

Mary Queen Pastoral Council

Purpose and Norms

Purpose

The Mary Queen Parish Pastoral Council is a leadership community rooted in prayer, seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit, committed to patient listening and study, and working to recommend to the pastor the plans and directions that will enable the parish to respond most fully to what Jesus asks of us in these times. It rests on the tripod of prayer, study and action.

Guidance

The Code of Canon Law indicates that Pastoral Councils are to be governed by Norms determined by the Diocesan Bishop. The following guidelines are typical of those norms in the Archdiocese of Galveston Houston.

Norms

1. The Pastoral Council is a consultative body, which makes recommendations to the Pastor.

As a consultative body, the recommendations of the Pastoral Council bear considerable weight. The Council is not a body, which makes binding decisions, nor is it an advisory group, which gives advice that, can readily be ignored. While the Pastor is not obliged to follow the recommendations of the Pastoral Council, it is understood that he would do so unless there is an extraordinary reason to do otherwise.

2. The Council's recommendations will deal with pastoral plans and policies.

The Pastor will consult the Pastoral Council on major pastoral concerns which affect the life and mission of the parish; namely, to proclaim the Word, to build up the community, to celebrate liturgy, and to serve all God's people. The Council will strive to achieve consensual agreement on recommendations which affect future directions for spiritual growth and pastoral activity.

3. The Council will not deal with acts of administration.

Matters of administration are distinct from pastoral policies and plans. Acts of administration concern the daily operation of the parish, which includes the implementation of pastoral plans and policies, parish programming, budgeting and personnel matters. Decisions relating to these are the responsibility of the Pastor, the parish staff or other persons designated by the Pastor.

4. The Pastor will preside over the Pastoral Council.

By virtue of his office, the Pastor presides over the Pastoral Council. As presider, he fully participates in the deliberations of the Council and is involved completely in the planning and policy development. He will have final approval of Council recommendations concerning pastoral plans and policies as well as for the implementation by the parish staff and other groups.

5. The purpose of the Pastoral Council is the spiritual growth of the parish community and to plan ways for the parish to carry out the mission of the Church.

The Pastoral Council is a consultative body, which unites laity and clergy in a community of prayer, leadership, service and pastoral planning. All work together as they seek to listen to the Holy Spirit in discerning what is best for the parish in the light of the Gospel, the Church's teaching, and the experiences and needs of the parishioners and the surrounding community. The Council can fulfill its role by encouraging a climate in which people can feel free to speak the truth with openness and love.

Spiritual Growth

The primary concern of the Pastoral Council is the spiritual growth of the parish community. In order to contribute to this ongoing spiritual renewal, Council members must commit themselves to regular times of prayer and study centered on Jesus and the teachings of the Church. They should strive to build a Christian community with mutual trust and understanding among members. Ideally they form a group, which serves as a model of prayer, cooperation, celebration and service.

Pastoral Planning

The Council is the pastoral planning body of the parish. It ensures ongoing collaboration in developing and renewing a pastoral plan for the ministries and life of the parish. This pastoral plan must promote the full mission of the Church; the priestly, prophetic, and royal mission of Jesus. While other groups may focus on a specific area of mission and ministry, the Pastoral Council is responsible for determining how the parish can be most effective in fulfilling its total mission. The Council discerns what needs to be supported, changed, or developed to make the parish more faithful to the call of God. Specific activities will include:

- Developing a parish mission statement
- Identifying key needs and concerns
- Synthesizing parish priorities into an ongoing pastoral plan
- Recommending flexible strategies related to those priorities
- Evaluating progress in achieving the parish plan and goals.

Source: Jim Barrette, Pastoral and Education Ministries, Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston