

# St John Vianney Parish Pastoral Council Constitution

Montdale, Pennsylvania

## Article I: Name

The name of this organization shall be Saint John Vianney Parish Pastoral Council, hereinafter referred to as the "Council."

## Article II: Purpose

**Section 1.** The Council shall be a vehicle for fulfilling the pastoral mission of the parish through Servant Leadership. It does this by fostering growth within the parish family and the sharing of spiritual gifts and talents; by encouraging positive relationships among all members of the parish, and by collaborating with other parishes and the wider community.

**Section 2.** The Council formulates parish policy, fosters good communication, and provides Servant Leadership by clarifying parish vision, establishing goals and witnessing the gospel message in the larger community and the world.

**Section 3.** The Council shall engage in a continuous process of pastoral planning which takes into consideration the needs of its own parishioners and the needs of the diocese, the broader community and the world.

## Article III: Scope

**Section 1.** Except to the extent limited by faith and morals, church or civil law or Diocesan policy/norms, the Council shall be the planning, consultative and policy formulating body in all matters of the parish, including but not limited to spiritual, educational, social, and financial concerns, with due respect to the scope and responsibility of the Parish Finance Council.

**Section 2.** In any case where any member of the Council interprets an action of the Council or any of its commissions to be outside the limits set forth in Section 1, such member shall present such interpretation no later than the next meeting of the Council and ask for reconsideration. Pending consideration, the effect of the action shall be suspended.

## Article IV: Membership

**Section 1.** The Council shall be comprised of twelve (12) members, all of whom must be baptized, practicing Catholics, at least 18 years old, registered members of the parish, and participants in the parish worship life, especially Mass and the sacraments.

**Section 2.** The Council shall have the following ex officio members: the pastor, parochial vicar, and permanent deacon. Ex officio members participate fully and equally in all Council decisions.

**Section 3.** At-large members shall be selected from and by the membership of the parish 18 years of age or older.

**Section 4.** The term for selected members shall be three years and shall be limited to two consecutive terms. The new members shall begin their terms with the conclusion of the annual transition meeting.

## **Article V: Officers**

- Section 1.** The officers of the Council shall be a chairperson, a vice-chairperson, and a secretary. They shall be selected by and from the Council at the annual transition meeting. They shall serve for a one-year term beginning with the conclusion of the transition meeting. Ex officio members of the Council are ineligible to serve as Council officers or commission chairpersons.
- Section 2.** The Chairperson shall serve as the parish representative to the Diocesan Pastoral Council district meetings. The Council vice-chairperson or secretary may be delegated to perform this function. (Pending as to how the Diocesan Pastoral Council is delineated.)

## **Article VI: Meetings**

- Section 1.** Regular Parish Pastoral Council meetings shall be held monthly.
- Section 2.** Special meetings may be called by the chairperson, pastor, or a quorum. A quorum consists of two-thirds of the total membership and includes the pastor.
- Section 3.** A transition meeting shall be held at the next regular Council meeting following the annual selection of Parish Pastoral Council members. At this meeting the newly selected members shall join the existing Council for the purpose of selecting Council officers for the following year.

## **Article VII: Relationship Of Pastor To Council**

- Section 1.** The pastor is the Parish Pastoral Council president. He presides at the Council by:
- a. Attending all Council meetings;
  - b. Making certain that the scope of the council's concerns reflects the entire mission of the Church;
  - c. Enabling the Council to build a community of faith and an atmosphere of trust among Council members;
  - d. Making certain that Parish Pastoral Council members have adequate training;
  - e. Assisting in formulating the Council agenda;
  - f. Sharing in the dialogue that leads to the formulation of policy;
  - g. Serving as chief administrative officer of the parish; and
  - h. Executing the policies formulated by the Council.
- Section 2.** The pastor does not chair Council meetings.

## **Article VIII: Manner Of Operation**

The Council's manner of decision-making shall be communal discernment which includes prayerful reflection, gathering of information, dialogue and sharing of conclusions. The usual method of reaching conclusions shall be consensus.

