

**CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS  
SAINT KATHARINE DREXEL PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL**

**PREAMBLE**

Saint Katharine Drexel Pastoral Council bases its existence on the principles set forth in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of the Second Vatican Council (Art. 37):

“A great many wonderful things are to be hoped for from this familiar dialogue between the laity and their pastors: in the laity, a strengthened sense of personal responsibility, a renewed enthusiasm, a more ready application of their talents to the projects of their pastors. The latter, for their part, aided by the experience of the laity, can more clearly and suitably come to decisions regarding spiritual and temporal matters. In this way, the whole Church, strengthened by each one of its members, can more effectively fulfill its mission for the life of the world.”

**Article I: Name of Advisory Body**

Section A:

The name of this body shall be Saint Katharine Drexel Parish Pastoral Council.

Section B:

The Parish Pastoral Council is established in accord with the The Dogmatic Constitution of the Second Vatican Council, Code of Canon Law and Diocesan norms concerning parish pastoral councils with which the articles of this Constitution must be in accord.

**Article II: Purpose**

Section A: The Pastoral Council is concerned with implementing the parish mission of Saint Katharine Drexel Parish while also embracing the mission of the Diocese of Harrisburg:

“Saint Katharine Drexel Parish Family, guided by the Holy Spirit, commits itself to reaching out and sharing with all people the love and service modeled by our patroness, with the Eucharist as our source of strength. Through prayer and action, we will serve God, our Lord and Savior, and our community, exhibiting a special concern for the poor, oppressed and marginalized of our society, especially those among the African-American and Native-American peoples.”

“To share the experience of salvation received from Jesus Christ in the living Catholic tradition of Word and Sacrament, drawing all persons into a believing, hoping, loving, and serving community which, empowered by the Spirit, gives glory to the Father through Jesus, Lord and Savior.”

Section B: The purpose of the Pastoral Council is to provide consultation to the pastor and parish staff concerning pastoral activity and initiatives. The Council shall strive to reach consensus concerning those issues which it addresses and the ordinary disposition of the pastor shall be to act in accord with the recommendations of the Council, unless there are overriding reasons which are to be made clear to the Council. The Pastor , being canonically responsible for the Parish, retains final decision authority on all Pastoral Council actions and deliberations.

### **Article III: Functions**

Section A:

Through prayer, reflection and discussion within the Council and among the members the parish, the Pastoral Council formulates and develops , according to its mission statement, a pastoral plan of action for the parish. At least every 2 years, or at direction of the Pastor, the Council reviews this plan and revises or rewrites it according to the changing needs and circumstances of the parish. The Council shares this pastoral plan with the parish at large.

Section B:

The Pastoral Council develops and reviews parish policies and recommends them to the pastor. These policies are to be in harmony with Article 1, Section B of these bylaws.

Section C:

The Pastoral Council provides oversight and coordinates the work of any parish committees, group activities and organizations by receiving reports of their activities and by calling forth cooperation of those groups in support of pastoral concerns and initiatives. The Pastoral Council may delegate one or more members to attend meetings of these groups and may request delegates from them to take part in the Pastoral Council meetings. Any such delegates are consultative only and are not voting attendees.

Section D:

The Pastoral Council receives a recommended budget from the parish Finance Council and collaborates with this Council to plan the pastoral program of the parish.

### **Article IV. Membership**

Section A:

The members of the Pastoral Council are to be Catholics of the parish , at least 18 years of age who are mindful of the common good, compassionate, prudent, faithful in the stewardship of time, talent and resources and regular participants in the worship of the parish. The Council shall consist of 11 members, elected or appointed.

Section B:

1. The members of the Council are selected by means of a Nominating Committee, or, as by appointment by the pastor. The pastor shall constitute a Nominating Committee of three members, appointed from the current Parish Council membership, with the responsibility of securing nominations for new membership. The committee will be

responsible for making recommendations to the pastor, both those to be elected and those to be directly appointed by the pastor, for the direct appointment of new members and those to be nominated for election by the parishioners.

2. The qualifications and responsibilities of Council members having been presented, all members of the parish are invited to place names in nomination.

3. Persons may nominate themselves.

4. Parish staff members are not eligible for nomination as elected members.

5. Having received the names of nominees, the Nominating Committee shall discuss the candidates and prayerfully select the 6 to 10 persons whom it judges as best suited to serve on the Council taking into account the social and economic conditions of the parish and the diversity of points of view within the parish.

