

American Martyrs Catholic Community

Pastoral Council Charter & Bylaws

October 2008

American Martyrs Catholic Community Pastoral Council Charter

Introduction

We, the people of American Martyrs Catholic Community, acknowledge our responsibility, conferred by virtue of our baptism, to utilize our gifts in service to God and God's Church. The American Martyrs Pastoral Council, consisting of representatives of the community at large, is hereby formed as a consultative body to articulate the vision, implement the mission and foster the faith of our parish as we strive to be a holy community.

Canonical Authority

1. The laity is called to share their talents in leadership: "The Christian faithful are those who, inasmuch as they have been incorporated into Christ through baptism, have been constituted as the people of God; for this reason, since they have become sharers in Christ's priestly, prophetic and royal office in their own manner, they are called to exercise the mission which God has entrusted to the Church to fulfill in the world, in accord with the condition proper to each one." (Canon 204)
2. The Council shall offer the laity of American Martyrs the opportunity to fulfill their baptismal obligation in accordance with Canon 536 which provides in part: "a pastoral council is to be established in each parish; the pastor presides over it, and through it the Christian 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."

American Martyrs Catholic Community Pastoral Council Bylaws

Article 1 Name

The name of this body shall be the American Martyrs Pastoral Council, hereinafter referred to as the “Council.”

Article 2 Purposes

The Pastoral Council is a consultative body acting in an advisory capacity to the Pastor on pastoral matters. The Pastor presides over the Council in accordance with Canon Law and together with the Pastor, the Council promotes the following of Jesus as Prophet, Priest and Servant-King. In this role, the Council shall:

1. Provide a means whereby the laity of the parish share with the Pastor the responsibility for shaping and guiding the mission of the parish through open and constructive communication.
2. Call forth charisms, gifts given by the Holy Spirit to individual members of the faith community for the common good.
3. Facilitate the formulation of a mission statement and promote development of clear, concise policies, goals and objectives in a parish five year plan based on this statement.
4. Collaborate with the parish commissions as herein referenced in Article 3 in administering and implementing the five year plan and reviewing and updating the goals and objectives as necessary.
5. Explore the need for activities and programs which promote the spiritual, educational and temporal well-being of the parish.
6. Help the parish to identify with the broader church on the diocesan, national and universal levels.
7. Act as a stabilizing force in the parish at times when it is particularly affected by change and/or transition.
8. Serve as a leadership team during times of transition in pastoral leadership. Throughout such transitions the Pastoral Council collaborates with its commissions, the Finance Council and members of the parish staff to provide continuity until such time as a new pastoral leader is assigned.

Article 3 Council Structure

Section 1. Role

The Pastoral Council is the chief advisory body to the Pastor (or alternative pastoral leader, hereinafter referred to as the “Pastor”), for parish planning, providing vision and direction to the parish as well as counsel, advice and support to the Pastor.

Section 2. Members

The Council shall be composed of the following persons:

1. The President, Vice President, Secretary, and Past-President;
2. Members-at-Large who represent the views of the parish at large;
3. A Finance Council Representative;
4. A Representative of the School ;
5. Representatives of each Parish Life Commission;
6. Associate Pastors, Pastoral Associates, and Deacons can sit on the Council, but are not active members (they do not participate in consensus decision-making);
7. The Parish Business Manager and School Principal can sit on the Council, but are not active members.

