

# CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OF THE SANTA ROSA DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL

## PREAMBLE

The mission of the Church is the mission of Christ. This mission is to bring all into union with God the Father by the power of the Spirit in Jesus Christ our Lord. All members of the People of God are called to participate in this mission in their own proper way and so fulfill their sharing in Christ as priest, prophet, and king.

To this end the People of God gathered together in the Diocese of Santa Rosa, striving to fulfill the mission of the Church, has established a Diocesan Pastoral Council to assist in the pastoral activity of the Church. This Council, which is representative of all the People of God, clergy, laity, and those in consecrated life, serves as a consultative body to the Diocesan Bishop. In union with and under the direction of the Bishop, it investigates, considers and proposes practical conclusions regarding the pastoral work of the Diocese.

This is not simply a practical way for the Diocesan Bishop to administer the Diocese; the formation of this Council responds to the vision of the Church set forth in the Second Vatican Council, which taught that "it is highly desirable that in each diocese a pastoral council be established over which the Diocesan Bishop himself will preside and in which specially chosen clergy, religious, and lay people will participate. The function of this council will be to investigate and weigh matters which bear on pastoral activity, and to formulate practical conclusions regarding them." (*Christus Dominus*, 27). Pope Paul VI further explained, "it is the function of the pastoral council to investigate everything pertaining to pastoral activities, to weigh them carefully and to set forth practical conclusions concerning them so as to promote conformity of the life and actions of the People of God with the Gospel." (*Ecclesiae Sanctae*, 1.16.1).

The Diocesan Pastoral Council reflects the whole Church and, as such, must include the laity, who do not merely have a "right" to serve the Church but are "obliged" to do so either as individuals or as members of associations. Echoing paragraph 33 of the Second Vatican Council's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, the Code of Canon Law states that "the Christian Faithful are deputed by God to the apostolate through their baptism and confirmation" (*canon 225 n.1*). This is repeated in the 1994 document, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, which adds, "lay activity in ecclesial communities is so necessary that, for the most part, the apostolate of the pastors cannot be fully effective without it" (cf. par. 900).

As a pilgrim people, the Church of the Diocese of Santa Rosa is journeying with our Lord to the fullness of the Kingdom of God when all will be brought to perfection in Christ. In union with and under the direction of the Bishop the Council seeks to read the "signs of the times" and so illuminate how best to appropriate, live out, and proclaim the Gospel.

This entire work, guided by the Holy Spirit's activity and influence, is committed to the Lord under the patronage of Saint Rose of Lima, the patroness of the Diocese.

## MISSION STATEMENT

This assembly of the People of God, consisting of Clergy, Religious and Lay Persons is called the Diocesan Pastoral Council of the Diocese of Santa Rosa (DPC). Recognizing we are a Pilgrim Church on a journey of holiness, through the DPC the Catholic Community is more fully and directly able to assist the Bishop in promoting the spiritual and temporal life of the People of God of the Diocese of Santa Rosa. It serves as a consultative and advisory body on pastoral matters to the Bishop, by raising and addressing concerns that should be considered and dealt with for the good of the entire Diocese. It recommends priorities and goals, and evaluates their success. In this way it helps shape the direction of the Diocese, and participates in the decision making process. It directs its efforts to fulfilling our vocation as Catholics to carry out the Gospel Message in our own lives and in the greater community. Through the work of the Diocesan Pastoral Council the People of God strive to foster holiness of life, facilitate evangelization, serve the needs of the most helpless, and build up the entire Church community. The Diocesan Pastoral Council, consisting of

the five Deanery Assemblies and the Executive Board, will function in accord with the spirit and intent of its Preamble and Mission Statement.

Furthermore, it will operate in accordance with Canon Law (#511-514), with relevant, constitutions, decrees and declarations of Vatican II, and with the pronouncements of Popes Paul VI, John XXIII, John Paul II and Benedict XVI.

