



**ST. MARK THE EVANGELIST  
CATHOLIC COMMUNITY**

**PASTORAL COUNCIL CONSTITUTION**

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**ARTICLE I: NAME**

This gathering of parishioners is called St. Mark the Evangelist Catholic Community, Plano Texas, Diocese of Dallas.

**ARTICLE II: PURPOSE**

The Parish Pastoral Council is a consultative body acting in an advisory capacity to the pastoral leader. Together with the pastoral leader, the Council promotes the following of Jesus as Prophet, Priest and Servant-King.

- A. The Council provides a vehicle whereby the laity of the parish shares with the pastoral leader the responsibility for shaping and guiding the mission of the parish through open and constructive communication.
- B. The Council seeks to build a community of faith to help make the church present and functioning within the parish's locale.
- C. The Council calls forth charisms, gifts given by the Holy Spirit to individual members of the faith community for the common good.
- D. The Council facilitates the formulation of a parish mission statement and promotes development of clear, concise policies, goals and objectives based on this statement.
- E. The Council explores the need for activities/programs that promote the spiritual, faith formational and temporal well being of the parish.
- F. The Council helps the parish to identify with the broader church on the diocesan, national and universal levels.
- G. The Council acts as a stabilizing force in the parish at times when it is particularly affected by change and/or transition.
- H. The Council continues to serve unofficially during times of transition in pastoral leadership.
  - 1. Throughout such transitions the Pastoral Council collaborates with the Commissions, the Finance Council, and members of the parish staff to provide continuity until such time as a new pastoral leader is assigned.
  - 2. Once appointed the new pastoral leader either reconfirms the existing Council, or calls for creation of a new Council.

### **ARTICLE III: MANNER OF OPERATION**

- A. The Council's ordinary manner of decision-making, whether as a committee of the whole or through the commissions, is by consensus rather than by vote.
- B. The Council conducts itself in a collaborative mode with individuals and groups in the parish. This collaboration is especially essential in the Pastoral Council's interaction with the Finance Council. For each Council to fulfill its responsibilities effectively, mutual understanding and support is vital between the two.

### **ARTICLE IV: COUNCIL and COMMISSION STRUCTURES**

- A. When considering matters that affect the entire parish, the Council operates as a committee of the whole.
- B. When dealing with matters specific to one of the commissions, the Council operates through that specific commission.
- C. The Pastoral Council has five commissions:
  - 1. The Faith Formation Commission is the structure of the Council through which the parish participates in the prophetic ministry of Jesus Christ. This commission assists the pastoral leader and pastoral team/staff in developing, promoting, coordinating and evaluating all parish activities relating to catechetical-Faith Formation ministries of the parish. As it promotes the growth of an informed and vital faith life among the parish members, the commission affects the lives of all in the faith community, young and old alike, who are growing to maturity in faith. The commission facilitates catechesis within the parish as well as evangelization within and beyond the parish.
  - 2. The Worship and Liturgy Commission is the structure of the Council through which the parish participates in the priestly ministry of Jesus Christ. This commission assists the pastoral leader and pastoral team/staff in furthering full, conscious and active participation in the parish's liturgical, sacramental and prayer life. Commission responsibility includes developing, promoting, coordinating and evaluating all the activities by which the parish offers its members opportunities for spiritual growth as individuals and as a community of Catholic Christians.

3. The Family and Adult Ministry Commission is one structure of the Council through which the parish participates in the servant ministry of Jesus Christ. This Commission assists the pastoral leader and pastoral team/staff in providing, promoting, and evaluating all parish responses relating to Family and Adult Ministries within the parish. The Commission also acts as an advocating body for encouraging a family perspective in all policies, programs, organizations and ministry efforts within the entire parish. It oversees ministries for singles, married and remarried couples, widowed, separated and divorced, parents, hurting individuals and families, families throughout the life cycle, and peer leadership development. The Commission works to affirm families as the Domestic Church, ensures inclusiveness in all ministry efforts, and encourages a true welcoming Christian community. In these ways, the Commission has an empowering effect on the whole of parish life.
4. The Service Commission is another structure of the Council through which the parish participates in the servant ministry of Jesus Christ. This commission assists the pastoral leader and pastoral team/staff in developing, promoting, coordinating and evaluating all parish activities which promote the social mission of the Church through direct service, ecumenical involvement, cooperation with civic and other groups which seek to further justice and peace. This commission promotes a deeper understanding of the baptismal call to service of the poor. Its ministry is concerned not only with the good of parish members but also extends to those in need beyond parish boundaries.
5. The Community Commission celebrates our identity as a Community Church within the Body of Christ. The Community Commission consists of ministries that celebrate the diversity of cultures reflected in the Body of Christ, and its parishioners work in concert to fulfill that mission. This commission actively pursues a greater awareness of the diversities that comprise St. Mark and the development of programs to bring these groups together to stimulate the spirit of One Church. The Commission works to increase opportunities for coordinated fellowship efforts of the community, while promoting Evangelism and Discipleship. Recognizing the fellowship and language-specific needs of the diverse groups, the ministries work to encourage and foster programs which are supported in a bilingual setting. The Commission also acts as an advocating body for encouraging a Community-building perspective in all policies, programs, organizations, and ministry efforts within the entire parish.

