

# Charters for the St. Mary Parish Councils: Pastoral Council and Finance Council

Revised on August 31, 2009

**St. Mary Church** in Mokena was founded in 1864. Originally part of the Archdiocese of Chicago, it became part of the new Diocese of Joliet in 1949. The Parish Covenant Book, of which this document is a part, contains the history of the parish and a description of its ministries and the programs. For more information about the ministries and programs of St. Mary Church, please go to [www.stmarymokena.com](http://www.stmarymokena.com). This section of the Parish Covenant Book contains the charters for the two parish councils of St. Mary Church in Mokena.

**Parish Councils.** Each parish has two parish councils, a pastoral council and a finance council, in accord with the following directives from the Code of Canon Law:

- Canon 536. §1. After the diocesan bishop has listened to the presbyteral council and if he judges it opportune, a pastoral council is to be established in each parish; the pastor presides over it, and through it the Christian faithful along with those who share in the pastoral care of the parish in virtue of their office give their help in fostering pastoral activity. §2. This council possesses a consultative vote only and is governed by norms determined by the diocesan bishop.
- Canon 537. Each parish is to have a finance council which is regulated by universal law as well as by norms issued by the diocesan bishop; in this council the Christian faithful, selected according to the same norms, aid the pastor in the administration of parish goods with due regard for the prescriptions of canon 532.
- Canon 532. The pastor represents the parish in all juridic affairs in accord with the norm of law; he is to see to it that the goods of the parish are administered in accord with the norms of canons 1281-1288.

For more information about church law and parish councils, please go to the following website that provides an online text of the complete Code of Canon Law: [www.intratext.com/X/Eng0017.htm](http://www.intratext.com/X/Eng0017.htm).

**Parish Governance.** In addition to the norms of Canon Law, the model of parish governance of St. Mary Church is also based on pastoral directives from the Diocese of Joliet ([www.DioceseofJoliet.org/omf](http://www.DioceseofJoliet.org/omf)).

The Parish Evaluation Project, developed by Fr. Thomas Sweetser, S.J., of Milwaukee, Wisconsin ([www.pepparish.org](http://www.pepparish.org)), also has an important influence on the organizational structures of St. Mary Church.

In the coming year, this model will be further enhanced with perspectives from the Good Leaders – Good Shepherds program for priests which is sponsored by the Diocese of Joliet ([www.CatholicLeaders.org](http://www.CatholicLeaders.org)).

The Parish Covenant Book, of which this document is a part, provides an encyclopedia of information about St. Mary Church and its organizational structures. To make this Covenant Book readily available to parishioners and others, it is published on a special internet website, [www.stmarymokena.com](http://www.stmarymokena.com). For more information about St. Mary Church, please consult the online Parish Covenant Book mentioned above, or contact the church office at 708-326-9300.

# St. Mary Parish: Pastoral Council Charter

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## 1: Pastoral Council Information

**Pastoral Council Mission.** The St. Mary Parish Pastoral Council engages in prayerfully reflective oversight for all parish pastoral activities. Through a strategic pastoral planning process, the Pastoral Council establishes a compelling vision and mission that provide unifying direction and worthwhile goals for the whole parish community.

**Pastoral Council Design.** The Pastoral Council, the Parish Commissions, and parish staff members work together with the Pastor, in their respective roles, to promote all the pastoral activities of the parish community.

- The role of the Pastoral Council is to establish a strategic pastoral plan for the whole parish, and to review the proposed annual goals of the parish Commissions in light of this overall plan.
- The role of the parish Commissions is to formulate their annual action plans, to obtain the approval of their plans through the Pastoral Council, and to implement their plans successfully in the parish.
- The role of parish staff members is to provide leadership for their parish Commissions, and to facilitate the work of both their Commissions and the organizations that comprise those Commissions.

The development of the strategic pastoral plan and the effectiveness of the annual goals and objectives are monitored throughout the course of the year at Parish Leadership meetings.

**Pastoral Council Members.** The Pastoral Council consists of the Pastor and at least seven parishioners. One person is discerned from among the membership of each of the six Commissions, and at least one at-large member is discerned by the Pastor in consultation with the Pastoral Council. Also, an at-large member may be selected by the pastor from among the youth of the parish. Pastoral Council members serve for a one year term, which is usually renewed for a second year, as long as the person remains a member of their parish Commission. At-Large members are appointed for one year terms, and may be reappointed once. A continuity of Council membership naturally occurs through this process. In order to be seated on the Pastoral Council, the nomination of the parishioner must be accepted by the Pastor; otherwise the Commission discerns another Council member. Council members may not be employed by the parish, or be related to parish employees or to other Council members.

**Pastoral Council Officers.** The Pastoral Council discerns a Chairperson and a Secretary each year in a process that is conducted by the Pastor. The Chairperson prepares the agenda with the Pastor, and conducts the Council meetings. The Secretary keeps the minutes and prepares Pastoral Council reports for the parish bulletin and for the Parish Leadership meetings. Each year, the Pastor conducts the discernment process for these officers, and the results are announced in the parish bulletin. All Pastoral Council minutes are kept in the parish archives after they are approved by the Pastoral Council.

**Pastoral Council Meetings.** Pastoral Council meetings are called by the Pastor, and are co-chaired by the Pastoral Council Chairperson on a monthly basis, or as needed. In accord with church law, each member of the Pastoral Council has one consultative vote, but consensus is the goal for all Pastoral Council deliberations. The Pastoral Council also calls and conducts general Parish Leadership meetings throughout the year for all the Commission and Council members of the parish.