### **FUNCTIONS**

The Functions of the Diocesan Pastoral Council will be the following:

1. Act as an authentic representative voice of the People of God, Laity, Religious and Clergy to their Bishop by honestly and forthrightly voicing their concerns, ideas and insights as enlightened by prayer, discernment and reflection.
2. Provide an open, honest and representative forum for bringing about full and free discussion of pastoral matters so that true consensus among the People of God may be achieved.
3. Serve as an effective two-way connection between all parties - Bishop, Clergy, Religious and Laity.
4. Serve as a consultative/advisory body to the Bishop, the Executive Board and the Laity, or other diocesan committees, especially in furthering the work of evangelization.
5. Provide an appropriate model for shared decision making.
6. Accept responsibility to support the Bishop in a spirit of collegiality for the mission of the Church in this Diocese.
7. Address publicly, with the Bishop, contemporary religious, social and economic issues with ethical implications.
8. Develop plans and programs to assist the Laity in their task of making Christ's message manifest in their communities, workplaces and in society at large.
9. Build confidence and trust in the Church by assuring that mutual concerns are identified and addressed.

### **BYLAWS OF THE DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL CONSTITUTION**

*As provided by Canon Law, Title III, Chapter V, Can. 514 B1, the Diocesan Bishop convenes and presides over the Diocesan Pastoral Council. He alone has the right to make public matters dealt with in the Council.*

### **THE PARISH**

**A. Organization of the Parishes in the Diocesan Pastoral Council.** Each Parish is an affiliate of its regional Diocesan Pastoral Council Deanery Assembly, of which there are five, paralleling the five Deaneries of the Priests' Council: Humboldt/Del Norte, Mendocino/Lake, Napa, Sonoma North and Sonoma South.

**B. Parish Representatives to their Diocesan Pastoral Council Deanery Assembly** will be determined as follows:

1. Practicing Catholics, active in their parishes or other ministries are deemed qualified to serve.
2. Each parish will devise an election/selection process to ensure that every qualified parishioner has the opportunity to participate in the selection process.
3. Qualifications for Parish Representatives include:
  - 3.1. Catholics of strong faith, good morals, and prudence.
  - 3.2. Catholics who have a strong love of God and the Catholic Church, and who cherish the Church's teachings.
  - 3.3. Catholics actively involved in the life of the Church, especially parish life.
  - 3.4. Catholics willing to work with others, to seek common ground, and to be direct and concise

in dialogue; able to listen; able to represent the opinions of others, to assess issues and proposals in terms of their implications for parish, diocesan and community life; able to judge matters in the light of the Gospels and the Catholic faith.

3.5. Catholics able and willing to commit to active participation in the work of the DPC.

4. Catholics meeting these criteria may self-nominate, or be nominated by fellow parishioners.

### **C. Selection & Terms:**

1. Each parish will select two or three Representatives to serve as its Representatives to its Deanery Assembly, according to the following guidelines: parishes of 1500 families or more (based on the annual Mass count) will elect/select three Representatives; parishes of fewer than 1500 families will elect/select two Representatives.

2. Three-year terms will be staggered among (between) the Representatives.

3. Terms will begin in June of each year.

4. A Representative may serve no more than two consecutive terms.

5. Persons of special expertise may be invited to participate *ex officio* in the work of the Deanery Assembly.

### **D. The DPC will be organized as follows:**

1. Each duly constituted Parish organization (*e.g.*, Council, Assembly, “Town Hall,” “Forum”) will meet periodically to determine the issues, concerns and vision of the Parish, pertaining to the Mission of the Diocesan Pastoral Council. The Parish organization’s designee will communicate these to the Parish Representatives who will present them to their Deanery Assembly.

2. Parish Representatives will serve as two-way correspondents between the DPC Diocesan Pastoral Council and their parishes. They will inform their parish communities of Deanery Assembly and Executive Board proceedings through written reports in parish bulletins and by reporting at parish meetings.

2.1. Parish Representatives will be available formally and informally to their Pastors and fellow Parishioners. Representatives’ names and means of contacting them will be made available in parish bulletins and by other appropriate means.

2.2. Any parishioner, parish group, or ministry may propose agenda to their Deanery Assembly, by submitting their request in writing to their Parish Representative. Such requests will receive a response in writing in timely fashion from an appropriate Deanery member.