6. The pastor may not reject anyone presented by the Nominating Committee without a serious reason.

7. The pastor is free to appoint 3 to 5 additional members to the Council even if they have not been nominees. He may invite the Nominating Committee to select all members of the Council.

8. Nominees identified and vetted through the Nominating Committee and the pastor will be published in the Parish Bulletin by March. Elections will be held in April or May in a centralized secret ballot and monitored by members of the Nominating Committee. To conduct the election by secret ballot:

a. Establish a centralized voting place before or after all Masses;

b. Elections will take place over a one-week period;

c. Ballots will not be counted until after the last Mass of the one week period;

d. Count the ballots and publish the election results in the weekly bulletin.

9. Any parishioner of at least 18 years of age is eligible to vote in elections.

10. Newly elected and appointed members will be presented and installed during a Mass in June, then take office at the first regular Council meeting in July. Those members leaving the Council shall be recognized by the pastor at the same installation Mass.

11. In the event of a vacancy ( or vacancies) among the elected membership, the parishioners who had the next highest number of votes (first alternate) will be asked to fill the term of the vacating member. This process will continue until all vacancies are filled. If the number of members falls below the prescribed minimum anytime during the membership cycle, the pastor shall appoint members up to the required minimum. Those appointed will serve until the end of the next election cycle.

12. An elected member serves for a term of 3 years and may not serve more than 2 elected terms by the means of the nomination process. Having served one full term on the Council, a person is again eligible for nomination after a year's absence to a second full term. Persons appointed to the Council by the pastor are not limited in terms of service.

13. In the first year of Parish Council organization, the elected members will draw lots to determine their initial tenure of 1,2 or 3 years. Persons who serve a partial term are eligible for re-election to only one full term of 3 years.

Section C: Attendance:

Any member absent without excuse from two consecutive regular meetings will be contacted by the Pastor regarding the continued fulfillment of that member's commitment. A third unexcused absence will be deemed a resignation. No contact from the member is considered an unexcused absence. The Chairperson or the Pastor determines excused absences.

Section D: Resignations

Voluntary resignation must be submitted in writing to the Chairperson and must be accepted with an effective date.

Section E: Removal

Any action by a member of the Pastoral Council during a meeting or otherwise which is considered, in the judgment of the Pastor, to be detrimental to the best interest of Saint Katharine Drexel Parish shall be cause for removal from the Pastoral Council. The member involved in such an action shall have an opportunity to meet with the Pastor and the Pastoral Council Chairperson to see if reconciliation can be achieved.

**Article V: Meetings**

Section A: The Pastoral Council shall meet monthly and at other times when called by the pastor.

Section B: To assure free and open communications between the Pastoral Council and the parishioners, meeting dates, minutes, and reports of the work of the Pastoral Council committees should be published on a regular basis.

1. Notice of all meetings of the Parish Council shall be posted in the Parish bulletin 2 weeks in advance of the meeting.
2. All meetings of the Parish Council shall be open to any registered member or staff of the Parish, with prior notification to the Chairperson, unless the pastor has determined otherwise prior to a particular meeting. Non-members or staff present may be recognized by the Chairperson to address a specific agenda item. Agenda items from non-members or staff must be submitted in writing a minimum of 3 days prior to the meeting and approved by the Pastor.

Section C: The agenda for meetings of the Parish Council shall be set by the Chairperson in consultation with the Pastor. Items requested by Parish Council members for inclusion on the agenda for a particular meeting shall be submitted in writing or by electronic mail at least one day in advance of the meeting.

Section D: Minutes of meetings of the Parish Council will be approved at the next meeting; and, once approved, published for members of the parish on the website. Bylaws will also be published on the website. Minutes will also be available in hardcopy in the church office. A notice will be posted in the bulletin when minutes are available.

Section E: The pastor presides over the Council as President. The pastor, additionally as the spiritual head, will provide for opening prayers and any further ecclesiastical leadership as discerned during Council deliberations. The pastor, as president, shall oversee, as the first order of business, the election of the officers at the first meeting of

the Council in July. Conduct of the meetings will then smoothly transition to the Chairperson.

Section F: The members of the Council shall elect a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson to plan the agenda with the pastor, to conduct meetings of the Council, and in general to facilitate the work of the Council.

