
St. Charles Borromeo

Arlington, VA

Pastoral Council
Charter

July 31, 2010

ST. CHARLES BORROMEO PARISH - ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA
PASTORAL COUNCIL CHARTER

SECTION I. INTRODUCTION

THE PASTORAL COUNCIL IN GENERAL

The 1983 Code of Canon Law, Section 536, describes why a Pastoral Council might exist; specifically:

§1. If the diocesan bishop judges it opportune after he has heard the presbyteral council, a pastoral council is to be established in each parish, over which the pastor presides and in which the Christian faithful, together with those who share in pastoral care by virtue of their office in the parish, *assist in fostering pastoral activity* [emphasis added].¹

§2. A pastoral council possesses a consultative vote only and is governed by the norms established by the diocesan bishop.²

Based upon these provisions, the Council is a consultative body to the Pastor³ of the parish that provides counsel to assist him in carrying out his servant leadership role.

THE PASTORAL COUNCIL AT ST. CHARLES BORROMEO

As is the case for all the ministries and functions at St. Charles, the Pastoral Council operates against a backdrop of the St. Charles core values. For convenience they are included below.

Welcoming persons of all races, cultures and economic strata.

Nurturing the faith and spiritual growth of persons of all ages.

Celebrating the liturgy and relating the word to daily living and the cycle of life.

Empowering all parishioners to use their gifts in a variety of ministries.

Serving the needy and promoting peace and justice locally and internationally.

¹ The Bishop of the Diocese of Arlington has provided for the establishment of a Pastoral Council in each parish.

² The Bishop of the Diocese of Arlington has not established governing norms for a parish Pastoral Council; however, former Bishop John R. Keating wrote a Pastoral Letter on September 17, 1984 entitled "A Pastoral Letter on Consultation in the Parish" which we have consulted in developing this Charter.

³ It is understood that the Pastor will involve members of the parish staff in carrying out the work of the parish, thus references to the Pastor implicitly include references to the staff in that regard.

SECTION II. THE PURPOSE OF THE PASTORAL COUNCIL

1. The purpose of the Council is to provide practical wisdom on strategic matters of parish life to the Pastor of St. Charles.
 - a. The need for practical wisdom can arise relative to pastoral planning and goal setting, developing pastoral programs, improving pastoral services and evaluating pastoral effectiveness.
 - b. Strategic matters can arise in all facets of parish life; for example, in proclaiming God's word, celebrating the sacraments, caring for the faithful, promoting the mission of the Church to the world and being a good steward of the parish resources.
2. The matters the Council evaluates and their relative priority are at the consensus of the Pastor and the Council. The matters may come about either from a Council suggestion that the Pastor agrees with or from a matter that the Pastor identifies with which the Council concurs.
3. The Council discerns the practical wisdom it provides on a matter that it evaluates by:
 - a. Investigating: Studying and thereby shedding light on the matter. If the Pastor or another parish ministry or outside organization has already investigated the matter to the Council's satisfaction, this step is not necessary.
 - b. Evaluating: Reflecting on the results of the study, discerning the true nature of the matter and evaluating the possibilities for handling it. This will involve an element of spiritual as well as practical discernment. Spiritual discernment can be fostered by, for example, a period of appropriate reflection during Council meetings and as part of discussions.
 - c. Concluding: Deciding upon a practical recommendation appropriate to St. Charles for taking the matter forward. The recommendations are in practice reached by forming a consensus view among the members of the Council. The Pastor reaches his decision on the matter as part of this Council process of reaching consensus. If a mutually agreeable Council consensus and Pastor's decision are not evident, then the Pastor and the three Council officers will confer regarding the way forward.
 - d. Communicating: Describing the conclusion on a matter. If the matter involves the parish's involvement with an outside organization, proposing to the Pastor whether he or the Council will be the one to communicate with that organization.
4. The Pastor directs the implementation of any conclusion that is an outcome of the Council's work. As a practical matter he may ask Council members to assist with implementation, but implementation is the responsibility of the Pastor and the affected ministries or functions, as appropriate.

