

# **Practical Information Related to Serving on St. Paul the Apostle Parish Pastoral Council**

## ***What is the St. Paul Parish Pastoral Council?***

The Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) is an organization which promotes the spiritual enrichment and well-being of the parish. The Council serves as an advisory group to the pastor and clergy. The Council receives guidance from the pastor, and also collects information from both individual members and parish organizations in an effort to identify needs at the parish level. The Council works with the pastor and staff to develop plans to meet those needs.

## ***Composition of the Council***

The PPC Council is composed of the Pastor, clergy (vicars and deacons) and typically 9 lay members from the parish. All members of the Council are to be registered, active participants in the parish community, in good standing with the Church, and who are committed to being led by the Holy Spirit in fostering the outward mission of our parish.

## ***Time Commitment***

It is important that those considering service on the Council be aware of the time commitment involved.

1. Service on the St. Paul Parish Pastoral Council is normally for a 3-year commitment.
2. Regular meetings are normally held on the First Saturday of the month with the Pastor and clergy from 8:30 to 10:30 AM.
3. There is also normally a planning meeting on the 3rd Thursday evening of each month from 7:00 to 9:00 PM. The Pastor and clergy are optional attendees at the planning meetings.
4. First Saturday and third Thursday meetings are not held in July.
5. There are a few special meetings that occur during the year such as the one half-day spiritual retreat and training sessions for potential candidates, held in May or June.
6. Special projects sometimes necessitate 1 or 2 additional meetings of a subset of the Council that are involved in the project.

## ***Purpose of Training / Orientation Sessions***

1. Acquaint candidates with the model which serves as the guide for the analysis, evaluation, and decision making process of the Council.
2. Provide the opportunity for each candidate to discern whether they feel service on the Council is a good match for their talents and abilities.

3. Provide information regarding the time and effort commitment, so candidates may judge whether the time and effort required is possible in their existing schedule.

### ***Need For Discretion***

It is important that the subjects discussed during Council meetings not be discussed outside the Council. This means that Council business should not be discussed with spouses, other members of the parish, or close friends.

### ***Goal of Council Membership is Service Guided by Openness to Holy Spirit***

The model used in Council deliberations is a group discernment model which presumes that each member is guided by the Holy Spirit, and that the Holy Spirit provides guidance and wisdom through each of the members. Matters for Council consideration are normally introduced by the Pastor, or by council members. One of the duties of council members is to be aware of needs expressed by other parish members. When a matter is taken up by the Council, it is deliberated slowly. The goal of Council deliberations is to study needs in the parish, and seek possible solutions through prayerful discussion and deliberation. The deliberations of the Council proceed slowly and normally do not have target dates and deadlines. Potential members need to be aware of the slower pace of Council business.

### ***Need For Prayer***

The use of group a discernment process presumes that each Council member is guided by the Holy Spirit and that the Holy Spirit provides guidance and wisdom through each of the members. This implies that each member is open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In order to be open to the Holy Spirit, it is very important that each member have a rich personal prayer life. It will be difficult to discern the will and guidance of the Holy Spirit if a person is not accustomed to seeking God's will through prayerful reflection in matters of their personal life. One of the benefits of serving on the Council is that it encourages prayer and reflection.