



The Covenant for the Parish Pastoral Council of St. Mary's Church, Rochester, New York

Draft Revisions for review 2009

This Covenant completed on February 29, 2000
Approved by Parish Pastoral Council on March 20, 2000
Ratified by the St. Mary's Faith Community in May of 2000



"...the Tabernacle of God is with humankind and God will dwell with them, and they shall be God's people, and God shall be with them, and be their God..."

Revelations 21:3

The Covenant

Through God's holy Covenant we are made into God's people. God's promise, repeated throughout Holy Scripture in these covenants, is to be with us always.

In Jesus this covenant is "made flesh". Baptized into Christ, we are commissioned to be instruments of the living Gospel of love for our brothers and sisters.

In response to God's love for us, we, the members of St. Mary's Parish Pastoral Council, strive to build an ever-stronger parish community where the word of God is proclaimed, studied and integrated into our daily lives, and where we endeavor to follow the example of Jesus by reaching out to those in the broader community. Our challenge is to have this covenant stand witness to the presence of God in our midst.

As members of the St. Mary's Parish Pastoral Council, we fully accept the Vision and Mission Statements of our Parish and the responsibility to live them fully to the best of our ability.

St. Mary's Mission Statement

St Mary's is a Roman Catholic Parish in downtown Rochester that is welcoming to all. This faith community is nourished by the Sacraments, scripture, music, and vibrant celebrations that are grounded in the spirit of Vatican II. Energized by the call to become the Body of Christ, the people of St Mary's encourage open inquiry, strive to be diverse and are committed to bringing healing, justice, and hope to each other and the broader community.

St. Mary's Vision Statement

It is the mission of the St. Mary's Parish Pastoral Council to encourage and support the efforts of St. Mary's Community to proclaim the Good News of Christ's Gospel. Our purpose is to be an advisory and policy making body united in service with the Pastoral Leader and Pastoral Staff to promote continual spiritual growth and Christian living. The Parish Pastoral Council participates in



developing goals and objectives for St. Mary's Community, as well as in reviewing its programs in light of these and Diocesan goals. To this end, we will give prayerful and thoughtful consideration to any and all matters set before us, acknowledging the wisdom of God in all things.

We have been chosen. We have been recommended by other members of this faith community and selected through a discernment process guided by the Holy Spirit. We acknowledge our unique role as representatives of the many voices of the people of the St. Mary's Community.

We Pledge:

- to be prayerful, both privately and communally
- to be pastoral in response to the parish needs
- to support diversity initiatives
- to be discerning when making decisions
- to challenge each other and the parish in spiritual growth
- to be collaborative in mission and ministry
- to be open to new ideas and other points of view
- to be supportive of each other and all groups and committees
- to participate in ongoing leadership formation
- to listen to the voices within our community
- to recognize and call forth the giftedness of all God's people
- to be prophetic in providing a broader, more challenging vision of the Church.

We Also Accept the Following Responsibilities:

- To provide a forum where all members of the St. Mary's Community can express opinions and contribute to the decisions that affect its life and mission.
- To encourage involvement and to maintain constant communication with the entire faith community of St. Mary's
- To be concerned with all the activities of St. Mary's Community connected with the mission of Church:
 - to promote active participation in the liturgical life of prayer and worship
 - to support the efforts of faith formation programs for youth and adults.
 - to encourage social ministry programs that help bring justice and charity into people's lives
 - to articulate mission of parish, monitor and assess activities within the parish and prioritize areas of ministry.
 - to collaborate on long range planning for the welfare and development of St. Mary's Community

- to encourage and empower people to more fully respect and appreciate the similarities and differences of all individuals, through diversity initiatives
- to dialogue with the Bishop, his staff, other Diocesan representatives and the civic community when needed
- to prayerfully consult and collaborate with other faith communities, including those of the Monroe Clinton Group.

The Parish Pastoral Council Guidelines And Procedures

"...walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you were called, with humility and meekness, patience and love...one body and one spirit... one Lord, one faith..."

Ephesians 4:1-6

By the power of this covenant, guidelines and procedures for the Parish Pastoral Council will be as follows:

Membership:

- All members of the St. Mary's Community 16 years of age and older will be eligible to serve; a couple can serve jointly.
- There will be no fewer than 10 and no more than 15 discerned members on council; couples count as one. If the number of Council members drops below 10, the Chairperson will fill the vacancies, for the remainder of the Council year, from those parishioners who participated in the discernment process but were not selected.
- In addition to the number stipulated above — a high school student from St. Mary's Teen Youth Group will be eligible to serve on Parish Pastoral Council for a period of one year. He or she will be selected through a discernment process with his or her peers. If no member of the Youth Group comes forward to participate on the Parish Pastoral Council, the chairperson in consultation with pastoral staff, may appoint a high school student from the parish to serve on PPC for a period of one year.
- The Pastoral leader and Pastoral Staff will be present at council Meetings.



