

Mary, Mother of the Church
PARISH COUNCIL OFFICIAL BYLAWS

Article I THE PURPOSE

The Parish Council shall be the apostolic vehicle through which a representative body of the People of God in MARY, MOTHER OF THE CHURCH Parish, in communion with one another, meets to deliberate and decide those matters for which they are responsible and which affect the good of the total Church as witnessed through this parish community.

Article II MEMBERSHIP AND ELECTIONS

Section 1. The Parish Council shall consist of twelve (12) elected members. The Pastor, Associate Pastor, Permanent Deacon and Director of Religious Education shall be ex-officio members of the Parish Council. All members of the Parish Council shall take part in decision-making. Each position on the Council has one voice.

Section 2. General parish elections shall be held annually during the month of March following the approved procedures of the Parish Council.

Section 3. The term of office of all elected members of the Parish Council, except the elected youth representative, shall be two (2) years.

Section 4. At all times one (1) member of the Parish Council is designated as a Youth Representative to be annually elected for a one (1) year term by the youth members of the parish at a separate election held concurrently with the parish general election. All youth members of the parish, ninth (9th) grade through twelfth (12th) who are registered with the parish will be eligible to hold this office.

Section 5. The person, who, in the last election, had received the greatest number of votes following those who were elected, will fill a vacancy among the elected positions on the Parish Council.

If none of the parishioners receiving votes in the past election is willing to fill the vacant position of a resigning council member *or, if no other person ran*, the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Pastor, after appropriate consultation with one another, will appoint a successor.

The person, who, in the last election, had received the greatest number of votes following that of the elected Youth Representative, shall fill the vacancy of the Youth Representative.

Section 6. In the event of a tie between the final two elected persons, the Nominating Committee Chairperson (the Vice-Chairperson) shall place the names of the tied nominees "in a hat." Asking the Holy Spirit to guide the selection, the Vice-Chairperson will draw the name of one of the elected persons.

Section 7. All adult members (18 years and older) registered with the parish will be eligible for membership on the Parish Council.

Section 8. A couple may run as a unit to fill commission vacancies on the Parish Council. If a couple is elected as vice-chairperson, one person will serve.

Article III OFFICERS

Section 1. At the first Parish Council meeting following the March general elections, the Vice-Chairperson shall be elected from among the new members-elect. The following persons shall vote: the new members-elect, the ex-officio members, and the Council members in their first year.

A majority vote of those present according to Article VI, Section 3 is necessary to elect. The new Vice-Chairperson shall take office at the June meeting of that year.

The Vice-Chairperson from the previous year shall automatically succeed to the position of Chairperson.

Section 2. During the Parish Council meeting following the March general elections, the Chairperson, the pastor, and the parish council members-elect will conduct a process of discernment for the Secretary and/or the Commission Chairpersons.

In the event that a couple is among the members elect, the couple will comply with Article II, Section 8 of the bylaws.

Section 3. Vacancy in the office of Chairperson will be filled by any Council member serving the second year of the two-year term on the Council for a total of four (4) or five (5) eligible candidates. A majority vote of the remaining council members is necessary to elect the new Chairperson. This election shall take place at the first scheduled meeting following the vacancy.

A vacancy in the Office of Vice-Chairperson will be filled following the procedures set forth above. This election shall take place at the first scheduled meeting following the vacancy.

Section 4. The Chairperson shall set the agenda and preside at all Parish Council meetings. As a rule, agenda items first presented at one meeting are given to consensus at the next meeting(s).

Section 5. The Vice-Chairperson shall preside in the absence of the Chairperson. The Vice-Chairperson will be responsible for all parish publicity and public relations.

Section 6 The Secretary shall record and report the minutes of each meeting. At the start of each council year (June), the secretary shall give all members of the Council an updated copy of the Mary Mother of the Church Parish Council Policy and Procedures Manual.

The Policy and Procedures Manual shall be updated annually by the Secretary and shall contain, at a minimum: Parish Council Policies, the current set of Goals and Objectives, and Parish Council Bylaws and Operating Procedures.

