

CONSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SPIRIT PASTORAL COUNCIL

PREAMBLE

The Pastoral Council of the Holy Spirit, in union with each other, with our Pastor, with the chief shepherd of our diocese, and in union, too, with all the members everywhere of the One, Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church founded by Christ and governed by His Vicar, the Bishop of Rome and successor of St. Peter, is elected and appointed to serve.

Each one of us is a member of the Body of Christ (I Corinthians, 12:27) and in this body “there are different gifts but the same Spirit (and) different ministries but the same Lord (ibid. vv. 4-5).” We acknowledge that each of us is called upon to offer his particular gift or ministry for the service of the whole body, “so that in everything God may receive the glory, through Jesus Christ (I Peter, 4:11).”

We do so in response to the recommendations of the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council, who, after urging that councils be formed in dioceses “to assist the apostolic work of the Church either in the field of making the gospel known and men holy, or in the charitable, social or other spheres,” added that so far as possible similar councils should be established in parishes also (Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, V, #26).

Finally, aware that Christ has us told us that without Him we can do nothing (John 15:5), we ask for the guidance of His Holy Spirit so that all our words may be spoken and all our works done in His charity and that they may contribute to the establishment of His reign.

ARTICLE I—NAME

The name of this body shall be the Church of the Holy Spirit Pastoral Council, hereinafter referred to as “the Council.”

ARTICLE II- PURPOSES

Section 1. The purpose of the Council shall be:

- (a) To accept responsibility with the pastor for the life and mission of the Church in the parish;
- (b) To act as an authentic representative voice of the People of God – lay, religious and clerical in advising the pastor;
- (c) To provide an open and honest forum of communication and dialogue regarding parish affairs among the pastor, associate priests, religious, the parish staff and the laity;
- (d) To assist the pastor in the administration of the parish through recommendations and active cooperation;
- (e) To encourage by all available means a vigorous and effective lay apostolate;
- (f) To collaborate with other religious bodies and with civic, business and professional organizations in working for the common good of the community;
- (g) To participate, by active cooperation with the Harford Catholic Assembly and with the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, in the total life and mission of the Church within the Archdiocese;
- (h) To be a visible witness to all people of the message and service of Our Lord Jesus.

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Section 2. Pursuant to the purposes set forth in Section 1 of the article, the Council shall perform the following functions:

- (a) It shall prepare annually a statement of the needs and goals of the Parish and, in union with the pastor, determine priorities among such needs and goals with respect to the allotment of personal, physical and financial resources;
- (b) It shall advise what may be necessary to provide for the dignified and reverent celebration of the Sacred Liturgy, in such manner and at such times as shall be for the spiritual welfare and the convenience of all the faithful of the parish;
- (c) It shall advise ways and means of increasing parish income and reducing expenditures, and take all necessary steps to provide for their practical implementation;
- (d) It shall advise regarding the maintenance and good upkeep of parish property and undertake any improvements or enlargements to the property which may be deemed necessary, except where the decision in such matters is reserved to the Ordinary;
- (e) It shall advise the pastor on membership of the parish in any secular community or professional organization;
- (f) It shall assist the pastor in rendering to all parishioners from time to time, but not less often than annually, a full report on the spiritual, material and financial condition of the parish;
- (g) It shall recommend whatever other action it may deem appropriate to fulfill the purposes set forth in Section 1 of this article.

ARTICLE III—OPERATION

Section 1. The Council shall submit its recommendations to the pastor in the form of conclusions consisting of motions duly made, seconded and passed by a majority vote.

Section 2. If the pastor, for grave reasons of fidelity to the Gospel, obedience to Church or civil law, or other serious financial or administrative considerations, feels that he cannot in good conscience accept and carry out the recommendations of the Council, he shall fully and frankly communicate his reservations with regard to them to the assembled Council. If the pastor does not communicate such reservations by the second next regularly scheduled meeting of the Council following the date on which the recommendations were submitted to him, the Council shall be entitled to presume their acceptance.

