

**CHARTER OF THE PASTORAL COUNCIL
CHURCH OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL, BROOKLYN PARK, MN
approved by Pastoral Council 9/15/2009**

I. Authorization

Canon 519. The pastor is the proper shepherd of the parish entrusted to him, exercising pastoral care in the community entrusted to him under the authority of the diocesan bishop in whose ministry of Christ he has been called to share; in accord with the norm of law he carries out for his community the duties of teaching, sanctifying and governing, with the cooperation of other presbyters or deacons and the assistance of lay members of the Christian faithful.

Canon 536. (1) After the diocesan bishop has listened to the presbyteral council and if he judges it opportune, a pastoral council is to be established in each parish; the pastor presides over it, and through it the Christian faithful, along with those who share in the pastoral care of the parish in virtue of their office give their help in fostering pastoral activity. (2) This pastoral council possesses a consultative vote only and is governed by norms determined by the diocesan bishop.

II. Purpose and Function

The Pastoral Council of the Church of St. Vincent de Paul is formed to advise the Pastor in achieving the following accountabilities:

1. Articulate, evaluate, and update the Core Values, Mission, Vision and Overarching Goals of the parish.
2. Empower and support other leaders within their respective areas of parish ministry.
3. Establish effective annual planning and evaluation processes for parish ministry.
4. Exemplify and nourish a parish servant-leader style of leadership.
5. Build a collaborative spirit among parish leaders that relies on healthy relationships and consensus-building models of decision making.
6. Encourage and promote the participation of the laity in the ministry and activities of the parish.
7. Serve as arbiter of conflict between commissions.
8. Serve as a consultative leadership body to the Pastor on critical issues affecting the overall well-being of the parish.

III. Membership

The Pastoral Council is composed of the following members:

- Pastor [ex-officio]
- 1 member from each Commission (selected annually by the respective Commission members – not the staff member or chairperson of the Commission).

- 3 at-large parishioners (1 member is selected annually for a 3-year term by a parish leadership discernment process. This member may not serve more than two 3-year terms.)
- Parochial Vicar [ex-officio, non decision-making]
- Director of Finance & Administration [ex-officio, non decision-making]

Annual member terms begin on July 1 and end on June 30.

IV. Selection of Members

General Eligibility

1. Registered member of the parish for one year.
2. Not employed by the parish.
3. Minimum age of 18 and confirmed in the Catholic faith.
4. Regularly attends parish worship.
5. Active volunteer in parish ministry.

Selection Process

Commission Member

By August 15, each commission will use a consensus process to select a member of their commission for a 1-year term on the Pastoral Council. Eligible candidates will be a second or third year member of the commission and not serving as the commission chairperson for the coming year. A commission member may serve a maximum of two consecutive years and no more than four years total from a single commission.

At-Large Member

One member will be discerned each year through the leadership discernment process in the attached **Addendum A – Parish Leadership Selection Process**.

This member will serve a 3-year term beginning July 1 after being selected. At-large members may serve a maximum of two terms. In order to serve a second term, the at-large member must participate in the leadership selection process and be discerned for a second term (not an automatic appointment).

V. Resignation, Removal, and Replacement

Resignation

A council member may resign at any time by submitting a written resignation to the Pastor, who will advise the other council members of the resignation at the earliest practical opportunity.

Three unexcused absences in any year (measured from July 1 to June 30) will result in automatic removal from the council.

Removal

A council member may be removed with or without cause, by recommendation of a two-thirds of the voting members of the council and final approval by the Pastor. Prior to a final decision, the council member being considered for removal has the right to complete the approved Conflict Resolution Process established by the Pastoral Council. (See Addendum B – Conflict Resolution Process for the Pastoral Council and Commissions)..

Replacement

When a resignation or removal occurs, a replacement member for open at-large Pastoral Council position will be selected by a sub-committee of the Pastoral Council including the Pastor, Chairperson, and Vice-Chairperson. However, if it is the Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson who has resigned, he/she would not participate in the replacement selection process.