Section G: The pastor and any member of the religious or parish staff shall be ex-officio, non-voting members.

Section H: Secretarial duties may be assigned to a parish staff person or the Council may select a regular member as secretary.

## **Article VI: Officers**

Section A. Terms of Office:

The Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary are elected annually by the Pastoral Council members at the June meeting or the last meeting of the fiscal year.

The term of office will be from July 1 through June 30. No officer may hold the same office for more than two consecutive terms.

Section B: Election:

Any voting member of the Pastoral Council may participate in the nominating and election of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary.

Section C: Chairperson:

The Chairperson's major functions will be to develop the meeting agenda along with the Pastor and conduct the meetings while allowing time for prayer and reflection:

- 1 . to facilitate the Pastoral Council meetings by stating the agenda issue or question then inviting discussion without indicating what solution is to be reached, while providing time for prayer and reflection.
2. to maintain order and attention to the topic; and, to regulate when and who will speak, while respectfully allowing adequate time of comments
3. end each agenda topic by restating, summarizing, or contrasting the various statements of the Pastoral Council members then calling a vote if required.

Section D: Vice-Chairperson

The Vice-Chairperson performs the duties of the Chairperson in the latter's absence and serves as an aide to the Chairperson in conducting the Pastoral Council's work.

Section: Recording Secretary

The Recording Secretary documents the business of the Pastoral Council (minutes, reports, etc.), maintaining attendance and other records, and handles all Pastoral Council correspondence.

## **Article VII: Procedures.**

Section A. Rules of Order:

Robert's Rules of Order shall ordinarily govern the procedures of the Council. However, other Christian means may be used, at the direction of the pastor, in order to reach decisions that all members can agree without violations of conscience. Consensus of all members must be reached on all Council decisions.

Section B. A majority of the voting members of the Parish Council constitutes a quorum. Any recommendation by the Parish Council must be approved unanimously by reaching a consensus of the voting members present.

Section C. Pastoral Ratification (or Non-Ratification):

Pastor's assent is an essential element of any consensus.

The pastor has the responsibility and power to ratify ( or not) all actions taken by the Council. Council ratification exists unless the pastor takes non-ratification action. If such Pastoral non-ratification is exercised, the Parish Council is required to prayerfully reconsider the action in question and find a solution to the Pastor's objection thereby reconciling to a full consensus.

### **Article VIII: Ratification**

Section A:

This Constitution becomes valid upon approval by unanimous consensus of the Council and acceptance by the Pastor. A copy is to be sent to the Office of the Bishop.

Section B:

By-laws or those more detailed procedures by which the Council carries out its responsibilities must be approved by a consensus of the Council and accepted by the pastor.

### **Article IX. Missions and Committees**

Section A:

Sub-committees, permanent or ad-hoc, of the Parish Council may be established to address specific needs or objectives of the Parish. Such committees shall have a well defined and focused purpose. Each committee shall be chaired, as practical, by a member of the Parish Council. Committee members should consist of members of the Council. Each appointed member to the committee are voting members within that committee only. The sub- committee's Chairperson may add specific non-voting experts, approved by the Pastor, as necessary for it's focused purpose. Any final action by a sub-committee is not binding on the full Parish Council's actions.

Section B:

1. All Missions or Ministries shall have full oversight by the Parish Council. A Parish Council member may be assigned by the Chairperson or as directed by the Pastor to attend their regular meetings.
2. Six Areas of Missions, as appropriate to the Parish needs, shall be established in accordance with Diocesan guidelines; i.e. Evangelization, Social Concerns and Outreach, Education, Pastoral Ministry, Liturgy, Ecumenism and Interfaith Concerns.

**Article X. Executive Session**

In the event that there arises an issue that is a very sensitive or confidential, the Pastoral Council may go into executive session. Only Pastoral Council members may be present and no voting shall take place or minutes recorded other than that of the Council entering the Executive Session. They are to maintain complete confidentiality.

**Article XI Suspension and Dissolution of the Council**

Section A:

Unless directed otherwise by the Bishop, the Pastoral Council ceases to function when the parish is without a pastor. A new pastor or administrator will call the Council into session within 1 month after appointment to office.

Section B:

The Pastoral Council can be dissolved only in consultation of the Diocesan Bishop.

**Article XII. Amendment**

These Bylaws may be amended by the unanimous vote of the members of the Parish Council and upon the approval of the Pastor.