

12-09-2009  
**PASTORAL COUNCIL BY-LAWS**  
ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI PARISH  
AVISTON, ILLINOIS

**INTRODUCTION**

St. Francis of Assisi Pastoral Council is established in accord with the Code of Canon Law of the Roman Catholic Church (*Canon 536 and Canons 511-514*) and the policies of the Diocese of Belleville. The Council coordinates present parish activities and plans for the future. While the Council is concerned with every aspect of parish life, it is generally concerned with planning, setting direction and establishing policy, leaving the administration to the Pastor and/or Pastoral Team. The Council is a consultative body, which sets direction and advises the Pastor on all aspects of parish life.

The primary focus of the Council is the Pastoral Life of the Parish, i.e. liturgy/worship, religious education, catechesis, evangelization, ecumenism, social concerns/justice and parish fellowship (social/recreational). Finances and the temporal goods of the church are the primary focus of the Finance Council of the Parish, as mandated by Canon 537 and Canons 492-494.

In light of the possibility of there being no Pastor assigned, by the Bishop, to some parishes in the Diocese of Belleville, adaptations to these By-Laws may be required. In such an event, the term "Pastor", within the context of this document only, should be interpreted to mean "the corresponding appointee of the Bishop (i.e. Parish Life Coordinator, etc.) who functions in lieu of an assigned Pastor." This adaptation DOES NOT and CAN NOT be applied in cases where the Pastor happens to be absent or unavailable. It ONLY applies where the Bishop has made a formal appointment in lieu of an assigned Pastor.

**ARTICLE I**  
**Purpose**

The purpose of the Pastoral Council shall be to assist and advise the Pastor in the spiritual and temporal affairs of the parish. The Council shall occupy a leadership position with respect to these activities and voice the concerns of the parish at large to the Pastor and shall carry out the spiritual and temporal requirements of the by-laws with the advice and consent of the Pastor.

**ARTICLE II**  
**Membership**

Section 1

Pastoral Council membership shall consist of Ex-Officio, Elected and Appointed Members.  
The Ex-Officio Members shall be the Pastor, Deacon(s) and the two Lay Trustees of the Parish.  
The Elected Members shall be those elected to serve by the Parish at large and must constitute at least 50% of the Council membership. The remainder can be appointed or ex-officio.  
The Appointed Member shall be chosen and appointed by the Pastor, if he chooses to do so.

Section 2

All Elected and Appointed Members of the Council shall have one vote each. The Pastor shall have one vote in the event of a tie, and shall have veto power.

Section 3

Elected Members shall be active, practicing Catholics who are not less than eighteen (18) years of age and registered members of record of St. Francis of Assisi Parish.

Section 4

Membership in the Council requires attendance at all Regular meetings of the Pastoral Council. Any Elected member absent from three consecutive Regular Council Meetings, without having notified a Council Officer in advance that he/she will be absent, may be excluded from Council membership by a majority vote of the Council.

**ARTICLE III**  
**Officers**

Section 1

The members of the Council shall elect from among the elected members of the Council, at their January meeting, a Chair, a Vice-Chair and a Secretary of the Council. These three members shall be the officers of the Council.

Section 2

The Chair shall be the chief executive officer of the Council and shall preside at all meetings of the Council. The Chair shall have powers and perform the duties usually vested in the office of Chairperson and shall have such additional powers and duties as may be assigned by the Council.

Section 3

The Vice-Chair shall perform all the duties of the Chair when the Chair is absent or unable to act. The Vice-Chair shall have the powers and perform the duties usually vested in the office of Vice-Chair and shall have additional duties as may be assigned by the Council.

Section 4

The Secretary shall keep minutes of all meetings, sign documents and instruments that require the signature of the Secretary and shall perform other duties as the Council may assign. The Secretary shall arrange to have minutes of the Council meetings made available to parishioners.

**ARTICLE IV**  
Meetings

Section 1

Regular meetings of the Pastoral Council shall be held on the second Wednesday of each month, except for the months of June, July and August, when the Council is in recess. The meetings shall be held at an appropriate time and place. The date of a regularly scheduled meeting may be changed to accommodate other commitments of Council members, schedule conflicts, etc upon approval by the Council members and Pastor.

Section 2

The right of non-members and/or visitors to address the Council shall be limited to those whose request, written or verbal, have been made to the Chair or Pastor twenty four hours (24 hr.) in advance of the meeting.

Section 3

Special meetings may be called by the Pastor or by the Council with the approval of the Pastor.

**ARTICLE V**  
Committees and Commissions

Section 1

From time to time it will be necessary for the Council members to serve on various committees, parish and/or deanery, to benefit the parish and the parishioners. The council members who serve on these committees will have the responsibility for assisting the Pastor and the Council in ensuring that the Parish needs are being met. The chair, in consultation with the Pastor, shall appoint Council members to serve on these various committees within the parish and/or deanery.

