

CONSTITUTION

Canadian Martyrs Pastoral Council

PART 1

Section I: The Parish and its Mission

1. Holy Canadian Martyrs Parish is a welcoming Christian community reaching out to all who seek God. We joyfully live, renew and share our Catholic faith through worship, prayer and service, especially to those in need, under the leadership of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate and our laity.¹

Sharing Word and sacraments with one another, our parish fosters and supports renewal in its various forms, promotes lay leadership and its exercise and strives to build up a strong faith community within the Archdiocese of Ottawa. Trusting in the care of the Mother of God, and relying on the patronage of the Canadian Martyrs, we commit ourselves to lead each other to spiritual maturity in Christ, through Faith, Hope and Love.

2. This Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) Constitution grows out of this statement, supports its aspirations and is oriented toward its fulfillment.

Section II: The Pastoral Council

3. The Parish Pastoral Council of Holy Canadian Martyrs Parish, hereafter referred to as **the Council**, is a basic leadership grouping called from the parish community to share with the pastor in the task of building up the body of Christ and tending to the welfare of the parish family.

4. The Council, as a consultative body of leaders within the boundaries of the doctrine, liturgy and laws of the Church, shares with the pastor and his team, the planning and coordinating of the overall policies and goals of the parish. The council is concerned with all aspects of parish life. It establishes policies and goals and the means to achieve these goals. It acts in liaison with the various parish committees, ministries, individual parishioners and the pastoral team (i.e., the pastor, parish priests, the pastoral assistant, and the parish administrative assistant).

¹ This statement, an expression of our identity, was developed through consultations with parishioners between 2007 and 2009, in preparing the pastoral plan that was released in June 2010. It was carried forward into the pastoral plan for 2015-2020.

Section III: The Purpose of the Council

5. What does the parish hope to achieve by means of the Council?

The Council strives to build a caring and just Christian community that discerns the spiritual and temporal needs of all members and organizes the structures required to fulfill those needs. The Council focuses on the quality of the liturgical services and education programs that are being delivered at the Church. The Council creates, updates and implements the Parish Pastoral Plan. The plan includes proclaiming the Gospel and carrying the Good News forth into the community.

Section IV: The Pastor

6. The pastor is the spiritual leader of the parish and the president of the Council (in accordance with Canon Law). His role on the Council is to keep the Council aware of the spiritual element in its decisions, to listen, to promote shared leadership and to encourage the Council towards consensus in its deliberations.

Section V: The Authority of the Council

7. The Archbishop defines the role of the Council within the diocese. Its role is consultative (Canon 536). When the pastor cannot accept a decision of the Council, he explains his reasons. In irreconcilable situations, the Archbishop can act as an arbitrator (usually through the Episcopal Vicar). As Canadian Martyrs is under the auspices of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI), the Oblate provincial superior can also act in this capacity.

Section VI: Relationship with the Finance Committee

8. The Finance committee is responsible, with the pastor, for the finances, properties, budgeting, bookkeeping, auditing and reporting in the parish. An annual financial report is submitted to the Oblate provincial treasurer. This committee meets once or twice a year with the Council to discuss budget and other financial matters affecting the Council's planning. The Finance Committee also consults with Council at the beginning of each calendar year, and once the Parish Pastoral Plan has been updated, in order to determine Council's financial needs for the year.

A member of Council attends the meetings of the Finance Committee and acts as liaison between this committee and Council. The Council and the Finance Committee also share the minutes of their meetings with each other.

PART 2

Section I: Eligibility for Membership

9. Any member of the parish in good standing is eligible for membership on the Council. A mature age (18) is advisable. Members of the pastoral team are **ex officio*** members of the Council. As such, they have a voice on Council but no vote.

Section II: Composition of the Council

10. The Council is composed of five to nine members, each elected or selected according to the procedures described in **Section IV: Selection Procedure** below.

11. Representatives of major parish organizations may be given membership on the Council. However, the Council is not meant to be a coordinating body of parish organizations. These representatives would be *ex-officio** members of Council.

12. Should one or more elected members be unable to complete a full term, the Council may identify and appoint eligible persons to temporarily serve as replacement councilors; such appointments are nullified by the appointment of new members resulting from the next Council selection procedure. Alternatively, the Council may decide not to replace these members if it decides that there are sufficient members left to effectively continue the work of Council until the next selection procedure is held.

