



ST. LAWRENCE MARTYR

CATHOLIC PARISH OF JESSUP, MD

ST. LAWRENCE MARTYR PARISH COUNCIL CHARTER

PREAMBLE

We, the community of believers known as St. Lawrence Martyr Parish, pursuant to canon law, do establish this charter in order to provide for the orderly administration of our parish. We do so in union with our pastor, with the Archbishop of Baltimore, and with all members of the Roman Catholic Church.

ARTICLE I. STRUCTURE

We the people of St. Lawrence Martyr parish ever mindful of the requirements of canon law do hereby designate the Parish Pastoral Council as the representative and advisory body in the administration of the parish. We accomplish this through a prayerful reflective process that recognizes that the Holy Spirit is at work among the members to discern the direction of the parish.

ARTICLE II. PURPOSE AND FUNCTION

Section 1. The purpose of the council shall be:

- A. To accept responsibility with the pastor for the life and mission of the Church in the parish.
- B. To act as a leadership and visioning body for the parish.
- C. To provide an open and honest forum of communication and dialogue regarding parish affairs and provide viable solutions.
- D. To provide support, collaboration and problem solving to assist the pastor in the administration of the parish.
- E. To identify and adapt for new parish demographics requirements.
- F. To encourage a network of communication within the parish and surrounding community.
- G. To participate with the archdiocesan bodies, in total life and mission of the church within the archdiocese.

Section 2. The parish council shall perform the following functions:

- A. To review, each February, the parish mission statement and council charter.
- B. To review the parish budget annually.
- C. To annually assess the needs and goals of the parish together with the pastor; establish priorities in accordance with personal, physical and financial resources.
- D. To review revenue generating and/or expenditure reducing activities.
- E. To ensure an annual report of the parish's spiritual, material, and financial condition is completed and issued to the parish.
- F. To support the reverent and relevant celebration of the Sacred Liturgy and the spiritual growth of the parish.

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 council members.

Section 2. The pastor shall communicate to the council by its next regularly scheduled meeting, his response to its recommendation(s). If the pastor, for grave reasons of fidelity to the Gospel, obedience to Church or civil law, or other serious financial or administrative considerations, or religious or spiritual reasons, feels that he cannot, in good conscience, accept and carry out the recommendations of the council, he shall fully and frankly communicate his reservations with regard to them to the assembled council.

Section 3. If, notwithstanding the reservations expressed by the pastor, the council determines to sustain its original recommendations, and no other means offers itself at the parish level to resolve the situation, either the pastor or the council through its executive head may petition the matter at issue to the Ordinary for such action as he may deem fitting.

ARTICLE IV. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. The council shall have three types of membership: automatic, elective, and appointive. All members must be currently registered at St. Lawrence Martyr and active in at least one parish ministry.

Section 2. The automatic member shall be the pastor who shall have full voice in the council discussions, but shall have no vote. In his absence, the pastor may appoint a representative.

Section 3. Six parishioners shall be elected to the council according to the electoral procedures specified in Article V. Elections.

Section 4. The pastor shall appoint three parishioners. One appointive member shall be a representative of the confirmed youth population, if one is not elected. All appointees shall serve three years and shall have full voice and vote.

Section 5. Membership on the council will be the pastor and nine parishioners (three appointed by the pastor and six elected by the parish). All persons shall serve three year terms, with a limitation of two consecutive terms.

Section 6. All Clergy (priests and deacons), Pastoral Associates, and Corporators of the parish are *ex officio* members of the Parish Pastoral Council, enjoying full voice but not an active vote.

Section 7. Members missing three consecutive meetings may be asked to resign.

Section 8. New members will be given a copy of the current parish council charter. New members will attend archdiocesan provided training within the first 18 months of taking office.

ARTICLE V. ELECTION PROCEEDINGS

Section 1. A person must meet the following criteria to be nominated for a position on the parish council:

- *Be a registered member of St. Lawrence Parish,
- *Have received the Sacrament of Confirmation,
- *Be active in at least one parish ministry and
- *Be a Catholic in good standing.

Section 2. All registered members of the parish, who are 18 years of age or older or have celebrated the sacrament of Confirmation, are eligible to vote.

Section 3. No elected or appointed members of the parish council shall serve for more than two consecutive terms, each term being three years.

Section 4. Two elected members of the council shall be elected each year. This will provide for a balance between new and experienced members.

Section 5. The St. Lawrence Martyr Parish Council elections shall be administered and supervised by the Nomination Committee. Nomination forms shall be available at all Masses on the first and second weeks in September. The Nominating Committee shall attempt to obtain a minimum of twice as many candidates as seats up for election.

Section 6. The Nomination Committee shall consist of four current parish council members, determined by majority vote of the parish council.

Section 7. Eligible nominees shall be presented to the parish during the third week of September. A picture and short biography of each nominee will be included in the parish bulletin for the third week of September.

Section 8. Nominees shall be placed on the ballot for distribution during all Masses on the fourth Sunday of September. Absentee ballots shall be made available through the parish office the week before the election at the request of any registered parishioner. These completed ballots shall be received at the parish office no later than 12:00 noon the day following the election.

Section 9. All parties on the ballot shall be notified, by phone, promptly of the outcome and the newly elected members shall be announced in the parish bulletin.

Section 10. The new parish council members will begin their term at the October parish council meeting.

Section 11. If any parish council elected seat should become vacant, the results of the last regular election shall first be used to attempt to fill the vacancy. The first non-elected person receiving the greatest number of votes, and giving consent, shall fill the vacancy for the remainder of the unexpired term. If no one should consent, the parish council will appoint someone as an elective who is qualified under Article V., Section 1., to fill the vacancy until the next general election occurs. If at the time of the next general election the

term of the vacated seat has not expired, the seat will be included in the election and be limited to the remainder of the unexpired term.

Section 12. If any appointed parish council seat should become vacant, the Pastor will appoint someone qualified under Article V., Section 1., to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the unexpired term.

ARTICLE VI. OFFICERS

Section 1. Whereas the pastor presides at parish council meetings, he may delegate the facilitating of such meetings to duly selected parish council officers. These officers of the council shall be a chairperson, vice chairperson, and secretary.

Section 2. The members of the incoming council shall, at the first meeting, determine among themselves, nominations for the three officers specified in Section 1. Each nominee will provide a brief reason for their desire to fill a particular office. After reflection, the council will vote for officers. Voting shall be by secret ballot. 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 chairperson shall facilitate monthly meetings of the council, and in consultation with the pastor, shall call such special meetings as may be necessary. The chairperson shall perform all other duties that are authorized by the full body of the council.

Section 4. The vice chairperson, in the absence of the chairperson, 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 chairperson. All correspondence necessitated by the work of the council shall be prepared, dispersed, and filed in permanent records by the vice chairperson. The vice chairperson shall perform such other duties as may be authorized by the full body of the council.

Section 5. The secretary shall perform all duties necessary to maintain the official written records of the council and the executive board. The secretary shall take the minutes of all regular and special meetings, preserve them in a permanent record and distribute copies of such meeting 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 perform such duties that may be authorized by the full body of the council.

Section 6. In the event of a vacancy in any office, except that of the chairperson, 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 chairperson, the vice chairperson 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 the successor all books, papers, and other records, and property pertaining to that office not later than ten days after said expiration.

ARTICLE VII. EXECUTIVE BOARD

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

Section 2. It shall be the responsibility of the executive board to coordinate and prepare the agenda for all regular meetings of the council and to make such agenda available to the secretary for distribution to council members prior to the meeting.

Section 3. The executive officers shall not be eligible to hold the position of chairperson to any committee during his/her term as an executive.

ARTICLE VIII. COMMITTEES

Section 1. Committees shall be created as needed with such powers as may be delegated to it 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 himself.

ARTICLE IX. MEETINGS

Section 1. All meetings of the parish council will open and close with a prayer.

Section 2. All meetings will be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order.

Section 3. The regular meetings of the parish council shall be held each month, except when stipulated by the council.

Section 4. Special meetings may be called by the pastor, chairperson of the parish council, the executive committee (i.e., officers of the council), or at the written request of three members of the council. The purpose of any special meeting shall be stated in the notice. Except in the case of emergency, at least three days' notice shall be given.

Section 5. A majority of the voting members of the council (at least half of the council members) shall constitute a quorum.

Section 6. Scheduling of all meetings of the parish council will be coordinated with the parish secretary.

Section 7. The agenda prepared by the executive board will be followed as closely as possible to ensure orderly conduct of the meeting. Input to the agenda may be submitted, in writing, by any member of the pastoral council to the chairperson or the pastor.

ARTICLE X. RATIFICATION AND AMENDMENTS

Section 1. The draft of this charter shall be made available to all board members, together with a ballot enabling them to signify approval or disapproval within ten days of receipt. With approval of at least two-thirds of the board members, this charter shall become

operable and effective at the May parish council meeting. The final charter will be posted on the St. Lawrence Martyr website.

Section 2. Charter amendments may be proposed at any regular meeting of the council. The proposed amendment shall be presented to the council members in writing one month prior to the vote. The draft amendment shall be approved by at least a two-thirds majority vote of the council.

Unanimously approved on April 19, 2016.