## **Article IX: Parish Commissions**

- Section 1.** The Parish shall have the following commissions:
- Ministry of Word
  - Ministry of Worship
  - Ministry of Community
  - Ministry of Service
- Section 2.** The Council may establish ad hoc commissions.

**Section 3. Council Commission Liaison**

The Council shall select from its at-large members a liaison to each of its commissions at the annual transition meeting following the selection of new officers. Liaisons shall serve for a one-year term beginning with the conclusion of the transition meeting. Ex officio members and officers of the Council are ineligible to serve as liaisons.

**Article X: Amendments**

This constitution may be amended at any regular or special meeting by consensus or a two-thirds vote of the Council and thereafter by approval of a majority of the parishioners participating in the parish approval process.

Date of Parish Ratification:

Date of Most Recent Amendment:

Date of Next Full Review:

# St John Vianney Parish Pastoral Council Bylaws

Montdale, Pennsylvania

## Article I: Nomination And Selection Of New Members

**Section 1.** At each annual selection, one-third of the members (i.e., four members) shall be selected for a term of three years to fill the vacancies caused by the members whose terms are due to expire.

**Section 2.** Annual selection of new members will take place in May, with new Council members taking office by July 1.

At least 60 days prior to each annual selection of new members, the chairperson shall appoint a Selection Committee of at least four members, two of whom are Council members. The Selection Committee's responsibility is to manage all aspects of the selection process including:

- a. **Education of Parishioners:** Parishioners are educated through bulletin and pulpit announcements about the Council and the selection process for at least two weeks. They are asked to give prayerful consideration to nominating parishioners or themselves for the Council.
- b. **Nomination:** Nomination forms are distributed at all liturgies on a designated weekend. Parishioners are invited to write down the names of persons they think have the essential characteristics of a Council member.
- c. **Notification:** Selection Committee members contact persons whose names were submitted by parishioners to inform them of their nomination and of the required orientation. At least 30 days before the date of selection, the Selection Committee publishes in the parish bulletin, the names of those who have agreed to continue in the nomination process. Additional nominations are acceptable if submitted in writing to the Selection Committee within ten days after this publication.
- d. **Orientation:** The Selection Committee plans the local orientation session and requires nominees' attendance at a local and/or diocesan orientation.
- e. **Acceptance:** Those who feel called to serve as Council members accept nomination and participate on the final slate of nominees. The Selection Committee ensures that the slate of nominees is representative of the parish community. In no event shall any persons be deemed nominated unless the Selection Committee receives an expression of willingness to serve. If a member of the Selection Committee becomes a nominee, that person ceases to be a Selection Committee member.
- f. **Final Slate of Nominees:** Nominees submit biographical information and their statement of parish vision to the Selection Committee for publication in the parish bulletin at least two weeks prior to the selection of new members.
- g. **Facilitation:** The Selection Committee facilitates the actual selection process and informs the parish of the results.

**Section 4.** The selection of new members of the Council shall be by discernment. In the context of prayer and with the help of a facilitator, the nominees who are best suited to serve on the Council at this time are discerned.

## Article II: Vacancies And Removals

**Section 1.** Any member of the Council may resign by filing a written resignation with the pastor, with a copy

to the chairperson.

**Section 2.** At any meeting of the Council, any at-large member may be removed for good cause by consensus or by an affirmative vote of three-fourths of the Council. Any member whose removal has been proposed shall be given an opportunity to be heard at the meeting. Good cause includes missing two consecutive meetings without good reason, physical or mental incapacity, or failure to perform duties as a Council member.

**Section 3.** A vacancy among the at-large members shall be filled by one appointed to serve the remainder of the term. The chairperson will make appointment, with approval of the Council. Consideration should be given to previous nominees.

### **Article III: Officers**

**Section 1.** Selection of officers of the Council shall be by discernment from among and by the Council members present at the annual transition meeting. Offices shall be filled in the following order: chairperson, vice-chairperson and secretary.