13. Parishioners may be appointed by the Council to ensure representation of particular segments within the parish. The number of appointees shall always be fewer than the number of elected members. These appointees will be full members with a vote on Council.

Section III: Conditions of Service

14. The term of office is three years. One-third of the membership is replaced each year so that the membership includes a balance of people who have served one, two and three years. Following the first three-year term, a member may be nominated for three further one-year terms to a maximum of six consecutive years of service on Council. After a break of no less than one year, a member may stand for re-election.

15. Responsibilities of Members:

a) Members are expected to attend all Council meetings, notify the secretary should they anticipate not being able to attend a meeting, read all documentation sent by the chair or secretary in advance of the meeting, and come prepared to discuss and decide on matters requiring decisions.

* ex-officio: by virtue of one's office – in this case, members of the pastoral team or appointed representatives of major parish organizations as they are unelected members of Council.

b) Each Council member completes and signs the Parish Council Member Terms of Engagement prior to becoming a member of the Council (see Appendix).

c) A member who misses three (3) consecutive meetings of the Council, or who fails to attend five (5) or more meetings a year without proper notification to the chair, is deemed to have resigned from the Council and is no longer invited to meetings or provided with materials associated with the work of the Council.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Council may allow a member to continue on the Council where there are exceptional circumstances that have contributed to the absence, and / or where continued membership is viewed by the Council as necessary for the on-going work of the Council.

When the Council is of the opinion that a member is unable to fulfill his or her responsibilities as a Council member because of illness, non-attendance at meetings, failure to abide by the Terms of Engagement, or for other exceptional circumstances, the Council may remove this member. Such a decision requires a two-thirds majority vote of the full Council and is to be taken while in camera*.

16. Members serve without financial remuneration. The parish will reimburse any legitimate expenses incurred by a member.

Section IV: Selection Procedure

17. Each year the terms of office of certain members of the Council expire. To fill the vacancies, Council will establish a Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee will be established at least 10 weeks before the scheduled date of the Annual General Meeting. This committee will consist of three people:

- a sitting member of the Parish Pastoral Council; and
- two current or former members of Council.

18. The Nominating Committee is responsible for finding candidates to fill the vacancies. A member of the Nominating Committee will contact the candidates to outline the responsibilities of a Parish Pastoral Council member and to answer any questions. Candidates selected must consent to letting their names stand by signing a consent form. Two persons from the nominating committee will also sign the consent form.

*In camera: A meeting that is closed to all but the elected members of Council and the parish pastoral team.

19. The Nominating Committee will establish a process to seek further nominations from the parish at large. Nomination forms will be prepared and made available in the pews. The nominating ballot will include the name of the nominee, his/her signature indicating consent to let his/her name stand, and the signatures of 2 parishioners.

20. The Nominating Committee will submit a report to Council on the nomination process. Once the report has been submitted, the results of the nomination process will be communicated to the parish at large through the bulletin, announcements at mass and the parish web site.

21. If the number of nominations equals or is fewer than the number of vacant positions on Council, then the vacant positions will be filled by acclamation. If, however there are more nominations than available positions on Council, then an election will take place at a time set by Council.

Section V: Specific Roles of the Council Members

22. The following positions and roles pertain to members of the Council:

President:

- the pastor, who is an ex-officio member of Council, supports, encourages and guides the Council.

Chairperson:

- chosen by the full Council;
- identifies issues for Council's attention and sets the agenda;
- chairs the meetings, facilitating decisions by consensus, wherever possible;
- assists the pastor in leadership;
- works to gain an overview of the parish;
- works with Council on the revision and implementation of the Parish Pastoral Plan;
- reports to parishioners and to the OMI on behalf of Council; and
- represents the parish when required.

Vice-Chair:

- chosen by the full Council;
- assists the chair; and
- serves as chair in the absence of the chairperson.

Secretary:

- chosen by the full Council;

- prepares and distributes the agenda for the meetings of Council and for the Annual General Meeting;
- prepares and distributes the minutes of Council meetings and of the Annual General Meeting; and
- assists with correspondence, as necessary.

Other:

- The Council may determine other roles for its members as required.

23. Should no one on Council accept the position of chairperson, the Council may identify and appoint, from the parish at large, a suitable person to carry out the responsibilities of the chair.

