

HOLY TRINITY PASTORAL PARISH COUNCIL

In the fall, September or October, Holy Trinity Parish desires to re-energize its Parish Council. As some members of the current Council have completed their terms there is a need for between 4 and 6 new members.

We are asking all parishioners to consider serving in this important ministry. The terms will be for either 2 or 3 years.

The Parish Council generally meets once per month between September and June inclusive.

Experience has shown that parishioners are reluctant to allow their names to stand for election. Thus, it has been decided that the members of the Holy Trinity Pastoral Council will be appointed.

Please review the information on the role and activities of a Pastoral Parish Council that is included with this package and discern if this ministry is for you. If you are interested and would like to learn more please contact Father Peter or Mike Campbell, Chair of the Council.

We want to keep the process simple. You may advise Father Peter or Mike Campbell that you have an interest or if you know someone who you believe would be a good representative.

Over the summer months we hope to have several parishioners offer to serve in this important ministry to the parish. Current members of the Council will also be recruiting candidates during this time. Remember the "Church" is the body of people assembled, not the building. We need parishioners to serve.

If you have an interest in serving or want more information please contact either:

Fr. Peter Stephen 653-6842
Mike Campbell 648-9025

What is a Pastoral Parish Council and what does it do?

Canon Law provides for the formation of Parish Pastoral Councils in Canon 536 #1.

"In every parish of the diocese, a Pastoral Council shall be established, if the diocesan Bishop, after consulting with the Council of Presbyters, so decides. The pastor presides over the Pastoral Council. The Pastoral Council is composed of members of the congregation together with those of the parish staff who have pastoral care by reason of their office. The Pastoral Council assists in promoting pastoral action in the parish."

The Parish Pastoral Council is a consultative body, pastoral in nature, because it strives to discern the movement of the Holy Spirit among God's people in the parish. A Parish Pastoral Council gives its help to the pastor in fostering pastoral activity; it investigates, under the authority of the pastor, all those things which pertain to pastoral works to ponder them, and to propose practical conclusions about them. It is essential that Council meetings occur in the context of prayer and openness to the Holy Spirit, so that at all times the common good will prevail.

Specifically, the Parish Pastoral Council's purpose is to enhance the process of:

- pastoral planning
- developing pastoral programs
- improving pastoral services
- evaluating the pastoral effectiveness of various programs and services

Although the Council is not a body which makes binding decisions, the recommendations of the Pastoral Council are to be taken seriously when grounded in prayer, discernment and communal wisdom.

The pastor is responsible for the final approval of Council recommendations concerning pastoral planning, programs, and services for the parish, as well as for their implementation. While the pastor is not obliged to follow the recommendations of the Parish Pastoral Council, it is understood that he ought to do so unless there is a compelling reason to do otherwise. If there is such a reason, the pastor should share this with the Council.

The Council does not deal with acts of administration which are distinct from pastoral policies and planning. Acts of administration concern the daily operations of the parish, which includes the implementation of the pastoral plan and policies, parish programming, budgeting and personnel matters.

The pastor has the responsibility for these matters and for the staff. Some elements of administration belong to other groups, such as the Parish Finance Council.

Following are some of the pastoral activities which could constitute agenda items for the Parish Pastoral Council:

- instruction in the full range of the faith and catechetical formation
- programs promoting gospel values, including issues of social justice
- responsibilities to people with special needs
- Catholic education of children and young adults
- outreach to alienated Catholics
- evangelization
- programs of sacramental life and preparation
- promotion of Eucharistic devotion
- enhancement of programs for the sacraments of penance and Eucharist
- effective participation in the liturgy
- methods of acquaintance with parishioners
- the welcoming of newcomers
- home visiting
- efforts at building community
- motivation of the spiritual and corporal works of mercy
- efforts of special care for the sick and dying
- tangible concern for the poor, the afflicted, the lonely, the exiled
- fostering of solid Christian family life
- promotion of the lay apostolate
- strengthening of extra-parochial relations with the bishop, diocesan-pastoral efforts and a worldwide Catholic identity
- special role with parish stewardship activities
- outreach to and inclusion of youth and young adults in the life of the parish

Responsibilities of all members

Responsibilities will differ according to the needs of the individual parishes but in general the members of the council will be required to:

- Attend the meetings of the Parish Pastoral Council on a regular basis
- Participate in the deliberations of the council
- Assist where possible with the implementation of Parish policies
- Grow in knowledge and awareness of what is happening in the parish
- Take part in the training / induction of all new council members and avail of on-going formation

Who are the right people for the Parish Council?

Serving on the council is a ministry to the whole parish. When considering membership on the council, the following criteria should be kept in mind. Potential candidates should be:

- of proven faith,
- with sound morals,
- demonstrating the gifts of wisdom and prudence,
- willing to commit their time, talent and wisdom in a consultative and collaborative manner.

The right people are those who understand why the pastor consults the Council and what the pastor is consulting about. Since the Council deals with pastoral realities the members should be people who can do the job. The Parish Council should consist of members who have an interest in proposing practical solutions to the above issues and the commitment to work to do so.

Council members should have the ability to study and reflect prayerfully, and to recognize and respect the viewpoints of others.