

CONSTITUTION OF THE PARISH ASSEMBLY AND PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL OF Ss ALBAN & STEPHEN PARISH

1. THE PARISH ASSEMBLY

- 1.1 The Parish Assembly, hereafter called the Assembly, is a body responding to the call to make the body of Christ alive in our parish community of Ss Alban & Stephen in the Diocese of Westminster, hereafter called the Parish.
“Go out to the whole world and proclaim the Good News” (Mark 16:16)
“As the Father sent me so am I sending you” (John 20:21)
- 1.2 *“From the fact of their union with Christ the head, flows the laymen's right and duty to be apostles. Inserted as they are in the Mystical Body of Christ by baptism and strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit in Confirmation, it is by the Lord himself that they are assigned to the apostolate. If they are consecrated a kingly priesthood and a holy nation (cf. 1 Peter 2:4–10), it is in order that they may in all their actions offer spiritual sacrifices and bear witness to Christ all the world over.” (Vatican II Documents on Lay People)*
- 1.3 *“Our Lord Jesus Christ has opened his heart to the world in order to bring an effective remedy to modern societies that are rushing into an abyss. And we are those whom He has sent to apply this remedy to the world.” (Jules Chevalier Founder of the MSCs)*

2. OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 To make the Church more alive and open to the Spirit and to further the spread of the Kingdom of God.
- 2.2 To ensure an ongoing assessment of the spiritual, social and human needs of the Parish and to foster ways to meet these needs.
- 2.3 To draw out, draw together, and draw upon the talents and gifts of the Christian Community in the Parish. *“As each one has received a gift use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace.” (1 Peter 4:10)*
- 2.4 To elect a Pastoral Parish Council (hereafter the PPC) that will provide a structure for constructive dialogue with the parish community and thus serve as a means of consultation and communication in the parish.

3. THE ASSEMBLY

Christ said “Come and see, so they went and saw where he lived and stayed with Him for the rest of the day”. (John 1:39)

- 3.1 All members of the Parish will be invited to attend an Assembly every three years normally held in June.

- 3.2 The existing PPC will be responsible for convening the new Assembly, compiling an agenda and organising the selection process. The PPC will arrange preparatory nights, determine a venue and decide on a facilitator for the Assembly.
- 3.3 Each area of priority group established at the previous Assembly will present a brief update of their activities over the past three years.
- 3.4 Up to six areas of priority for the parish will be identified at this Assembly. These must be approved by the majority of people present and not be in conflict with the charism of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. One representative from each area of priority will be elected to be members of the PPC until the next Assembly.
- 3.5 Up to five additional members of the PPC will be elected from the whole Parish Assembly.

4. PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL (PPC)

- 4.1 The PPC works in collaboration with the Priest/Clergy for the Parish under the direction of the Bishop of Westminster. The PPC is called to participate with the Priest/Clergy for the Pastoral Ministry of proclaiming God's word, celebrating the sacraments, caring for the faithful, promoting the mission of the Church to the world, and being a good steward of parish resources. The scope includes all the practical matters of Parish life, responding to the call of Christ to Peter *"Feed my lambs, feed my sheep."*

5. MEMBERSHIP

- 5.1 The PPC:

Membership of the PPC is open to all members of the parish. It shall be made up of the following members:

- (a) One representative from each area of priority identified by the Assembly shall be elected from the members of that body within 30 days of the Assembly date. These representatives will assume an ongoing role of care for those in their area and their interests.
- (b) Up to five individual members appointed at the Assembly.
- (c) Parish Clergy, Deacons, a member of the Finance Committee and the Youth Coordinator are always ex-officio members.

- 5.2 The term of membership shall be three years. Members may be reappointed for a maximum of one further consecutive term. In the event of a vacancy occurring on the PPC, the PPC shall invite the area of priority group from which the vacancy occurred to nominate the replacement.
- 5.3 The Council shall appoint the following officers at its first meeting: Chairperson and Secretary.

6. FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PPC

The functions and responsibilities of the PPC are

- (a) to have responsibility for seeing that the programmes set out by the Parish Assembly are carried out; and appoint such committees as are deemed necessary to carry out the work;
- (b) to review the parish pastoral programme in the light of the objectives at the previous Assembly and in the light of the current needs of the parish;
- (c) to act with the priest of the parish on pastoral issues arising between meetings of the Assembly that require urgent responses;
- (d) to work with the parish finance committee, and make recommendations in relation to pastoral issues;
- (e) to arrange further meetings of the Parish Assembly.

7. MEETINGS

- 7.1 The PPC shall meet at least eight times yearly. The Parish Priest or another Priest of the Parish designated by him shall attend where possible at all meetings. Special meetings may be called by the Chairperson or by a quorum of members. The quorum shall be six people.
- 7.2 Prior to each meeting, the Priest, together with the Chairperson and Secretary shall draw up an agenda. Members of the Committee are invited to submit motions to the Secretary for the agenda. The agenda shall concern itself with issues relative to the pastoral mission of the Parish and standing items will include reports from the area of priority committees that were set up by the Parish Assembly; Priest's Report and Finance Committee Report.

8. AMENDMENTS

- 8.1 Amendments to this Constitution may only be effected at a meeting of the Assembly and then by two-thirds of those present and voting. All other decisions of the Assembly will be reached by consensus where at all possible and, in the absence of consensus, then a simple majority of the delegates present and voting will suffice.

APPENDIX A

1. Role of the Parish Priest

The Parish Priest is the custodian of the vision of the Council's Mission in Christ and the authentic unifying link between the Parish and the Bishop.

He should foster co-responsibility and encourage freedom and initiative.

He should attend, where possible, but not chair PPC meetings.

He should participate and listen with impartiality to all sides of a debate.

2. Role of the Chairperson

The Chairperson is responsible for developing the agenda for Council meetings in consultation with the Parish Priest and Secretary. He/she should:

facilitate an atmosphere of open discussion and free participation,

seek consensus rather than a decision by vote,

initiate discussion where necessary,

clarify points raised,

focus on the point of discussion,

summarise,

encourage silent members,

keep dominant members in check, and

listen with charity to all view points.

3. Role of the Secretary.

The Secretary should:

(a) keep the Minutes,

(b) ensure that Agendas are available in advance, and

(c) establish some means of communicating reports of Committee business to the Parish in general, e.g. to the Parish Newsletter, Website, through the communications Sub-Committee, special bulletins, etc