

# OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP PASTORAL COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

## Article I. Name

The name of this body shall be the Our Lady of Perpetual Help Pastoral Council, hereinafter referred to as "the council."

## Article II Purpose

**Section 1.** The purpose of the council shall be:

- A. to accept responsibility as a collaborative and consultative body, with the pastor for the life and mission of the Church in the parish;
- B. to provide an open and honest forum of communication and dialogue regarding parish affairs among pastor, staff, religious and laity;
- C. to collaborate with other religious and civic groups in working for the common good of the community; and
- D. to actively encourage by all available means vigorous and effective volunteerism.

**Section 2.** Pursuant to the purpose set forth in Section I of this Article, the council shall perform the following functions as recommendations to the pastor:

- A. it shall annually review the statement of the parish's mission;
- B. it shall prepare, through long and short range planning, a statement of the needs and goals of the parish and, in union with the pastor, determine priorities among such needs and goals with respect to the allotment of personal, physical, and financial resources.
- C. it shall review and approve the annual budget prepared by the finance committee;
- D. it shall render to all parishioners from time to time, a full report of the parish's spiritual, material, and financial condition.

## Article III. Operation

**Section 1.** The council shall submit its recommendations to the pastor in the form of conclusions resulting from the considered reflection and discussion by the council.

**Section 2.** The pastor shall communicate to the council by the next regularly scheduled meeting, a response to its recommendation(s).

**Section 3.** Ordinarily, the pastor's determination regarding any recommendation by the pastoral council is final. If, notwithstanding the pastor's determination, the council determines by a two-thirds vote to sustain its original recommendation, it must make an effort to resolve the issue at the parish level. Failing that effort, it may petition the matter to the vicar bishop for such action as he deems fitting. In such instances, the decision of the vicar bishop shall be final.

#### **Article IV. Membership**

**Section 1.** The council shall consist of no more than twenty (20) members and no fewer than eight (8) members. All members of the council must be at least sixteen (16) years of age, baptized and confirmed members of the parish. Membership shall be of three types: ex officio, elective and appointive.

**Section 2.** Ex officio members of the council shall include the pastor, permanent deacons, and any other staff persons involved in the direct pastoral care of parishioners. Said members shall have a full voice in council discussions but shall have no vote.

**Section 3.** At least two (2) lay persons who are members of the parish shall be elected to serve on the council according to the election procedures specified in Article V, "Elections." Up to four (4) lay persons may be elected. Elected and appointed members will serve 2 year staggered terms of office, so as to insure that no more than 2 members are up for election in any given year.

**Section 4.** The pastor shall name no more than two (2) lay persons to be appointed members of the council, and such appointed members shall serve for the same term of office as elected members. Such appointments shall endeavor to maintain a proper balance among sexes, ethnic groups, age groups and areas of knowledge and competence desired on the council.

**Section 5.** Each standing Committee (See Article VIII) shall have one (1) voting member on the council.

**Section 6.** The failure of any elected or appointed member to be a full and participating member, as determined by the council, will be a ground for removal from the council. Such a member may be dismissed by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the membership of the council. The subject of the vote is not permitted to vote in that decision. If a council member is dismissed from the council, a replacement may be procured according to the procedure specified in Article V, "Elections."

**Section 7.** The new council shall take office in September. In the event that a vacancy occurs among the elected membership during the council year, the person who received the next highest number of votes in the more recent council election shall be asked to fill out the remaining term of the vacating member; and in the event that she/he declines, the remaining candidates shall be similarly asked, in the order of the number of votes which each received. If no candidate is available, the pastor may appoint someone to complete the term.

**Section 8.** In the case of an appointed member who resigns, the pastor shall appoint another person to fill out the remainder of the vacated term.

### **Article V. Officers**

**Section 1.** Whereas the pastor presides over the work of the pastoral council, the chairing and facilitation of the council meeting is delegated to duly selected council officers. The officers of the council shall be a president, vice-president, and secretary.

**Section 2.** The members of the incoming council shall, at the September meeting, determine among themselves the three offices specified in Section 1. Following nominations, voting shall be by secret ballot, and in the event of a tie balloting shall be continued until a candidate receives a majority. Each office shall be taken individually, thus permitting candidates not elected to be nominated for the next subsequent office.

**Section 3.** The president shall facilitate meetings of the council and in consultation with the pastor, shall call such special meetings as may be necessary. The president of the council shall perform all other duties that customarily devolve upon the office of president, not specifically mentioned herein.

**Section 4.** The vice-president, in the absence of the president or in the event of the latter's inability for any reason to carry out the functions of the office, shall assume, during such absence or disability, the duties of the president. The vice-president shall perform such other duties as may be delegated by the president.

**Section 5.** The secretary shall take minutes of all regular and special meetings of the council, reduce such minutes to writing, preserve them in a permanent record in the parish office, and distribute copies of such minutes to all members of the council at least one week prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting, along with the agenda for that meeting. The secretary shall also prepare and send out all correspondence necessitated by the work of the council and shall maintain permanent files of such correspondence in the parish office. The secretary shall also be responsible for the council page on the Parish website.

**Section 6.** In the event of a vacancy in any office except that of the president, the council shall select someone from among its own membership to fill the office until the next regularly scheduled election. In the event of a vacancy in the office of the president, the vice-president shall automatically succeed and fill out the unexpired portion of the term.

**Section 7.** Each officer shall, at the expiration of his or her term of office, turn over to his or her successor all books, papers and other records and property pertaining to the office not later than ten days after said expiration.