## **ARTICLE V: QUALIFICATIONS & TERM - COUNCIL, COMMISSIONS & COMMITTEES**

### **A. Council Membership & Terms of Service**

1. The Pastoral Council is comprised of nine at-large members selected through a discernment process and with the approval of the pastoral leader. The at-large members shall be baptized, confirmed, registered, and participating Catholics. The pastoral leader will appoint three or more additional members to the Pastoral Council at his discretion.
2. Council members serve a three-year term with each term beginning on July 1. Council members are to select three members annually through the discernment process. Preferably, members shall serve no more than two consecutive terms.
3. Since the Council is advisory to the pastoral leader, the leader is not a member of the Council. Because of the special nature of their work, staff members may not be discerned as at-large members on the Council. Within their specific areas of ministry, they act as resource persons to the Council. All clergy are invited and encouraged to attend Council meetings.
4. Service on the Council is a special ministry to the parish requiring an understanding of and commitment to the church in accord with the Second Vatican Council, willingness to stay current with developments in the diocesan and universal church and a capacity for consensual decision-making.

### **B. Commission Membership & Terms of Service**

A commission is composed of relevant ministries, Parish Pastoral Council representatives, and a Parish staff liaison.

1. Service on the commission is a special ministry to the parish. A chairperson for each commission will be drawn from the ministries represented in that commission.
2. Commissions establish their own terms of service. To ensure that commissions are able to benefit from new as well as continuing membership, a rotation process is suggested.

### **C. Committee Membership & Terms of Service**

As needs arise the Councils or Commissions may appoint either ad hoc or standing committees. Such groups are usually informally organized as to membership and service.

**ARTICLE VI: SELECTION, TERM, AND DUTIES OF THE COUNCIL AND  
COMMISSION OFFICERS**

A. Council Officers

1. A chair, a vice-chair and a secretary assist the pastoral leader in facilitating the work of the Council. They are selected by and from the Council at the first meeting of the new Council year when an officer's term has expired. These officers constitute the Council's Executive Committee. A Council officer may serve two consecutive years in the same position.
2. The duties of the Pastoral Council Chair include but are not limited to the following:
  - a. Assisting the pastoral leader and the Executive Committee in setting agendas for meetings;
  - b. Conducting the meetings in a consensual manner;
  - c. Facilitating communication between the Pastoral Council and the parish-at-large;
  - d. Assisting the pastoral leader in scheduling open forums when concerns about specific issues deeply affect the parish as a whole;
  - e. Discussing with the pastoral leader the continuing membership of any Council member with repeated absences;
  - f. Chairing Executive Committee meetings when the need for these is indicated.
3. The vice-chair conducts meetings in the absence of the chair and assists the chair in the performance of his/her duties.
4. The secretary is asked to:
  - a. Circulate the agenda to all participants prior to regularly scheduled meetings;
  - b. Take minutes, circulating them promptly following the meeting;
  - c. Maintain record of attendance and bring to the attention of the chair the name of any Council member with repeated absences;

- d. Keep a current record of the names, addresses, telephone numbers and terms of Council officers and members;
- e. Assist the Chair in attending to Council correspondence.

B. Commission Officers

1. Each commission will select its chairperson through a process agreed upon by the commission. The chair should request another member to act as a recorder.
2. The chairperson and recorder will ordinarily serve for one year and can be re-elected for more than one consecutive term.
3. In furthering the work of the commissions, chairpersons are encouraged to share their ministry as broadly as possible among commission members and with other parishioners.
4. A parish staff liaison will be appointed by the pastoral leader and two Parish Pastoral Council representatives will be appointed by the Pastoral Council Chair to help support each commission and its chairperson.

## **ARTICLE VII: MEETINGS**

- A. Pastoral Council Meetings
  - 1. Frequency: The Parish Pastoral Council will meet a minimum of six times per calendar year. The Executive Committee assists the pastoral leader in determining meeting frequency, in setting the place, dates and times of meetings. Special meetings may be called as necessary.
  - 2. Items ordinarily on a Pastoral Council agenda would include:
    - a. Communal prayer;
    - b. Correction/approval of minutes of previous meeting;
    - c. Items for information, discussion, action;
    - d. Reception of written reports including Commission updates with opportunity for questions;
    - e. Opportunity for proposal of future agenda items by members;
    - f. Feedback and comments from members of the parish
- B. Commissions are expected to meet four times per year. Since communication is a critical purpose of the Commissions, minutes are an important output of each commission meeting, and should be published expeditiously.