



Bylaws for St. Mary's Parish Council
Effective as of 06/30/08

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Proposed Changes for Bylaws for St. Mary's Parish
North Grafton

Article I: NAME

The name of the body shall be known as the Parish Council of St. Mary Church in North Grafton, MA; a Stewardship Parish.

Article II: PURPOSE

Section 1. GENERAL

The Parish Council shall be an apostolic people of God in St. Mary Parish in North Grafton, MA in communion with one another and with their Pastor, who meet to consider and resolve in common agreement those matters for which they are responsible and which concern the good of the church.

Section 2. SPECIFIC

The purpose of the Parish Council shall include but is not limited to the following:

1. To develop a sense of Parish community;
2. To foster Parish Renewal;
3. To afford a channel for discussion of Parish needs, priorities, and plans;
4. To assure communication and mutual assistance of Parish organizations and activities;
5. To plan, initiate, and carry out programs to involve members of the Parish Community;
6. To share responsibility for temporal affairs of the Parish so that the Priest may focus on the spiritual life of the Parish;
7. To provide leadership, direction, education, resources, and encouragement in accordance with the continuing goals of the Parish, the diocese, and the universal church;
8. To strive for a consensus vision among its members and to help the Pastor and the Parish meet the challenge of being church in the modern world.

ARTICLE III. AUTHORITY

1. The Parish Council is the primary consultative and advisory body in the Parish that assists the Pastor in the administration of the life and ministry of the Parish.
2. As a member of the Parish Community and by virtue of his office, the Pastor is automatically a member of the Council and engages in its discussions. As the bishop's representative and the Parish's spiritual leader, the Pastor bears ultimate responsibility for and authority in the Parish community.

ARTICLE IV. ORGANIZATION AND DUTIES OF OFFICERS/MEMBERS

- 1.** The membership of the Parish Council is open to all confirmed and registered parishioners in good standing.
- 2.** The Pastor, any Associate Pastors, Pastoral Associate, and/or Assistant, Deacons, and professional staff (i.e. Director of Religious Education, Director of Music), may occupy an ex-officio position on the Council.
- 3.** The Pastor presides at every meeting, consults with the Council, accepts/rejects recommendations, and develops the agenda with the officers.
- 4.** Parish Council Members (either via the Discernment Process or appointed by the Pastor) should ensure they are active participants at all Council meetings and conscientiously undertake tasks that may be required as part of the investigation stage of matters brought before the Council:
 - a)** Secretary keeps the minutes; ensures they are sent (along with the agenda and supporting documents) to each Councilor at least one week before each meeting.
 - b)** Vice-Chair assists the Chair and facilitates meetings in the Chair's absence.
 - c)** Chair facilitates Council discussions to ensure that everyone speaks and is heard, monitors the work of the Parish Council Members between regular meetings, and may preside at the meeting in the absence of the Pastor.

ARTICLE V: SELECTION OF NEW PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERS AND LENGTH OF TERMS:

1. All terms should be three-year terms, except for the initial Council. In order to create a proper rotation, four members will accept a three-year term, two members a two-year term and one member a one-year term. All appointed members would serve a one-year term.
2. No member may serve more two full 3-year terms in a ten-year period.
3. The discernment and selection process for Parish Council Members shall be held prior to the installation on Pentecost Sunday. (Refer to meetings section of the Bylaws).
4. Installation of new Parish Council Members will be held during a regularly scheduled Mass on Pentecost Sunday.
5. Nomination of new Parish Council Members:
 - a) Notice of available positions on the Parish Council and nomination forms shall be published at least five weeks prior to the installation on Pentecost Sunday and in each subsequent bulletin till one week before the installation.
 - b) Selection/election will be made only from the list of nominees who have agreed to accept the nomination.

ARTICLE VI: RESIGNATIONS, CHANGES IN POSITION, AND VACANCIES:

Section 1. RESIGNATIONS

1. An elected or appointed Parish Council Members: If a Parish Council Member is unable to complete the term, he/she may resign by submitting a written notification to the Chair, stating an effective date.
2. Committee representative: If a Parish Council Members is a committee representative, such as Finance, Religious Education or Stewardship, and is unable to complete the term assignment, he/she should; (1) inform the committee Chair who will provide a substitute representative and (2) inform the Secretary of the Council who can prepare an introduction and welcoming agenda for the replacement.

Section 2. CHANGE IN POSITION

An elected or appointed Parish Council Members can be Chair, Vice-Chair, or Secretary, or any combination, during each three-year term. Committee representatives are not eligible to hold an officer's position.

1. Officers will be elected and confirmed, annually, at the first meeting after the installation of new members.
2. If an officer is unable to complete the term as an officer he/she may resign by submitting a written notification to:
 1. The Pastor, if the officer is Chair
 2. The Chair, if the officer is Vice-Chair or Secretary
3. When an officer's seat is vacant, the Pastor will nominate a replacement from the Council by the next scheduled meeting at which time the Council will confirm the appointment.

Section 3. VACANCY OF NON-OFFICER POSITIONS

Whenever a Parish Council Member seat is vacant, the seat shall be filled for the remainder of that term from a list comprised of the previous Parish Council selection process. Completing another Councilor's term does not impact the individual's own term limits. (Refer to Article V #2).

Section VII. MEETINGS

1. All meetings of the Parish Council are open to any parishioner whose attendance is that of an observer.
2. At each meeting, any parishioner is given 15 minutes to petition the Council on any matter. That petition shall be put on the agenda of the next Parish Council meeting and then the results will be given to the petitioner as soon as possible.
3. The Council does reserve the right to hold executive (closed) sessions whenever the Council deems it is necessary.

Section VIII. AGENDA

1. The Pastor and Chair shall jointly determine the agenda.
2. The agenda will be determined before the meeting and will be distributed to Council members by the Chair prior to the scheduling meeting.
3. Any parishioner may bring a matter for deliberation to the attention of the Council through a Council member.

Section IX. ATTENDANCE

1. Any Council member absent without due reason for three consecutive meetings shall forfeit his or her membership and be notified by the Chair.
2. Any Council member who has been excused for due reason and is absent for six consecutive meetings shall forfeit his or her membership and be so notified by the Chair.
3. Any Council member who cannot attend a meeting shall notify the Chair as soon as possible.

Section X. ENACTMENT AND AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS

1. These Bylaws shall be posted online, and in a book/binder in the gathering space. Copies thereof shall be given to any parishioner requesting it.
2. Notice of adoption of these Bylaws and of any amendments thereto shall be published in the Parish bulletin.
3. These Bylaws shall be enacted by consensus of the Parish Council members present.
4. Any proposed amendment to these Bylaws shall be submitted to the Parish Council in writing. The proposed amendment may be acted upon and approved by consensus.