

PARISH OF ST THERESE

MANGERE EAST

DIOCESE OF AUCKLAND



PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

CONSTITUTION

ADOPTED 8 SEPTEMBER 2002

MISSION OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

- 1 The parish is a community of Christ's faithful established within the diocese, and is called by God to share in the mission of Jesus Christ. The pastoral care of the parish is entrusted to the parish priest as its own pastor, under the authority of the diocesan bishop.
- 2 In this community of Christ's faithful:

Laypeople should be used to working in union with their priests in the parish bringing their personal problems, those of the world and questions concerning human salvation to the community of the Church, to be examined and resolved by discussion. They should also collaborate in every apostolic and missionary initiative on the part of this family within the Church.¹
- 3 The Second Vatican Council recommends that:

As far as possible, in dioceses there should be councils supporting the apostolic work of the Church, whether in the field of evangelization and sanctification, or in charitable, social and other fields, involving the cooperation of clergy and religious with laypeople.²
- 4 The fulness of God's light and guidance in the Church will be seen when all members collaborate in the mission. Thus, a totally new ministry of Christ's faithful is born – a special ministry of laypeople and pastors reflecting together on the parish's ministerial activity. On the basis of that reflection, together they will be able to discern what needs to be changed and developed in the parish to make it more faithful to what God is calling us to be. It is this ministry that is specifically and particularly the ministry of the Parish Pastoral Council.
- 5 The Parish Pastoral Council, hereafter referred to as the Council, is a representative body of the whole parish, priests, religious and laity, working together to form a community that seeks out and responds to the spiritual and material needs of all God's people. The Council, therefore, should be truly 'pastoral', reflecting a sharing of responsibility for the Church's mission, so that the local Church may reflect more fully the presence of Christ. The Council functions in accordance with Diocesan Guidelines.

1 ¹Vatican Council II, *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity*, 10

2 ²Vatican Council II, *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity*, 26

OBJECTIVES

- 6 The following are the major objectives of the Council:
 - [a] to build up a caring, Catholic community that is characterized by a spirit of prayer and hospitality;
 - [b] to endeavour to involve the whole parish in the mission of the Church to the world;
 - [c] to assist the apostolic mission of the Church by promoting Christian formation of people and providing for them the means to achieve this;
 - [d] to discern the spiritual and temporal needs of the parish community, to respond to their needs, and to involve the whole parish in response to their needs;
 - [e] to develop a sense of Church beyond parish boundaries and to stimulate a Christian response to local issues and the problems confronting the world;
 - [f] to coordinate and communicate between all members, sectors and organizations of the parish and wider community;
 - [g] to cooperate and communicate with diocesan organizations, and to support and promote the activities and services of these organizations.

ROLE AND FUNCTION

- 7 The Council is a body representative of the whole parish. Through it Christ's faithful, along with those who share in the pastoral care of the parish in virtue of their office, give their help in fostering pastoral activity.
- 8 The Council is a *consultative* body. As such it has the duty and right to provide wise advice and constructive assessments to the pastor [parish priest]. The Council is to be involved in prudent policy making, goal planning and setting of objectives for promoting the mission of the Church within the parish. Where necessary in fulfilling the mission of the parish, the Council will be required to dialogue and collaborate with the Parish Finance Council, which is a separately established body.

9 The role of the Council, in collaboration with the pastor, is to see that every avenue is opened for all members of the parish:

- [a] to discover their call as disciples of Christ;
- [b] to develop the confidence and skills they need to fulfil their mission;
- [c] to find in the parish the structures they will need for their ongoing support and growth;
- [d] to review regularly individual and parish goals and strategies so that all members of the parish will have a sense of proceeding purposefully and effectively towards bringing about God's reign.

10 In carrying out this role, the Council will:

- [a] provide for education and formation of all members of the parish in understanding the role of the Council within the mission of the Church;
- [b] initiate processes of participative pastoral planning in order to:
 - develop a vision of the parish;
 - plan appropriate **goals** and specific **objectives** for the liturgical and apostolic life of the parish;
 - ensure regular **evaluation** of the parish's attempt to achieve them;
- [c] oversee the workings of the parish groups and services, and the sharing of services with other parishes, so as to provide for
 - the efficient coordination of those services;
 - the initiation of new services where needed;
- [d] ensure that lines of communication are kept as open as possible between the parish administration, parish agencies and individual members of the parish, and be a means of communication with other parishes and the diocese;
- [e] prepare the parish for the future, particularly by providing opportunities for future leaders of the parish to emerge and be trained.