Parishioners who have participated in previous Pastoral Council member discernment processes should be given preference as potential replacement candidates. A replacement member will serve the remaining term of the member being replaced. If the remaining term is one year or less, such service will not count toward the “two term” limit for council members (as described in Section III above).

When a resignation or removal occurs, a replacement for and open commission-member Pastoral Council position will be selected by the remaining members of that commission. The replacement member will serve the remaining term of the member being replaced. This service time will not count against the maximum four-year term limit for a commission member to serve on the Pastoral Council.

VI. Officers

Pastoral Council officers will consist of a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson, and such other officers as the council shall deem necessary. The officers are elected annually at the first council meeting after July 1 each year, and their terms of office shall be one year or until their successors are elected.

VII. Meetings

1. Regular monthly meetings of the Pastoral Council shall be held on Church property on the monthly Leadership Meeting night. The pastor or chair may choose to hold additional meetings or cancel meetings if deemed useful or appropriate. Also, a special meeting will be held if three or more of the voting members submit a written request to the pastor or chair along with an explanation of the purpose of the meeting.
2. At least five days before any meeting, an agenda should be mailed to each member of the council.

3. A quorum to conduct business at any meeting of the council shall be a majority of the voting members of the council.
4. Action items requiring decisions should be submitted to the Pastoral Council for review one month before approval is sought, unless such prior review is impossible or impractical. In that case, Pastoral Council members should receive as much advance notice of the proposed action item as is practical.
5. The Pastor has final approval on all items and issues brought before the Pastoral Council.

VIII. Committees and Liaisons

The Pastoral Council may appoint committees consisting of two or more persons to carry out council responsibilities. Such committees will report to the Pastoral Council at regular intervals. Any parishioner may be appointed to serve on such a committee, regardless of whether the parishioner is a member of the Pastoral Council.

IX. Amendments

This Charter may be amended by consensus of the Pastoral Council. This Charter should be reviewed in January of each year.

Addendum A St. Vincent de Paul Parish Leadership Selection Process

The success of a new leadership structure is dependent on attracting parishioners to serve in a leadership role. The recruitment process should be introduced as a parish-wide “invitation to serve” that offers an opportunity to “make a difference” in a new leadership model for your parish community. The nomination and discernment process should encourage parishioners to offer their gifts as “servant leaders”. Single agenda candidates with a desire to “fix the parish” should be discouraged from participation in the leadership selection process.

The following is an example of a timetable and action steps in a parish leadership selection process.

| Weeks Before Pentecost | Action Steps |
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| at least 10 (prior to Ash Wed) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Memo to staff and current leadership outlining selection process and requesting names of candidates for open parish leadership positions. ▪ Pulpit announcement of Nomination Weekend next week. Sample <i>Leadership Nomination Form</i> inserted in bulletin and available on website. Back of form includes qualifications for leadership positions and cut off date for submittal. |
| at least 9 (prior to Ash Wed) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nomination Weekend – Presentation by current pastoral council member at each Mass. Nomination forms and pencils available in pew. |
| 8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pulpit and bulletin announcements reminding members to submit names for open leadership positions. |
| 7 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Final week to submit names for open leadership positions. |
| 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Candidates are sorted by the leadership body they were nominated for (may be more than one). Names distributed to current leaders in each area for follow up. ▪ Letters mailed to candidates indicating what area they were nominated for, reviewing qualifications to serve, and inviting them to a general Information Night. |
| 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Current leaders contact assigned candidates for their area, personally inviting them to the information night and answering any questions |