24. The chair may be removed in the following circumstances:

- if at least 50% of the currently serving members of Council so request, in writing to the vice-chair or by motion at a duly convened meeting of Council;
- if a petition signed by at least 30% of registered parishioners so requests and this request is approved by Council;
- if the chair is either charged with or convicted of an indictable offense.

25. If the chair resigns or otherwise leaves office, and should 6 months or less remain in the chair's term, the vice-chair shall assume the role of chair until the end of that Council year. If more than 6 months remain in the chair's term, the vice-chair shall assume the role of chair and shall, as soon as possible, initiate a selection process by Council to replace the chair.

26. A person may cease to be a member of Council in one of the following ways, by:

- tendering his/her resignation in writing to the chairperson of Council;
- ceasing to be a parishioner; or
- not being able to fulfill the conditions of Council membership (see Section III above).

27. The term of office for the chair, vice-chair and secretary positions (i.e. the Council executive) is one year, under normal circumstances, and is renewable for two or three consecutive one-year terms when approved by the Council.

Section VI: Meetings

28. Meetings of the Council are held once each month on a date fixed by the Council membership. For a meeting to proceed, a quorum of 50%+1 is necessary and this number must include at least one member of the Council executive. Members of the pastoral team are not included in the tally for the quorum.

29. Meetings are open to all parishioners. However, for exceptional reasons, the pastor or the Council may request an in camera session, to close the meeting to all except members of Council and the pastoral team. The decision to proceed in camera is agreed upon by consensus, or by an absolute majority vote (i.e. 50% +1) of the members present.

Section VII: Parish Committees and Ministries

30. The Council maintains liaison with the different committees and ministries that have been created to facilitate worship and to promote evangelization within the parish and the wider community. These committees and ministries are accountable to Council. The Council recognizes its authority in the approval of the chairpersons of the committees. The Pastor is an ex officio member of all committees. The overall objectives and activities of these committees and ministries are reflected in the Parish Pastoral Plan. The Council ensures good communication with and among these committees and ministries, principally through visits conducted by members of Council, and works with the committees and ministries to prioritize programs, resources and availability of funds.

Section VIII: Consensus Within the Council

31. The Council's decisions are made through prayer and movement toward consensus. A consensus has been reached when everyone can live with the decision. As much as possible, every person on the Council should feel that his/her voice has been heard and that s/he has been taken seriously even though s/he may not agree with the final decision(s). The emphasis is on individual and community growth. If a formal vote is required, no major policy or proposal should proceed without a two-thirds majority of the members present at the meeting.

Section IX: Parish Annual General Meeting

32. At least one Annual General Meeting is to be held within a year (January - December).

The president of the Council and chairperson may co-chair the meeting.

The purpose of this meeting is as follows:

- to enable parishioners to meet with members of the Council and heads of parish committees to raise and discuss issues of concern;
- to seek parishioner input;
- to report on what has been accomplished during the year, including activities identified in the Parish Pastoral Plan;

- to introduce new members and to install new members of the Council if not done during mass;
- to present financial statement(s) issued by the Finance Committee;
- to approve amendments to this Constitution. Any modification must receive the approval of two-thirds majority of parishioners present at the meeting. The Constitution must then be forwarded within 30 days to the archbishop for final approval; and
- to introduce any major policy changes or projects.

Section X: Review and Amendment of the Constitution

33. This Constitution shall be reviewed annually, in advance of the Annual General Meeting (AGM). Should Council determine that the Constitution be revised, the proposed revisions shall be put to a vote at the AGM, and subsequently ratified by the archbishop.

Section XI: Approvals

Holy Canadian Martyrs Constitution, revised November 2018

Dorothy Wood Chair, PPC	Fr. Tim Coonen, OMI Pastor	Ken Forster, OMI Provincial, OMI Lacombe
Date	Date	Date

Appendix

Terms of Engagement for Parish Pastoral Council Members

Congratulations upon your appointment to the Parish Pastoral Council of Holy Canadian Martyrs. As an incoming member, you are asked to carefully review and commit to abide by the following standards of conduct before beginning your term. Presented below is an overview of the basic responsibilities and expectations of council members. Current members of the pastoral council or pastoral team will be happy to discuss further with you any questions or concerns you may have about the points addressed in these terms of engagement. Once you have completed your review, please sign this form as a record of your understanding of, and agreement to, the terms. You may submit the signed document to the parish office, or return directly to the pastor, who serves as Council president, or to the presiding Council chair.