Section 3. If, notwithstanding the reservations expressed by the pastor, the Council shall by a two-thirds majority vote to sustain its original recommendations, and no other means offers itself at the parish level to resolve the situation, either the pastor or the Council through its president may petition the matter at issue to the Ordinary for such action as he may deem fitting.

ARTICLE IV- -MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. The Council shall have two types of membership: elective and appointive.

Section 2. The pastor shall be an automatic member of the Council and shall have full voice in its deliberations, but shall have no vote.

Section 3. Twelve persons who are members of the parish shall be elected or appointed to be the Council according to the electoral procedures specified in Article V "Elections."

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Section 4. The pastor can appoint members to the Pastoral Council. Such appointments shall endeavor, so far as is practical, to achieve a proper balance among sexes, age groups and areas of knowledge and competence desired on the Council.

Section 5. Members of the Council have been called to serve the people of the Parish and it shall therefore be their duty to attend all Council meetings. The President must be notified of all planned absences. Absence without just cause from two consecutive meetings or four meetings annually may result in release from Council membership.

ARTICLE V – ELECTIONS

Section 1. Any lay person who (a) has attained the age of 16 years by the date of elections, and who (b) is a registered member of the parish shall be eligible for election to the Council, and all members meeting these same qualifications shall likewise be eligible to vote in such elections.

Section 2. The Council, at the general meeting held in the month of April, shall appoint a Nominating Committee and designate the chairperson thereof. It shall be the duty of the Nominating Committee to consider qualified parishioners and to obtain their consent to run as candidates for The Council. The number of candidates should be at least four representing one third of the Council.

Section 3. Elections shall be held on the third Sunday of May. They shall be by secret ballot, which ballots shall be distributed to all persons attending Masses on the third Sunday of May. The persons receiving the highest number of votes on the returned qualified ballots shall be declared elected. In the event of a tie, the members of the incumbent Council shall vote among themselves for one or the other of the tied candidates.

SECTION 4. Council members shall serve a two year term with the option to serve a second consecutive term.

SECTION 5. The new Council shall take office on the first Sunday of June. In the event that a vacancy occurs among the elected membership, the pastor shall appoint a person to complete the term.

ARTICLE VI – OFFICERS

Section 1. The officers of the Council shall be a President, Vice President and Secretary.

Section 2. The members of the incoming Council shall, at the Annual Meeting, vote among themselves for the three offices specified in Section 1 above. Following nominations, voting shall be by secret ballot, and in the event of a tie balloting shall be continued until a candidate receives a majority. Each office shall be taken individually, thus permitting candidates not elected to be nominated for the next subsequent office.

Section 3. The President shall preside at all meetings of the Council and shall have the authority to call such special meetings as in his/her judgment may be necessary. In consultation with the other members of the Council she/he shall appoint the membership of all standing and special committees and he/she be an ex-officio member of all such committees except the Nominating Committee. She/He shall render periodic reports to the pastor and parishioners on the completed and recommended projected work of the council, and shall perform all other duties that customarily devolve upon the office of President, not specifically mentioned herein.

Section 4. The Vice President, in the absence of the President or in the event of the latter's inability for any reason to carry out the functions of his/her office, shall assume, during such absence or disability, the duties of the President. He/she shall coordinate the work of all committees and, where necessary, shall report to the Council on the meetings and activities of

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such Committees. He/she shall perform such other as duties as delegated to him/her by the President.

Section 5. The secretary shall take minutes of all regular and special meetings of the Council, reduce such minutes to writing, preserve them in a permanent record, and send copies of such minutes to all members of the Council at least one week prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting, along with the agenda for that meeting. The Secretary shall also prepare and send out all correspondence necessitated by the work of the Council and shall maintain permanent files of such correspondence. He/she shall also prepare notices to appear in the parish bulletin pertaining to the work of the Council, as well as any other publicity matter which is desired to use in various news media.

Section 6. In addition to the officers above named, the President, in consultation with the Pastor, shall designate two members of the Council to serve as representatives to the Harford Catholic Assembly. These Representatives shall act as liaison between the Pastoral Council and the Harford Catholic Assembly shall attend all meetings of the latter and shall render regular reports to the Pastoral Council on all matters which may be of interest or concern to it.

