

St. Edward the Confessor Catholic Church
Dana Point, California
Pastoral Council Foundation Document

Affirmed February 1, 2011

St. Edward the Confessor Catholic Church Mission Statement:

Loved by the Father, saved by the Son, empowered by the Holy Spirit,
we, the faithful of St. Edward the Confessor and San Felipe de Jesus,
joyfully embrace our community and the world.

Nourished by the sacraments and inspired by the example of Christ,
we strive to be his voice, hands and heart.

Affirmed May 2010

1. Introduction

The documents of the Second Vatican Council recommended the establishment of Pastoral Councils. The Bishop of the Diocese of Orange has directed every parish to establish a Pastoral Council. Acknowledging the wisdom and opinions of the parishioners, the Pastor of St. Edward the Confessor Catholic Church established the Pastoral Council of St. Edward the Confessor Catholic Church in September 2009.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the parish pastoral council is to assist the Pastor as an advisory body, acting in a collaborative manner, to provide advice on the faith life of the parish. The Council's role is to seek out, investigate, discern, and recommend to the Pastor suggestions involving pastoral matters.

The Council's tasks are:

- a. to develop processes to gather input/ideas from the whole parish community;
- b. to investigate and study those matters brought to its attention and shed light on them;
- c. to reflect on them thoroughly, to discern their true nature, to evaluate them; and
- d. to draw sound conclusions.

The Council presents these conclusions to the Pastor in the form of recommendations. When the Pastor is satisfied with the advice presented, he formally accepts the Council's recommendations.

The role of the Council is to assist in the pastoral planning. The Council, through consensus, sets long range goals for the faith life of the parish through the discernment process. The Council's purpose is to offer overall vision and general planning but not to focus on detail or implementation. Implementation is the responsibility of the Pastor and those he designates, not the responsibility of the Council.

3. Scope

The scope of the Council is pastoral matters. Pastoral matters can be divided into the seven elements of a Eucharist-centered parish life:

- a. Evangelization;
- b. Worship;
- c. Word;
- d. Community;
- e. Service;
- f. Stewardship; and
- g. Leadership.

The scope includes all the faith-life matters of the parish. The Pastor may consult the Council on all matters apart from faith, orthodoxy, moral principles, or laws of the universal Church.

4. Criteria for Membership

Pastoral Council members are chosen for the gifts they have that will enable the Council to accomplish its main purpose - to examine pastoral matters, to consider them thoroughly, and to propose practical recommendations to the Pastor.

Council members are baptized, practicing Catholics, who embrace the teachings of Vatican II with regard to collaboration and shared ministry. Members must be team players who are able to study and reflect with others prayerfully. They need to be able to commit to a three-year term. Council members should reflect the parish's various neighborhoods, social and professional groups, and ministries and should have a view of the whole parish and its spiritual needs.

5. Selection of Members

The Pastoral Council will consist of twelve members; each member will serve a three-year term. After the initial year of existence of the Pastoral Council, four of the positions will be open for replacement each year. Former Pastoral Council members may serve on the Pastoral Council after a three-year absence.

Registered parishioners will be invited to discern their desire to become members of the Pastoral Council by submission of an application and attendance at a limited number of discernment meetings. From those who continue to express interest the Pastor will select, with the assistance of the current Council, the new Council members.

6. Officers

The Pastor presides at every meeting of the Pastoral Council. He consults, accepts or rejects recommendations, and he develops the agenda with the Council officers.

The Pastor will select two officers from among the Council members. They are the Chairperson and Vice-chairperson. Together they assist the pastor in setting the Council agenda. Each officer will serve a one-year term.

- a. The Chairperson facilitates Council discussions, making sure that everyone speaks and is heard. The Chairperson also monitors the work of the Council between regular meetings.
- b. The Vice-Chairperson assists the Chairperson and facilitates meetings in the Chair's absence.

7. Operation

The Pastoral Council participates with the Pastor in pastoral planning. Planning may include a variety of activities, such as:

- a. clarifying the parish's mission;
- b. assessing the parish's needs;
- c. recommending goals for the parish; and
- d. monitoring the progress of the goals set for the parish.

The parish pastoral planning involves:

- a. discernment and assessment;
- b. engage the parish, including staff;
- c. decision-making by consensus;
- d. goal setting;
- e. developing objectives;
- f. oversight; and
- g. evaluation.

A pastoral plan is a "living" document which may be changed as the needs of the parish change. Three components of a pastoral plan are:

- a. the parish mission statement;
- b. goals, and
- c. objectives.

The pastoral plan typically sets forth the goals of the parish on a three to five year cycle. The objectives of the parish are set on an annual basis.

In addition, the Pastoral Council is likely to be involved in communicating with parishioners; and in working with the pastoral staff and Finance Council to determine how parish resources can best be used for the good of the parish.

8. Agenda

The Pastor develops the agenda for each meeting with the Council officers. The agenda guides the meeting. Each meeting begins with faith sharing. The minutes of the previous meeting are reviewed and the meeting concludes with a blessing prayer.

9. Relation to the Staff and Finance Council

The Pastor consults others besides the Pastoral Council. He relies upon the parish staff for their expertise and consults them regularly about the management of parish operations. The Pastor may occasionally ask parish staff members to attend Council meetings in order to put their knowledge at the service of the Pastoral Council.

Moreover, the Pastor relies on the Finance Council to develop, monitor, and report on the temporal matters of the parish – the parish budget and finances. Finance council members are chosen for their technical skill in the areas of accounting and finance.

10. Meetings

The Pastoral Council meets monthly at least eleven times per year. The Council year is from September to July. Meetings are no longer than two hours in length. Between the monthly meetings, Council members are expected to follow up the previous meeting and prepare for the next. Recommendations made to the Pastor are a result of consensus.

As needed, the Pastoral Council will help to organize and lead a parish gathering at the direction of the Pastor. After each gathering, the Council will assimilate the gathering results.

During the final Council meeting of each year, Council members adjust and modify the long-range plan based on the progress of the planning cycle.

Orientation of new members is dedicated to the call and purpose of a parish pastoral council.

11. Amendments to the Foundation Document

The Pastoral Council will review this Foundation Document annually and will update it, if needed.