SECTION III. THE COMPOSITION OF THE PASTORAL COUNCIL

5. Council members are non-staff adult parishioners of St. Charles who have received the sacraments of baptism, communion, reconciliation and confirmation and who currently practice their Catholic faith. Further, Council members are those parishioners whose gifts include an interest in and ability for the process of group discernment over strategic matters of parish life, adequate time to devote to the Council's work, and previous Council service such that once combined with a new term a member would not serve more than a total of 6 [or 9] years.
6. Some Council members serve in an individual capacity and some Council members serve in an association—but not representation—capacity. Those serving in an association capacity are associated with a particular ministry, function or demographic within the parish.
 - a. All Council members have a fiduciary responsibility to the welfare of the parish as a whole.
 - b. Members serving in an individual capacity and those serving in an association capacity are both to contribute their personal views on Council matters; these are views formed after whatever consultation and discernment they deem appropriate.
 - c. The views of members serving in an association capacity will be informed by the nature of that association even though they do not serve as the representative of that constituency.
7. The Council is composed of 12 members who each serve a 2 [or 3] year term.⁴ Both individual and association members are drawn in the same manner from among the eligible parishioners who express in writing their interest in, reasons for, qualifications for and capacity for serving as a Council member. To fill any member vacancies:
 - a. The current Council will make an in-person announcement or host an information session to make the St. Charles parishioners aware of the call for Council member(s), including whether any are sought who possess particular qualifications or associations and if so, what they are. The information made available to the parishioners will include, at a minimum, this Charter and to the extent known the nature of the matters which the Council will address in the future.
 - b. The Council considers these parishioner expressions of interest via the same basic process of discernment as it utilizes for other matters. Accordingly, the existing Council and the Pastor will collectively identify what composition of new members would form the best future Council in light of the number of members needed, capacities in which the members will serve and, if known, the nature of the issues the Council is likely to address.

⁴ To achieve a staggered expiration of Council member terms after the 2010-2011 year, as a matter of transition some members of the 2011-2012 Council will be given 1 year terms, others will be given 2 [or 3] year terms.

SECTION IV. THE OPERATING PROTOCOLS OF THE PASTORAL COUNCIL

LEADERS

8. Various Council members will take the lead on moving the Council's work forward for their term of Council membership, more specifically as follows:
 - a. One Council member serves as Council President. The President's duties are primarily to plan the agenda for and preside over the Council's meetings, represent the Council between its meetings and in other forums and serve as the liaison for the Council to the Pastor.
 - b. Another Council member serves as Council Vice-President. The Vice-President's duties are to act as the President in his/her absence and to carry out other duties as assigned by the President.
 - c. A third Council member serves as Council Secretary. The Secretary's duties are primarily to keep the minutes of the Council meetings and on a timely basis to make parishioners aware of Council meetings and agendas. After Council meetings the Secretary makes approved minutes available to both Council members and the St. Charles parishioners.
 - d. The three Council Officers may collectively consult with the Pastor on emergency Council matters.
 - e. Any Council member can serve as the leader of an ad hoc Task Force of Council members established to take the lead on a matter that the Council is considering.
 - f. These Council leader roles are filled by those Council members who both the Council and the Pastor agree possess the appropriate gifts and availability for the respective responsibilities.

MEETINGS

9. The three Council Officers collectively work to develop a yearly meeting schedule and each meeting agenda in consultation with and for approval by the Pastor.
 - a. The agenda and associated materials for each meeting are sent to Council members on a timely basis prior to the meeting. The meeting agenda is also made available to parishioners at this time.
 - b. Council meetings are open for attendance by St. Charles parishioners. As observers, however, they do not have the rights to the floor unless consulted. Council meeting agenda items associated with administrative matters, for example the selection of new Council members, may be closed to observers.
 - c. The Council concludes on a matter on its agenda at the time it is requested to do so by the Pastor. This may occur either at a Council meeting attended by a majority of Council members or between meetings by a written consultation with Council members, normally giving them at least a week to consider a matter.

SECTION V. ADOPTION OF THIS CHARTER

10. The Pastor of St. Charles has approved this Charter. It has also been acknowledged by the current Pastoral Council President.
11. Amendments or additions to this Charter require the approval of the then current Pastor or Parochial Administrator, as appropriate, of St. Charles.

Rev. Horace H. Grinnell, Pastor

July 31, 2010

Ms. Julie A. Erhardt, President

July 31, 2010