

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL OF SAINT THERESA OF LISIEUX - STANSTED

Mission Statement:

Introduction

In his Apostolic Exhortation at the Beginning of the New Millennium, the Venerable Pope John Paul II stated that "the Church of the Third Millennium will need to encourage all the baptised and confirmed to be aware of their active responsibility in the Church's life." The Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity of Vatican II noted that as: "Participators in the function of Christ, priest, prophet and king, the laity have an active part of their own in the life and action of the Church... Nourished by their active participation in the liturgical community... they should develop the habit of working in the parish in close union with their priests, of bringing before the ecclesial community their own problems, world problems and questions regarding personal salvation, to examine them together".

It is important that they reflect upon the Mystery of Christ and respond to His teaching in the light and spirit of the Beatitudes: "Blessed [are] the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed [are] they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed [are] the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed [are] they who hunger and thirst for righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed [are] the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed [are] the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed [are] the peacemakers: for they shall be called children of God". (Mt 5)

With the above in mind, Fr John Garrett has decided to form a Parish Pastoral Council. The Council, presided over by the parish priest, is to give our parish laity an opportunity to offer their help in fostering pastoral action.

Purpose

It is important to be aware that the Parish Pastoral Council has only a consultative role, and it is regulated by the norms laid down by Cannon Law and our Bishop.

It constitutes a group of people which is representative of the parish community as a whole and whose purpose is the promotion of the mission of Christ and his Church in the parish and in the local community. The purpose of the council is to:

- ✓ Promote consultation and co-operation between clergy and parishioners in the pastoral affairs of the parish with due regard to the responsibilities in law, both civil and ecclesiastical, which bear upon the Parish Priest.

- ✓ Provide a channel of communication between the priest and parishioners and a forum for the expression of their respective views on all matters affecting the parish
- ✓ Provide a means of communication and co-operation between Parish groups, organisations and societies. Provide a parish voice for communication and co-operation with deanery and diocese, other Christian churches and the wider community
- ✓ Advise the parish priest on any point on which he seeks advice
- ✓ Undertake any work assigned to it by the parish priest.

Parish Pastoral Councils are not an end in themselves but are at the service of mission and evangelisation. Its intention is that it should enable the clergy and people to work together to build up a dynamic Christian community that is characterised by faith, mission, worship and service.

In particular it should facilitate the coordination of parish services regarding:

- proclaiming the Word of God and developing faith formation, especially for the young,
- fostering the sacramental, liturgical and prayer life of the parish,
- supporting marriage and family life,
- enabling the lay faithful to carry out their particular vocation of shaping society in accordance with the Gospel.
- strengthening commitment to social justice and caring for the poor and marginalised.

The Parish Pastoral Council will also:

- encourage leadership in reaching out to young people and engaging them in their journey of faith;
- establish support to the clergy to ensure all parishioners are known, feel loved and are able to practice their faith in a safe and supportive environment, caring for each other and the wider society.
- look to welcoming new members into their communities and ensure that people of different nationalities and culture find their place in the liturgy and parish life;
- address the particular social challenges of the parish and ensure that the parish community is sensitive to the needs of all.

To carry out this mission, Parish Pastoral Councils should see their task in terms of:

- Prayerfully discovering the needs of the parish and involving everyone in a response.
- Enabling the baptised to discover their call as Disciples of Christ.
- Providing the necessary structures that will marry the needs of the parish with the many gifts and resources of the community.
- Ensuring that all voices within the parish, the Diocese and the wider community are heard and respected.
- Reviewing the life and activities of the parish so that these are seen to foster the Mission of the Church.

Parish Pastoral Council Constitution:

1. The Constitution, aided by the general framework of subsequent guidelines, should remain faithful to the basic nature of Parish Pastoral Councils outlined in the documents of the Second Vatican Council, the Code of Canon Law and this document. The Finances of the Parish are catered for by the Finance Committee which is obligatory by Canon Law. The Finance Committee will not however, fall under the general oversight of the Parish Pastoral Council.

2. Membership Members shall be baptised Catholics who participate in the life and worship of the parish and are available to attend a minimum of half the meetings in the space of one year. (that is 2 of the planned 4 unless the Parish Priest decides otherwise).

3. **Selection of Members** Parish Pastoral Council - will be at the request and invitation of the Parish Priest after discernment with Deacons and/or with the existing Council members.

3.1. Composition of the Parish Pastoral Council:

The PPC shall not consist of more than 12 members. The Parish Priest may invite Ex officio members, which may include those who by virtue of their office are engaged in pastoral ministry in the parish. It may contain a representative of the parish finance committee. Other parishioners may be appointed because of their expertise. Ex officio members should not exceed 40% of the total membership.

3.2. Members of the Council undertake to be representative of the whole community and focus on what is best for the whole parish, not individual parish groups.

3.3. Ongoing formation Prayer, reflection and skills training are of paramount importance. To ensure that the Council is effective ongoing appropriate formation should be provided for every member of the Parish Pastoral Council.