COMPOSITION OF THE COUNCIL

- 11 The Council shall consist of:
 - [a] the pastor, who is *ex officio* the President of the Council;
 - [b] any assistant pastors;
 - [c] any pastoral assistants;
 - [d] eight parishioners elected by the parishioners;
 - [e] a maximum of two parishioners appointed by the pastor, if the pastor so wishes.
- 12 Members of the Council, who are not *ex-officio* members, are appointed or elected for two years.
- 13 The initial Council shall vary as follows:
 - [a] one of the parishioners appointed by the pastor is appointed for a period of one year;
 - [b] the three parishioners who receive the lowest number of votes are elected for one year.
- 14 Retiring members may be re-appointed or re-elected provided they have not served for more than four successive years.
- 15 On completion of four years' service, retiring members may again be eligible for membership after a lapse of one year.
- 16 Any member of the Council may resign by giving written notice to the secretary. Such resignation shall become effective from its acceptance by the Council.
- 17 Any member of the Council who, without giving adequate reason, is absent from three successive meetings, is automatically excluded from the Council.
- 18 A member may be removed from the Council by the pastor after a two-third's majority vote of the Council, if a member is unable to fulfil his/her responsibilities due to illness, non-attendance or some other serious reason. Any recourse against such a removal is made to the pastor thence to the diocesan bishop.

- 19 Should the position of an elected member become vacant before the completion of a term of office, the Council shall have the authority to appoint a replacement until the next election.
- 20 All members of the Council shall serve gratuitously. Legitimate expenses incurred by members on Council business are to be paid by the parish.

COUNCIL ELECTIONS

- 21 Council Elections shall be held annually in association with a General Meeting of parishioners.
- 22 Nominations shall be called for at liturgies over two successive Sundays that begin at least four weeks prior to the Annual General Meeting.
- 23 Nominations shall be in writing and signed by a proposer, a seconder and the candidate. Nominations close with the pastor at 6pm on the Thursday following the second call for nominations.
- 24 On the Sunday following the close of nominations, the names of those nominated shall be displayed on the church notice board, and, if possible, in the parish bulletin.
- 25 Voting shall take place after Saturday evening and Sunday masses over two weekends, about the time of the Annual General Meeting, and is to commence within twenty-one days of the close of nominations.
- 26 Voting shall be by secret ballot on prepared ballot papers, and shall be governed by special by-laws.
- 27 All baptized Roman Catholics over the age of 16, who are registered members of the parish, are eligible for membership of the Council, and are eligible to vote in Council elections.
- 28 Persons who have been found by the diocesan bishop to be in open conflict with the basic precepts of the Church or with the authority of the Church, are excluded from membership of the Council.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

- 29 An Annual General Meeting of parishioners shall be held on a date to be fixed by the Council. This meeting will usually be in the first quarter of each calendar year and have a quorum of 25 electors.
- 30 At least five weeks' advance notice of the Annual General Meeting shall be given in the parish bulletin and on the church notice board. The agenda shall be published at least one week prior to the Meeting.
- 31 At Annual General Meetings, the agenda shall comprise:
 - [a] presentation of a full report from the Council on the past year's activities, including the annual financial report;
 - [b] any items of business submitted in writing to the secretary at least fourteen days prior to the Annual General Meeting;
 - [c] proposed changes to the Constitution of the Council;
 - [d] election of members to fill any vacant Council positions in accordance with the special by-laws for elections.

COUNCIL MEETINGS

- 32 The pastor is *ex-officio* the president of the Council. No meeting of the Council can occur without the pastor or his delegate.
- 33 Council members shall elect their own chairperson, deputy chairperson and secretary, all of whom shall hold office for one year.
- 34 The Council shall usually meet once a month.
- 35 A quorum shall comprise more than half the members.
- 36 The Council shall usually adopt a consensus approach to reaching decisions, rather than a voting procedure. If a formal vote is required, no major policy or proposal may proceed without a two-thirds affirmative vote. Merely administrative decisions are decided by a simple majority.
- 37 The secretary is to keep and publish the minutes of Council meetings in a manner determined by the Council.

- 38 The chairperson, in consultation with the pastor, shall prepare an agenda for each meeting. Such agenda shall usually be circulated to all members at least by the Sunday before each meeting.
- 39 Committees of the Council may be formed as needed, and are appointed by the Council. All committees report to the Council.
- 40 Parishioners wishing to have matters considered by the Council shall submit such matters in writing to the secretary.
- 41 Unless determined otherwise in specific instances [cf. Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987], all meetings of the Council are open to members of the parish.
- 42 At least three times each year, all communities and service groups within the parish are to be invited to attend a Council meeting to submit a written report on their activities, and to present any requests to the Council.

CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION

- 43 Changes to the constitution can be made only at the Annual General Meeting of the parish.
- 44 Proposed changes must be submitted in writing at least twenty-one days before the Annual General Meeting. Each proposed change must be signed by a proposer and a seconder.
- 45 Proposed changes are to be displayed on the church notice board for at least fourteen days prior to the Annual General Meeting.
- 46 Proposed changes are adopted only after an absolute majority vote of eligible voters at the Annual General Meeting.

TERMINATION OF THE COUNCIL

- 47 If the pastor dies, is transferred or resigns, the existing Council continues in office to advise and assist an administrator if one is appointed. When a new pastor is appointed, the Council continues in office under its existing Constitution for at least three months, or until the next Annual General Meeting, as decided by the pastor.
- 48 The Council cannot be dismissed, dissolved or discontinued without the express permission in writing of the diocesan bishop.