

ST. NICHOLAS CATHOLIC CHURCH

CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

Jesus proclaimed, “the Spirit of the Lord is upon me because He has chosen me to bring the good news to the poor.”

“He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed, and announce that the time has come when the Lord will save His people!”

We will respond, therefore, to the call of the Gospel by resolving to share our lives together. We will create an atmosphere of genuine hospitality within our community wherein all persons, both strangers and friends, can enter without fear of judgment or exclusion. In this environment, all persons will be free to discover their own dignity, to be stimulated and supported, to learn, to share faith and fellowship, and each will be encouraged to bear fruit according to personal calling and talents.

We will celebrate our communal life and purpose in our Eucharistic meals together as well as in sacraments and prayer, realizing that through this very celebration we shall be moved to journey beyond self-nurture to the point where our faith will become a light to illuminate and inspire the broader community in which we live.

Reflecting upon Christ’s life and ministry, we understand our communal ministry as one which will liberate persons from the bonds that oppress them through the proclamation of the Good News and heal wounds through the power of self-giving love. We resolve, therefore, to reach out in reconciling love to release those imprisoned by loneliness and to invite all those who feel alienated and friendless to come home. In the selfless outpouring of our gifts and talents, we will strive to make Christ truly visible in our world following His example of expressing perfect love through servanthood.

We will continually strive to be open to the movement of the Spirit in our community by engaging in ongoing discernment, being attentive to the signs of our time, and creatively responding to the call to proclaim the Good News.

ARTICLE I – NAME AND ADDRESS

The organization shall be known as the Parish Pastoral Council (“Council”) of St. Nicholas Church. The offices of the Council shall be located at 712 Little Neck Rd., Virginia Beach, VA 23452-5807.

## ARTICLE II - OBJECT

- Section 1. The object of the Council is to act in behalf of the general membership by collaborating with the Pastor in:
- A. Identifying and responding to spiritual and temporal needs of the Parish as a whole.
  - B. Developing leadership within the Parish.
  - C. Establishing Parish vision and setting pastoral priorities.
  - D. Implementing approved policy through a committee structure.
  - E. Coordinating all Parish activities.
  - F. Working with other religious and civic groups to identify and respond to the needs of the deprived, neglected, and oppressed.
- Section 2. The Council year shall be from the first June meeting through the last May meeting of the succeeding year.

## ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP

- Section 1. Eligibility for membership on the Council shall require that each member be chosen from a registered household of the Parish. Representation on the Council should be as diverse as possible. Each prospective member must be willing to accept responsibility for education in the vision and mission of the Diocese and purpose of the Parish. Council members shall have reached at least their 16th birthday by the start of the term.
- Section 2. The membership of the Council shall consist of:
- A. The Pastor, Parochial Vicar, and the Deacon.
  - B. Up to nine (9) At-Large members to be elected by the Council.
  - C. The Chairpersons of the Standing Committees. As listed in ARTICLE VIII.
  - D. The Pastoral Associate.
  - E. Members appointed by the Pastor at his sole option and in his sole discretion.

- Section 3. The elected membership shall always constitute a Council majority. The tenure for At-Large members shall be for a term of three (3) years. These members may not serve more than two (2) consecutive terms (6 years) and thereafter be ineligible for a period of one (1) year.
- Section 4. Each February the Chairperson shall request applications and resumes from the registered adult membership of the Parish to fill At-Large Council vacancies, if any, and appoint an Election Committee of three Council members who shall oversee the entire election process. The candidates' applications and resumes shall be reviewed by the Election Committee who shall then choose the candidates to be interviewed. The Election Committee shall then refer recommended candidates for election by the Council no later than the first week of May prior to the Council's regularly scheduled May meeting. The Election shall be held by written ballot or by motion. All newly elected At-Large members shall be presented to the Parish membership at all masses as schedules allow. The Chairperson and other members of Council are encouraged to attend the presentations and should also be presented to the Parish.
- Section 5. The tenure of appointed individuals shall be for a one (1) year term. These individuals may be appointed for additional one (1) year terms at the Pastor's discretion not to exceed six (6) consecutive terms, and thereafter be ineligible for appointment for a period of one (1) year.
- Section 6. Mid-term vacancies. When a vacancy occurs in a seat held by an elected or appointed member, Council as the first order of business at the next meeting shall fill the vacancy as follows:
- A. The candidate who received the next highest number of votes in the previous election shall be seated.
  - B. If no candidates are available from the previous election, candidates shall be nominated by the Council for election at the next regular meeting.
  - C. Standing Committee representatives are elected by their respective committees or subcommittees.
  - D. Appointed members are chosen by the Pastor. Anyone so elected or appointed shall serve the remaining term of office. If the remaining term is more than half a full term, it shall be considered a full term for reelection eligibility purposes.
- Section 7. If a Council member fails to attend three (3) consecutive regular Council meetings or otherwise fails to perform any duties, that position will be declared vacant by a majority vote of the Council. Such a vacancy will be filled by the procedures set forth in Article III Section 6.

