

# **THE CONSTITUTION OF THE PARISH COUNCIL OF THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY ROSARY NATIVITY OF OUR BLESSED LADY**

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## **ARTICLE I – NAME**

This organization shall be known as the Parish Council of the Church of the Holy Rosary Nativity of Our Blessed Lady.

## **ARTICLE II – PURPOSE**

As indicated by Canon 536 §2 after the Second Vatican Council,

*A Pastoral Council possesses a consultative vote only and is governed by the norms established by the diocesan bishop.*

The Parish Council shall be a consultative body from which the Pastor is encouraged to seek guidance and wisdom on non-liturgical matters. He is also encouraged to keep the Parish Council abreast of Parish issues and finances, among other matters. The Parish Council has several tasks:

- To be a Christian community and model for other organizations;
- To minister with the Pastor for the good of the parish;
- To identify the needs of the people, voice the concerns of the Parish, reflect upon, assess and recommend actions to address them;
- To assist the Pastor in addressing the Parish's needs and increase its efficiency;
- To act for the good of the Parish as a whole.

## **ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP**

The Parish Council shall have a composite membership of persons who serve ex officio because of their responsibilities in the parish; individuals Selected by the Pastor as per Article VI below; and individuals Appointed by the Pastor. They are defined as follows:

1. Ex officio members include the Pastor, the two Parish Trustees, the chairperson of the Parish Finance Council, the Committee of Black Ministry (COBM), the Rosary Altar Society (RAS), the Holy Name Society (HNS) & Deanery representatives;
2. Selected Members: Twelve members, men and women reflecting the Parish congregation, selected as per Article VI below. This number is separate from the ex officio members;
3. Appointed Members: At the Pastor's discretion, two additional members may be appointed by the Pastor, after consultation with the existing Parish Council, to reflect the makeup of the Parish, and to include any needed expertise or experience.

The COBM, HNS and RAS shall select the member from their individual Committee who will be the Parish Council representative.

All assigned parish priests are warmly welcomed to attend at their discretion; the director of religious education, the school principal, staff and ministry representatives are invited to attend when they have a report or matter of interest to share with the Parish Council. Likewise, the Parish Council may request that they attend a meeting in which a matter that is within their expertise may be discussed more fully; as per Article VIII "Meetings", voting is left to the Parish Council members.

If a Parish Council member is appointed as a Trustee under Article III Section 1, that Trustee will be considered an ex officio member, and will not be considered a "Selected" or "Appointed" member under Article III Sections 2 or 3 above. In such a case where a Council member becomes a Trustee, a new Parish Council member shall be appointed by the Pastor to fill the remainder of the term that the new Trustee occupied before being appointed Trustee.

The head of the Parish Finance Council may not serve as Trustee.

Because Trustees serve to review the Financial Report prepared and submitted by the head of the Parish Finance Council, it would be a conflict for a Trustee to also be the head of the Parish Finance Council.

In no event shall the number of “Appointed Members” exceed the number of “Selected Members”.

Each member represents the Parish as a whole, not any individual constituency. As such, they are advocating for the good of the entire Parish. Parish Council members are strongly encouraged to participate in and/or attend Parish activities when possible, such as Committees, Bible Studies, Lectures, Dinner Dances, Multicultural Festival, and Special Events.

Each member may only serve in one capacity at a time, e.g., one cannot be both a “Selected Member” and an HNS ex officio member at the same time.

## **ARTICLE IV – ELIGIBILITY FOR OFFICE**

Membership in the Parish Council shall be open to Catholics who participate in the prayer life of this parish, who are registered with Holy Rosary Nativity, and who are 16 years of age or older.

Members are expected to actively participate in the Parish Council discussions, in directing our prayers, in hospitality, and in committees. Members are strongly encouraged to serve on the Executive Board at least once.

## **ARTICLE V – TERM OF OFFICE**

The terms of the members of the Parish Council are as follows:

- (a) “Ex officio members” serve for as long as they are in their positions (see Article III);
- (b) “Selected members” serve a three-year term; and
- (c) “Appointed members” serve a one-year renewable term for a maximum of five consecutive times from the time they are initially appointed.