## 2: Parish Commission Information

**Parish Commissions.** There are six Commissions: Worship, Spirituality, School, Religious Education, Community-Service, and Administration. Each Commission is led by a designated parish Staff Member, appointed by the Pastor. The appointed Staff member is an employee of the parish, who reports administratively to the Pastor, and who represents the Pastor to their designated Commission. Just as the Pastoral Council functions as an advisory board to the Pastor, each Commission functions as an advisory board to their pastorally appointed Staff Member. Consensus is the goal of all deliberations.

**Commission Membership.** Commission members are discerned yearly from the recognized parish organizations which constitute each particular Commission, in a process that is conducted by the appointed Commission Staff Member. Liaisons from related organizations may be invited to attend Commission meetings as participants, but are not eligible to be discerned for Commission offices or Pastoral Council membership. Parishioners may only serve on one Commission at a time. A person who holds a leadership position within an organization in one Commission may not serve as a Commission representative from a different organization on another Commission. Family members may not serve on more than one Commission, or even on the same Commission. Commission members may not be closely related to parish staff members or other church employees. Through these restrictions on Commission membership, a broader base of parish leadership is made possible in the parish community.

**Commission Officers.** Each Commission is coordinated by a staff member appointed by the Pastor, and a Chairperson and a Secretary discerned by the respective Commission members. The Commission Chairperson prepares the agenda and co-chairs the Commission meetings with the staff person. The Secretary keeps the minutes and prepares Commission reports for the parish bulletin and for the Parish Leadership meetings. Each year, the assigned Staff Member conducts the discernment process for these Commission officers, and the results are announced at the spring Parish Leadership meeting.

**Commission Meetings.** Individual Commission meetings are usually held monthly, or as decided by the Commission. All the Commissions meet together several times a year at Parish Leadership meetings. Each Commission presents their annual goals to the Pastoral Council for approval in the fall. Each Commission gives regular updates to the Pastoral Council throughout the year through their representatives. All Commission meeting agendas and approved minutes are shared with the Pastor on a regular basis. The Commissions evaluate their annual goals at the spring Parish Leadership Meeting.

## 3: Parish Leadership Meeting Information

**Parish Leadership Meetings.** The Parish Leadership meetings are called by the Pastor, and are chaired by the Pastoral Council. Usually these meetings are held in the fall and in the spring, but other meetings may be called by the Pastoral Council as needed. The Commissions and Councils present reports at Parish Leadership meetings for the purposes of sharing information, obtaining feedback for progress on action plans, and networking with each other for the effective implementation of the strategic pastoral plan in the parish as a whole.

**Parish Leadership Agenda.** At the regular fall meeting, the Pastoral Council presents a pastoral plan for the year, and the Commissions complete the discernment of their action plans for the year. A winter meeting may also be called, so that the pastoral plan and the Commission goals may be reviewed and updated, and current parish issues or opportunities are discussed and acted upon by the assembly of parishioners. At the regular spring meeting, the Commissions and Councils establish their memberships and their officers for the coming year, review the annual pastoral plan, and evaluate the implementation of the Commissions' action plans for the year. Other agenda items include the spiritual formation of Commission members, the preparation of the annual parish calendar of events, the training of Commission and Council members for their respective duties, and special forums to address timely issues of importance that may impact the parish community. Leadership Meeting minutes are taken by a Pastoral Council member, usually the Pastoral Council secretary, and are kept in the parish archives after they are approved by the Pastoral Council.

# St. Mary Parish: Finance Council Charter

Revised on August 31, 2009

**Finance Council Mission.** The St. Mary Parish Finance Council provides oversight for parish finances in support of the pastoral activities of the parish in accord with church law and diocesan directives. Through an ongoing review of the Pastor's stewardship, the Finance Council determines whether the Pastor is faithfully fulfilling his financial responsibilities.

**Finance Council Design.** The Finance Council provides a forum for transparency and accountability for all the Pastor's financial decisions in the parish. The Finance Council is consulted by the Pastor before he approves budgets, financial reports, and any expenditure over \$20,000. By examining the parish financial records on a regular basis, the Finance Council determines whether the Pastor is compliant with diocesan financial policies, is administering the financial affairs of the parish in a responsible manner, and has duly allocated parish resources to implement the strategic plan of the parish.

**Finance Council Members.** The Finance Council consists of the Pastor and three Trustees, who are knowledgeable in business and financial matters. In consultation with the Pastoral Council, the Pastor appoints Trustees to the Finance Council. The Trustees serve three-year terms that are staggered to provide continuity of membership. Finance Council members may not be employed by the parish or be related to parish employees. They may not simultaneously serve on the Pastoral Council or any of its Commissions, or be related to anyone who is currently serving on any Parish Council or Commission.

**Finance Council Officers.** The Finance Council discerns a Chairperson and a Secretary each year. The Chairperson prepares the agenda with the Pastor, and conducts the Finance Council meetings. The Secretary keeps the minutes and prepares Finance Council reports for the parish bulletin and for the Parish Leadership meetings. The Pastor conducts the discernment process for selecting these officers, and the results are announced in the parish bulletin.

**Finance Council Meetings.** Finance Council meetings are called by the Pastor, and are conducted by the Finance Council Chairperson, on at least a quarterly basis, with a quorum of members present. The minutes of the Finance Council are kept in the parish archives for review by the diocesan auditors. In accord with church law, each member of the Finance Council has one consultative vote, but consensus is the goal for all Finance Council deliberations.

**Additional Council Meetings.** Additional Finance Council meetings may be called by the Pastor as needed, especially for the approval of any extraordinary parish expenditures. At the discretion of the Finance Council, and in the course of the execution of its duties, parish staff members and financial experts may be invited to address the Finance Council. The Trustees are also invited to attend Parish Leadership meetings as well.