

GUIDELINES FOR THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, Varroville

PARISH MISSION

To know, love and serve Jesus by sharing our gifts through our Baptismal Mission

PARISH VISION

EVANGELISATION: REACHING OUT AND SHARING OUR FAITH

Drawing on their personal relationship with Jesus and ongoing experience of the Holy Spirit all members of our community are willing and able to constructively reach out beyond the community, share their faith and invite others to encounter Jesus and the community of faith.

COMMUNITY: LOVING AND CARING FOR ONE ANOTHER

Hospitality, love and care are essential to the life and joyfulness of our community. It is a place where all are welcome and included. Through taking responsibility for the life and growth of the community, each member experiences a strong and growing sense of belonging.

DISCIPLESHIP: LEARNING AND GROWING TOGETHER IN FAITH

Through ongoing participation in small faith sharing groups and celebrating the sacraments, all members of our community are committed to growing in the knowledge, understanding and practice of their faith and so live more fully Jesus' call to discipleship and mission in our world today.

WORSHIP: CELEBRATING & PRAISING GOD'S PRESENCE

Our experience of worship, especially our Sunday Eucharist, is the high point of life in our community where we celebrate and praise God for his presence in our lives. All members, through their full and active participation, experience prayerful, nurturing and uplifting liturgies, enabling them to live out Jesus' mission in their lives.

MINISTRY / SERVICE: GIVING OF OURSELVES

Seeing their life as part of Jesus' mission, and being responsive to the needs of the society in which we live, our community enables every member to use their unique gifts and skills in ministry, giving of themselves in the service of others.

LEADERSHIP: GUIDING AND INSPIRING OTHERS TO GROW AS MISSIONARY DISCIPLES

All leaders take shared responsibility for intentionally guiding, inspiring and empowering members of the community to grow as missionary disciples.

ROLE

The Parish Pastoral Council shares, with the Parish Priest and Parish Leadership Team, the task of developing and communicating the overall vision, mission and pastoral plan for the parish community.

The Parish Pastoral Council seeks to:

- Search out and analyse in the light of faith the state of the local and parish community, their hopes, needs and concerns.
- Respond in a strategic way through setting medium and long-term parish pastoral goals in line with the parish vision and mission as we live out the overall mission of the Church.
- Shape and Refine, Communicate and Sustain the desired vision, culture and goals of the parish.
- Ensure the effective operation of the Parish Structures Model
- Evaluate and review the fruitfulness of these responses in light of gospel values, the mission of the Church and Diocesan priorities.
- Measure outcomes against plans and deliverables.

MEMBERSHIP

This team comprises of between five to seven members. In addition, there will be a representative of the Finance Council who will operate in an ex-officio capacity.

Each member of the Parish Pastoral Council will be:

- Baptised and in full communion with the Catholic Church
- Active in the life of the parish community.
- Prayerful, a good listener and team player who seeks to discern, vision and plan the future growth of the parish as lead by the Holy Spirit.
- Willing and able to take up the responsibilities of membership, especially focusing on big picture, long term thinking.

TERM OF OFFICE

The term of membership is two years, however this term can be extended based on need. To facilitate continuity, it is anticipated that approximately half of the team members will choose to continue for a second term. Anyone who serves consecutive terms will then stand down for at least one term for prayer and reflection.

NEW MEMBERS

The parish community will be asked to nominate people for the Parish Pastoral Council. Each person recommended will be invited to attend an initial discernment evening. This gathering will inform them about the vision, role, purpose and responsibilities of being on the Pastoral Council. At the conclusion of this meeting, participants will be invited to complete a nomination and discernment exercise outlining their desire to be part of this team.

Nominations will then be given to the Parish Priest, Parish Leadership Team and current members of the Pastoral Council for further discernment and finalisation of appointment.

CASUAL VACANCIES

The Pastoral Council may fill any casual vacancy through prayerful discernment and invitation.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS

In a spirit of prayerfulness each member of the Parish Pastoral Council will:

- Attend the regular bi-monthly meetings of the Council.
- Provide input to deliberations of the Council.
- Participate in research and decision making.
- Undertake activities outside of meeting times
- Develop a spirit of enquiry and the ability to listen and understand the issues affecting the people across the community.
- Provide prayerful support and encouragement for all leaders in the parish.
- Embrace opportunities for personal faith development and for gaining skills to assist with effective participation in the responsibilities of the Team.
- Ensure effective communication between the Council and its members, the various parish ministries, the Diocese and other groups and organisations.
- Represent the Parish when required (eg: other Parish meetings, Regional or Diocesan meetings and gatherings)
- Respect and support other teams working towards the Parish Vision.
- Live by the values and culture of the parish

OFFICE BEARERS

The Parish Priest plus office-bearers will form the executive of the Parish Pastoral Council. The office-bearers, chosen by the members, will be chairperson and secretary.

The role of the executive is to:

- Reflect on the effectiveness of each meeting.
- Organise the agenda for each meeting, incorporating input from Council members.
- Arrange distribution of the agenda, minutes and all relevant material one week in advance of that meeting.
- Coordinate the business of the Council between meetings.
- Arrange additional formation opportunities outside the regular meetings.

MEETINGS

The Parish Pastoral Council will normally meet 6 times per year. These meetings will include all Council members along with the Parish Priest and representatives of the Parish Leadership Team.

The meeting agenda, along with other supporting documentation, will be finalised by the executive and circulated to members one week in advance of the meeting. The minutes of the previous meeting will be circulated within two weeks of the conclusion of each meeting.

The minutes of each Council meeting will be circulated to Council members, the Parish Office and Parish Leadership Team, within two weeks of the conclusion of each meeting. The Parish Leadership Team will also circulate the minutes of their meetings to the Council and Parish Office within a week of each of their meetings.

In order to ensure that the whole Parish Leadership Group remains united and focused on the implementation of the Vision, Mission and Pastoral Plan, the full membership of both groups will meet together every six months.

SUB-COMMITTEES

Sub-committees (or short term task forces) may be set up for specific purposes for a definite duration.

DISCERNMENT AND CONSENSUS

Discernment and consensus will be used in the process of contributing towards the making of Parish Pastoral Council decisions, with each member offering input towards the final outcome. Majority voting, lobbying, competition and domination are to be avoided.

COMMUNICATION WITH THE PARISH

The Parish Pastoral Council will report to the parish regularly. It will seek the input of parishioners through various means, e.g. Parish consultations, focus meetings, conversations, bulletin notices.

REVIEW OF GUIDELINES

These Parish Pastoral Council Guidelines will be reviewed at the end of each term of the Parish Pastoral Council, or more frequently if the need arises