After a Selected Member’s three-year term expires, there shall not be an automatic renewal. He/She may run for a new three-year term. After two

consecutive terms, a Member cannot serve on the Council for at least one year, or unless that person shall become an Ex Officio Member or Appointed Member.

## **ARTICLE VI – SELECTION PROCESS AND VACANCIES**

A member becomes a Parish Council Member in one of three ways: (a) by virtue of being an Ex Officio member; (b) by selection; or (c) by appointment. This section addresses only (b), the selection process for “Selected Members” as defined in Art. V, (b) above.

Each year, the term of one-third of the “Selected Members” shall expire. The selection process for new Parish Council Selected Members shall be as follows:

- There shall be a newly formed Parish Council Selection Committee every year. Such Committee shall be selected no later than the March Parish Council meeting. The Chairperson shall ask active members of the Parish Council to volunteer to serve on this ad hoc Committee. Members may join the Committee every year that they are sitting members of the Parish Council, including their first year.
- On two Sundays in April, bulletin announcements invite nominations for the open Parish Council seats. Anyone may nominate him/herself, or any other parish member 16 years or older;
- A “summary of Parish Council member duties” sheet is posted in the church (both front and back) and summarized in the bulletin. The purpose of this summary sheet is to permit the parish congregation to know when the Parish Council meets and to understand the role and consultative nature of the Council;
- The Selection Committee will receive the nominations, and will check to see that all nominees are acceptable to the Pastor;
- All nominees are contacted, complimented, and asked if they’re willing and able to serve on the Parish Council, if chosen. The “Selection Process” is explained to them;
- All nominees, and those who will continue on the Parish Council, are

invited to attend a specified Mass in May. After the homily, which makes reference to what is occurring, the names of all nominees are placed in a vessel of some kind, a prayer is said asking God's guidance on this choice, and the names are drawn, chosen by lot, as the new members of the Parish Council;

- Those selected are honored, and those not selected are thanked for offering themselves for service;
- The process is concluded by thanking the outgoing members, and by calling the new and current members to the altar, and blessing the Council for their work;
- Orientation shall be held at 7:00 on the same evening as the Parish Council's June meeting. All new members are **required to attend the full orientation**. Orientation will be provided by the Executive Board;
- Following the orientation, the new members are invited to observe as a **non-voting** guest at the June meeting. Their first official meeting begins in September. Attendance at the full June Council meeting is optional though encouraged.

If another opening has occurred, someone shall be appointed by the Pastor for the balance of that term of office, even if only for less than one year. An opening may occur if, for example, a member resigns after one year; if a member is unable to serve; if a member becomes incapacitated; if a member cannot attend the meetings; etc. These examples are not meant to be an exhaustive list of triggering events.

Such an appointment shall be by invitation of the Pastor, and he may seek the input of parishioners whether they are on the Parish Council or not. The new Member's term shall expire when the outgoing Member's term would have expired.

A list of current Parish Council Members and Executive Board members shall be posted in the Church and in our Church website and Facebook pages.

## **ARTICLE VII – EXECUTIVE BOARD AND THEIR DUTIES; VACANCIES ON THE EXECUTIVE BOARD**

The Parish Council shall have an Executive Board consisting of four officers: Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Recording Secretary, and Corresponding Secretary. These officers shall be elected by the current Parish Council members present at the June meeting. The newly selected members do not vote at this meeting as their term has not yet begun.

Officers serve a one-year term, renewable once for that office. The Parish Council's Executive Board shall plan the Agenda with the Pastor. This may be done electronically if all sitting Executive Board members agree.

The duties of each officer shall include the following:

- The Chairperson facilitates and maintains order at meetings;
- The Vice Chairperson assists the Chairperson as needed, and performs the duties of the chairperson in his/her absence;
- The Recording Secretary keeps the minutes over all the meetings and shares the draft of the minutes with the Executive Board. After the Board approves the draft, the Draft is then distributed to the Parish Council before the following meeting for their review. At the next meeting, the Draft will be reviewed, and amended if necessary. Following a Motion to Approve the minutes and a "Seconding" of the Motion to Approve the Minutes, Members vote to approve. The minutes shall be posted in the Church and Rectory; and
- The Corresponding Secretary calls for volunteers for the Opening and Closing Prayers and Hospitality persons for each meeting. If no one volunteers for the prayers and hospitality, the Corresponding Secretary shall assign the individuals to perform those functions. He/She shall draft any correspondence to be mailed; once the draft is approved by the Pastor, s/he mails the correspondence. The Corresponding Secretary shall have no less than five copies made of the minutes; the copies shall be made available at the meetings.

