

PASTORAL COUNCIL

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

SANTA CRUZ CATHOLIC CHURCH

BUDA, TEXAS

Adopted by vote of Pastoral Council

2-10-2010

# SANTA CRUZ CATHOLIC CHURCH

## PASTORAL COUNCIL CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

### Article I – Mission

The Pastoral Council of the Catholic Community of Santa Cruz Catholic Church is a body of Clergy, Religious and Laity drawn from the registered and active members who are representative of the people of God who believe in the teachings of Jesus Christ and the furtherance of His church on earth.

The purpose of the Council is to help the entire parish reflect on its Strengths, Gifts, Opportunities, Needs, Goals, and Challenges.

The hope and goal of the Council is to sharpen the vision of the parish and to increase the number of people involved in ministries and services.

### Article II – Objectives

As a body of representatives of church ministries and of the Santa Cruz Catholic Church Community, the Pastoral Council seeks:

1. To strengthen the unity of the parish.
2. To assess adequately, under the leadership of the Pastor, the needs of the whole parish and to develop and assure implementation of a unified program of renewal which will promote the common good of the parish.
3. To coordinate all parish activities in a manner that will involve and bring participation of the Santa Cruz Catholic Community.

4. To encourage what is spiritually beneficial for the entire Santa Cruz Catholic Community.
5. To promote programs and activities of the Bishop, Diocesan Commissions, and Agencies as well as the Pastoral Council itself.
6. To provide opportunities for the pastor and pastoral council to understand the concerns of the Santa Cruz Catholic Church members.

### Article III – Authority and Role

#### A. The Council

Pastoral care of the faithful is a trust and responsibility that flows from the diocesan bishop to the pastor. The pastor has a moral responsibility to make the best possible pastoral decisions when considering the life of the faith community. The church provides the parish-level institution, The Pastoral Council, whose express purpose is to provide counsel to the pastor. The Council will function in a manner consistent with the norms of the diocese. Authority for and norms of operation for the Santa Cruz Catholic Church Pastoral Council are outlined in the “Austin Diocese Pastoral and Finance Council Norms”. By reference (See Appendix A) therefore, these Norms promulgated by the Bishop provide the nature, purpose, and consultative role, which the Pastoral Council will play in the life of the faith community of Santa Cruz Catholic Church.

#### B. The Pastor

The pastor (parochus) is the proper pastor of the parish entrusted to him, exercising the pastoral care of the community committed to him under the Authority of the diocesan bishop in whose ministry in Christ he had been called to share, so that for the same community he carries out the functions of teaching, sanctifying, and governing, also with the cooperation of the other presbyters or deacons and with the assistance of lay members of the Christian faithful, according to the norm of law. Can. 519.

The Pastor is the authority and representative of the Bishop in the parish and in his appointment to his office as Pastor; he must establish a Parish Pastoral Council within an allotted time. He is to choose and empower the ongoing Council or establish a new one.

The Pastor must:

1. As the governing person, act as facilitator at all council meetings and participate in the activities of the Parish Church and the Parish School.
2. Respond to the needs of the Parish Church, thus calling on the Pastoral Council to seek counsel and advice on matters affecting the life of the Parish Church.
3. Participate in the interactions of the Pastoral Council, be open and respectful to the voice of the Council and respond appropriately to the collective representation of the whole Parish Church.
4. Make every effort to insure that the membership of the Council is truly representative of the whole Parish Church Community.
5. Assist in the formation of all Council members, insure that the Council's concerns reflect the whole Parish Church, facilitate council members in building their community of faith, and assist in the preparation of the Parish Council agenda.

The Pastor should work together with the Associate Pastor (s), Deacons, parish staff, and members of the Council to provide the ministries and programs that serve the mission of the Parish Church, the mission of the diocese and the universal Church.

#### Article IV – Membership

- A. The Pastoral Council shall consist of the pastor, associate pastor (s) and appointed members.
- B. The following shall be voting members of the Pastoral Council:
  1. Chairperson confirmed by the Pastor.
  2. Those persons selected by the pastor or through his discernment process.
- C. Membership Selection Method
  1. The council will be comprised of six to eight members. The terms will be three years in duration. The current members may remain in membership through the year 2010. The Council will conduct a discernment of new lay members selected to serve as council members' terms expire or they leave for other reasons. In addition, the Pastor may

select up to three additional parishioners to serve on the council, so as to achieve a balance of age, gender, and length of time in the parish. In the event of an unexpected vacancy, the pastor may appoint interim members until a new selection process can be completed. Members may serve for a second term, but not for more than two consecutive terms.