PURPOSE

This document outlines the general responsibilities and minimum standards of conduct required of all members of Holy Canadian Martyrs Parish Pastoral Council. The terms presented herein are not intended to be exhaustive, and they stand in conjunction with all applicable legal duties and obligations associated with the operation of a charitable organization. Should uncertainty regarding your duties or role arise at any point during your service as a council member, it is expected that you will discuss your concerns with the Council chair and/or the pastor, who will provide support, guidance, and advice. The intentions underlying this document are threefold: (1) to underscore the solemn nature of the role you are undertaking; (2) to assist you through providing clarity concerning your role and responsibilities; and (3) to assure you that other members of the pastoral council – as well as those of the pastoral team – will always endeavour to assist and encourage you during your term as a council member.

COUNCIL MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

A separate document – the Constitution of the Holy Canadian Martyrs Parish Pastoral Council – describes the specific details of the role within the parish, structure, operational dynamics, and terms of service of the pastoral council. All members of the Council are expected to familiarize themselves with the constitution and consult it when appropriate. The responsibilities outlined here summarize the general duties all council members are obliged to maintain.

Holy Canadian Martyrs Parish Pastoral Council operates in accordance with obligations that arise in both canon law and the common law tradition of Canada. The duties of council members include the following:

- I.** *Observance of the episcopal authority and canonical structures of the Archdiocese of Ottawa*, in union with the Magisterium of the Church. This includes a duty of compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, articles, and policies that operate within the parish.
- II.** *Loyalty to the parish*. In all dealings as representatives of the parish – both internal and external – council members must act in the best interests of Holy Canadian Martyrs Parish. In general terms, this means acting honestly, in good faith, and with charity and goodwill. More specifically, situations in which a council member could benefit, monetarily or otherwise, must be handled under the terms of the Conflicts of Interest section (below).
- III.** *Respect for the constitutional structure and properly exercised decisions of the parish council*. Council members must be aware of and follow the constitutional guidelines, and be mindful of their speech and behaviour when acting on behalf of the Council. This includes avoiding speaking publicly on parish matters or engaging in any other activity that could be perceived as an official act or expression of parish policy when authorization has not been granted to do so.
- IV.** *Mature and professional comportment*. A duty of care is owed to the parish as a council member, meaning one must exercise a degree of skill, diligence, and professional commitment to good service in accordance with one’s abilities and experience. This entails a duty of knowledge such that you are expected to familiarize yourself with all regulations, procedures, policies, safeguards, etc. necessary for carrying out a task on behalf of the council (see also the Code of Conduct section below).
- V.** *Exercise of caution and confidentiality*. Confidential information received in the course of performing your duties as a council member must be handled with strict caution, keeping privacy in mind at all times. No confidential information is to be divulged to anyone other than persons who are authorized to receive this information by the council. The duty to maintain this information in confidence continues even after your term with the parish council has come to an end.
- VI.** *Disclosure of inappropriate behaviour and conflicts of interest*. Council members have a duty of continuing disclosure. If you become aware of a matter or situation which must be reported under civil or canon law codes, whether it be a result of your own actions or those of another council member, you must advise the council chair as soon as is reasonably possible. This includes financial improprieties, conflicts of interest, and any breach of trust. Official disclosure in writing must then be submitted to the parish by the time of the next scheduled parish council meeting following your becoming aware of the matter to be reported. Any complaint of non-compliance with

parish policies or other inappropriate behaviour will be investigated by the council chair and/or the pastor.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

OVERVIEW AND DEFINITION: In your role as a representative of the parish, you may encounter situations that present a conflict of interest due to your responsibilities and authority as a member of pastoral council. A conflict of interest exists wherever you as an individual could benefit disproportionately from others – either directly or indirectly – as a result of advantages or opportunities that you possess in your capacity as a council member. Such advantages of your position include access to confidential information or the opportunity to inappropriately influence a decision of the council that might lead to gain or benefit on your part. Members of pastoral council are therefore obligated to reveal any personal, family, or business interests in which they are currently or potentially involved whose purpose and/or activities intersect with affairs of the parish. Such outside interests could create a sense of divided loyalty that might unduly influence your judgment and impact the wisdom of council decisions.