**Section 2.** At the transition meeting following the annual selection of Council members, newly selected members join the existing Council for the purpose of selecting Council officers for the following year.

**Section 3.** No Council officer may serve more than three consecutive 1-year terms in any one office.

**Section 4.** The chairperson

- a. Is aware of the tasks and responsibilities of the Council and communicates these to the Council, commissions and parish community.
- b. Organizes/coordinates activities and work of the Council. Develops and maintains an annual Council calendar consistent with the parish calendar.
- c. Prepares the meeting agendas in consultation with the pastor and other Council officers. Ensures that time is spent in prayer. The agenda is published in the parish bulletin the weekend before the meeting or posted for parishioners to review. Submits the agenda to Council members at least 3 days before the meeting.
- d. Provides formation/education for Council members, utilizing the parish staff and offerings at the regional and diocesan levels.
- e. Facilitates Council meetings by helping members work together, participating fully in discussions and decision-making through consensus. Also conducts parish meetings.
- f. Monitors implementation of all Council recommendations and decisions.
- g. Ensures that a Council budget is established in consultation and approval of the Finance Council.
- h. If there is no council liaison, is an ex officio member of all ad hoc commissions of the Council.
- i. Assists the next chairperson in understanding the Council's history, responsibilities and resources. Transfers all Council materials to the new chairperson.
- j. Serves as the parish representative for the Diocesan Pastoral Council regional meetings.
- k. Performs duties consistent with the office as the Council may direct.

**Section 5.** The vice-chairperson

- a. Conducts meetings in the absence of the chairperson.
- b. Becomes chairperson in the event of vacancy.
- c. Performs duties consistent with the office as the chairperson or the Council may direct.

**Section 6.** The secretary

- a. Oversees the accurate recording of the minutes of each meeting and sees to it that the minutes and the agenda are made available to the Council members, commission chairpersons, and the parish. Provides a condensed report of the meeting for publication in the parish bulletin.

- b. Takes attendance at meetings and records absences.
- c. Maintains the official list of all Council and commission officers and members and their terms, the list of all ad hoc commission and committee chairpersons and members and keeps these lists current with regard to addresses and phone numbers.
- d. Updates the Diocesan Extranet whenever a change in membership on Council occurs. This is done on-line. The Council secretary works with the parish web administrator to keep the Diocesan registry current.
- e. Reports to the Council all communication. Handles correspondence for the Council, including agendas, minutes, notification of regular and special meetings, notes of thanks, etc.
- f. Performs such duties consistent with office as the chairperson or Council may direct.

#### **Article IV: Meetings**

**Section 1.** Regular meetings of the Council shall be held at such time, place, and date as the Council may designate. Prayer shall be an integral part of the meeting.

**Section 2.** The agenda shall be developed in advance of the meeting by the pastor and council officers based upon the proposals from commissions, liaison reports, the Parish Pastoral Council annual calendar, strategic plan or mission goals, ongoing needs and concerns of the parish. Parishioners may submit items for consideration to any council member one week before the meeting.

**Section 3.** Advance notice of the time and place of the meetings of the Council shall be published in the parish bulletin, and all members of the parish shall be entitled and welcome to attend as observers. The Council may open any meeting to discussion by parish members on such subjects and under such rules as the Council may announce.

**Section 4. Special Meetings.** Notice of special meetings shall be given to all members within a reasonable time before the meeting, stating its time, place and purpose. No other business than that stated as the purpose shall be conducted at that meeting.

**Section 5. Closed Session.** When a question arises at a Council meeting that relates to a person's right to privacy, the Council may request the absence of visitors for that portion of the meeting. The content of the closed session is not part of the formal minutes of the meeting and is not made public.

**Section 6. Absence.** Notification of intended absence should be given to the Council Chairperson, Vice-chairperson or Secretary before the meeting.