2. The Selection Process will be as follows:
  - a. Parishioners may be nominated for participation in the discernment process by the Pastor, by members of the Pastoral Council, by any registered member of the parish, or through self nomination.
  - b. Informational meetings on the role of Pastoral Councils followed by a discernment process will be conducted on an as need basis to fill any vacant positions not filled by appointment.
  - c. The Council will verify that the candidates are registered for at least one year in the parish and are active participants in Santa Cruz Catholic Church.
3. Council members who fail to uphold their responsibilities as pastoral council members (for example: by failure to attend three consecutive council meetings or failure to respect the work and authority of the council) may be asked to resign or be terminated from the council by the joint action of the pastor and the chairperson.
- D. The pastor can remove a member of the Pastoral Council for serious reasons.

#### Article V – Election and Terms of Officers

- A. The terms of all appointed Officers shall be one year. A maximum of two consecutive terms.
- B. The chairperson, with the assistance of the pastor, is responsible for the training of all incoming council members to insure adequate understanding of the Pastoral Council constitution and bylaws, goals, and objectives. All members are encouraged to attend Diocesan Pastoral Council training when offered.

#### Article VI – Officers

- A. At the first Pastoral Council meeting of each calendar year, under the direction of the chairperson, members of the council shall elect a vice-chairperson and a secretary from their own voting membership.
- B. Any vacancy of the vice-chairperson or secretary position will be filled at the first scheduled meeting after the vacancy occurs, by the majority vote of the remaining council members.
- C. The chairperson shall preside at all Pastoral Council meetings. The chairperson will strive for consensus, making certain that each member of the council has had an opportunity to voice his or her opinion on the matters at hand.
- D. The chairperson shall prepare and distribute a written agenda to each member at least five days in advance of the regularly scheduled meeting.
- E. At the start of each calendar year the chairperson shall insure that all members have a current copy of the Pastoral Council Constitution and Bylaws.
- F. The secretary shall record and distribute the minutes of each meeting to every member of the Pastoral Council. The secretary should be allowed up to fourteen days after the meeting to comply.

#### Article VII – Commissions

- A. The implementations of Pastoral Council policies will be accomplished through commissions as needed when requested by the pastor.
- B. The Finance Council, appointed by the pastor per Canon Law 537 and the Austin Diocesan Parish Finance Council Guidelines, shall assist the pastor in the areas of administration of parish goods, preparation of parish budgets, financial reports, fiscal policies and similar financial responsibilities.
- C. Special Ad-Hoc advisory committees may be established from time to time at the request of the pastor under the direction of the chairperson.

#### Article VIII – Meetings

- A. The Pastoral Council shall meet regularly on the second Wednesday bi-monthly (every other month) unless specifically rescheduled with a minimum of five (5) days advance notice to all members. The council must meet at least quarterly. The chairperson will strive to hold all meetings to no more than one and one half hours in length.
- B. Special meetings of the Pastoral Council may be called with forty-eight (48) hours notice to each member by the chairperson and/or the pastor.
- C. The chairperson shall facilitate the meetings, striving for consensus. If consensus cannot be reached, a simple majority vote of the attending members will be required to approve action by the council.
- D. The pastor and chairperson will be responsible for the development of the agenda. Although Pastoral Council meetings are held specifically for attendance by Pastoral Council members only, from time to time, special guests will be invited to discuss specific issues or give informational presentations. Parishioners may suggest issues for consideration by contacting a member of the Pastoral Council two weeks in advance of the monthly meeting. Agendas and any accompanying documents will be sent out one week prior to the meeting so that council members and the pastor may have time to consider matters prior to the meeting.
- E. The order of business for regular meetings shall include, but not limited to the following:
  - 1. Opening Prayer
  - 2. Attendance (noted by secretary)
  - 3. Approval of minutes of last meeting
  - 4. Pastor's Report
  - 5. Old Business
  - 6. New Business
  - 7. Schedule next meeting date
  - 8. Closing Prayer

- F. Amendments to the Pastoral Council Bylaws will be approved by the pastor on recommendation of the Pastoral Council, and be in compliance with Diocesan norms. The Pastoral Council will develop their recommendations by consensus or by simple majority vote of council.
- G. If any parishioner feels strongly that the pastor and/or pastoral council are not following the intent of the diocesan norms for pastoral councils, they may appeal through the procedure listed in the Diocesan Norms on page 59.
- H. Proposed amendments and changes to the operational norms of the Pastoral Council shall be posted and available for review by all parishioners at least one month prior to consideration at a scheduled Council meeting. Should consensus not be attained, a simple majority of those members at the meeting shall prevail. Revised norms shall be promulgated throughout the parish community and shall take effect after review by the Dean of Bishop's designee.