Article IV PARISH COUNCIL COMMISSIONS

- Section 1. The Parish Council shall form the following nine (9) standing commissions to assist the Council in its duties: Administration/Finance; Athletics; Christian Formation; Christian Service; Evangelization; Health Ministry, Liturgy; Social; Youth.
- Section 2. The new members-elect shall attend the April and May Parish Council meetings to become acquainted with policy, procedures and the methods of the Council. New members shall also attend the respective Commission meetings and work with the Commission Chairpersons that they will replace in June. During this time, new council members will be serving their apprenticeship and will not engage in policy decisions or consensus at the Council meetings until June when they assume their new office.
- Section 3. Special and ad hoc advisory committees may be established from time to time by the Council to meet specific objectives. Such ad hoc advisory committees may not be established for a period longer than six (6) months.
- Section 4. The Parish council shall set out the duties and areas of responsibility for the operation of each commission.
- Section 5. Each commission may establish committees to assist in accomplishing its stated objectives. Participation by the entire parish community is encouraged in accomplishing the work of each commission. Full membership in each commission is granted to every parishioner. Commission decisions shall be made by consensus. When consensus cannot be reached within a commission, the issue shall be referred to the Parish Council for resolution.
- Section 6. Each commission Chairperson shall be responsible for submitting a written or electronic report on the activities and proposals of the commission to each Council member before the 5:00 P.M. Mass on the Saturday before the next Parish Council meeting. It is incumbent upon each Council member to read these reports and keep current with the work and proposals of the various Commissions.

Section 7. Each commission is a decision making body in matters of commission and committee affairs and is responsible to the Parish Council for its decisions. Each commission acts both as an advisory body to the Parish Council with respect to parish-wide concerns, matters affecting more than one commission, and as an administrative body responsible for implementing policy established by the Parish Council.

Article V AUTHORITY

Section 1. The Parish Council is a decision making body and is accountable to the parish community for its progress and decisions.

Section 2. The Parish Council shall exercise general supervisory control over all parish expenditures and shall require pre-approval of all activity budgets with the consultation and advice of the Administration/Finance Commission. Proposed commission budgets must be submitted to the Administration/Finance Commission prior to the regular January Parish Council meeting. The preliminary annual budget for all parish activities shall be submitted in writing to the Parish Council no later than the week-end before the April meeting of each year, and shall be studied by the Parish Council at said April meeting. Said proposed annual budget for the next fiscal year shall be approved by the Parish Council membership by the May Parish Council meeting. Expenditures not currently budgeted must be approved by the Parish Council.

Article VI MEETINGS

Section 1. The parish Council shall meet monthly for a minimum of ten meetings per year, commencing in June following the general elections.

Section 2. The Chairperson and/or Pastor may call special meetings of the Parish Council upon forty-eight (48) hours' notice to each member.

Section 3. Ten (10) members of the Parish Council shall be sufficient to transact business at any meeting, regular or special.

Section 4. The Chairperson shall prepare an agenda for each regular meeting following the order of business as presented in the Parish Council Policy and Procedures Manual and shall forward a copy to each member before the 5:00 P.M. Mass on the Saturday before the Parish Council meeting.

Any member of the Parish may propose a matter to be included on the agenda.

Section 5. The Parish Council will use consensus to arrive at decisions. During the consensus process, couples on the Council will have one voice. The level of agreement necessary to finalize a decision, known as the "decision rule" will be set at a simple majority unless otherwise defined in this document. The Consensus process is delineated in an Addendum to these Bylaws.

Section 6. Members of the Parish community are encouraged to attend and to participate in any meeting of the Parish Council. In order for all business to be accomplished in a reasonable amount of time, the Chairperson may, as necessary, limit the number of speakers and their time on the floor.

Section 7. It is expected that Parish Council members be present for each meeting. In the event that a member is not present for three council meetings or is not present for two consecutive meetings, the chairperson may ask for the member's resignation and then proceed to fill the vacancy in accordance with Article 2, Section 5.

Article VII NOMINATIONS

Section 1. The Vice-Chairperson, with the advice of the Pastor, at the November Council meeting, shall name a Nominating Committee of five (5) members of the Parish; three (3) shall be current elected members of the Council. These Council members shall be the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson, who shall serve as head of the Nominating Committee, and the Youth Representative. The remaining members shall be parishioners at large. The Vice-Chairperson shall contact the other committee members shortly after the November Council meeting and give them the manual covering the nomination-election procedure.

Section 2. The Nominating Committee shall, at least thirty (30) days prior to the scheduled parish general election, invite nominations for the vacancies occurring that year on the Parish Council, with a minimum number of adult nominees equal to the number of said vacancies plus two alternates. If, in the intervening time before the election, the number falls below the minimum, those who have placed their names for election shall be considered the candidates. If six or fewer have presented themselves, they become the new council members. The present Council will fill any remaining vacancies by due process.

Section 3. No name placed in nomination will be accepted if that person has served on the Parish Council in the preceding six years.

