

# St. Peter's Pastoral Council Foundation Document (draft)

## Mission:

Forming deeply committed Catholics living the gospel. Worship Regularly, Pray Often, Serve Others.

## Preamble:

The Second Vatican Council encourages the formation of Pastoral Councils wherewith Pastors may consult and seek advice. Father Thomas Connery has established a pastoral Council for St. Peter's Church to help in his responsibility of governance of the parish.

## Purpose:

The primary purpose of the Pastoral Council is **pastoral planning**, not governance. That is, fostering pastoral activity (Can. 536) through:

- Viewing St. Peter Parish in light of its Gospel Mission
- Consultation with all parishioners
- Reflection on the core values of our St. Peter Parish
- Assessment of strengths and resources of our parish
- Assessment of the needs and limitations of our parish
- Examination of our local community
- Identifying priorities and goals for (the next three years)
- Drafting action plan with clearly defined objectives
- Evaluation to ensure that all activities within St. Peter Parish are accountable to the mission of St. Peter parish.

Under the broad objectives outlined by the pastor, the council will investigate and research pastoral matters, study and reflect on them and then draw conclusions and make recommendations to the pastor. The pastor directs the implementation of any accepted recommendations, possibly with assistance of the council.

**Scope:**

The pastor may consult the council on any practical matters related to his pastoral duties.

**Objectives:**

The Pastoral Council will evaluate the parish needs and that of its members, and develop and recommend a pastoral plan to support the common good of the parish. The committee should encourage a sense of unity and community in the parish to serve the interests of the parish.

**Officers:**

The pastor will select three officers: a chairperson, a vice-chairperson and a secretary (forthwith, the Executive Committee). Together they develop meeting agendas which consist of meeting goals, supporting materials and potential processes to attain the goals.

The pastor presides over meetings and the chairperson runs meetings and monitors work between meetings. The vice-chair assists the chairperson and fulfills the chair's role when absent. The secretary keeps minutes, disperses minutes and oversees the dissemination of any needed documents at least a week before the next meeting. Minutes are made available to parishioners, perhaps on the parish website.

**Operation:**

In September of the first year of a three year cycle, the pastor lays out a general theme or directs the council to propose one. The Pastoral Council carries out its initial planning process. This consists of research, solicitation of ideas, consensus building, etc. In subsequent years, the Pastoral Council oversees activities of and advises on the plan and reports to parishioners, usually at a parish council. At the end of the period, the council summarizes its accomplishments and provides any recommendations or lessons learned for future efforts.

Meetings are 90 minutes long, held monthly from September through May (except December) and start with a review of the minutes of the previous meeting and an evaluation of related activities. The agenda then guides the meeting.

## **Membership:**

Members are baptized Catholics 18 years of age or older of the parish in good moral standing having talents, training or knowledge enabling them to investigate pastoral matters, study and reflect on them and then draw conclusions and make recommendations. As a whole, they should reflect the parish demographics and apostolates. Members should be stewardship minded.

Priests, deacons, and religious may serve on the council. Staff members may serve on the council, but that is often redundant given they advise the pastor routinely.

The Pastoral Council will be limited to 12 parishioners and ex officio members. Initially, these 12 will be appointed as follows:

Three people will be appointed by Father Tom to comprise the Executive Committee.

Seven people will be selected from existing Parish Commissions - Worship, Stewardship, Outreach, Hospitality, Youth and Young Adults, Education/Formation, and Finance. Each commission will provide a knowledgeable and committed representative approved by Father Tom.

Two at-large members from the parish will be appointed by Father Tom.

Two ex officio council members include St. Peter's School Principal and the Director of Religious Education. Others may be appointed.

The selection of at large and executive committee members will consider the demographic and cultural diversity of the parishioners.

Following the initial year, council members will serve staggered terms; some serving 2 years, others serving 3 years. A council member may serve no longer than three, consecutive years. The selection of new council members will occur through a process of discernment, informed choice, with recommendations on prospective new council members forwarded to the Pastor. The Pastor may appoint new members, with any remaining vacancies filled by drawing lots in accordance with Acts 1:21, 23-26.

### Notes:

Suggestions on how to stagger the two and three year appointments are welcome.

Jack Crahan will serve the first year as Chairman.

Father Tom has scheduled another meeting to take place at 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, June 12, 2012. Agenda for that meeting will include planning for August workshop on Pastoral Council.

## Resource Material:

A good narrated presentation on Pastoral Councils can be viewed at:

[http://www.evision-video.com/bisdiocese/Parish\\_Council\\_04\\_Large.wmv](http://www.evision-video.com/bisdiocese/Parish_Council_04_Large.wmv)

The website

<http://pastoralplanning.diobrook.org/>

for “Office of Pastoral Planning, Diocese of Brooklyn is a good source to review. The site has quite a bit of info on listening process, including one-on one meetings, timeline for planning process (first year of 3-5 year plan cycle), and info/materials for Parish Assembly. (Parishes that have 3 year plan may hold parish assembly during 2nd and 3rd years.)

Other resources of value are:

<http://www.pastoralcouncils.com/>

<http://www.bismarckdiocese.com/uploads/resources/969/parish-pastoral-council-guidelines.pdf>

<http://www.archdiocese.la/synod/councils/parishes/index.html>

<http://pastoralplanning.diobrook.org/pastoral-planning/parish/parish-pastoral-councils/>

<http://www.dioceseofgfb.org/userfiles/file/Parish%20Pastoral%20Council%20Guidlines.pdf>

<http://www.bostoncatholic.org/Offices-And-Services/Office-Detail.aspx?id=12414&pid=1400>

<http://mfischer.stjohnsem.edu/PPCLectures.htm>

<http://archphila.org/pastplan/INDEX/PPCindex.html>

<http://www.buffalodiocese.org/Evangelization/ParishLife/PastoralCouncilDevelopment.aspx>

<http://www.jesusthegoodshepherd.org/Pastoral%20Council.htm>

<http://www.dcgary.org/office-parish-pastoral-council.htm>

<http://www.arch.pvt.k12.ia.us/LeaderDevPastPlan/ParishCouncil/documents/PPCGuidelines072010.pdf>