

**Constitution and Bylaws
of the
Parish Pastoral Council**

**Corpus Christi Catholic Church
Tucson, Arizona**

The Mission of Corpus Christi Catholic Community

**We, at Corpus Christi, seek
to experience God in Scripture,
the Sacraments, our prayer,
studies, one another,
and all of God's creation.**

**We aspire to embody
God's presence
by sharing our gifts
and welcoming all.**

The Corpus Christi Parish Pastoral Council has been formed to assist the pastor of the parish in promoting the life of the gospel among the people of Corpus Christi Parish.

ARTICLE I Structure and Purpose of Parish Pastoral Council

Section 1 Name

The name of this organization is Corpus Christi Parish Pastoral Council.

Section 2 Purpose

As stewards of Christ's mission in the parish, the main purpose of the Council is pastoral planning.

The Council is consultative in nature, to give counsel to the pastor. This body is called to reflect on and consider pastoral issues for the common good and for the future of the parish

The Parish Pastoral Council is to be a representative body of the parish community. The focus is on the whole community, its beliefs, joys, needs, sorrows, concerns, gifts, and the pursuit of the mission of the parish.

In carrying out its purpose, the Council shall be called to live as examples of Christian leadership, service, humility, and spirituality to the parish community.

The Council shall hold a yearly retreat in March at which time they will prayerfully determine objectives/goals for the coming year.

Section 3 Members

The Council will have no more than twelve to fifteen voting members, not including the pastor. All will be chosen in a discernment process. *Ex officio* members may be seated, but will not be voting members.

Section 4 Officers

The Pastoral Council shall have a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson, and a Secretary. Officers will be elected at the March retreat and serve for two years. These officers along with the pastor will constitute the Executive Committee.

ARTICLE II Membership

Section 1 The Parish Pastoral Council shall be representative of the parish community. The Council shall be composed of:

Twelve to fifteen discerned members. Each will be chosen for three-year terms. Terms shall be staggered with equal number of members elected in rotation each year. Members are limited to one term and must wait three years before being considered again for membership on the Council.

Ex officio nonvoting members of the Council are appointed by the pastor and may include a representative of the parish Corporate Board of Directors, the associate vicar and others. Their term of office will be one year and may be extended annually for no more than three years. The Finance Committee, having a different role in advising the pastor will not have an *ex officio* member on the Council.

Section 2 Qualifications of Members: Council members must meet at least these minimum qualifications:

- A. Baptized Catholic
- B. Registered in the parish for at least two years
- C. At least sixteen years old
- D. Attend mass regularly and be active in parish life
- E. Be willing to commit their time and energy to considering matters involving the community
- F. Commit to attending meetings once a month
- G. Commit to attending the Council retreat each year
- H. Commit time and effort to completing the goals of the Council
- I. Exception under these qualifications is as follows: Staff members and their immediate family members are not eligible to serve.

Section 3 Discernment Process to Select Members

In order to select those persons to serve on the Council, a process of discernment will be used. Discernment is keenness in seeing and understanding through the use of good judgment. In order to discern if a candidate is appropriate for the Council, the Discernment Committee must be guided by prayer in evaluating the candidate's talents and gifts needed on the Council for vacant positions. Listening to the Holy Spirit and one another is also key to the process.

Process

Beginning with the October Council meeting, the Executive Committee will solicit the names of prospective candidates. The candidates may be nominated by any Council member, the pastor, or interested parishioner. Candidates' names must be submitted to the Executive Committee by November 30th.

A Discernment Committee, established by the Council will review the prospective candidates. This review will involve the following steps:

- a. Review each candidate's suitability with the pastor
- b. Ensure each candidate meets the minimum qualifications listed in
- c. Contact all candidates to let them know of their nomination and to verify their ability to meet the commitments under Article II, Section 2.
- d. Select candidates to recommend to the Pastor to take to the Council for review.

The pastor will present the names of all discerned candidates for review at the December Council meeting. After a prayerful discussion and listening session, members will take the next month to pray and to consider the candidates presented to them. Affirmation will take place at the January meeting.

The new members will be notified by the chairperson or pastor after the January meeting and will be seated at the February meeting.

ARTICLE III Duties and Roles of Parish Pastoral Council Officers and Members

Section 1 Chairperson: Responsible for conducting meetings. The chairperson shall act as facilitator, working to draw all members into active collaboration and discussion. The chairperson is a member of the Executive Committee which plans the agenda with the pastor. He or she will follow up on all assignments given to individual Council members. The chairperson is elected to a two-year term and may serve one term in that position.

Section 2 Vice-Chairperson: Responsible for conducting meetings in the absence of the chairperson. The vice-chairperson is a member of the Executive Committee and is specifically responsible for coordinating the annual Council retreat. He or she is elected to a two-year term and may serve one term in that position.

Section 3 Secretary: Responsible for recording the minutes of the meetings and for maintaining all Council documents and rosters. The Secretary is a member of the Executive Committee. He or she shall send out the completed agenda to all Council members by one week prior to the meeting and post notice of the meeting date in the bulletin and on the website. The secretary will provide the minutes of the meeting to Council members and ministry leaders, and place a copy of the minutes in the office, within three days following the meeting. The secretary is elected to a two-year term and may serve one term in that position.

