

St. Bede Parish Pastoral Council Constitution and Bylaws

**Approved
28 June 2012**

CONSTITUTION

Article I Name

The name shall be the St. Bede Parish Pastoral Council (the Council).

Article II Authority and Guidance

The Council and the Constitution are established under the guidance of the document “Called to Serve,” published by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Richmond.

Article III Purpose

1. The purpose of the Council shall be to enhance the quality of parish life and its pastoral activity. Specifically, it shall assist the Pastor, as a consultative body, in the following areas:
 - a. Pastoral planning and goal setting,
 - b. Developing and implementing pastoral programs,
 - c. Improving pastoral services,
 - d. Evaluating the effectiveness of pastoral programs
2. The purpose of the Constitution is to provide for the continuity of the Council. The purpose of the Bylaws is to provide for the conduct of the Council’s meetings and activities.

Article IV Membership and Term of Service

A. Membership

1. The Council shall be composed of:
 - a. The Pastor and Parochial Vicars ex officio,
 - b. At large members selected from the parish community through a discernment process.
 - c. Additional at-large member(s) appointed by the Pastor
 - d. Representatives of Standing Committees chosen by the committee members
 - e. Representative(s) of the Catholic Student Association to be chosen by the CSA
2. All members of the Council as defined above are voting members.
3. The number of at-large members selected through discernment must always be in the majority.
4. All lay members of the Council, with the exception of the professional staff, must be registered parishioners who regularly attend Sunday Mass and the Eucharist and must be contributing members of the parish.

5. Members of the Council shall automatically lose their seats if absent three (3) consecutive meetings without sufficient reason. A parish member selected as an alternate parish council member at the previous discernment shall fill an at-large member's vacant seat. A committee representative's vacant seat shall be filled by the choice of the committee's membership.

B. Terms of Service

1. Terms of service shall usually be for three (3) years, except as stated elsewhere in the bylaws.
2. With the exception of the Pastor and Parochial Vicars, a member of Council may not serve more than two consecutive terms whether selected through the discernment process or appointed.

Article V Organization

A. Officers

1. The Council shall have a Chair and a Vice-Chair who will serve for one year. Only discerned members may serve as Chair or Vice-Chair.
2. The Council officers shall be chosen annually by the voting members of Council at the first meeting following the selection of new members.
3. The Chair shall appoint a member to serve as secretary for a period of one year. That person shall keep the minutes of the Council meetings and provide for the timely distribution of pertinent materials.

B. Executive Committee

1. The Council shall have an Executive Committee (if necessary) consisting of the Pastor, the Chair, the Vice-Chair, the Secretary, and two at-large members of the Council. The Executive Committee shall be formed immediately following the selection of the officers of the Council.
2. The Executive Committee shall (if necessary) ordinarily meet prior to the regular meeting of the Council and shall record minutes of the meetings. Such minutes shall then be presented to the Council at its next meeting.
3. The Executive Committee shall (if necessary) conduct such business as the Pastor or the Council assigns and shall participate in developing an agenda for the Council meetings. Further, the Executive Committee shall have the responsibility to act for the Council between regular meetings of the Council.
4. Three (3) members of the Executive Committee present at a meeting shall constitute a quorum.

C. Standing Committees

1. The Council shall have the following Standing Committees:
 - a. The **Liturgy Committee** which shall assist the Pastor in the planning and implementing parish worship and other prayer opportunities;
 - b. The **Christian Formation Committee** which shall assist the Pastor in the planning and the implementation of the educational mission of the parish;
 - c. The **Social Ministry Committee** which shall assist the Pastor in enabling the parishioners to respond to the needs of the poor and deprived, both within the parish and throughout the world;
 - d. The **Parish Community Life Committee** which shall assist the Pastor in fostering community development, ministering to the diverse needs of the parish community, and enhancing parish social life.
2. While these committees are committees of the Council, they will serve as autonomous groups, reporting yearly to the Council.

D. Sub-Committees

The Council may form sub-committees as necessary for carrying out its responsibilities.

E. Ad-Hoc Committees

The Pastor and the Council may call upon individuals, or establish Ad Hoc committees to meet certain and special needs of the Parish. When this is considered necessary and expedient, communication and accountability shall be carefully delineated.

**Article VI
Discernment of New Members**

1. The Council shall arrange for the discernment of new at-large members.
2. The discernment process shall be held yearly, with a portion of the membership selected each year.
3. The Bylaws shall stipulate the process to be used in these selections.

**Article VII
Meetings**

1. The Council shall meet regularly during the year. Regular meetings may be suspended or rescheduled, and special ones called, at the discretion of the Pastor, the Chair, or at the request of a majority of the Council.
2. The scheduling of meetings and their contents shall be at the discretion of the Council provided notice of each meeting is placed in the Parish Bulletin for the weekend preceding the meeting. Provision for scheduling shall be contained in the Bylaws.
3. All parishioners are welcome to the meetings and may address the Council upon recognition by the Chair.
4. The quorum for a meeting shall be the members present at a scheduled meeting.
5. The Council will usually reach its decisions by consensus, which is defined in “Called to Serve” as ‘a process whereby the members of a group work toward an agreement/conclusion that all, though not necessarily in total agreement, can still support.’
6. The Council shall conduct periodic evaluations of its meetings.

**Article VIII
Relationships**

1. The Council serves in an advisory capacity to the Pastor.
2. The Standing Committees shall report periodically to the Council.
3. The Finance Council is separate from the Pastoral Council and members of the Finance Committee may not be members of the Pastoral Council. (See “Called to Serve” Appendix D for details of this relationship.)

**Article IX
Bylaws**

The Council shall develop such Bylaws as shall be necessary for its efficient operation.