Section 8. No Council member (elected or appointed) may serve in any combination of membership longer than six (6) consecutive years.

#### ARTICLE IV - OFFICERS AND DUTIES OF OFFICERS

Section 1. The Officers of the Council shall be Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson.

Section 2. The duties of the Officers shall be:

A. Chairperson:

1. Is responsible for conducting each meeting.
2. Is responsible, in coordination with the remainder of the Executive Committee, as defined in Article VIII, for the preparation and distribution of the Council meeting agenda.
3. Is responsible for informing the general Parish membership through the Parish bulletin of the time, date and location of each Council meeting and major agenda items.
4. Is responsible for furnishing a written meeting agenda to each Council member prior to the Council meeting.
5. Is an ex-officio member of all Committees, except the Election Committee.

B. Vice Chairperson:

1. Acts as Chairperson in the absence of the Chairperson.
2. Assists the Chairperson in the performance of assigned duties.

Section 3. Officers shall be elected annually and may succeed themselves for one (1) year.

Section 4. Officers shall be elected by written ballot, or by motion, by the newly constituted Council at the first regular June Meeting. They shall serve until successors are elected.

Section 5. A vacancy in any Office shall be filled by election by the Council.

#### ARTICLE V - PARISH COUNCIL SPECIAL APPOINTMENTS

Section 1. A Secretary shall be appointed by the Executive Committee at the beginning of each Council year for a one-year term. The Secretary shall not be a Council member.

- Section 2. The duties of the Secretary shall be:
- A. Ensure that the minutes of each Council meeting are available for the Executive Committee agenda meeting. After Executive Committee approval, they are made available to Council members.
  - B. Upon request, make the minutes of Council meetings available to any Parish member.
  - C. Post and make available copies of the minutes in the Church.
  - D. Maintain Council files and records at the Parish Office.

Section 3. An Historian may be appointed by the Executive Committee at the beginning of each Council year for a one-year term. The Historian may be chosen from Council membership.

- Section 4. The duties of the historian shall be:
- A. To ensure that all Parish activities and ministries are documented.
  - B. To maintain and up-to-date chronological record of all Parish functions, as stated above. This record should contain dated photographs, news articles, programs, etc.
  - C. Maintain an archive of annual records in the Parish Office.

#### ARTICLE VI - MEETINGS

- Section 1. Regular Meetings
- A. Unless otherwise ordered by the Council, or the Executive Committee acting in its behalf, the regular meetings of the Council will be held on the second Tuesday of the month.
  - B. In order to conduct business, a quorum of eight (8) members must be present.
- Section 2. Special Meetings may be held at the call of the Executive Committee or upon written request of six (6) members.
- Section 3. Meetings will be open to the general Parish membership unless Council determines the need for Closed Session. Any Parish member may submit agenda items and address Council on those items. Proposed agenda items shall be submitted to the Executive Committee prior to the Executive Committee agenda meeting.

The order of business at all Council meetings shall be as follows:

- A. Opening prayer
- B. Administrative Items (approval of minutes, Finance Council Report)
- C. Old Business
- D. New Business
- E. Closed Session (if needed)
- F. Standing Committee Report Highlights
- G. Pastor's Remarks
- H. Closing Prayer

#### ARTICLE VII - EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- Section 1. The Executive Committee shall consist of the Pastor (or in his absence, the Parochial Vicar), Chairperson, and Vice Chairperson each with equal voice and vote. One additional Council member shall participate at each meeting on a rotating basis in an advisory capacity.
- Section 2. The duties of the Executive Committee shall be to facilitate Council operation by preparing agendas for Council meetings and, when the need arises, to conduct other business in the name of the Council.
- Section 3. A quorum shall consist of two (2) members.

#### ARTICLE VIII - COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES AND DUTIES

- Section 1. The Chairperson of each Standing Committee and respective Subcommittees shall be elected by Committee membership annually by May 1.
- Section 2. The Chairperson of a Standing Committee or Subcommittee shall serve no longer than three (3) consecutive years in that office.
- Section 3. Standing Committees consist of parish members and a Chairperson elected by Committee members.
  - A. Liturgy Committee: This body is responsible for planning, implementing, and evaluating Parish prayer and worship in accordance with diocesan policies and directives. The priest's role as presider requires that a priest serve on the Liturgy Committee.