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| | they may have at that time. |
| 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Information Night – a common general presentation by current parish council leaders followed by information break out sessions for specific leadership areas. ▪ Following Information Night, current leaders contact assigned candidates to answer questions and invite them to Prayer Discernment Night. ▪ Candidate rosters are revised to reflect only those continuing in the leadership discernment process. |
| 3-2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Additional candidates are sought for those leadership areas that have fewer candidates than open positions. Individual orientations (normally received at Information Night) are completed by current leaders. |
| 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prayer Discernment & Commitment Night – All current leaders and candidates participate in a facilitated prayer service with themes relevant to the selection of parish leaders. Length should be approximately 30-45 minutes. At this point, those candidates who feel called to continue the discernment process should break out into their respective leadership groups (Pastoral Council, Finance Council, etc.). ▪ Each leadership group includes current leaders who will be serving in the coming year as well as all candidates for open leadership positions. A facilitator is assigned to review the general characteristics for leadership¹. All nominees should be clear on criteria and commitment before entering the discernment discussion. ▪ The facilitator reads the following passage: “Discernment means to “see” or to “know” or to acknowledge” what is. It is to see the movement of God, perhaps only in the dust kicked up by the wind. It is to see from God’s perspective. If this is so, then the discernment process is one of uncovering the decision – not of making it. The Spirit prays within us “with sighs too deep for words.” As we listen to the Spirit, those prayers begin to surface into our consciousness.” [Olsen, Charles, <i>Transforming Church Boards into communities of spiritual leaders</i>, Alban Institute, 1995] ▪ The facilitator now asks each candidate to briefly share their story by answering two questions. (The facilitator explains that there is no prescribed order to their sharing.) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. tell us a little bit about yourself 2. share with us why you believe you are called to this leadership group Once all present have shared their story, the facilitator asks for a few minutes of quiet contemplation so that each can listen to the voice of |

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| | <p>the Spirit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ After the quiet period, the facilitator asks those present to share what they are feeling. It could include responses such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> [Bill] I think Mary would make a great member of this Council because [Jane] I feel called to be on this Council because ... [Bob] I am still not sure how I feel [Mary] At this time, I don't think I am being called to this Council ▪ Once all have had a chance to share, the facilitator polls the candidates to see who feels called to the leadership group. Discernment continues until the group agrees on who should fill all open positions or no uncommitted candidates remain. |
| Pentecost | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ At all Masses, new leaders are presented to the community. New and ongoing leaders are blessed by all in attendance. |
| Post-Pentecost | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All print and electronic communication sites are updated with the names of the leadership group members. ▪ Individual leadership groups meet over the summer to begin building personal relationships and to help new members understand their area of leadership. ▪ The Pastoral Council conducts an Orientation Morning for leaders, sharing information and practices that will support their activity in the coming year. (Usually in late August or early September) |

1. Leaders should have the following characteristics:

- a desire for spiritual growth in oneself and in the parish
- enthusiasm about the future directions of the parish
- willingness to listen, to speak honestly, and to work toward consensus
- the ability to inspire and empower others and to delegate
- flexibility and openness with people and ideas

excerpt from *Revisioning the Parish Pastoral Council, A Workbook*, Mary Ann Gubish and Susan Jenny, S. C., Paulist Press, 2001

St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church

Addendum B

Conflict Resolution Process for the Pastoral Council and Commissions

If a council or commission member believes that a conflict situation has occurred seriously affecting their ability to maintain healthy working relationships among parish leadership reflective of the Core Values of the parish, the member should complete the following steps:

1. The member should schedule a meeting with the Pastor (or designate) to confidentially communicate and clarify their concern.
2. If prayerful discernment indicates that a significant conflict situation has occurred, the Pastor (or designate) and the member should develop written action steps to be completed within one week of the initial meeting.
3. The member should schedule a follow up meeting with the Pastor (or designate) within ten days of the initial meeting to evaluate the outcome of the action steps. If the action steps do not satisfactorily resolve the conflict and restore effective working relationships, the Pastor or designate should contact the Parish Leadership Team for conflict resolution assistance.
4. The member should schedule a follow up meeting with the Pastor or designate within thirty days of the initial meeting to evaluate the outcome of steps facilitated by the Parish Leadership Team. If the action steps do not satisfactorily resolve the conflict and restore effective working relationships, the Pastor may require the resignation of one or more of the members of the Pastoral Council or commissions.