#### **Article VI. Executive Committee**

**Section 1.** The executive committee shall be composed of officers of the council and the pastor.

**Section 2.** It shall be the responsibility of the executive committee to coordinate and prepare the agenda for all regular meetings of the council and to make such agenda available to the recording secretary for mailing prior to the meeting.

#### **Article VII. Committees.**

**Section 1.** The standing committees of the council and their corresponding parish organizations shall have such powers as may be delegated to them by the full council and pastor. Because of its canonical importance, the finance committee shall be named in consultation with the pastor or may be appointed in full by the pastor. The standing committees shall each have one voting member on the council. Those committees will be designated in the bylaws. Each standing committee will appoint one representative to serve on the council. In the event the committee fails to select a representative, the pastor may appoint one.

**Section 2.** The council, with the Pastor's concurrence, must vote to create or dissolve any standing committee. Standing committees will be identified in the by-laws.

**Section 3.** The council president, in consultation with the executive committee, may create any special or ad hoc committees, which may from time to time be deemed necessary, and to designate the members thereof and to dissolve these committees when objectives have been completed.

**Section 4.** The committee president shall be prepared to render a report on the work of the committee at designated meetings of the committee.

## **Article VIII. Committee Duties**

**Section 1.** The president of each standing, special and ad hoc committee shall present oral or written reports to the council at each meeting.

**Section 2.** Each committee shall be responsible for submitting a budget estimating its overall expenses as well as estimates of any income derived from fundraising activities, fees or other means to the finance committee in January.

**Section 3.** The president of each committee shall submit the names of all committee members to the council each January and where appropriate ensure that all committee and members are compliant with any Archdiocesan requirements before performing any work for that ministry.

## **Article IX. Authority and Decision Making**

**Section 1.** In matters of serious consequence to the parish community, the council shall make every effort, in union with the pastor, to arrive at a decision through consensus.

**Section 2.** Every member of the council must be involved in the consensus building process and must speak to the assembled council his or her consent or reservations regarding the matter under discussion.

**Section 3.** The discussion must continue, addressing any reservations until every member is either in favor of the decision or is willing to support the decision even though it may not be the preference of the individual.

**Section 4.** In all other matters not requiring a consensus decision, the rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the council in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with this constitution and any special rules of order the council may adopt.

## **Article X. Ratification and Amendments**

**Section 1.** Its approval shall be by the pastor and a two-thirds vote of the membership of the council.

**Section 2.** This constitution may be amended at any regular meeting of the council by a two-thirds vote of the membership of the council.

**Section 3.** Proposed amendments to this constitution shall be submitted in writing to the council at any regular meeting and voted on at the next regular meeting.

**Section 4.** The president may appoint a committee to review the amendment. The committee shall present a written report on its recommendation to the council members two weeks prior to the next regular meeting.

**Section 5.** The council shall review the amendment and the committee recommendations and shall vote on the amendment.

**Section 6.** The By-laws may be amended by a simple majority vote of the members of the council. Proposed By-laws amendments can be handled using the same procedures set forth in Sections 3-5, above.

## **BYLAWS**

### **Elections**

**Section 1.** Any lay person who (a) has attained the age of sixteen (16) years by the date of elections, and who (b) is a baptized, confirmed and registered member of the parish in good standing, and who (c) maintains a public posture not inconsistent with Church teaching, and who (d) is a contributing member of the parish, shall be eligible to serve on the council, and all persons meeting these same qualifications shall likewise be eligible to vote in such elections.

**Section 2.** The council, at the general meeting held in the month of February shall appoint a nominating committee and designate the president thereof. The committee shall call for and identify qualified parishioners and obtain their consent to stand as candidates for the council. Names of nominations will be presented to the pastor for review and approval by the March meeting. The Committee will oversee the election process.

**Section 3.** Elections shall be held in May by secret ballot, which shall be distributed to all registered parishioners, and the two (2) persons receiving the highest number of votes on the returned qualified ballots shall be declared elected. In the event of a tie, the candidate shall be chosen by lot. While the Council can elect up to four (4) members, it may only elect two (2) members in any given year, except when it is necessary to fill a vacancy left by an elected member.

**Section 4.** Elected members shall serve for a term of two (2) years. No parishioner shall be eligible to serve for more than two (2) consecutive full terms.

**Section 5.** The new council shall take office in September during an annual retreat to reflect on their role as a council, to elect officers for the new term, to review the accomplishments of the last year and the goals and objectives of the new term.

**Section 6.** In case an appointed member resigns before the expiration of their term on the council, the Pastor shall appoint another person to fill out the remainder of the vacated term.

### **Meetings**

**Section 1.** The regular meetings of the council shall be held on the first Monday of each month, excepting the months of July, August and December.

**Section 2.** The meeting held in the month of September shall be known as the annual meeting and shall be for the purpose of electing officers, designating the membership of the standing committees, receiving reports and for any other business that may arise. Any such matters left unfinished at the adjournment of the annual meeting shall constitute the first order of business at the next regular meeting.

**Section 3.** Special meetings may be called by the pastor, president, executive committee or at the written request of six (6) members of the council, the purpose of which shall be stated in the call. Except in cases of emergency, at least seven (7) days' notice shall be given.

**Section 4.** Regular meetings of the council shall be open to all parishioners as observers. It shall be left to the discretion of the executive committee as to whether any special meetings shall be open.

**Section 5.** A majority of the voting members of the council shall constitute a quorum.

### **Standing Committees**

**Section 1.** The standing committees of the council shall be

- a. Liturgy
- b. Religious Education
- c. Haiti
- d. Saint Vincent de Paul
- e. Finance
- f. Evangelization
- g. Facilities
- h. Pastoral Care Ministry