Section 3. Officers

A President, Vice-President ,Secretary and Past-President shall constitute the Executive Council to assist the Pastor in facilitating the work of the Council. Officers shall have the following duties:

1. President: The President shall be the executive head of the Council, presiding at all meetings of the Council and being an ex-officio member of all standing committees. The duties of the Pastoral Council President include but are not limited to the following:
 - a) Assisting the Pastor and the Executive Committee in setting agendas for Pastoral Council meetings;
 - b) Conducting the meetings in a consensual manner;
 - c) Facilitating communication between the Pastoral Council and the parish-at-large;
 - d) Assisting the Pastor in scheduling open forums when concerns about specific issues deeply affect the parish as a whole;

- e) Discussing with the Pastor the continuing membership of any Council member with repeated absences;
 - f) Serving on the Executive Committee and chairing Executive Committee meetings when the need for these is indicated.
2. Vice President: The Vice President shall:
- a) At the request of the President or due to the inability of the President as determined by the President or by the Council, perform the duties and exercise the functions of the President and when so acting has the authority of the President.
 - b) Aid the President in the performance of the duties of each office.
 - c) Serve as the Council liaison to the Finance Council and shall attend scheduled Finance Council meetings.
 - d) Serve on the Executive Committee and attend Executive Committee meetings as scheduled.
3. Secretary: The secretary is asked to:
- a) Circulate the agenda to all participants prior to regularly scheduled meetings and reserve meeting rooms in advance;
 - b) Take minutes, circulating them promptly following the meeting;
 - c) Maintain record of attendance and bring to the attention of the chair the name of any Council member with repeated absences;
 - d) Keep a current record of the names, addresses, telephone numbers and terms of Council officers and members;
 - e) Assist the President in attending to Council correspondence.
 - f) Upon any material change to these By-Laws, provide each member of the Council with a copy of the By-Laws, as amended through the date of such change.
 - g) Serve on the Executive Committee and attend Executive Committee meetings as scheduled.
4. Past President: The Past President is asked to:
- a) Chair meetings in the absence of the President and Vice President;

- b) Liaison with other past residents and obtain their insight into issues facing the Council;
 - c) Serve as Pastoral Council representative to the Five Year Plan Committee.
 - d) Serve on the Executive Committee and attend Executive Committee meetings as scheduled.
5. Appointment of Officers: Officers shall be selected by the Executive Committee in consultation with the Pastor and upon the Pastor's approval. Generally, a new officer shall be appointed to serve a term of four consecutive one (1) year periods: the first as Secretary, the second as Vice President, the third second as President, and the fourth as Immediate Past President/Advisor to the Council.

Section 4. Commissions

1. The Pastoral Council uses commissions to organize and facilitate the parish ministries in the goals and objectives of parish life set forth in the Mission Statement and 5 Year Plan. The Commissions are not part of the Council, but rather are the implementers of the vision and mission of the parish. The Council listens to the needs of the Commissions, and provides guidance and advice to them. The Council, in collaboration with the Pastor may add or subtract commissions as necessary to fulfill the mission of the parish.
2. Commission Offices: Each commission will select its officers, in consultation with the Pastor, through a process agreed by the commission. The term of office shall be one year. An officer may be re-nominated by the commission and reappointed by the Pastor, but may serve no more than three consecutive terms. In furthering the work of the commissions, officers are encouraged to share their ministry as broadly as possible among commission members and with other parishioners.
3. Commissions include:
 - a) The Faith Formation Commission is the structure of the Council through which the parish participates in the prophetic ministry of Jesus Christ. This commission assists the Pastor and pastoral team/staff in developing, promoting, coordinating and evaluating all parish activities relating to catechetical-education ministries of the parish. As it promotes the growth of an informed and vital faith life among the parish members, the commission affects the lives of all in the faith community, young and old alike, which are growing to maturity in faith. The commission facilitates catechesis within the parish as well as evangelization within and beyond the parish.
 - b) The Liturgy and Worship Commission is the structure of the Council through which the parish participates in the priestly ministry of Jesus Christ. This

commission assists the Pastor and pastoral team/staff in furthering full, conscious and active participation in the parish's liturgical, sacramental and prayer life. Commission responsibility includes developing, promoting, coordinating and evaluating all the activities by which the parish offers its members opportunities for spiritual growth as individuals and as a community of Catholic Christians

- c) The Social Justice and Outreach Commission is the structure of the Council through which the parish participates in the servant-kingly ministry of Jesus Christ. This commission assists the Pastor and pastoral staff in developing, promoting, coordinating and evaluating all parish activities which promote the social mission of the Church through direct service, ecumenical involvement, cooperation with civic and other groups which seek to further justice and peace. This commission promotes a deeper understanding of the baptismal call to service of the poor. Its ministry is concerned not only with the good of parish members but also extends to those in need beyond parish boundaries.
 - d) The Stewardship Commission is the structure of the Council through which the parish, in gratitude, recognizes that we are all called to nurture and develop God's gifts for our own good and for the good of our parish and the human family. The commission assists the Pastor in promoting a deeper understanding of God's call to be faithful Christian stewards and in encouraging each of us to find our unique way of responding through education, discernment, communication, hospitality, annual renewal and development.
 - e) The Community and Evangelization Commission is the structure of the Council through which the parish lives out Jesus' call to spread the Good News. The commission assists and supports the many social/service ministries in our parish whose members live out the Gospel by building strong and loving Christian community relationships within our parish community, the local community and the greater world.
4. The Pastoral Council includes a representative of the Finance Council. The Code of Canon Law mandates a parish finance council in each parish. The role of the parish finance council is to assist the Pastor in planning the budget and in overseeing and controlling the financial affairs of the parish including any schools. The parish finance council is accountable to the Pastor who has the responsibility for final decisions.
 5. The Pastoral Council includes a representative of the American Martyrs School Board or Parent Association ("AMPA") selected by the Principal..

Section 5. Committees

As needs arise, the Council may establish committees from time to time having such responsibilities, authority and scope of activity as shall be determined by the Council. Committees can be of two types: standing or *ad hoc*. Standing committees, which are permanent in nature, are generally oriented toward ministry organization. *Ad hoc* committees are formed for a specific task and exist only for the duration of the project.

1. Appointment: The Executive Committee, in consultation with the Pastor shall appoint members to all committees.
2. Powers: Each committee shall have such powers and perform such duties as may be assigned by the Council.
3. Members: A Council committee may include people who are not Council members.

Section 6. Manner of Operations

1. When considering matters which affect the entire parish, the Council operates as a committee of the whole.
2. When dealing with matters specific to one of its Commissions, the Council operates through that specific Commission and has supervisory authority over all Commissions.
3. The Council's ordinary manner of decision-making, whether as a committee of the whole or through its commission structure, is by consensus rather than by vote.
4. The Council conducts itself in a collaborative mode with individuals and groups in the parish. This collaboration is especially essential in the Pastoral Council's interaction with the Finance Council. For the Council and the Finance Council to fulfill its respective responsibilities effectively, mutual understanding and support is vital between the two entities.

Article 4 Qualifications & Selection

Section 1. Council Membership & Terms of Service

1. Size: The Pastoral Council is comprised of up to 16 members.
2. Composition:

- a) Commission Members: Members shall include a representative of each commission and of the Finance Council.
 - b) Members at Large: The additional members are drawn from the parish-at-large and are ordinarily selected through a collaborative discernment process with the Pastor.
 - c) Ex Officio Members: Since the Council is advisory to the Pastor, the Pastor is not a member of the Council. Because of the special nature of their work, staff members do not serve as members on the Council but, within their specific areas of ministry, act as resource persons to the Council. The Business Manager and School Principal are not members of the Council, but shall attend Council Meetings in their capacity as a resource persons.
3. Qualifications: The Council members shall be registered, participating and contributing parishioners of at least 18 years of age. Service on the Council is a special ministry to the parish requiring an understanding of and commitment to the church, willingness to stay current with developments in the diocesan and universal church and a capacity for consensual decision-making.
 4. Term: Council members serve a three-year term with each term beginning on July 1. Members serve no more than two consecutive three year terms with the exception of members at large who are limited to one three year term. Provision should be made for rotation of terms so that there are new members joining the Council each year with some experienced members remaining.
 5. Nomination and Appointment: New members of the Council shall be nominated annually to replace any member whose term will expire. The nomination process will begin in February of each year. The Executive Committee shall function as the Nomination Committee for new members. The Committee shall be led by the Past President as Chairperson. At the April Council meeting, the Nomination Committee shall present to the Council a slate of candidates for appointment. New members shall be selected at the May meeting by consensus of the Council with the collaboration and approval of the Pastor.
 6. Formation: New members of the Council shall receive education and formation on the role of Council at the beginning of the first year of their first term.