#### **Article V: Parish Commissions**

**Section 1. Purpose.** Each commission implements parish priorities and goals in its own areas of responsibility in the collaborative spirit of working together to accomplish the parish's stated mission. All commission work leads to building a faith community, proclaiming the Word of God, calling people to prayer and motivating people to serve others.

**Section 2. Scope.** All commissions are accountable to the Council. Commissions make decisions in their areas of responsibility following the principle of subsidiary, which means making decisions at the most appropriate level in the parish commission structure.

**Section 3. Functions.** The basic functions of each Council commission are to:

- a. Identify needs of the parish within its areas of responsibility and in keeping with the parish mission.
- b. Establish priorities among the needs and communicate how these needs can realistically be addressed and where inter-commission collaboration might be effective.
- c. Formulate long-range and short-term goals and objectives.
- d. Research and investigate options to implement goals.

- e. Submit the proposed programs to the Council for support.
- f. Communicate with the pastor and pastoral staff about the implementation.
- g. Maintain communication with the parish concerning programs, encouraging active support and involvement.
- h. Maintain communication with the respective Diocesan offices and agencies for guide-lines and resources.
- i. Provide on-going formation of commission members in its areas of responsibility through workshops, study, spiritual formation, etc.
- j. Determine budget priorities in the area of the commission's responsibility and make recommendations to the Council through the Finance Council.
- k. Periodically evaluate existing programs and activities.
- l. Provide the Council with regular oral or written reports of the work of their commissions.

**Section 4.** The descriptions of the individual commissions of the Council are:

**Ministry of Worship:** This commission nourishes and gives direction to the liturgical aspect of parish life. It provides opportunities for parishioners to deepen their faith through a variety of prayer experiences and liturgical celebrations. It identifies the spiritual needs of parishioners and maintains an on going program of education and training for liturgical ministers.

**Ministry of the Word:** The role of this commission is to develop within the parish awareness that the parish community has the responsibility for promoting the educational/formation aspect of the mission of the Church. Christian Formation is a lifelong process aimed at personal conversion and growth in faith. This commission is advisory to educational administration in the design, implementation and evaluation of the total Christian educational/formation programs in the parish, which include: sacramental preparation, adult and family ministry, youth ministry, school ministry and child ministry.

**Ministry of Community:** This commission looks at parish ministries from the standpoint of community, which is an essential part of parish life. Community draws parishioners together in mutual support, activity, celebration and growth. The commission uses the lens of community to ensure that parish life nurtures and is shared with the people of God. The commission brings about intergenerational wisdom to enrich the whole parish, cluster and larger community. The ministry in this area does all it can to create a deep and abiding sense of unity which binds the parishioners together in faith and collectively helps them experience what it means to be God's people.

**Ministry of Service:** This commission discerns needs of persons in the parish and wider community, especially the poor, and identifies resources to meet those needs enlisting the active cooperation of parish members. This commission fulfills the justice dimensions of scripture and our Church tradition acknowledging that every Christian is called to service and to work for justice, including Respect Life efforts. The commission's scope of responsibility is two-fold:

- a. to meet immediate needs;
- b. to work for changes in the structures of society, which are oppressive.

Commission members are not responsible to do all of the commission's work but rather to involve others in actively accepting the responsibility of their baptism. The commission supports those in the parish who are already involved in service, advocacy, justice education, and empowerment of people. This commission works with community groups and other parishes to help solve related problems. They keep parishioners aware of issues relating to justice, peace, hunger and homeless persons on local, national and international levels so that appropriate Christian action on such issues can be determined.

**Section 5. Commission Officers.** The chairperson of each commission shall be discerned by and from the commission members, based on competence, leadership ability and knowledge of the commission's area of ministry. The term of office for the chairperson is one year. Other officers determined by the commissions, e.g. secretary, are selected in a similar manner. Neither an employee of the parish nor an ex officio member of the Council shall be eligible to be an officer.

**Article VI: Amendments To The Bylaws**

The Council may amend the bylaws by consensus or a two-thirds vote of the members at two consecutive meetings of the Council.

Date of Most Recent Amendment:

Date of Next Full Review: