



### **St Patrick's Cathedral**

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## **PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL GUIDELINES**

**St Patrick's Cathedral Parish, Toowoomba**

13 November 2008

### **Pastoral Setting**

St Patrick's Cathedral parish is a diverse and complex community, grounded in faith in God. Our primary focus is pastoral: prayerful care of those within and beyond our community of faith, making use of the human and material resources available to us.

A small Pastoral Team of priests and lay people deals with the day to day operation of this pastoral activity. The Cathedral Pastoral Team has several members: Parish Administrator (priest), Associate Pastor, Parish Secretary, Finance Officer, Parish House host, Bingo Coordinator, Cathedral Centre Manager, and Grounds and Maintenance Officer.

This Team works side by side with the many people of the parish community who are actively involved in different Pastoral Ministries providing prayerful care, service and support in direct and personal ways to those within the parish community and beyond in the wider community. Of particular concern are the personal and health needs of those who are housebound or resident in nursing homes and retirement complexes.

As the Cathedral Parish of our diocese, we are only fully alive when we gather in prayer, especially Eucharist, and pastoral activity with our Pastor, Bishop William Morris. We are mindful that our Pastor has diocesan responsibilities which take him from our midst into the heart and life of all the parish and faith communities that make up our geographically extensive diocesan family. We are always mindful of his singular leadership role amongst us.

Our Parish Pastoral Council provides thoughtful and prayerful leadership in pastoral matters arising in the life of our community of faith. In this way, the Pastoral Council takes part in and promotes the Church's mission of living and communicating the love and values of Christ in our world, beginning with the local neighbourhood in which we live.

The Council works directly and through other ministries and groups to develop a welcoming, friendly and caring community.

Several other Parish bodies (eg the Parish Finance Council) provide advice and wisdom to the Pastoral Council, based on their particular area of pastoral competence.

Of special importance to our Parish are our partners in the ministry of education of the young: St Saviour's Primary School and St Saviour's College. All three are interwoven communities of faith.

### **Role of the Parish Pastoral Council**

Our Pastoral Council's role is to promote the Church's mission of living and communicating the love and values of Christ in the world around us, through prayerful and thoughtful pastoral leadership and service.

Our Pastoral Council shares in the responsibility for the ongoing life and development of our parish community, working together with parishioners to provide support for their efforts to live as followers of Christ.

Our Parish Pastoral Council seeks to:

- listen and respond to the hopes, ideas, needs and concerns of parishioners
- encourage and support the continuing good work of existing pastoral groups
- provide opportunities for parishioners:
  - to grow in their relationship with God and with each other
  - to support and encourage them in their continuing efforts to be a Christian influence in the wider community
- set short-term and long-term pastoral goals for our parish community within the framework of diocesan priorities
- contribute towards making parish decisions that reflect the values of the Gospel and the teachings of the Church
- provide support for our Pastors, working collaboratively with them.

### **Membership**

There will be ten members consisting of our Priest Administrator, Associate Pastor and eight members chosen by parishioners, through a process of prayerful selection.

The Council will have as broad a membership as possible in terms of age, gender and ethnic origin.

Each chosen parishioner is a representative of the whole parish community and not a representative of a specific parish group or ministry.

There will be a session of formation for all Council members prior to the first meeting of the newly chosen Council and after each changeover of membership.

The Council once in place and as need arises, may invite particular members of the parish community to become Associate Members because of their position or expertise. This may involve the Principal of the Parish Primary School or a member of the Parish Finance Council. Associate Membership and its term are at the discretion of the Council.

### **Term of Office**

The term of membership for the eight members chosen by parishioners is normally two years, with the option, after discussion within the Council, of extending for a second term of two more years. Prayerful selection of new members is to take place every two years. The terms of members are to be arranged by discussion within the Council so that there is a change in membership every two years. This ensures both continuity and change in the overall membership of the Council. Anyone who serves consecutive terms in their own right (ie not filling a vacancy) is to stand down for at least one term.

### **New Members**

All parishioners will be invited to recommend other parish members for possible nomination to the Council.

Each person recommended will be invited either to a combined Information Meeting or to an individual meeting with a Pastoral Councillor, to receive current information about the Pastoral Council and its role and responsibilities. At the conclusion of this meeting, participants will be asked to indicate whether they wish to accept or decline nomination.

All parishioners will be invited to participate in the process of prayerfully selecting new members.

### **Casual Vacancies**

The Council may fill any casual vacancies by invitation, until the next selection process. A member filling a casual vacancy completes the term of the person whom he/she is replacing.

### **Responsibilities of all Members**

In a spirit of prayerfulness each member of the Parish Pastoral Council will:

- attend the regular meetings of the Council
- provide input to deliberations of the Council
- develop a spirit of enquiry and the ability to listen and understand the issues affecting the lives of parishioners
- provide prayerful support and encouragement to other members of the Council
- take part in the annual and ongoing formation offered to all members of the Council
- embrace opportunities for personal faith development and for gaining skills to assist with effective participation in the Council's operations
- represent the Council when required eg Parish meetings; deanery, regional or diocesan meetings.

### **Office Bearers**

The Administrator plus office-bearers will form the Executive of the Pastoral Council. The office-bearers, chosen annually by the members, will be Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and Secretary.

The role of the Executive is to:

- reflect on the effectiveness of each previous Council meeting
- organise the agenda for each meeting, incorporating input from all members
- arrange distribution of the agenda, minutes and all relevant material one week in advance of each meeting
- coordinate the business of the Council between meetings
- represent the Council as required
- arrange additional formation opportunities outside the regular meetings.

Each year the Council is to choose:

- one member to be an ex-officio member of the Parish Finance Council; and
- another member to be an ex-officio member of St Saviour's Primary School Board.

### **Meetings**

There will be a minimum of ten monthly meetings of the Pastoral Council each year, usually excluding January and December.

The agenda, incorporating input from all pastoral councillors, will be finalised by the Executive at an agenda meeting. It will be circulated to members in advance of the meeting, together with the Minutes of the previous meeting and any information or other relevant material required.

### **Decision Making Process: Consensus**

The consensus approach will be used in the process of making parish decisions, with each member offering input towards the final outcome. Majority voting, lobbying, competition and domination, are to be avoided.

### **Sub-Committees**

Sub-committees (or short term task forces) may be set up for specific purposes for a definite duration. These sub-committees will include at least one member of the Pastoral Council.

### **Communication with the Parish**

The Pastoral Council will report to the parish community regularly. Normally this will involve a spoken report at Masses over one weekend and a written report in the Parish Newsletter, each month. Communication is to be a two-way process. The Council will seek the input of parishioners through various means eg parish consultations, focus meetings, conversations.

### **Review of Guidelines**

These Pastoral Council Guidelines will be reviewed at the end of each Pastoral Council's term or more frequently if the need arises. The date of next review is November 2010.

### **Vatican II: Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People**      18 November 1965

Sharing in the function of Christ, priest, prophet and king, the laity have an active part of their own in the life and activity of the church. Their activity within the church communities is so necessary that without it the apostolate of the pastors will frequently be unable to obtain its full effect. Following in the footsteps of the men and women who assisted Paul in the proclamation of the Gospel (Acts 18:18-26; Rom 16:3), lay persons of a genuinely apostolic spirit supply the needs of their brothers and sisters and are a source of consolation to the pastors no less than to the rest of the faithful (1 Cor 16:17-18). Nourished by their active participation in the liturgical life of their community, they engage zealously in its apostolic works; they attract people towards the church who had been perhaps very far away from it; they ardently cooperate in the spread of the word of God, particularly by catechetical instruction; by their expert assistance they increase the efficiency of the care of souls as well as of the administration of the goods of the church. (paragraph 10)

In the church, there is a diversity of ministry but unity of mission. To the apostles and their successors, Christ has entrusted the office of teaching, sanctifying and governing in his name and by his power. Lay people too, sharing in the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ, play their part in the mission of the whole people of God in the church and in the world (paragraph 2: refer LG 33).

**13 November 2008**