Section 2. Commission Membership & Terms of Service

1. Size: A commission shall have no less than 3 and no more than 16 members drawn from the parish-at-large. One member, generally the president or chair, serves as a member of the Parish Pastoral Council and functions as liaison between the Council and the commission.

2. **Composition:** The commission members should include parishioners who possess skills or charisms relevant to the commission's area of ministry.
3. **Qualifications:** Service on the commission is a special ministry to the parish. Requirements and restrictions for this ministry are generally the same as those listed for members of the Parish Pastoral Council
4. **Term:** Commissions are required to establish their own terms of service. It is recommended that terms of service be established at three consecutive years with the option for renewal thereafter. The term of service must ensure that the representative commission member may serve his or her full three year term as a member of the Pastoral Council. To ensure that commissions and the Pastoral Council are able to benefit from new as well as continuing membership, a rotation process should be adopted.

Section 3. Terminations

A member of the Council may lose his or her membership as follows:

1. **Absenteeism:** Any member who is absent without due reason for three consecutive regularly scheduled Council meetings may be asked to resign.
2. **Voluntary:** Any member may resign his or her membership on the Council at will. The member shall notify the Council Secretary in writing of the effective date of such termination.
3. **Involuntary:** The Pastor, in consultation with the Council, may terminate the membership of any Council member at his discretion.

Article 5 Meetings

Section 1. Frequency

1. **Regular meetings:** The Council shall hold regular meetings. The Pastor or President may convene special meetings upon notice to all members.
2. **Open meetings:** The Council shall hold meetings open to all parishioners at least three times annually. Any parishioner may request time on the agenda of any open Council meeting by communication of such request in advance of the meeting to the Council Secretary.

Section 2. Agenda

Items ordinarily on a Pastoral Council agenda would include:

1. Communal prayer (place on the agenda may vary)
2. Correction/approval of minutes of previous meeting;
3. Items for information, discussion, action;
4. Reception of written reports with opportunity for questions;
5. Opportunity for proposal of future agenda items by members.

Section 3. Quorum

A quorum of the Council shall consist of a simple majority of the members.

Section 4. Decisions

The method of decision making shall be by consensus.

Article 6 Minutes and Reports

Section 1. Minutes

The Council shall maintain adequate minutes, reports and other records of its proceedings and actions, with such records being available for inspection at the parish offices by any parish member during regular business hours with reasonable notice.

Section 2. Council Reports

The Pastoral Council and Commissions shall report to the parish at least three times annually and shall present an annual summary of objectives and accomplishments. The minutes of these meetings shall be posted on the American Martyrs website.

Article 7 Amendments & Dissolution

Section 1. Approval and Amendments

1. Approval: The Pastoral Council Charter and By-Laws are submitted to the Pastor for approval.
2. Amendments:
 - a) Suggested changes in approved Charter and By-Laws are submitted in writing to the Executive Committee of the Pastoral Council. Copies of the

proposed changes are distributed to the Council prior to the first meeting at which the changes are to be discussed.

- b) When a second reading and discussion of proposed changes has taken place at the next regular meeting of the Council, action may follow.
- c) A proposed change requires a consensus or an acceptance by two-thirds of the Council members present. After receiving this endorsement, suggested changes are submitted to the Pastor for approval.

Section 2: Dissolution.

This Council may be dissolved in accordance with Canon Law.