

**THE CONSTITUTION OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL
ST. TERESA OF AVILA PARISH
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS**

PREAMBLE

As a Catholic Christian community, we center our life and worship in the Eucharistic liturgy to listen and reflect on God's word; to bless, break, and share the Body and Blood of Christ. This empowers us to care for and about one another, in joy and sorrow, all in God's name. Through the infinite guidance of the Holy Spirit, this prayer-based leadership council is formed to carry out God's word and to serve the parishioners of St. Teresa of Avila Church.

ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this group shall be the Parish Pastoral Council of St. Teresa of Avila Church, Chicago, Illinois, referred to hereinafter as "The Pastoral Council" or "the council".

ARTICLE II - THE PURPOSE AND FUNCTION OF THE COUNCIL AND PASTOR

Section A - The purpose of the Pastoral Council

The Pastoral Council, representing the entire parish, will serve as a consultative body to the Pastor. The council exercises shared responsibility for the Pastoral life of the parish under the leadership of the Pastor. The members of the council along with the Pastor, through prayer and common reflection, are to explore and determine the parish's mission. It will achieve this through planning and evaluation in light of the gospel and Church teachings. The council therefore has six basic areas of function:

- 1) to research the needs, the ideas and the hopes of St. Teresa of Avila's faith community;
- 2) to encourage and support existing ministries;
- 3) to encourage one another in spiritual growth, in the understanding of our faith, in our ministries to all our parish family whose members differ in background, heritage, lifestyle, age, and culture;
- 4) to evaluate the quality of life of the parish faith community;
- 5) to plan for the parish's future by recommending policies, procedures, programs, and ministries that will implement its values and fulfill the church's mission;
- 6) to regularly review the parish Mission Statement under the guidance of the Pastor.

Section B - The purpose of the Pastor

The Pastoral care of a community of the faithful is entrusted to a Pastor. By virtue of his office, the Pastor is the shepherd of the community. The Pastor is the one who nourishes the faith community with the Word of God and with the Eucharist, celebrates with them the sacramental moments of their lives and lead them in service of one another. The Pastor provides the means by which the Pastoral ministry of the parish is unified, and the means through which it receives direction. At the same time, the Pastor can only accomplish this task in cooperation and communion with all the members of the community.

The Pastor must always be seen as being one with the parishioners; he does not exist apart from them. The authority he receives as Pastor is the authority to shepherd a people. This is so that the Pastor and people together might accomplish the mission, which Jesus has entrusted the Church, under the guidance of the diocesan bishop.

Thus the Pastor is an essential member of the council, for it is through the Pastor that the work of the council is organized, unified, and directed. The Pastor presides over the council, but is not the

chairperson. He receives the advice of the council, but is ultimately the one who must ensure that the Pastoral mission of the parish is fulfilled.

ARTICLE III - RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PASTORAL COUNCIL AND PASTOR

Section A - The responsibilities of the Pastoral Council are:

- 1) to be a worshipping community
- 2) to proclaim the gospel through word and deed
- 3) to reflect on the nature of Church as mission
- 4) to implement directives of the Archbishop and the Church of the Archdiocese of Chicago
- 5) to oversee all parish activities to insure that the stated goals, objectives, and priorities are implemented and maintained
- 6) to identify and encourage the use of the gifts and talents of the members of the parish
- 7) to promote continuous dialogue and communication among the clergy, professional staff, council members, other groups and organizations parishioners, and the broad community through:
 - a) Open meetings
 - b) An annual report or annual meeting
 - c) Public relations, i.e., newsletters, newspapers, bulletins, articles, and special flyers
 - d) Reflections after Communion
 - e) Public media
 - f) Active listening, both within and outside of meetings
 - g) Greeting people before or after Mass on Sundays
 - h) Attending parish functions as often as possible
- 8) to conduct an in-service program for the council and other parish leaders in areas such as:
 - a) Orientation for new council members
 - b) Church history, theology, prayer, scripture, discernment, gospel values, and their relationship to council responsibilities
 - c) Skill development in areas such as listening, consensus, meetings, developing agencies, minutes, delegation, evaluation, affirmation, conflict management, needs assessment, planning, and policy setting
- 9) to discuss current community and world realities that effect its parishioner and the neighborhood
- 10) to develop a positive relationship with the Archdiocesan leadership
- 11) to develop committees of parish concern such as Education, Spiritual Life, Human Concerns, and Parish Life
 - a) one parish council member will serve as a liaison to each committee of parish concern
 - b) every parish organization shall be encouraged to affiliate with at least one area of parish concern and report to the designated council member
 - c) the council may, by consensus, recognize additional areas of parish concern as deemed appropriate
- 12) to continue to be aware of signs of the time and place

