 2024: Open seats: 3
- 2025: No election
- 2026: Open seats: 3
- 2027: Open seats: 3

2028: No election  
2029: Open seats: 3  
2030: Open seats: 3

#### Article IV: Section 4

The election of new Council members and selection of officers shall be concluded by June 30. The new and existing Council members and Officers shall be installed on the second Sunday of September. The name of the President of the Parish Pastoral Council shall be sent to the Vicar General as soon as possible after June 30, including their contact information and preferred method of contact.

### **ARTICLE V: OFFICERS- TERMS AND DUTIES**

#### Article V: Section 1

The Council shall annually elect all officers from among its members (President, Vice-President, Secretary) directly by secret ballot. Should any position result in no candidate receiving a majority of votes, the two candidates with the most votes shall be voted on in a second round, with the candidate receiving the majority being selected. Should there be no individual receiving a majority and more than two candidates receiving the most votes, secret ballots shall be conducted until there is either a clear selection via one candidate receiving a majority or two top candidates that will be voted on. No officer shall serve more than two consecutive full years in the same position.

In the event of the resignation or incapacitation of the President, the Vice-President shall succeed, with the resulting open position of Vice-President filled by a replacement selected by a simple majority vote of the Council. A vacancy in the position of Secretary shall likewise be filled by a replacement from the Council selected by majority vote. Vacancies due to resignations, etc. in appointed and elected members shall be filled by the pastor, with those replacing appointed members serving out the rest of annual term and those replacing elected members serving until the next election year, in which that seat(s) shall be added to the normal number of open seats.

#### Article V: Section 2

The President shall:

- a. Work with the Pastor in preparing an agenda for each meeting.
- b. Insure that the Council functions according to its by-laws.
- c. See that goals set by previous Councils are carried out in a way which provides continuity from one Council to the next.

- d. Be eligible to participate as an *ex-officio* member of any subcommittee of the Parish.
- e. Call special meetings when necessary.

The Vice-President shall perform the duties of the President in the President's absence and perform such duties as may be delegated by the President.

#### Article V: Section 3

The Secretary is responsible for:

- a. Keeping accurate and detailed minutes of all meetings, to be approved by the Council at the next meeting.
- b. Preparing minutes or a summary of the minutes for the Pastor to share with parishoners.
- c. Maintaining and preserving the official minutes of the Parish Pastoral Council as part of the permanent records of the Parish.

### **ARTICLE VI: MEETINGS**

#### Article VI: Section 1

The Parish Pastoral Council shall meet on a regular basis following the installation of members on the second Sunday in September and continuing through the following summer.

In addition to regular meetings, the President shall ensure that a minimum of one spiritual retreat per year shall be held with the Council and pastor for the purpose of the spiritual growth of Council members. The retreat shall have as required elements a period of Eucharistic Adoration, Marian prayer, and a discussion of the spiritual charism of the Claretians, with emphasis on the principles enunciated by St. Anthony Mary Claret.

Meetings shall be carefully planned and executed. Meetings should begin and conclude on time. (Two hours is a recommended maximum length of time for regular meetings.)

Council members should be informed of issues to be addressed at the next meeting and shall receive a copy of the minutes of the previous meeting, committee reports and other appropriate material by at least the Sunday prior to that meeting.

According to Diocesan Guidelines, each meeting could include:

- a. **PRAYER**- an opportunity to share faith together. Meetings open and close with prayer.
- b. **LEARNING**- a time spent listening to a discussion concerning the current teachings of the Church and topics related to the spiritual growth of all Council members.
- c. **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**- a time spent putting the pastoral plan into concrete form.
- d. **REPORTS**- listening to how the committees are implementing the pastoral plan.
- e. **OLD AND NEW BUSINESS**- the current situation and needs of the parish community.

#### Article VI: Section 2

The Parish Pastoral Council may be called into a special session by the Council President with the approval of the pastor.

#### Article VI: Section 3

Two-thirds of the current *officio* members of the Parish Pastoral Council shall constitute a quorum. A simple majority of those present is required for any specific determinations and recommendations to be agreed upon and submitted to the pastor.

### **ARTICLE VII: COMMITTEES**

#### Article VII: Section 1

- a. At the meeting in which the new officers are chosen, the Parish Pastoral Council shall review the previous year's standing and temporary committees and recommend to the Pastor which of them should continue or be established for the next 12 months.
- b. To encourage increased communication, one or more Parish Pastoral Council members shall serve as a contact(s) between each of the parish committees or groups and the parish council.
- c. In addition to the standing committees, the Parish Pastoral Council may, from time to time, authorize the establishment of ad-hoc (temporary) committees to handle particular issues, responsibilities, or duties. These committees will be directly responsible to the Parish Council.

d. The list of all committees, along with their summary of purpose, their chairpersons and parish council contacts, shall be maintained by the Parish Pastoral Council Secretary and updated at least once each year.

#### Article VII: Section 2

##### Guidelines for Standing Committees:

a. Each committee shall set its own meeting date with approval from the Pastor.

b. Each chair of a standing committee shall choose committee members from the congregation. A list of current members shall be recorded with the Council.

c. All committees shall be prepared to report to the Council as scheduled by the parish council executive committee. Reports should be written and presented to the Parish Pastoral Council Secretary or President prior to the scheduled meeting that the report is to be given so as to become part of the Council minutes. These reports should represent all ministries of the standing committees.

d. Proposed committee actions shall not be undertaken until reviewed by the Parish Pastoral Council and approved by the Pastor or his designated representatives. In the case of proposals involving expenditure of parish funds, the Finance Council shall also provide its counsel during the review process.

#### Article VII: Section 3

##### Relationship of the Parish Pastoral Council to the Parish Finance Council.

a. The Parish Pastoral Council shall evaluate the pastoral plan and continue its implementation in consultation with the pastor as the annual budget is developed. The Finance Council, in turn, collaborates with the pastor, parish council and various parish staff members and other appropriate parties for the development of the annual parish budget.

b. Ordinarily, since the Finance and Parish Pastoral councils are separate and distinct, a person should not serve on both councils simultaneously unless the small size of a parish warrants it. In some cases, a pastor may feel it would be of benefit to the parish to assign a person to both Councils when such action fosters better communication.

c. The Finance Council, together with the pastor, makes available to the Parish Pastoral Council regular and adequate financial reports, noting any major factors or trends that could have a budgetary impact.

d. The Finance Council is not responsible for fund-raising but may recommend appropriate means for this to the Parish Pastoral Council and should collaborate in the parish's stewardship efforts.

## **ARTICLE VIII: AMENDMENTS**

### Article VIII: Section 1

#### Amendments:

This method of operation and these guidelines may be amended by the Council. Any amendment proposed shall be submitted in writing and read at a regular Council meeting. The vote on said amendment shall be at the next regular Council meeting and in order to be adopted, it shall require support of a simple majority of those Council members present at that meeting.

#### By-laws last revised:

09/13/2022 & 10/11/2022, during pastorship of Fr. Ray Smith. Updated to be in accord with the new Diocesan *Norms for The Parish Pastoral Council* (effective 05/31/21 and promulgated by The Most Reverend Bishop Edward M. Rice) and with Canon 536 referenced therein.

04/12/2016, during pastorship of Fr. Héctor Návalo