A Parish Council Member may serve on the Executive Board if he or she has been on the Parish Council at least one year prior to the beginning of the new year for which the elections are being held. A newly selected Member, however, may be elected to be on the Executive Board if they have previously served on the Parish Council, as they are already familiar with the responsibilities of the Parish Council and the Executive Board.

Ex officio members may also serve on the Executive Board.

**Vacancies on the Executive Board:** In the event of a vacancy of any of the offices of the Executive Board (i.e., Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Recording Secretary and Corresponding Secretary), the position shall be filled as follows:

In the event the position of Chairperson becomes vacant, the Vice Chair shall become the Chairperson.

For the remaining three positions (Vice Chair, Recording Sec. or Corresponding Sec.), the Parish Council shall follow the decision pursuant to the vote held in the June meeting.

Specifically, the process shall be as follows:

In June, when the Parish Council votes for the Executive Board members, the person receiving the second highest number of votes shall be considered the "Alternate" for that position.

In the event of a tie for second place, or if someone declines, and also at that June meeting, the Parish Council shall take a short vote to determine who shall be considered the "Alternate". The Recording Secretary shall maintain a copy of the votes at the Holy Rosary rectory.

## **ARTICLE VIII – MEETINGS**

The Council shall meet every other month from September through May, with a final meeting in June. Meetings will be held at Holy Rosary on the first Wednesday of each month, unless otherwise indicated in advance.

Members are expected to attend all meetings. If a member cannot attend a meeting, the member shall contact the Pastor or a member of the Executive Board or the rectory and leave word that he/she cannot attend, and ask to be excused. If a member has three unexcused absences within a one-year period, the Member may be removed from the Parish Council.

This decision is made by the Pastor.

Council meetings are open to all Parishioners. Only Parish Council members, however, may vote.

Those who wish to speak at a meeting must first be recognized by the Chairperson. If a Parishioner wishes to raise an issue, he/she is strongly encouraged to previously submit a statement in writing, whether electronically or as a hard copy, particularly if he/she has reflected upon or researched the matter, and to share those reflections and research with the Executive Board. Every attempt should be made to ensure that their statement is received by a member of the Executive Board or Pastor at least one week before the scheduled meeting.

If the Chair recognizes a Parishioner who brings up an issue spontaneously during a meeting, the Council may ask the parishioner to investigate further for the Council to be able to discuss it more fully at a future meeting. The goal is to have all relevant information presented to enable a well-thought out discussion while simultaneously encouraging participation by Parishioners.

Attendance may be electronic. See “remote attendance” under Art. IX.

## **ARTICLE IX – QUORUM AND VOTING AT MEETINGS**

*Quorum:* A Quorum is required for a Parish Council meeting to be held. A quorum consists of “one half plus one”\* of the full, current Parish Council.

\*“One half (rounded up) plus one”: where  $\frac{1}{2}$  is not a whole number, we shall round up to the next whole number. E.g., if there are 17 total members on the Parish Council, half-plus-one equals 10 (half of 17 = 8.5 or rounded up to 9, plus one = 10 members are needed to constitute a quorum).

*Voting Process:* To vote on a matter, a Motion stating what shall be voted upon shall be made and Seconded. Discussion shall follow, after which a Vote shall be taken and recorded in the minutes. Voting in all cases shall be by Majority Vote during Parish Council meetings. For a Vote to Amend the Constitution, see Article IX “Other Votes”, below.

No Proxy Voting is permitted. All members, including Ex Officio and Appointed members, may vote. The Pastor is not a voting member because the role of the Council is to advise the Pastor. Only members who are present may vote. When voting is required, all members have a right to vote, although they may abstain from voting.

