

# Process for the Selection and Renewal of Parish Pastoral Council Membership for St Agnes' Catholic Parish

Prepared for

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To be revised one year from acceptance

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This advice pertains to the development and renewal of membership of the Parish Pastoral Council at St Agnes' Catholic Parish and should be read in conjunction with the Parish Guidelines for Parish Pastoral Councils that have been recommended. It expands upon section 4.2 of those Guidelines, entitled "Membership: Process of Selection". Citation of relevant sections of the Parish Guidelines for the Parish Pastoral Council is included for ease of reference.

The Parish Priest is able to determine membership of the Parish Pastoral Council in a number of ways provided the process of renewal includes adequate consultation and discernment (4.2.1). The advice below presents one way of proceeding, drawing upon best practices and available literature in the field, for the assistance of St Agnes' Catholic Parish.

## Phase 1 (Week 1):

This phase is dedicated to **communicating with parishioners**, including those potential candidates identified by the Parish Priest, that there is an intent to reform or renew the Parish Pastoral Council. In this communication, the following can be included:

- **The motive for this process of change** following a time of discernment by the Parish Priest or the Parish Pastoral Council itself, whether this is an opportunity for renewal aligned with the commencement of a new Parish Priest, a new calendar or Church year, in response to a significant milestone or event in the life of the parish (e.g. an anniversary of Parish foundation), the customary renewal of an existing Parish Pastoral Council, or another reason seen as fitting.
- **An explanation of the vision** of the Parish to which the Parish Priest seeks to dedicate himself and a renewed Parish Pastoral Council, noting the renewal of the Parish Pastoral Council has the intent to ensure that this vision can be exercised in fruitful collaboration with laity as co-responsible for the mission of the Parish.
- In light of this vision, the Parish Priest **invites recommendations for membership** of the Parish Pastoral Council for the next two years or other duration (as determined and finalised in the St Agnes' Catholic Parish Guidelines for Parish Pastoral Councils 4.7.1);
- The Parish Priest should also communicate, for the sake of clarity, **the number of elected members** he is seeking for the Council, the number of *ex officio* members that will be in place, and the number of direct appointments he intends to make.
- Note that the draft Guidelines for the Parish Pastoral Council recommend a maximum of 12 members, including *ex officio* members, and with there to be more elected members than the number of those appointed and *ex officio* (4.2.3).
- In inviting recommendations to the Parish Pastoral Council, **criteria should also be shared with parishioners regarding eligibility**. Members of the renewed Parish Pastoral Council should possess at least some of the following qualities (4.5.1):
  - a) A commitment to the practice and nourishment of the Catholic faith, the Parish community and its mission;
  - b) An ability to collaborate and consult with others for the mission of the Church;

- c) Good communication and interpersonal skills, including listening;
- d) An openness to ongoing formation and learning;
- e) Demonstrated integrity and spirit of stewardship;
- f) A capacity to think strategically toward the development of Parish Pastoral Plans;
- g) A respect and commitment to the unity of the Parish and its works of mission.

It can be added that diversity in age and pastoral experience will also be considered as part of the discernment process.

- Finally, parishioners should be informed that they have **a set date by which to recommend** a parishioner, or themselves, for membership. This date should be set at least two (2) weeks out from the final communication of the intent to develop or renew the Parish Pastoral Council, providing sufficient time for parishioners to consider recommendations for membership.

## Phase 2 (Weeks 2 & 3)

This second phase is dedicated **to receiving recommendations from parishioners** for the elected positions on the Parish Pastoral Council. These recommendations should be submitted to the appropriate member of the Parish Staff, Pastoral Team or the Parish Priest himself, depending on his preference.

- **A recommendation form** should be used to submit names. This form can invite the person who is recommending membership to confirm they have the consent of the person they are recommending, to share reasons why this person would be suitable for the Parish Pastoral Council, relevant contact details, and how they could envisage this person could contribute to the vision and planning of the Parish, while calling forth any other details the Parish Priest may seek to know.
- Once names are received, the Parish Priest can **prayerfully shortlist candidates** for consideration. He may choose to do this with an intended Chairperson of the new Parish Pastoral Council or other trusted advisors, with the vision of the Parish as well as the Role and Function of the Parish Pastoral Council in hand (see Guidelines for Parish Pastoral Councils 2.1-2.5).
- The shortlisted candidates are to be informed of such by the Parish Priest and can be **invited to an information night** about the workings of the Parish Pastoral Council. The names of these shortlisted candidates can be placed on Parish noticeboards or otherwise announced to the Parish for the sake of transparency and engagement.
- **Those not shortlisted should be thanked** for their gifts and commended for having been recommended by parishioners or for recommending themselves for service. Other opportunities for Parish involvement might be highlighted in this communication.

### Phase 3 (Week 4)

This phase is dedicated to **hosting an information night** for shortlisted candidates, to provide further details on the intended workings of the Parish Pastoral Council, and to call forward a formal acceptance or decline of membership.

- Once recommendations are received and shortlisted by the Parish Priest, the select group can be invited to an information night where **further details are shared**, including the vision of the Parish, the guidelines for the Parish Pastoral Council and expectations of membership (e.g. the number and length of meetings to take place in a year).
- The Parish Priest or delegate should **provide each participant with the Guidelines for Parish Pastoral Councils**, preferably prior to the Parish information night so any questions or clarifications can be addressed at this gathering.
- This documentation and information night ensure that all those recommended and shortlisted are aware that the Parish Pastoral Council is a consultative body which provides strategic advice to the Parish Priest for the sake of its mission, that the term of appointment of members is for two years or similar (4.7.1), and that half of the renewed Parish Pastoral Council may be invited to continue for a second term for the sake of continuity (4.7.3).
- **The *ex officio* and appointed members** of the Parish Pastoral Council can also be introduced at this information night, to introduce themselves and build relationships with prospective Parish Pastoral Council members.

### Phase 4 (Week 5)

This final phase is dedicated to **finalising the membership** of the Parish Pastoral Council and moving towards establishing a schedule for meetings and respective roles within the Parish Pastoral Council, including the Executive.

- Following the information evening, **participants can be asked to formally indicate** whether they wish to accept or decline membership of the Parish Pastoral Council.
- If more accept than required, the final members can be chosen by the Parish Priest after a further period of discernment. The Parish Priest can write or speak personally to those who are not needed in this instance, reassuring them that they were among many strong candidates. Any shortfall in numbers can be filled by direct invitation or appointment by the Parish Priest.
- The final elected members, together with the *ex officio* and appointed members, can then be **announced to the Parish** and the work of the Parish Pastoral Council can commence.
- **An initial meeting** should be set by the Parish Priest or delegate for the new Parish Pastoral Council to get to know one another, to determine or present a draft schedule of meeting dates for the year, and to discern and invite the Parish Pastoral Council members to assume any roles required (e.g. the Chairperson if not appointed, Deputy Chair and Secretary of the Council).