Section B - The responsibilities of the Pastor:

- 1) to consult with and give careful consideration to the advice of the council in matters pertaining to the affairs of the parish
- 2) to bring to the attention of the council issues important to the life of the parish
- 3) to encourage and share in the spiritual development of the council
- 4) to be present and actively participate in Pastoral Council meetings
- 5) to meet with the Executive Committee as needed

ARTICLE IV - STRUCTURE AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE PASTORAL COUNCIL

Any registered parishioner of St. Teresa of Avila Church who has reached the age of eighteen years may be considered for membership on the Pastoral Council.

Section A - The Pastoral Council Composition

The Pastoral Council shall be composed of least twelve (12) but not more than fifteen (15) discerned members. The Pastor and up to four other Pastoral staff members can serve as ex officio members with voice, but no voting privileges. The discerned council members shall reflect the diversity of the parish.

Section B - Pastoral Council Officers and the Executive Committee

The officers of the Pastoral Council shall be selected on an annual basis by the council from its members, and shall consist of a chairperson, vice chairperson, and secretary. These three members shall comprise the Executive Committee, which shall lead the Pastoral Council in achieving its goals.

- 1) The duties of the Chairperson are:
 - a) to preside at all regular and special meetings of the Pastoral Council
 - b) to insure that each meeting be opened and closed with prayer and conducted in the spirit of faith
 - c) to develop unity and stability within the Pastoral Council
 - d) to identify and clarify topics for future agendas in consultation with the Pastor
 - e) to facilitate discussions at meetings so that all members have the opportunity to participate in the consensus process by freely and fully expressing their thoughts and concerns
 - f) to act as a spokesperson for the Pastoral Council when appropriate
 - g) to insure that the Pastoral Council fulfills its duties as described in Article III
 - h) to establish processes through which the council's effectiveness can be evaluated

- 2) The duties of the Vice Chairperson are:
 - a) to perform the duties of the Chairperson in his or her absence
 - b) to assist the chairperson in conducting the work of the council
 - c) to arrange for the preparation of the discernment process for election of new council members
 - d) to coordinate an annual Pastoral Council retreat

- 3) The duties of the Secretary are:
 - a) to record the minutes of all the Council's regular and special meetings
 - b) to maintain a roster of members and record of attendance
 - c) to maintain a list of
 - d) to notify the Executive Committee when a member has two consecutive or three total absences
 - e) to reserve space and coordinate the physical set up of the meeting room for all regular and special meetings
 - f) to mail the minutes of the previous meeting to council members at least one week in advance of the next meeting
 - g) to maintain a council correspondence file and conduct correspondence as delegated by the chairperson
 - h) to notify council members at least five days in advance regarding special meetings or date changes of meetings
 - i) to obtain a list of each permanent parish organization including its members and its corresponding area of parish concern

- 4) The duties of the Executive Committee are:
 - a) to meet with the Pastor as needed
 - b) to arrange consultation with any member who has two consecutive or three total absences to help the member discern the viability of continued council membership
 - c) to fill vacancies on the council pursuant to Article IV, Section D

Section C - Terms of Pastoral Council membership

The term of Pastoral Council membership shall be three years. A term will begin on September 1 and end on August 31 of the third year. Members of the Parish will be invited to discern to fill vacancies at least

one month prior to the end of each term. There shall be a minimum of four members scheduled to depart the council at the end of each term. Members who discern that they are called to serve a second three-year term, will meet with the Pastor, or his representative, and the Executive Council to discuss how the needs of the council and the parish can best be met.