- B. Christian Formation Committee: This Committee is responsible for planning, implementing, and evaluating Parish religious education according to the needs of the Parish and the wider community in accordance with educational policies of the Diocese of Richmond.
- C. Parish Life Committee: This body is responsible for promoting Christian community in the Parish. This includes consistent and planned efforts to strengthen relationships among all segments and individuals within the Parish in order to foster a truly hospitable atmosphere. The Committee' is particularly concerned about reaching out to new members and involving them in Parish activities. It ensures that an accurate membership census is maintained.
- D. Justice and Peace Committee: This Committee assesses and responds to the needs of the deprived, disabled, neglected, and oppressed in the Parish, in the civic community, and in the world at large. It promotes legislative advocacy, peacemaking, and other efforts to change social structures. With the Christian Formation Committee, it raises parishioners' awareness regarding the social dimensions of the Gospel, and enables them to witness to their convictions by participating in service activities.
- E. Ecumenism Committee: This committee is responsible cooperating with the Diocesan Commission on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs. In particular, the committee's charge is to foster and promote ecumenical activities within the parish as well as with the larger Christian community in pursuit of full "Christian Unity" and Interreligious understanding.

Section 4. The Pastor or the Council may call on individuals or establish Ad Hoc Committees to meet special needs. In most instances, a Council member shall be named to maintain liaison.

#### ARTICLE IX - BUDGET PROCEDURES

Section 1. The budget year shall extend from July 1 to June 30.

Section 2. Each Standing Committee Chairperson is responsible for the preparation and submission of a budget for the Committee and respective Subcommittees.

Section 3. Each budget request shall:

- A. Outline Committee needs.
- B. Prioritize those needs.
- C. Fully document Committee costs and reasons for budget increases. This documentation should be complete in and of itself.

- Section 4. All Committees shall submit a fully-documented budget to the Council by March 1 of each year.
- Section 5. The Pastoral Council or a designated committee will review all submitted budgets. It will be the responsibility of those in the review process to see that:
- A. Guidelines of the Pastoral Council have been followed.
  - B. Requested budgets are within guidelines.
  - C. Committee requests are fully documented for final discussion by the full Pastoral Council.
  - D. All questionable items in Committee budgets are resolved so that each Committee budget receives a fair and complete hearing by the full Pastoral Council.
- Section 6. The Pastoral Council shall review and have general dialogue on the full budget of expenditures. This open dialogue will ensure that all have input concerning:
- A. The general mission of the Parish financially.
  - B. The establishment of Parish priorities.
  - C. Recommendations to format the expenditure budget in its final state.
- Section 7. The Pastoral Council shall submit a completed budget with all pertinent documentation to the Finance Council by March 15.

#### ARTICLE X - RELATIONSHIPS

- Section 1. The Council shall, where possible, use the process of consensus established in Called to Serve (Diocese of Richmond, latest version), seeking always to find general agreement among members on issues through common prayer and dialogue. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Council serves in an advisory capacity to the Pastor who exercises ultimate authority over Parish matters. Accordingly, no Council member shall be held personally liable for any actions or decisions taken by Council or the Pastor whether by consensus or by decision of the Pastor.

Section 2. The. Pastor

- A. As the Delegate of the Bishop, he keeps the Council informed on Diocesan policy and Parish responsibilities as part of the Diocesan Church.
- B. The Pastor is the Administrator and Chief Executive of the Parish. The Pastor, with the Council acting in a collaborative capacity, -is responsible for implementing decisions and executing Parish affairs.
- C. The Pastor advises and assists members of the Council and the Committees in their performance.
- D. The relationship between the Pastor and the Parish Council should be one of openness, trust, and mutual support. As a member of the Council, the Pastor openly shares his views.
- E. In cases where the Pastor concludes that a decision not be implemented, he must inform the Council as soon as possible stating his reasons. The matter is then reconsidered. If, after reconsideration, an agreement cannot be reached, the Pastor or the Council may present the situation to the Ordinary of the Diocese for decision.

ARTICLE XI - AMENDMENTS

The Constitution may be amended by written publication of the proposed amendment to the general Parish membership at least ten (10) days prior to the Council meeting to allow for expression of opinion. It will be voted on at the next scheduled meeting and a consensus of the Council will amend the Constitution.

ARTICLE XII - PROTOCOL

This Constitution shall be implemented in the spirit of our Parish vision statement, faith sharing, and community building. All provisions stated herein shall go into effect upon Council acceptance of this revised document; immediate compliance is expected.