2.3. Representatives will keep themselves apprised of their Parish’s activities.

## **THE DEANERY ASSEMBLY**

### **A. Functions of the Deanery Assembly:**

1. Provide a forum for concerns and aspirations of the “people in the pews.”

2. Enable Parishes of their Deanery to support each other, by promoting an exchange of ideas and concerns for the greater good of their Parishes and the Diocese.

3. Provide two-way correspondence between Laity and their Bishop, and between him and them.

4. Serve as a resource for the Diocese.

### **B. Membership:** Selection DPC membership will consist of five (5) categories of Representatives.

1. Parish organization Representatives will be determined as provided above: **The Parish**, Sects. **A** and **B**.

2. One Clergy selected by the Members of the corresponding Priests’ Deanery.

3. Two Religious, one male, one female, selected by their respective Orders.

4. One Representative from each diocesan-recognized minority organization within the Deanery, selected by his/her organization.

5. One Youth or Young Adult residing within the Deanery, selected by the Diocesan Youth and Young Adult Ministry.

### **C. Terms.**

1. Deanery Assembly Representatives will serve three-year terms.
2. Terms of each Parish's Representatives will be staggered.
3. Members may serve no more than two consecutive terms.
4. Terms will begin in June of each year.

**D. Voting:** Deanery Representatives, as designated above in Section **B**, are voting members of the Deanery Assembly.

**E. Officers.** Each Deanery Assembly will elect the following Officers to serve a one-year term, beginning in June. No Officer may serve more than two consecutive terms. These Officers will be known as the Deanery Assembly's Executive Committee. Terms will begin in June of each year.

1. Chair
2. Vice Chair
3. Secretary
4. Other Officers deemed necessary by a majority of Deanery Representatives.
5. The immediate Past-Chair, *ex officio*.

**F. Meetings:**

1. Each Deanery Assembly will determine the time and place of its meetings.
2. In June of each year, each Deanery Assembly will publish throughout the Diocese the annual calendar of its regular meetings.
3. Each Deanery Assembly will determine the rules by which it will conduct its meetings.
4. Regular Deanery meetings will be open.

**G. Agenda:** Any Deanery Assembly Representative may propose an item for the Agenda. Deanery Assembly Representatives present will determine Agenda.

**H. Minutes.** Within ten (10) days, the Secretary will circulate Minutes of Meetings to the Deanery Assembly Representatives present, for their review and comment. They will respond within seven (7) days to the Secretary. Upon final editing, the Minutes, within seven (7) days, will be deemed approved, and the Secretary will disseminate them to all Diocesan Pastoral Council Representatives and the Executive Board whose Executive Secretary will disseminate them by E-mail and post them on the Diocesan Pastoral Council Website. The Minutes will be formally approved at the next regular Deanery Assembly meeting.

## DEANERY ASSEMBLY PLENARY SESSIONS

**A. The Sessions:** At least once each year the Representatives of the five Deanery Assemblies will meet in Plenary Session.

**B. Organization.** The Diocesan Pastoral Council Executive Board will organize the time, place and agenda of the Plenary Sessions, over which the Chair of the Executive Board will preside.

**1. Agenda:** The agenda will be determined by the Executive Board upon the advice of the Bishop and the Deanery Assemblies.

- 1.1. At the Bishop's discretion, the Agenda will include a Report by the Bishop on the state of the Diocese.
- 1.2. At the discretion of the Executive Board, the Agenda will include a Report by the Chair on the state of the Diocesan Pastoral Council.
- 1.3. Deaneries may propose to the Executive Board items for the Agenda.
2. Plenary Sessions will be open. To this end, the DPC Executive Board will assure timely announcement of the time, place and Agenda of the Sessions.

**C. Report:** Within ten days of the Plenary Session, the Executive Board will disseminate a Report on the Session to Deanery Representatives, and throughout the Diocese.