Section 4. No parishioner shall nominate more than five (5) persons. If more than five (5) names are submitted, only the first five (5) names will be accepted.

Section 5. At the regular January Parish Council meeting in each year, the Nominating Committee shall submit for approval the procedures to be followed at the annual election.

Section 6. Ballots and a brief biographical description of each nominee will be made available to the members of the parish at least two (2) weeks before the scheduled election.

Article VIII ADDITIONS AND AMENDMENTS

Section 1. Additions or amendments to these Bylaws may be adopted by consensus of the Parish Council membership at the meeting following their initial presentation.

Section 2. The Chairperson shall appoint an ad hoc committee of at least three (3) parish members to review the Bylaws to ensure they are current and complete. This review shall be done at a maximum of every five (5) years. At least one member of the committee shall be a current Parish Council member.

Section 3 If any situation arises which is not covered by Parish Council bylaws, archdiocesan statute or canon law, and cannot be delayed the required forty-eight hours to convene a special meeting, the Pastor will make the decision after consulting with the chairperson and vice-chairperson.

Article IX ANNUAL REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

The Parish Council Chairperson will write an annual summary of Parish Council activities and make it available to the parish community via the Sunday Bulletin after the May meeting and in the next UPDATE.

ADDENDUM

CONSENSUS PROCEDURE FOR PARISH COUNCIL (amended 8/28/97)

Consensus is a process of arriving at a decision through compromise. The process is designed to provide a forum where creative input and discernment are required by all participants, therefore producing more options towards reaching a better decision.

In order to insure the maximum of the consensus process, the group should adhere as much as possible to the suggested procedure.

CONSENSUS PROCEDURE

- A. Chairperson states the agenda “item” for decision.
- B. Chairperson then opens the floor for input (no lobbying or dialoguing may take place at this time).
- C. All participants are required to contribute their ideas, positions, or possible solutions concerning the issue.
- D. After everyone has given their input, the chairperson then opens the floor for discussion in hopes of moving toward consensus.
- E. When the process is opened for discussion, it is required that:
 1. An individual may state only once his/her idea or position. S/he may not continually lobby and reinforce the same position.
 2. All participants are asked to refrain from digressions not relevant to the issue.
 3. The purpose of the discussion is to integrate the thinking of the group to assess all possible options, and to combine, modify, or enhance the total group thinking through compromise.
 4. The basic condition of decision-making through consensus is the attitude of the decision-makers. When a group accepts this procedure, they are accepting the responsibility of working in an optimistic, supportive, and informed atmosphere. Each member is expected to have done his or her homework in regard to any item put on the floor for decision.
- F. The chairperson’s major responsibility at this point is to listen carefully as the discussion begins to move toward a general feeling of agreement.

When the chairperson feels that consensus has been reached through integrating the participants’ ideas and solutions, s/he will ask: “Do we have consensus that (giving the consensus statement)?” Is there anyone who cannot accept this consensus? As soon as the chairperson moves toward consensus, no further discussion is allowed. If there are no objections, consensus has been reached and should be restated. “We have consensus on the decision then that (insert consensus statement).”

- G. If over one-third of the group is unwilling to accept the consensus statement, consensus has not been reached, and the chairperson must reopen the floor for further discussion to move toward compromise. If less than one-third of the group is unwilling to accept the consensus statement, the statement must be amended to be acceptable to all.

The chairperson then restates the consensus statement with amendments and asks whether there is anyone who cannot accept the decision statement. If there are no objections, the statement is accepted as the consensus decision. However, if over one third are unwilling to accept the amended statement, the chairperson then states the group is not in support of the changes. Therefore the original consensus still stands.

- H. When a group has agreed to work under a consensus decision-making process, they are agreeing to yield to the majority's thinking. Total agreement is not necessary to attain consensus, but total support by the membership is necessary once consensus is reached. It is essential that the persons involved in a consensus decision-making process understand their relationship as individuals to the group and the process.

No person could or should block a consensus decision. What is felt by the group to be the best and most workable decision should be upheld. This process is difficult to initiate but extremely beneficial when understood and utilized. It promotes a greater degree of participation and commitment by all involved and hopefully better decisions.

- I. There will be occasions when consensus cannot be reached and the group is at an impasse. If this occurs:

The group will move to "Robert's Rules of Order, Revised" and vote on the item. An affirmative vote by twelve members of the Council is required for approval. Should less than twelve members be present, the matter will be tabled until such time as it can be properly considered.

The above underlined change was adopted 08/27/97.