Terms of Office:

- Council members will be selected for a three-year term, which begins at the regularly scheduled Council meeting in June.
 - A portion of Council membership will be discerned annually
- It is recommended that a formal installation of Council members take place during a weekend Liturgy.
- A member having completed a three-year term will not be eligible for Council discernment for two years.

Discernment Process:

- Council chairperson will convene a Parish Pastoral Council Selection Committee, consisting of outgoing Council members. This committee will be formulated in January and will coordinate the discernment process for new members in May or June.
- After praying for the calling forth of leadership, parishioners are asked to submit their own or a fellow parishioner's name for service on the Parish Pastoral Council.
- Candidates are contacted and asked to attend an information session on the role and responsibilities of a Council member. This session will also provide the opportunity for the candidates to pray and reflect on the call to this ministry.
- After the information session, candidates are encouraged to spend a week in individual discernment. All candidates are then invited to attend a second session. This is a gathering for prayer when the names of the willing candidates are placed in a container and the Parish Pastoral Council vacancies are filled by the drawing of names under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Leadership Discernment:

- Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Secretary will be recommended as a slate by the outgoing leadership (chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and secretary) team and the Pastor/Pastoral Administrator at the June PPC Meeting. PPC members will have an opportunity to provide input to this process by contacting the current leadership and or the pastor/Pastoral Administrator. Couples may be considered, jointly or individually, for a leadership role. However, a couple cannot hold two different Council leadership positions within the same Council year.

The Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary and Pastor/Pastoral Administrator, will meet at a time mutually agreeable between the Evening of Prayer and Reflection and the June PPC meeting to discuss and propose leadership candidates. Leadership candidates will be contacted to determine their interest prior to the June meeting. The proposed slate will be voted on by the entire PPC at the June meeting. Officers will serve a term of one year. However they are eligible for future leadership discernment. Officers will serve a term of one year. However, they are eligible for future leadership discernment.



Leadership:

- The Parish Pastoral Council Chairperson will preside at all meetings and is responsible for preparation of meeting agenda with the assistance of the Pastor/Pastoral Administrator, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary.
- The Vice-Chairperson performs duties of the Chair in the absence of the Chairperson and aids the Chairperson and assists in the preparation of meeting agendas.
- The Secretary is responsible for distribution of Council Minutes (prepared by a scribe hired to record proceedings), agendas, and other materials to Council members. The Secretary is also responsible for the following:
 - All Council correspondence
 - Posting Meeting Agendas and Minutes in Church
 - Publishing meeting dates in the bulletin
 - Posting Council Minutes and agendas on the Parish website.

Meetings:

- Meetings shall begin with a period of prayer.
- Meetings will be held on the third Monday of the month from September to June. Special meetings may be held as needed.
- Attendance at all meetings is expected of all participating members. Council members are expected to contact the Chairperson if they cannot attend a meeting. The Chairperson will assume responsibility to communicate with members incurring (#?) unexcused absences. Members showing excessive absences will be asked to discern their continued membership.
- Members of St. Mary's Community are encouraged to attend Council meetings. Comments may be offered during the "Community Forum" portion of the meeting. However to be on the Agenda, a parishioner must seek permission, from the Chairperson, prior to the date of the Agenda Meeting.
- In making decisions it is the intent of Council to follow the consensus procedure. However if after an extended discussion (i.e. the span of two scheduled meetings) on a particular question, Council is not able to reach consensus, a two-thirds majority vote of the entire Council will be used to close the dialogue.
- If, in the opinion of the Pastor/Pastoral Administrator, the teachings of the Church and/or the Diocese are being departed from, exception may be taken to the Council's direction. The Pastor/Pastoral Administrator shall explain and clarify to Council the reasons for the exception and Council shall reconsider the issue. If an agreement cannot be reached, the matter must be referred to the appropriate diocesan authority.



Annual Review:

We will review this covenant annually, updating it as needed. Any proposed revisions will be effective when consensus occurs. Subsequently, the St. Mary's faith community must consent to proposed revisions through an agreed process; e.g. parish meeting or bulletin notice.

Committees with Liaison to Parish Pastoral Council

“and there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of ministries, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of workings, but the same spirit God, who works all things...”

Corinthians 12:4-6

The following standing committees are part of the overall Council structure and look to guidance and direction from the Council.

- Buildings and Grounds
- Faith Formation
- Liturgy
- Strategic Planning
- Ministry & Tithing Fund
- Parish Life
- School Partnership
- Social Justice
- Stewardship

- Parish Pastoral Council will maintain contact with all organizations, groups and ministries within the St. Mary's faith community (i.e. Youth Group, Seniors, etc.)
- Each committee shall be responsible for formulating its charter, subject to approval of the Council. As changes occur, revised charters will be subject to Council approval
- All committees and any organization connected with Council shall report on a yearly basis on its goals, activities, and membership.
- Each standing committee shall have a Council member to serve as liaison.
- If a particular need or demand arises, Council may establish an adhoc committee to develop a response to the concern.