

Blessed Sacrament

A Christ-Centered Catholic Community

Pastoral Council Constitution

MISSION STATEMENT

*We, Blessed Sacrament Parish are a Christ-centered community,
Committed to worship the Father,
Committed to respond to the Spirit's gifts,
Committed to loving service to all God's people.*

BIBLICAL DESCRIPTION

They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their property and possessions and divide them among all according to each one's need. Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple area and breaking bread in their homes, they ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of heart, praising God and enjoying favor with all the people. And every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.
— Acts of the Apostles 2:42-47

ARTICLE I: Name

The name of this organization shall be the Blessed Sacrament Parish Pastoral Council.

ARTICLE II: Purpose

Section 1:

The Pastoral Council is a leadership body that leads the parish community in the discernment and expression of its mission. The Council will be charged with calling forth and engaging the gifts of all in the parish to serve the parish mission, goals and objectives.

The Pastoral Council shall serve as a medium through which the insights and concerns of the total parish community can be brought before the clergy and laity alike.

The Pastoral Council is a vehicle through which the whole parish can be involved in the life of the church.

The Pastoral Council shall attempt to reflect to the Pastor the thoughts, opinions, trends, and needs of the whole parish.

Section 2:

The Pastoral Council shall be the consultative body to the Pastor for spiritual, educational, and social matters except to the extent limited by Church law, civil law, or diocesan policy. The Pastor must ratify Pastoral Council recommendations before they become effective.

In cases where the Pastor interprets an action of the Council or any of its committees to be inappropriate, he shall promptly present such interpretations to the Council or committee and ask for reconsideration. Pending reconsideration, the effect of the action shall be suspended.

ARTICLE III: Scope of the Pastoral Council

The Pastoral Council will concentrate on the following: Evangelization, Faith Formation, Worship, Service, and Community Building.

Evangelization. St. Paul writes to the Romans: “How can they hear without someone to preach? And how can people preach unless they are sent?” As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring the good news!” As a faith community, we are called to spread the good news of the Lord.

Faith Formation. Jesus built a faith community through the teaching of the Twelve Apostles. As disciples of Christ, our parish is called to follow the teachings and examples of the Apostles. Growing in faith together is important for all people of all ages.

Worship. The word from which we derive the term liturgy means “work of the people.” Liturgy can mean all the rites, ceremonies, prayers, and sacraments of the Church. We are called to celebrate all the sacraments, but most importantly the Sacrifice of the Holy Eucharist which we call the Mass, with heartfelt reverence and respect for Christ and each other.

Service. Jesus taught, “Whatever you do for one of these least ones, you do for me.” (Matthew 25:40) Our parish should strive to serve God in suffering people, and in those most in need within and outside our church.

Community Building. The Acts of the Apostles reports, *"They devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple area and breaking bread in their homes; they ate their meals with exultation.* Our parish should foster fellowship and community through social interaction. This we call communion.

Stewardship for believers involves the sharing of individual time, talent, and treasure, as well as the commitment of communal resources (temporal, financial, human, etc.) in service to the community of faith. Members will realize their obligation to contribute to the fulfillment of the parish's mission and will do so willingly and generously by sharing their personal resources.

Leadership. Effective parish pastoral councils require a shared leadership among clergy and laity which call forth the gifts of visioning, planning, empowering, and evaluating. These gifts are placed at the service of the community for the fulfillment of the parish mission.

While the pastor bears the ultimate responsibility and authority within a parish, the pastor and council do not work for or under one another but rather with one another for the Kingdom of God. Together, they lead the parish in the ongoing discernment and realization of its mission.

You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and the great ones make their authority over them felt. But it shall not be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you shall be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave. Just so, the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many. (Matt 20:25-28)

An Important Word about our Children and Youth.

As a Christ-centered community, Blessed Sacrament Parish seeks to ignite the hearts and minds of our youth to the love of God and all people while calling them to put their faith into action. We seek to affirm the gifts of our youth and provide opportunities for young people to safely share their gifts with each other and the parish community.

ARTICLE IV: Membership

The Pastoral Council shall be composed of both regular and ex-officio members. Regular Members will agree to serve for a three-year term.

Somewhere between Nine or Twelve Regular members of the Pastoral Council shall constitute the core of the Pastoral Council and be chosen through a discernment process. Each year terms will expire for 1/3 of the Council and a new 1/3 will be selected. Those nominated must be practicing, confirmed Catholics.

Members are limited to two consecutive terms on the council (six years). After the completion of two consecutive terms the member will not be eligible for membership for one year.

The Pastoral Council through consensus should also designate a regular member to the roles of facilitator and a regular member as recording secretary. These assignments should be for one year.

Ex-officio members of the Pastoral Council shall include the Pastor and pastoral staff members as designated/requested by the Council and Pastor. All staff shall be encouraged and invited to attend as their schedules allow.

Regular members are expected to attend all meetings. The absence of three meetings in a twelve-month period shall cause the Pastoral Council to review circumstances with the individual and take appropriate action.

ARTICLE V: Discernment Process for New Members

By March 15 of each year, a Nominating Committee consisting of three members from the Pastoral Council shall prepare a list of parishioners who are willing to serve on the Council. Such candidates may be found by contacting individuals personally as well as publicly. The list will be presented to the Council at the March meeting.

All candidates are required to attend an orientation meeting before they join in a discernment process. Such a meeting will be to explain the role of the council, a review of the Pastoral Council Constitution and the time and effort expected of each member. They will also be strongly urged to attend a meeting of the council.

At a mutually convenient time, all those interested and willing to serve on the council will undergo a period of prayer and discernment. Led by the prompting of the Holy Spirit, individuals will discern their roles as new members, alternates, or as ones who do not feel called to serve on the Council at this time.

ARTICLE VI: Recommendations through Consensus

Consensus is a process of arriving at a decision through compromise. The process is designed to provide a forum where creative input and discernment are required by all participants.

When general agreement of the members is reached through discussion and compromise all members are bound by the process to support the decision.

Every member shall be encouraged to voice his or her ideas. All participants agree to come prepared with factual data and a position on any item on the agenda for decision. In the event no Consensus can be reached, the Pastoral Council may refer the issue to the Pastor for direction and/or a decision.

Article VII: Prioritization of Goals and Objectives

Parish goals and objectives are formulated in response to questions. How well are we meeting our mission as a parish in light of our Mission Statement and Scope of the Pastoral Council? What are we doing well and what needs work? Where best can we spend our resources, time, talents, and energy?

It is important to have listening sessions, questionnaires, surveys, and the like to get broader input.

ARTICLE VIII: Amendement of Constitution

This Constitution or by-laws may be amended by consensus of the Pastoral Council. Such amendments shall be submitted in writing to the Council. Each member shall have a copy of the amendment at least thirty working days prior to submitting the amendment to a vote at either a special or regular meeting.


Fr. Paul Wharton

Final Approval: November 1, 2023