**Article X
Amendments**

1. This Constitution may be amended at any regular meeting of the Council by two-thirds vote of the voting members present provided that:
 - a. The amendment has been presented at a previous meeting of the Council,
 - b. Notice of the amendment has been published in the Parish Bulletin prior to the meeting at which the vote will be taken, indicating that a copy of the Constitution is available in the Parish Office.
 - c. A quorum of the Council is present.

2. If the change is accepted, the Secretary shall distribute the revised constitution to all members and arrange to place a copy in the parish office.
3. Revision of the Bylaws shall be at the discretion of the Council.

BYLAWS

Article I – III None

Article IV - Membership

1. The Pastor and all Parochial Vicars are ex officio members of the Council for the entire period of their assignment to the parish.
2. Twelve (12) parishioners who are not employees of the parish are to be discerned from the parish at large for membership on the Council. Four (4) of these member positions will be opened to discernment every year for three (3) year terms.
3. The Pastor, in consultation with the Council, may appoint one parishioner each year to serve a three-year term as a member of the Council. This parishioner should be selected to improve the geographic and demographic representation of the Council.
4. Each of the Standing Committees shall select a member to serve on the Council. Each appointment shall be for a three (3) year term but will terminate if the individual is no longer a member of the committee.
5. The Catholic Student Association of the College of William and Mary may, with the agreement of the Pastor and campus minister on the candidates, select one of their members to serve a one-year term as a member of Council. This person may not be an officer of the Council.

Article V – Organization

A.

1. Selection of officers shall take place at an annual Retreat to be held soon after the selection of new members.
2. The Chair shall lead the Council and:
 - a. Lead meetings of those groups and be responsible for preparing an agenda for each meeting after consultation with the Pastor.
 - b. Shall establish all ad hoc committees.
 - c. Shall assign a member to be the prayer leader at each Council meeting.
3. The Vice-Chair shall assist the Chair and substitute for the Chair in the case of absence.
4. The Secretary shall be appointed by the Chair. S(he) shall:
 - a. Keep the minutes of all Council meetings,
 - b. Send minutes to Council Members electronically for approval.
 - c. Post the approved minutes of the Council meetings in the Parish Office and on the Parish Web Site.
 - d. Arrange for the announcement of upcoming Council meetings to be published in the Parish Bulletin on the weekend before the meeting

B – C None

D. Sub Committees

1. These sub-committees are **Discernment and Selection**, and **Retreat and Prayer**.
 - a. Discernment and Selection Sub-Committee: Besides the Council members, other parish members may be included in order to have a wide picture of potential Council members. One of the members shall be a Parochial Vicar. The Committee shall prepare all necessary discernment documents, supervise the discernment, and report the results of the discernment to the Council.
 - b. Retreat and Prayer Sub-Committee: The committee members should preferably be those who will retire from the Council at the completion of the retreat. One member should be a Parochial Vicar. The committee will plan and oversee the annual Council Retreat. They will establish a theme and strategy for the prayer and reflection required of Council members during the service year. They will develop resources for those members assigned to lead prayers at meetings.

2. Each member of Council shall serve on one sub-committee as part of his/her activity as a member.

E. Ad Hoc Committees

1. Such committees may have whatever membership is necessary for completing their tasks.
2. Each group must have a written agreement as to time frame, result(s) expected, approval of expenditure of funds, etc.
3. When the Ad Hoc Committee shall have completed its task, it shall disband.

Article VI – Discernment of New Members

A. Nominations

1. A year of membership service on the Council shall run from 1 July to 30 June. Selection of new members shall be held during the first two weeks in June.
2. The Chair of Council, or her/his representative, shall speak at all Masses on a weekend to encourage parishioners to volunteer for discernment or to suggest other parishioners who might be interested.
3. The nominating Sub-Committee shall conduct the selection/discernment process described in “Called to Serve” to recruit potential candidates for Council membership Insofar as possible, the candidates shall represent a geographic and demographic cross-section of the parish.
4. Candidate must be a parishioner for at least one (1) year.
5. The committee shall require of each candidate:
 - a. A written commitment to serve actively if selected,
 - b. A brief description of his/her education and applicable experience,
 - c. A brief description of his/her goals in serving on the Council.

B. Selection Process

1. The selection shall take place on a weekend designated by the Pastor.
2. Selection shall take place by drawing lots from those who have participated in the discernment weekend and agree to serve if selected.
3. The results of the selection shall be announced to the Council as soon as possible.
4. The new members of the Council will be seated at the July meeting. A meeting soon after shall be a Retreat for all new, continuing and retiring members of the Council. New members of the Council shall receive copies of the Constitution and Bylaws, of “Called to Serve,” a subscription to “Today’s Parish”, and copies of the minutes and committee reports from the prior three months of Council business.

Article VII – Meetings

1. An agenda for each Council meeting shall be sent to all members at least a week before the next meeting.
2. The Council shall operate on a basis of consensus.
3. The agenda for each meeting should include:
 - a. Opening prayer and reflections,
 - b. Approval of minutes of previous meeting (unless approved electronically),
 - c. Confirmation of next Council meeting date,
 - d. Committee reports,
 - e. Old business,
 - f. New business,
 - g. Pastor’s comments
 - h. Closing prayer and adjournment.
4. Minutes of the Council meetings shall be sent (electronically) to each member of Council as soon as possible following each meeting.

5. The minutes of each meeting, once approved, shall be available in the Parish Office and on the Parish Web Site.

Articles VIII – IX None

Article X – Amendments

1. Proposed amendments to the Bylaws must be presented at one meeting and considered for action at the next meeting.
2. A majority of those present shall be necessary for amending.
3. When an amendment has been approved, a copy of the amendment shall be placed in the Parish Office.