Section 7. In the event of a vacancy in any office except that of the President, the Council shall elect someone from among its own membership to fill the office until the next regularly scheduled election. In the event of a vacancy in the office of President, the Vice President shall automatically succeed and fill out the unexpired portion of the term.

Section 8. Each officer shall, at the expiration of his term of office, turn over to his successor all books, papers, and other records and property pertaining to his office not later than ten days after said expiration.

ARTICLE VII---EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Section 1. The Executive Committee shall be composed of the officers of the Council and the Pastor.

Section 2. It shall be the responsibility of the Executive Committee to coordinate and prepare the agenda for all regular meetings of the Council and to make such agenda available to the Secretary for distribution prior to the meeting.

ARTICLE VIII—COMMITTEES

Section 1. The Standing Committees of the Council shall be Education, Stewardship, Ways and Means, Liturgy, Christian Service, Youth and Hospitality.

Section 2. Each member of the Council except the officers shall serve on one Standing Committee, but not on more than one. The President, by and with the advice and consent of the other members of the Council at the Annual Meeting, shall designate the membership of each committee, having regard to the professional knowledge and competence desired in each case.

Section 3. The chairperson of each Standing Committee, in consultation with the President, shall be free to name to his committee parishioners who are not members of the Council in order to provide the breadth and depth which the work of the committee requires. Such committee members shall have the right to attend all regular and special meetings of the Council and to have full voice therein, but they shall have no vote.

Section 4. The chairperson shall have the authority to call meetings of his committee as often and at such times as in his judgment may be necessary, and he shall be prepared to render a report on the work the committee at all regular meetings of the Council.

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Section 5. The President, in consultation with the Executive Committee, shall have the authority to create any special or temporary committees which may from time to time be deemed necessary, and to designate the members thereof.

ARTICLE IX—MEETINGS

Section 1. The regular meetings of the Council shall be held monthly on a date determined by Council members.

Section 2. The meeting held in the month of June shall be known as the Annual Meeting, and shall be the purpose of electing officers, designating the membership of the standing committees, receiving reports and for any other business that may arise. Any such matters left unfinished at the adjournment of the Annual Meeting shall constitute the first order of business at the next regular meeting.

Section 3. Special meetings may be called by the Pastor, the President, or by the Executive Committee, or at the written request of any seven members of the Council. The purpose of any special meeting shall be stated in the call. Except in cases of emergency, at least three days notice shall be given.

Section 4. Regular meetings of the Council shall be open to all parishioners as observers. It shall be left to the discretion of the Executive Committee as to whether any special meeting shall be open.

Section 5. A majority of the voting members of the Council shall constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE X—PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

Section 1. The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the Council in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with this constitution and any special rules of order the Council may adopt.

Section 2. The President may at his discretion appoint a parliamentarian, who need not be a member of the Council, to assist and advise him in presiding at all meetings.

ARTICLE XI—RATIFICATION AND AMENDMENTS

Section 1.

- (a) This constitution was ratified by the parishioners with a majority of qualified ballots on December 11, 1983.
- (b) This constitution was amended by the Council on March 6, 1988 by addition of Section 5 ARTICLE IV and by modification to Section 1. (g) Of ARTICLE II, Sections 1,2,5,6, and 7 of ARTICLE VI, Section 2 of ARITCLE VII, Section 1 of ARTICLE VIII, and Section 1 of ARTICLE IX.
- (c) This constitution was amended by the Council on February 22, 2009 by modification to Article 1; Article II, Sections 1 and 2; Article IV, Sections 1 and 4; Article VI, Section 6; and Article IX, Section 1.

Section 2. This constitution may be amended at any regular meeting of the Council by two-thirds vote, provided that there shall have been appended to the call for such meeting a copy of the proposed amendment at the meeting prior to said meeting.

(This document was given final approval by the Pastoral Council at the June 2009 meeting.)