## **THE EXECUTIVE BOARD**

**A. Functions.** The Executive Board:

1. Assures the implementation of the Mission and Functions of the Diocesan Pastoral Council among the Deanery Assemblies.
2. Facilitates communications between the Bishop and the Diocesan Pastoral Council, among Parishioners, Parishes and Deanery Assemblies, and between the Deanery Assemblies and the Executive Board.
3. Cooperates with the Priests' Council in projects of mutual concern.
4. Disseminates throughout the Diocese the activities of the Diocesan Pastoral Council.

**B. Membership:**

1. Two Representatives elected from each of the five Deanery Assemblies.
2. Two clergy selected by the Priests' Council.
3. Two Religious, one male, one female, from among Deanery Representatives, selected by their respective Orders.
4. One Representative from each diocesan-recognized minority organization selected by his/her respective organization from among the minority Deanery Representatives.
5. One youth or young adult selected by the Diocesan Youth and Young Adult Ministry.
6. Executive Secretary, *ex-officio* appointed by the Executive Board.
7. The immediate Past-Chair, *ex officio*.

**C. Terms.**

1. Terms of the elected/selected Members will be three years.
2. Terms will begin in June of each year.
3. Elected/Selected Members may serve no more than two consecutive terms.

**D. Officers:**

1. The voting Members of the Executive Board will elect the following Officers for a one-year term and not to exceed two consecutive terms:
  - 1.1. Chair
  - 1.2. Vice-Chairman
  - 1.3. Secretary
  - 1.4. Treasurer
  - 1.5. Executive Secretary, *ex officio*
  - 1.6. Immediate Past-Chair, *ex officio*
  - 1.7. Other Officers as deemed necessary by the Executive Board.
2. The Executive Board will elect one of its voting Members to serve on the Diocesan Finance Committee.
3. The Executive Board may elect one of its voting Members to serve on other Diocesan Committees, as the Executive Board deems necessary.

**E. Meetings**

1. A majority of the voting members of the Executive Board will determine the time and place of regular meetings.
2. Regular meetings of the Executive Board will be open.

3. In June of each year the Executive Board will publish throughout the Diocese an annual calendar of its regular meetings.

4. A special meeting of the Executive Board may be called by the Bishop, or requested by any voting Member of the Executive Board and agreed to by a majority of voting members of the Executive Board.

**F. Agenda:** Any Deanery Assembly Representative may propose an item for the Executive Board Agenda. Agenda will be determined by a majority of Executive Board Members present.

**G. Minutes:** Within ten (10) days, the Secretary will circulate Minutes of Meetings to the Executive Board Members present at the Meeting, for their review and comment. They will respond within seven (7) days to the Secretary. Upon editing of the Minutes, within seven (7) days, they will be deemed approved, and the Secretary will disseminate them to the Executive Board, all Diocesan Pastoral Council Representatives and throughout the Diocese. The Minutes will be formally adopted at the next regular Meeting of the Executive Board.

**H. The Chair's Report.** In June of each year, the Chair of the Executive Board will disseminate throughout the Diocese a Report on the year's activities of the Diocesan Pastoral Council.

### **REVISION OF THIS CONSTITUTION AND ITS BYLAWS**

Any DPC Representative may propose a revision of this Constitution or its Bylaws by submitting it in writing to his/her Deanery. The Deanery will make known in writing its disposition of the proposal to the Representative and to the DPC Executive Board, within ten days (10) of the Deanery's first regular meeting after its receipt of the proposal. At its first regular meeting after receiving the proposal from the Deanery, the DPC Executive Board will consider it. It will thereupon inform the proposing Deanery of its decision within twenty (20) days of its meeting. Its decision warranting, it will, within thirty (30) days, put the proposed revision to the vote of DPC Representatives by electronic or United States Mail. The majority of DPC Representatives returning their Ballots within thirty (30) days as determined by postmark, will determine the vote. The proposed revision will be in force upon a majority of those Representatives voting its Approval.

### **LIFE OF THE DIOCESAN COUNCIL**

When the Diocesan See is vacant, the Diocesan Pastoral Council is dissolved.

*This Revised Constitution of the Santa Rosa Diocesan Pastoral Council is valid by majority approval of Diocesan Pastoral Council Deanery Assembly Representatives voting between  
December 7, 2006, and January 8, 2007*