3.4. Period for Membership Elected and appointed members of the Parish Pastoral Council are to have terms of office. The term should be no shorter than two years and no more than four years initially. There will be the possibility of reappointment for one or more terms, according to the needs of each parish. On the appointment of a new Parish Priest, it is recommended that the composition and membership of the Council be reviewed within one year.

4. **Officers** At least three officers defined in the Parish Pastoral Council Constitution: President, Chairperson, and Vice Chairperson

4.1. President- The Parish Priest has been entrusted with the care of the parish by the Bishop; he invokes the meetings and is the president of the Council. In extraordinary situations the Parish Priest as President may, after consultation with the Dean or Bishop, suspend or dissolve the Parish Pastoral Council with a view to its reformation. The Parish Priest may delegate the day to day workings of this role to the Deacon.

4.2. Chairperson - The Chairperson is appointed for a determined period of three years with an option for renewal. The role of the Chairperson is to prepare the agenda with the President and the Vice Chairperson and to facilitate the meetings of the Parish Pastoral Council.

4.3. Vice Chairperson - The Vice Chairperson will assist the Chairperson in keeping a record of the meetings of the Parish Pastoral Council and for circulating relevant material to the Council members. They will be appointed for a determined period of two years with an option for renewal.

4.4 The Parish Steward of the Gospel shall also be a member of the Council For so long as the Diocese choose to appoint one.

4.5. Responsibilities of all members Responsibilities will differ but in general the members of the Council will be required to:

- attend regular meetings of the Parish Pastoral Council
- provide input to 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 ongoing formation.

5. **Meetings:** Minimum required is four times per year. The Gospel mandate of mutual love, listening and understanding, should prevail among all the members of the Council

5.1. Process - The collaboration between the Parish Priest and the Parish Pastoral Council is integral to each stage of the parish decision making process. In virtue of his office the Parish Priest presides over and ratifies all stages of the process leading up to and including final choices and implementations. This collegial process respects the authority of the Parish Priest and the integrity, expertise and deliberations of the members of the Council.

5.2. The agenda for each meeting will be finalised by the President of the Council, Chairperson and the Vice Chairperson and should be circulated to Council members in advance of the meeting, together with any notes or other relevant material required. Minutes of the meeting will be circulated at an agreed time after the meeting has taken place. A period of time should be set on the agenda for prayer and reflection.

5.3. Quorum- The minimum number of members who must attend the meeting is one third of the appointed members and must include either the Chairperson or the Vice Chairperson.

6. **Committees** - The Parish Pastoral Council exists to co-ordinate the various parish initiatives of evangelisation and pastoral action including the work of standing and ad hoc committees. These committees shall report into the Parish Pastoral Council
Included here are some core committees may or may not include:

- Liturgy committee responsible for overseeing arrangements for the provision of and training opportunities for readers, extraordinary ministers of holy communion, choir, altar servers, sacristans, music, catechesis, welcomers, collectors, etc., also provision for childrens' liturgy and other services in the absence of the Priest, Rosary groups, opportunities for prayer, exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.
- Pastoral Works - Ensuring provision for: Sacramental programmes, taking Holy Communion to the sick and housebound, visiting the lonely and the bereaved, youth groups, making ecumenical contacts and carrying out other outreach work in the Community.
- Social Events and Fund Raising - A committee responsible for organising 'after Mass' coffee mornings, social evenings, hospitality, other Parish get-togethers, Parish fairs and raffles, bingo, youth and pre-school activities.
- External representation to the Diocese, Deanery & Local Community.
- Ad Hoc Committees Ad hoc committees may be set up for specific purposes and with a definite time limit, e.g. planning a centenary celebration for the parish, ordinations etc.

7. Annual Parish Meeting (APM)

The Pastoral Council will ensure at least one parish meeting is held each year usually in March. The date, time and place will be advertised in the parish newsletter for the four weeks preceding the meeting. At each APM, in addition to any other business approved on the agenda, the elections of the Officers and Members due for re-election will take place. The President chairs the APM unless he delegates the Chair of the PPC to do so.

The agenda for the APM will be published two weeks prior to the meeting and will be displayed on the notice board at the back of the church. Draft Minutes of the APM will be displayed at the back of the church no less than 10 days after the APM.

8. Special Parish Meeting

By advertising a notice in the parish newsletter for two weeks, the President may call a Special Parish meeting, which consists of the members of the Parish Pastoral Council and any other parishioners who wish to attend. The notice will state the matter to be discussed and no other matter is discussed at a Special Parish Meeting unless the President has approved additional items to be on the agenda.

9. Urgent meetings

The president may call an Urgent Meeting of the Parish Pastoral Council, open to members only, with less than normal notice when he considers this is necessary.

10. Alterations to the constitution:

Any proposal to alter this constitution should be submitted to the agenda of a Parish Pastoral Council meeting where it may be discussed and, if desired by the President, a vote of recommendation may be taken. The President will then choose whether or not to accept the proposed alteration. It is understood that, in accordance with the provisions of the universal law of the church, the parish pastoral council is not a deliberative structure but is a consultative body which advises the parish priest. Consequently, no alteration to the constitution of the Parish Pastoral Council without the approval of the President nor, in any case, to its functioning contrary to this understanding is permitted.