“Remote Attendance” Under exigent circumstances and with the approval of the Executive Board, a member may request that they attend a meeting via telephone conference, Skype or other electronic means that may be developed in the future. However, remote attendance should only be permitted sparingly, and subject to these limitations:

- Remote attendance is only open to Council members;
- Remote attendance is limited to only one member per meeting;
- Each council member may only request one such attendance per year;
- Request must be made as far in advance as possible, and at least 48 hours in advance of a meeting;
- The member must attend the entire meeting from opening prayer to closing prayer, and an Executive Board member must periodically (every 15 minutes or more often) ask the remote attendee if they are still present.
- Any other conditions that the Council and Pastor may deem necessary for an efficient meeting.

Failure to follow this protocol will result in an “unexcused absence” on the part of the remote attendee.

The Council may vote to add additional limitations or protocols the Council determines are necessary to fulfill the needs of the Parish, the Parish Council, and the individual Council members.

**VOTE TO RECOMMEND; OTHER VOTES:** “Vote to Recommend” and “Other Votes”: Whenever a vote is held, the Chairperson and the subsequent minutes shall indicate if the vote is a *VOTE TO RECOMMEND TO THE PASTOR*, or if it is “Other Vote” (Binding Majority Vote).

(a) *Vote to Recommend*: The Parish Council is a consultative body. As such, the Parish Council will often discuss matters to assist the Pastor by recommending actions. When a vote is taken, the result is

a “*Vote to Recommend to the Pastor*”. The final decision rests with the Pastor.

(b) *Other Votes*: On other matters, the vote shall be binding for the following:

- (1) accepting the minutes;
- (2) matters that the Pastor has requested that the Parish Council decide;
- (3) election of the Executive Board; and
- (4) any matters that are officially added in the future by way of Constitutional amendment.

(c) Two-thirds [aka *SUPERMAJORITY*] VOTE: On critical matters such as amending the

Parish Council Constitution or By-Laws (if any), a vote of 2/3 of the TOTAL number of Parish Council Members (ex officio + Selected + Appointed Members) shall be required.

## **ARTICLE X – COMMITTEES & ACTIVITIES**

The Parish has various committees, not all of which are considered Parish Council Committees.

The Committees shall provide informative reports to the Parish Council on an as-needed basis, but no less than twice a year. Additional reports are welcomed. The report may be submitted electronically to a member of the Executive Board or to the Pastor, and the report will be read at a Parish Council meeting and included in the minutes thereof.

The following is a list of current committees and activities at Holy Rosary / Nativity of Our Blessed Lady. Though not an exhaustive list, they include the following:

- Parish Council Selection Committee (see Art. VI above).
- Committee of Black Ministry – The Committee of Black Ministry (COBM) is an offshoot of the Office of Black Ministry in the Archdiocese of New York. It strives to promote the presence and aspirations of Black Catholics with an emphasis on evangelization.

Members of the COBM come from diverse background, promote intercultural relations, and seek spiritual growth.

- Building and Grounds Committee – oversees areas of facilities management, landscaping, gardening and improvements as needed.
- RCIA – Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults - program provides instructions for adults who are interested in becoming a Catholic and adult baptized Catholics who would like to complete their Christian Initiation by being admitted to Holy Communion and by receiving Confirmation.
- CCD – Confraternity of Christian Doctrine is the religious education program for children who attend non-Catholic elementary and junior high schools.
- Right to Life and Evangelization Committee – oversees areas of parish Census and evangelization teams.
- Holy Name Society - The Holy Name Society is a spiritual confraternity within the Catholic Church for men, whose mission is to promote devotion and reverence to the Holy Name of Jesus and help members grow in holiness through Faith and works under the direction of our Pastor, the Holy Name Society serves as usher captains at all masses and special events; assists other ministries; promotes spirituality and fellowship among members; coordinates blood drives; delivers food for the needy; prays for and assists parishioners in need; coordinates fundraising events for the benefit of the parish; volunteers to maintain or improve the physical conditions of the parish; responds to requests from the Pastor.
- Finance Council – Assists the Pastor relative to financial matters pertaining to Holy Rosary to include a review of the Annual Report and other financial interests as they arise affecting the parish. Members of the Finance Council include the Pastor as Chairman, and select parishioners having finance expertise.
- Liturgy / Decorating Committee – Decorates our beloved Church and Fr. Winters Hall, particularly during Advent, Christmas, Holy Week, Easter and during Autumn. We seek to reflect and reinforce our Faith through the Arts. By surrounding Parishioners with uplifting sights, we aspire to contribute to our prayerfulness as we engage all our senses in the essence of prayer.
- Parish Life Committee – Primary purpose is to plan special parish events.
- Media & Publicity – Oversees the Parish's website, Facebook, and other electronic formats as they are developed.