Examples of possible conflict of interest situations with respect to the parish include:

- A) A pastoral council member has a personal or business relationship with the parish as a supplier of goods and services
- B) A pastoral council member has a personal or financial relationship with a client of the parish outside of the parish environment
- C) The parish is employing someone who is directly related to a pastoral council member or other parish staff member

All genuine conflicts of interest must be disclosed to and discussed with the council chair, and it is important to operate in such a way that even the mere perception of a conflict of interest where none actually exists be avoided wherever possible. It is also important to remember, however, that situations in which conflicts of interest (real or perceived) are unavoidable may often be mitigated by your not actively participating in a particular task, duty, debate, or decision-making process of the pastoral council (see the following section for more details). Only when the extent of an external interest is so significant that the potential for divided loyalty is present in a large number of situations should a candidate for pastoral council consider not accepting the appointment.

RESOLVING CONFLICTS OF INTEREST: The exact procedures for handling a conflict of interest will vary somewhat depending upon the specific nature of the situation. Some general actions apply to all situations, however, and should be followed as soon as a conflict of interest is identified. Pastoral council members have a duty to continually examine their situation in light of parish activities and to fully disclose to the council chair any personal, family, or business

interests that may, in the eyes of another person, influence their judgment. The council chair, in consultation with the council president, will then decide to disclose specific conflicts of interest to the involved parties, which may include the pastoral council, parish staff, the entire parish community, and/or external stakeholders. In most instances, you will be obliged as a council member to recuse yourself from participating in any discussion and voting on matters where you have, or may be perceived as having, a conflict of interest. Such recusals will be recorded in the minutes of pastoral council meetings.

BUSINESS RELATIONSHIP: Any business relationships between the parish and a member serving on pastoral council, whether acting as an individual or through a company wherein the council member is an owner or is in a position of authority, must be approved by pastoral council following a conflict of interest examination. This includes both pre-existing business relations prior to serving on the Council as well as those established while serving as a council member. Such business relationships must be described formally in writing and submitted to pastoral council for approval.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Pastoral council reaches decisions following careful consideration of the issues at hand. This process should always involve respectful and open discussion, and once consensus (or a majority in cases where a matter has been brought to a vote) has been achieved, all council members are expected to abide by and support the final decision.

In all council interactions, you are expected to behave in accordance with the following points:

- All interactions among council members should proceed with civility and respect for personal dignity.
- You and other council members are always free to express your own thoughts and opinions.
- Be mindful when presenting information to clearly distinguish your thoughts and ideas from those of a particular group, organization, or other parish members/groups, i.e., do not misrepresent the positions of others.
- You are encouraged to express additional or alternative points of view and to invite others to do so as well.
- You are expected to respect all council communications, whether verbal or electronic, through taking into consideration their content whenever relevant to the topic at hand.
- Avoid creating a sense of rivalry, limiting free and open discussion, and promoting antagonism.
- Do not disclose the specifics of differences of opinion on the pastoral council where there is no legitimate need to do so; parishioners and other interested parties may always be directed to consult the official minutes of pastoral council meetings for a summary of council proceedings.

- All council members are expected to support the final decisions of pastoral council, even if one’s personal view is a contrary or minority opinion.
- You must respect the confidentiality of information on sensitive issues, especially in personnel matters. Confidential information is understood here to mean any and all information obtained by or disclosed to you in the course of serving the parish as a Pastoral Council member, including but not limited to, parish employee salaries and benefits, donor identities and contributions, performance appraisals, confidential decisions, and in camera discussions.
- You are to refrain from speaking for the parish unless authorized to do so.

AGREEMENT AND SIGNATURE

I, _____, have read the above terms of engagement
PRINT NAME ON LINE ABOVE

for service on the Holy Canadian Martyrs Parish Pastoral Council and agree to abide by said terms in their entirety. I acknowledge that the work of the pastoral council is undertaken in strict confidence and with an understanding of privacy such that I will not use any confidential information obtained in my capacity as a council member save to perform my approved duties, nor will I disclose, discuss, divulge, or distribute (or assist any third-party) to or with any party outside the pastoral council any confidential information, unless prior authorization is obtained from pastoral council to do so. Additionally, I confirm that I meet the eligibility criteria outlined in the Constitution of the Holy Canadian Martyrs Parish Pastoral Council.

Pastoral Council Member (Print)

Pastoral Council Member (Signature)

Date

Witness (Print)

Witness (Signature)

Date