Section D - Filling vacancies of Pastoral Council members

Vacancies shall be filled at the discretion of the Executive Council in consultation with the Pastor, provided that the minimum number of twelve Pastoral Council members is maintained.

ARTICLE V - NOMINATIONS AND SELECTION OF MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

Each April, the Executive Committee shall plan, conduct, and oversee the nominations, discernment, and selection of members to the Pastoral Council.

Section A - Information Handouts

During the first week of April, the Executive Committee shall arrange an information handout about the Pastoral Council for the parish. This handout should include information about responsibilities and duties of council membership. This shall be accomplished by publication in the church bulletin and by announcements made at masses. During the remaining weeks of April, the committee shall solicit from the parish at large, the names of all parishioners interested in being candidates for membership in Pastoral Council.

Section B - Information Meeting

During the first week of May, the Executive Committee shall arrange two information meetings to answer any questions from prospective candidates about the Pastoral Council. One of these sessions should occur at the beginning of a regular parish council monthly meeting.

Section C - Discernment Process

During June, the Executive Committee shall arrange for a discernment program for all interested candidates to complete the process. (See Appendix A for the process)

ARTICLE VI - MEETINGS

Section A - Regular Meetings

Regular meetings of the Pastoral Council will be held once a month at a time to designated by the members. Council meetings will be open to all parishioners. At the first meeting after instillation, a calendar of regular meetings for the next twelve months shall be established. This calendar may be amended at any regular meeting.

Section B - Special Meetings

Special meetings may be called by the chairperson, the Pastor, or at the request of several council members.

Section C - Quorum

A simple majority of members in attendance at a given meeting shall constitute a quorum. Every effort shall be made to reach all decisions during a meeting by consensus. If a decision is unable to be resolved by the council, the Pastor may resolve it.

ARTICLE VII - APPEALS PROCESS

Section A - The Pastor's Decision

If the Pastor decides after prayer and reflection not to approve a council recommendation or to withhold implementation, he should express this decision in writing to the Pastoral Council and should give his reasons as fully as possible.

Section B - The Pastoral Council's Response

The council shall decide by consensus whether it accepts the Pastor's decision.

- 1) If the council does not accept the Pastor's decision, the recommendation shall be discussed at the next regular meeting or a specially called meeting. The Pastor and all concerned shall study the recommendation further and prepare any relevant data or insights.
- 2) At that meeting, the council shall prayerfully review the recommendation and any additional data. The recommendation may be revised in response to what is said. If the recommendation is again approved and is still not approved by the Pastor, the issue can be referred to the Dean or Episcopal Vicar by either the chairperson or Pastor.

ARTICLE VIII - CHANGE OF PASTOR

If the Pastor is absent for an extended period of time, incapacitated or reassigned, the Pastoral Council shall continue to function and work for the good of the parish.

ARTICLE IX - AMENDMENTS

The constitution of the Pastoral Council may be amended at any regular or special meeting of the council. The procedure for amending the constitution shall be as follows:

- 1) Any current parishioner of St. Teresa of Avila Church may submit amendments to the constitution in writing to the chairperson.
- 2) The proposed amendment shall be distributed to the council members at least one week prior to the meeting at which the amendment will be discussed.
- 3) The decision on the proposed amendment will be made by consensus after a period of prayerful discernment at that meeting.

ARTICLE IX - AMENDMENTS

The Pastor and current members of the council shall approve the constitution of the Pastoral Council of St. Teresa of Avila Church. Immediately upon the instillation of the new council, the new constitution shall take effect.