- P.O.T.S. – Part of the Solution. Provides meals for POTS, a local organization that feeds the poor.
- Religious Education and Spiritual Development Committee - oversees areas of Adult Religious Education, Preparation for Baptism, Preparation for Marriage, Parish Devotions and Missions, RCIA, Young Adults, Youth Religious Education Program (formally known as CCD), Youth Sacramental Program, Youth Ministry.
- Rosary Altar Society - The primary purpose of the Rosary Altar Society is to praise and honor the Blessed Virgin Mary. Membership is open to all women of the parish. The only requirement is to say the 20 decades of the Rosary each week; however, members are encouraged to attend the monthly Mass and meeting, to participate in some of the RAS activities such as laundering altar linens, and sewing baptismal robes, and to take part in special projects. The RAS also supports general church projects and functions whenever possible.
- Lectors - Proclaim the readings from Sacred Scripture, with the exception of the Gospel. He or she may also announce the intentions for the Universal Prayer and, in the absence of a psalmist, recite the Psalm between the readings.
- Senior Club – Seniors meet for card games, crafts, and fellowship. Some of the members make rosary beads for the nursing home residents. There are also occasional trips to casinos and theaters.
- Nursing Home Ministries - Attends to the spiritual needs of Catholics in care facilities located within the parish boundaries.
- Choirs – Adult and Children's Choirs; possibility of a Youth Choir.
- Christmas Giving Tree – Accepts and distributes Christmas gifts to local children in need.
- Dinner Dance Committee – Plans and organizes the Dinner Dances.
- Parish Volunteer Groups.

Subcommittees and Ad Hoc committees can be created as necessary after consultation with the Pastor. The Parish Council may also on its own create such committees as needed, in which case the Parish Council shall specify that committee's goals and term (if it will be an ad hoc or a permanent subcommittee). Such committees shall state their purpose, and shall indicate if they are ongoing or ad hoc.

Members from the parish, particularly if they are on the Parish Council, are encouraged to participate in the various committees and subcommittees

and to attend major Parish events.

## **ARTICLE XI – LIAISON WITH DEANERY**

The Pastor shall select two members to serve on the Deanery and act as liaison for the Parish, reporting on Deanery meetings and activities. Each term shall be for three years, renewable twice for a total of nine consecutive years.

## **ARTICLE XII – ADOPTION / AMENDMENTS**

This constitution becomes effective when approved by two-thirds of the total number of Parish Council members, after discussion at one meeting and after a vote at the next meeting.

The Constitution and any ensuring By-Laws if any can be amended by following the same process.

The Parish Council Constitution may be reviewed every five years or sooner if necessary. If no major changes are voted upon, the current Constitution will remain in effect.

In the event that the Parish name changes, the Constitution shall be amended to reflect such change. The Parish Council Constitution remains in effect until and unless Constitutional Amendments or a new Constitution are properly voted upon, or if a new Constitution is voted upon. There shall be no lapses.

Each new member of this council shall be given a copy of this Constitution.

## **ARTICLE XIII – MISCELLANEOUS**

Annual Commissioning of the Parish Council Members during a Mass in September: Once a year, the Parish Council shall participate in the Commissioning of the Parish Council Members, which serves as a blessing

and also serves to increase visibility of the Parish Council. Visibility helps Parishioners identify Parish Council members to whom they may approach regarding issues pertaining to the Parish. However, in no event shall the Parish Council member represent to such Parishioner that any particular action will be taken, other than that the matter will be brought to the attention of the Executive Board. The agenda and minutes of meetings shall be posted on Church bulletin boards. The names of all council members shall be reported in Parish bulletin.

In the event that a new Pastor or Administrator is appointed, the Executive Board may meet more frequently to better advise the new Pastor or Administrator.

**In Effect:** This Constitution shall remain in effect if our Parish's name change becomes necessary. In such event, the Constitution shall be revised accordingly soon after any such name change.

Adopted: January 9, 2019  
Amended: January 8, 2020