

Our Lady of Loretto Parish Pastoral Council  
*Foundation Document*  
*2022 to 2024*

**Preamble**

Recognizing that sound pastoral decisions are informed by the wisdom of the People of God, and following the documents of the Second Vatican Council, which recommend the establishment of such councils, Father Tony Vallecillo hereby establishes the pastoral council of Our Lady of Loretto Church, effective May 1st, 2022.

Council documents state that Catholics have a right and duty of express their opinions on what pertains to the good of the Church. Pastors should willingly consult their people and use their prudent advice. By establishing a pastoral council, the pastor acknowledges the wisdom of his parishioners, and expresses his desire to share with them his responsibility for the governance of the parish.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this parish pastoral council is to investigate pastoral matters, to consider them thoroughly, and to propose practical conclusions about them. The council's primary task is to study those matters brought to its attention, and to shed light on them. Its second task is to reflect on them thoroughly, to discern their true nature, to evaluate and to ponder them. Its final task is to draw sound conclusions.

The council presents these conclusions to the pastor in the form of recommendations. After the threefold task of the council: investigating, considering, and recommending conclusions are complete, and after the pastor has accepted the recommendations of the council, he will direct their implementation. Council members may assist him, but strictly speaking, implementation is the responsibility of the pastor, not the council.

**Scope**

The scope of the council is pastoral matters. These may include everything that pertains to the pastor's ministries of proclaiming God's word, celebrating the sacraments, caring for the faithful, promoting the mission of the Church to the world, and being a good steward of parish resources. The scope includes all the practical matters of parish life. There is, in short, nothing about which the pastor may not consult the council, apart from faith, orthodoxy, moral principles, or laws of the universal Church.

### **Criteria for Membership**

Pastoral council members are chosen, above all, for their ability to accomplish the main task of the council: the work of investigating, considering, and recommending practical conclusions. They are baptized Catholics, in good standing with the Church, who reflect the parish's various neighborhoods, social and professional groups, and apostolates. Finally, they are parishioners noted for their faith, good morals, and prudence.

### **Selection of Members**

The council consists of nine members. They are chosen by the pastor, who seeks advice and recommendations from parishioners and others, as appropriate. The council is seated on August 1st of even-numbered calendar years, and serves until that date on the next even-numbered year. This two-year period is called the "Planning Cycle." Vacancies that may occur during the two-year service period are filled by the pastor at his sole discretion.

### **Officers**

The pastor is, ex officio, a member of the council, and he presides at every regular monthly meeting. The pastor and the eight other council members select three officers from among their number. The three will serve as chairperson (CP), vice-chairperson (VCP), and secretary (SC). The pastor and Officers develop the agenda for each meeting. The CP facilitates council discussions, and monitors the work of the council between regular meetings. The VCP facilitates and monitors if the CP is absent. The SC takes the minutes for meetings and maintains files for council documents. Meeting minutes and any supporting documents are to be sent to members at least one week prior to the next meeting.

### **Operation**

The pastor defines the theme of the current planning cycle at the beginning of the two-year term. The council then meets monthly from September through May. As appropriate, the council will create subcommittees, solicit assistance from the parish, and give public progress reports as appropriate, including an annual report at the end of each May.

At the end of the two-year planning cycle, the council is dissolved, and a new council is selected, thus beginning a new cycle. The pastor, at the end of each cycle, will the council for its service, and summarize publicly the progress made by the council in reaching the pastor's (and parish's) goals.

## **Agenda**

As stated above, the pastor decides his agenda for the coming two-year council session. He also sets the agenda for each meeting, with assistance from the council officers. The monthly agenda states the goals for each meeting, the means and process for reaching those goals, and the materials needed to accomplish them. It begins with a review of the minutes from the previous meeting, and concludes with a brief evaluation. The council should, with some exceptions, complete its work on each assignment within two months. If the pastor is satisfied with the council's work, he formally accepts the council's recommendations. If he is less than satisfied, he states his reservations and asks the council to clarify the question. Once satisfied, the pastor will ask parish staff, or other parishioners, to implement the council's solutions.

## **Relations with Parish Staff and with the Finance Council**

The pastor will, as a matter of course, consult with others about parish governance. He relies upon parish staff for their expertise, and consults them daily about parish operations. As his discretion, the pastor may ask parish staff to attend pastoral council meetings to share their expertise and insights. In addition, the pastor relies on the parish finance council to develop, monitor, and report on the parish budget. Finance council members are, therefore, chosen for their technical skill in accounting and finance. The pastoral council, by contrast, offers practical wisdom on other matters, using skills appropriate to investigating and reflecting upon pastoral concerns, and proposing conclusions appropriate to the parish as a whole.

## **Pastor's Approval**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_