Section 4 All Members of the Parish Pastoral Council are to participate in:

- Prayerfully discerning the needs of the parish
- Establishing goals and objectives for the parish and plan for implementation
- Serving as liaisons for constructive dialogue within the parish community
- Being visible models for the parish during parish activities, events, and services
- Being open to new ideas for problem-solving and decision-making, using the consensus model to build support for implementing the solution or plan
- Promoting unity within the parish community

ARTICLE IV Meetings

Section 1 The Parish Pastoral Council will meet monthly beginning in February and ending in January except for the month of July. The March meeting will be Council retreat held on a Saturday to be determined by each year's Council. The purpose of the retreat is to set goals for the coming year, to build relationship, to provide spiritual growth, and/or to develop skills development as part of the Christian leadership process. Officers will be elected at the retreat, as terms expire.

Section 2 Regular meetings of the Council shall be open to all parishioners. Parishioners may not participate in discussions

Section 3 Special meetings may be called by the pastor or Executive Committee.

Section 4 The agenda will be set by the pastor and the Executive Committee and distributed at least a week before the meeting. Any supporting documents will be sent along with the agenda to the members for their review before the meeting. Members may submit items for consideration of inclusion on the agenda at least two weeks before the meeting. Parishioners may submit suggestions for the agenda in writing in the same timeframe.

Section 5 Meetings will be conducted by the chairperson under the authority and in the presence of the pastor.

Section 6 Making Decisions

A. In giving counsel to the pastor, the Parish Pastoral Council is called to reflect on and consider pastoral issues for the common good and future of the parish. The subsequent recommendations may be accomplished by seeking consensus (see Appendix A) or, when circumstances require, obtaining a majority vote.

B. A majority of the Council membership shall constitute a quorum. No matters requiring a vote may be decided in the absence of a quorum of voting members. Except as otherwise required in these bylaws, a majority vote of those members constitution quorum shall be sufficient to conduct the business of the Council. Council has no authority to implement its voted-upon measures. All measures passed by the Council require the Pastor's final approval and implementation of any measures passed by the Council is totally within the discretion of the pastor.

Section 7 All meetings are considered a spiritual gathering of the faithful and therefore will begin with a prayer or reflection on scripture, which may be offered by any member. A Council member will be designated at the time of the agenda's mailing to prepare the opening prayer.

Section 8 The topics discussed at meetings of the Council will be confined to the published agenda unless a motion is passed to consider opening up the floor to parishioners or to discuss items brought up by members which are not on the agenda for that meeting.

Section 9 Certain topics discussed at Parish Pastoral Council meetings may be deemed confidential and may not be discussed outside of the meeting, nor included in the published minutes. As necessary, the pastor may designate a portion of the meeting closed and attended only by Council members.

ARTICLE V Vacancies and Removal

Section 1 Vacancies on the Council may occur through resignation, death, or just-cause for removal.

Vacancies of members will remain vacant until the annual selection process and will then be filled for the length of time remaining on the term of the person being replaced.

Section 2 Just causes for removal of a Parish Pastoral Council member include:

Missing three consecutive meetings (At the pastor's discretion)

Allegations of dishonorable conduct (Pastor will investigate and take appropriate action.)

ARTICLE VI Ministry and Organization Role in Relation to Parish Pastoral Council and Parish Goals

Section 1 To ensure the effectiveness of accomplishing the parish mission and goals, the Corpus Christi Parish Pastoral Council will communicate to the ministries and organizations its goals which are set at the yearly retreat for the coming year. Each ministry and organization within the parish will be asked to review the objectives of their groups to ensure that they are in line with the mission, goals, and objectives of the parish.

Section 2 The Council may communicate its goals to the ministries/organizations by written notice or by holding a common meeting with these groups for discussion.

ARTICLE VII Amendments

Section 1 Amendments to these bylaws may be proposed at any regular meeting of the Parish Pastoral Council in which at least three-fourths of the members are present, and where the proposed amendment has been completely described and published in the agenda sent to all Parish Pastoral Council members in advance of any meeting in which the proposed amendment is to be considered. A copy of the proposed amendment along with the current text shall be mailed to all members in advance of the meeting at which the vote will be taken. A two-thirds majority vote of the council membership is required to amend these bylaws. Any such amendment shall not take effect unless and until it is approved by the pastor.

Appendix A

Using a Discernment Process in Christian Leadership

Section 1 Discernment is used to refer to thoughtful decision-making, but it's more than that when we live a life of *Christian* spiritual discernment. The question at the heart of Christian spiritual discernment is, "How do I know what God is asking of me in any given situation?"

Section 2 Elements of discernment include the following after stating the question:

- A. Prayer
- B. Quiet Reflection: after prayer, what in me is at peace in my response to the question at hand?
- C. Listening: hearing with the heart what the Holy Spirit and others are speaking
- D. Taking time: do not hurry the outcome

Section 3 In a discernment process of coming to a decision as a group, the individuals come together as a whole and find collective wisdom in the whole. In following the elements above, we can address the question at hand through thoughtful discussion and listening to one another. There are two ways to arrive at a decision:

A **Consensus** option may be used, with each speaking their choice. If the majority choose the same direction, those in the minority may be asked if they can support that direction, even though it was not their first choice. If there are still strong objections, then the group can choose to continue the process until a consensus of all can be reached.

A **majority vote** may be the option after discernment and will stand without further discussion.

Section 4 Further keys to discernment...

- A. One of the keys to discernment is surrender. If we treat "I" as the place we act from, we won't be in the right place to find out what God wants of us. We need to set aside what we want and join with Jesus in his prayer, "Yet not as I will, but as You will." (Matt 26:39)
- B. Another key is a "sense of peace" about a choice. The peace comes from the whole framework of discernment and, as such, comes from God. This peace grows from our prayer and gives a sense of trust and security in our choice.

