

# **St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Pastoral Council By-Laws**

## **Mission Statement**

We are a Sacramental Catholic Community who come together to celebrate God's presence in our lives.

We are committed to strengthening our faith through prayer, stewardship and service.

The Council, through its Baptismal Call, is called to share its gifts to further the mission of Jesus Christ, and its constantly aware of its mission to proclaim The Good News in all its undertakings, especially in guiding the active response of the local faith community, which it serves.

## **Article I: Name**

The Council's formal name is Pastoral Council of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church (hereinafter referred to as "The Council").

## **Article II: Purpose**

- Section 1: The Council shall effect the parish policies, goals, and leadership vision under the discretion of the Pastor, and in conjunction with Diocesan directives.
- Section 2: The Council shall be a sounding-board for parishioners to express their needs or concerns, either personally or by the Parish delegate-at-large if one is designated.
- Section 3: The Council shall cooperate with the Diocese of Monterey and the Diocesan offices or agencies to carry out its work. The Council shall contribute to the formation of Diocesan goals and policies, by adhering to Diocesan directives and in response to requests from the Diocese.

## **Article III: Scope**

- Section 1: The Council shall be the policy-formulating body in all matters of the parish, including but limited to the spiritual, educational, social, and financial, except to the extent limited by faith and morals, church or civil law, or Diocesan policies or norms.
- Section 2: The Council shall present its policy proposals or revisions to the entire parish community for review and response before such policies are promulgated and become effective. This presentation may take a variety of forms, such as written survey, general meetings, announcements after Mass, etc. "Policy" does not mean general day-to-day usual and normal operations of the parish.

Section 3: In a case where a member of the parish or a member of the Council, including the pastor, interprets an action of the Council, or any of its officers or committees, as needing clarification, or it is in perceived violation of the Church policy or law, such member shall present such interpretation no later than the next Council meeting and ask for reconsideration. Pending reconsideration, the effect of the action shall be suspended.

Section 4: In a case where reconsideration has failed to resolve the matter, the person(s) asking the question may then approach the Bishop or his delegate for mediation or arbitration. The decision resulting from this process shall be final. Meanwhile, the effect of the action shall remain suspended.

#### **Article IV: Membership**

Section 1: The Council shall consist of up to ten (10) members, excluding the Pastor, who have been nominated through a formal nominating process, involving a period of discernment, prior agreement to serve, and an election.

Section 2: All Council members shall be baptized Christians who take an active part in the scheduled parish events, and shall be proactive in carrying out Council plans and directives.

Section 3: In June, an election shall be held to elect all council members.

#### **Article V: Terms of Office & Resignation**

Section 1: The term of each elected member shall be three years, with the exception of the Pastor or his delegate, who are excluded from this provision. Prior to the end of the initial three year term, and each year thereafter, approximately one-third of the council shall be replaced by holding an election as described in Article IV. This process provides for rotational continuity and permits new members to take part in the mission of the Council.

Section 2: Any council member wishing to resign must do so in writing. All resignations must be reviewed and accepted by a majority of the Council.

Section 3: Any Council member with three consecutive, unexcused absences may be asked by the Council Chairperson to resign.

Section 4: The Council shall select the replacement, if any, for a seat vacated by resignation. The replacement will complete the unexpired term.

## **Article VI: Officers**

Section 1: The Officers of the Council shall be:

- a. Chairperson
- b. Vice-chairperson
- c. Secretary

They shall be elected from among the members of the Council after the June election and shall serve for three years. All members, except for the pastor or his delegate, are eligible to serve as Council officers.

Section 2: The Council Secretary may enlist the aid of a volunteer to help with the recording of minutes and other clerical tasks. If the volunteer is not a council member, the volunteer will have neither voice, nor vote.

Section 3: The three officers listed in Section One, together with the Finance Committee Chairperson and the pastor or his delegate, form the Council's Executive Committee and may act on behalf of the whole Council in emergencies. Such actions are presented at the very next meeting of the whole Council to be ratified.

## **Article VII: Relationship of Pastor and Council**

Section 1: The Council recognizes the special role and canonical responsibilities of the pastor, who presides over the Council in such a way that he:

- a. Makes certain the scope of the Council's concerns reflect the mission of the Diocese and the larger Church.
- b. Enables the Council to build a community of faith in an atmosphere of trust.
- c. Makes certain that Council members have adequate resources and formation.
- d. Assists in the formulation of the Council's agenda.
- e. Shares in the dialogue that leads to the formulation of policy and consults with the Council in all policy matters.
- f. Executes the policies promulgated by the Council.
- g. Serves as chief administrator for the parish.

## **Article VIII: Meetings**

Section 1: Regular Council meetings shall be held monthly. Special meetings may be called by the Chairperson or Pastor.

## **Article IX: Manner of Operation**

- Section 1: The Council shall operate in the manner agreeing with Diocesan guidelines.
- Section 2: The Council shall strive to achieve consensus through a process of careful gathering of information, prayerful reflection, and attentive listening to the sharing of each individual's own wisdom.
- Section 3: The Council shall be aware of, and respect those items or situations that are confidential in nature, to be kept within the Council and not to be disseminated. Subjects to be considered as confidential usually involve personnel issues, those that would violate privacy rights of individuals, or those items directly defined confidential by the Chair or Pastor.

## **Article X: Amendments**

- Section 1: These BY-LAWS may be amended at any meeting of the Council by consensus. Thereafter, the Council must inform the parishioners and solicit their agreement. Such amendments become effective after the parishioners have ratified them by a simple majority vote.

Date of Approval by the Parish Council: January 2, 2010

Date if most recent amendment: \_\_\_\_\_