Section 2

The Council shall establish “ad hoc” and/or standing committees, as needed, to meet its needs and mission, and for the benefit of the parish and its parishioners. Council committees may be established with the approval of the Council and the Pastor. Council Officers and/or the Pastor have the authority to establish ad-hoc committees. Ad-hoc committees will cease existence, upon the fulfillment of the mandated purpose or task, with the approval of the Council and Pastor.

Section 3

Membership upon Council committees are to consist of at least two (2) voting members of the Council and individuals selected from the parish at large. The council members of the committee shall be comprised of at least one (1) voting member from each annual election to ensure that the terms on the committees are staggered for future continuity. They are to serve as liaison between the committee and the Council and vice versa.

Section 4

Ad Hoc and Standing Committees are to select their own chair and secretary and may solicit additional membership to the committee as needed. They have the right and obligation to appear before the Pastoral Council to report on their work on a regular basis, at least annually.

Section 5

Annually, at the January meeting, volunteers or nominations will be requested from the newly elected Council members for serving on any on going committees, council and/or deanery to fill the vacancies of outgoing council members. After nominations are received, the Chair will appoint Council members to serve on the respective committees.

**ARTICLE VI**  
Elections

Section 1

Annually, at the September meeting, the Chair of the Council shall appoint an election committee consisting of those Council members whose terms are not expiring. They shall be responsible: 1) To announce the upcoming Pastoral Council election to the parish through the bulletin; 2) To solicit from the parishioners, in early October, nominees for candidacy, insuring that at least eight (8) names appear on the ballot ; 3) To approach the nominees to assure that they will accept membership on the Council if elected, 4) To publicize the candidates running for election during the month of November. Responsibilities 1, 2 and 3 of the Election Committee are to be completed prior to the end of October.

Section 2

The Election is to be held annually on 1<sup>st</sup> full weekend of December at all parish masses. The Election Committee shall be responsible for conducting the election at all of this weekend’s masses.

Section 3

Election results shall be tabulated by the Parish Trustees prior to the December Pastoral Council meeting and reported at the December meeting.

Section 4

Any member of the parish sixteen (16) years of age or older as of the date of the election shall be entitled to one (1) ballot in the annual election.

Section 5

At each annual election, the three (3) candidates receiving the highest number of votes shall be elected. Ties will be decided by a majority vote of the Pastoral Council. The newly elected members of the Council shall be published in the Sunday Bulletin.

**ARTICLE VII**  
Terms of Office

Section 1

The term of office for Elected Council Members shall be three (3) years. The term of office for the Appointed and Ex-Officio members shall be the duration of their appointment and/or term.

Section 2

Elected members shall serve no more than two consecutive terms.

Section 3

The term of office for all Council members shall begin at the regular January meeting.

**ARTICLE VIII**  
Vacancy

Section 1

Any member may resign by submission of a written resignation to the Secretary of the Pastoral Council.

Section 2

A vacancy of an un-expired term on the Pastoral Council shall be filled by a candidate from the last Pastoral Council Election, beginning with the one receiving the highest number of votes, after the four elected candidates (i.e. 1<sup>st</sup> runner-up), and working down the list.

**ARTICLE IX**  
Amendments to the By-laws

Proposed amendments to these by-laws may be made by Council members at any Council meeting. Proposed amendments to the by-laws will not be acted upon at the time of initial discussion, but must be tabled and voted on at the subsequent Council meeting. A majority vote of the Council members present and voting at a regular meeting and the approval of the pastor are required for the ratification of an amendment to these by-laws.

**ARTICLE X**  
Conflict Resolution

Section 1

In the event of an irreconcilable conflict between the Pastor and the Council, arbitration is to be sought by the Pastor and/or the Council. This must follow the Due Process and Arbitration procedures within the Diocese of Belleville and the Office of the Bishop

Section 2

The Council may be dissolved only by the direct action of the Bishop or mutual agreement of both Pastor and Council members, or by the decision of the Arbitration process of the Diocese of Belleville.

Originally Approved and Established: December 17, 1968  
1<sup>st</sup> Amendment and Revision: December 1990.  
2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment and Revision as BY-LAWS: March 10, 2004  
3<sup>rd</sup> Amendment and Revision: December 12, 2009

## APPENDIX

### Quotes from the Code of Canon Law of the Roman Catholic Church:

Canon 536 1. *If, after consulting the council of priests, the diocesan Bishop considers it opportune, a pastoral council is to be established in each parish. In this council, which is presided over by the parish priest, Christ's faithful, together with those who by virtue of their office are engaged in pastoral care in the parish, give their help in fostering pastoral action.*

2. *The pastoral council has only a consultative vote, and it is regulated by the norms laid down by the diocesan Bishop.*

Canon 537 *In each parish there is to be a finance committee to help the parish priest in the administration of the goods of the parish, without prejudice to can. 532. It is ruled by the universal law and by the norms laid down by the diocesan bishop, and it is comprised of members of the faithful selected according to these norms.*