

Archdiocese of Milwaukee

**ST. DOMINIC'S**  
**PARISH COUNCIL**  
**BYLAWS**

Revised March 9, 2006

**Article I: NOMINATION AND SELECTION OF NEW MEMBERS**

**Section 1:** At each annual selection, one-third of the members shall be selected for a term of three years to fill the vacancies caused by the members whose terms are due to expire.

**Section 2:** At least 60 days prior to each annual selection of new members, the chairperson shall appoint a Selection Committee chaired by the vice chair and one or more members of the Council. The Selection Committee's responsibility is to manage all aspects of the selection process including:

- a) **Education of Parishioners:** Parishioners are educated through bulletin and pulpit announcements about the Council and the selection process for at least two weeks. They are asked to give prayerful consideration to nominating parishioners or themselves for the Council.
- b) **Nomination:** Nomination forms are distributed at all liturgies on a designated weekend. Parishioners are invited to write down the names of persons they feel have the essential characteristics of a Council member.
- c) **Notification:** Persons whose names were submitted by parishioners are contacted by Selection Committee members to inform them of their nominations and of the required orientation. Additional nominations are acceptable if submitted in no later than the Parish Council nominees' orientation meeting.
- d) **Orientation:** The Selection Committee plans the local orientation session and requires nominees' attendance at a local and/or archdiocesan orientation.
- e) **Acceptance:** Those who feel called to serve as Council members accept nomination and participate on the final slate of nominees. The Selection Committee ensures that the slate of nominees is representative of the parish community. In no event shall any persons be deemed nominated unless the Selection Committee receives an expression of willingness to serve. If a member of the Selection Committee becomes a nominee, that person ceases to be a Selection Committee member.

**Section 3:** a) The selection of new members of the Council shall be by discernment. In the context of prayer and with the help of a facilitator, the nominees who are best suited to serve on the council at this time are discerned.

b) Newly discerned members will submit a biography for publication in the parish bulletin.

## **Article II: VACANCIES AND REMOVALS**

**Section 1:** Any member of the Council may resign by filing a written resignation with the chairperson, with a copy to the pastor.

**Section 2:** At any meeting of the Council, any at-large member may be removed for good cause by consensus or by an affirmative vote of three-fourths of the Council. Any member whose removal has been proposed shall be given an opportunity to be heard at the meeting. Good cause includes missing many consecutive meetings without good reason, physical or mental incapacity, or failure to perform duties as a Council member.

**Section 3:** A vacancy among the at-large members shall be filled by one appointed to serve the remainder of the term. The chairperson will make appointment, with approval of the Council. Consideration should be given to previous nominees.

## **Article III: OFFICERS**

**Section 1:** Selection of officers of the Council shall be by discernment from among and by the Council members present at the annual Council discernment meeting. Offices shall be filled in the following order: chairperson, vice-chairperson and secretary.

**Section 2:** At the Council discernment meeting following the annual selection of Council members, newly selected members join the existing Council for the purpose of selecting Council officers for the following year.

**Section 3:** No Council officer may serve more than three consecutive 1 year terms in any one office.

**Section 4: The chairperson:**

1. Is aware of the tasks and responsibilities of the Council and communicates these to the Council, committees and parish community.
2. Organizes/coordinates activities and processes of the Council. Develops and maintains an annual Council calendar consistent with the parish calendar.

3. Prepares the meeting agendas in consultation with the pastor and other Council members. Submits the agenda to Council members at least 3 days before the meeting. Agendas will be posted on the parish website at least 3 days before the Council meeting, and a notice will be placed in the bulletin advising of this on the Sunday immediately prior to each regular Council meeting.
4. Provides formation/education for Council members, utilizing the parish staff and offerings at the district and archdiocesan levels.
5. Conducts meetings by assisting the Council members to work together effectively and arrive at appropriate decisions through consensus. Also conducts parish meetings.
6. Facilitates the task of determining priorities and setting goals for programs and services to be developed within parish guidelines and archdiocesan structure and goals.
7. Monitors implementation of all Council decisions.
8. Ensures that a Council budget is established and communicates budget information to the Finance Committee.
9. Establishes ad hoc committees and appoints their chairpersons; assigns specific tasks to individuals, delegates responsibilities and encourages cooperation.
10. Is an ex officio member of all standing and ad hoc committees of the Council.
11. Assists the next chairperson in understanding the Council's history, responsibilities and resources. Transfers all Council materials to the new chairperson.
12. Performs duties consistent with the office as the Council may direct.

**Section 5: The vice-chairperson:**

1. Conducts meetings in the absence of the chairperson.
2. Becomes chairperson in the event of vacancy.
3. Performs duties consistent with the office as the chairperson or the Council may direct.
4. Organizes the annual Parish Council retreat.

**Section 6: The secretary:**

1. Oversees the accurate recording of the minutes of each meeting and sees to it that the minutes and the agenda are made available to the Council members, committee chairpersons, and the parish
2. Takes attendance at meetings and records absences.
3. Maintains the official list of all Council and standing committee officers and members and their terms, the list of all ad hoc committee chairpersons and members and keeps these lists current with regard to addresses and phone numbers. Completes the archdiocesan registry form following each annual selection and keeps this list current by informing the archdiocese of all changes.
4. Reports to the Council all communication. Handles correspondence for the Council, including agendas, minutes, notification of regular and special meetings, notes of thanks, etc.
5. Performs such duties consistent with office as the chairperson or Council may direct. The Council may designate a non-member as "recorder" of the minutes. However, the responsibility rests with the Council's secretary. The "recorder" has no rights of membership.

## **Article IV: PARISH DELEGATE TO THE ARCHDIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCIL (APC) DISTRICT ASSEMBLY**

**Section 1. Delegate.** The Council chairperson, or a delegate approved annually by the Council, shall serve as the parish delegate to the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council

### **Section 2. Responsibilities**

1. The parish delegate to the APC district assembly represents the parish at all district APC meetings and the annual assembly of parish delegates to the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council.
2. The parish delegate to the APC assists the next APC delegate in understanding the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council's history, responsibilities and resources; and transfers all APC materials to the new parish APC delegate.

## **Article V: MEETINGS**

**Section 1: Regular meetings** of the Council shall be held at such time, place and date as the Council may designate. Prayer shall be an integral part of the meeting.

**Section 2: The agenda** shall be developed in advance of the meeting based upon the proposals from committees, liaison reports, the parish council annual calendar (see "Parish Papers"), strategic/mission goals, ongoing needs and

concerns of the parish. Parishioners may submit items for consideration to any council member one week before the meeting. The Pastor and Council officers make up the Council agenda committee.

**Section 3: Advance notice of the time and place of the meetings** of the Council shall be published in the parish bulletin, and all members of the parish shall be entitled and welcome to attend as observers. The Council may open any meeting to discussion by parish members on such subjects and under such rules as the Council may announce.

**Section 4: Absence.** Notification of intended absence should be given to the Council Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson or Secretary before the meeting.

**Section 5: Special Meeting.** Notice of special meetings shall be given to all members within a reasonable time before the meeting, stating its time, place and purpose. No other business than that stated, as the purpose shall be conducted at that meeting.

**Section 6: Closed Session.** When a question arises at a council meeting that relates to a person's right to privacy, the council may request the absence of visitors for that portion of the meeting. The content of the closed session is not part of the formal minutes of the meeting and is not made public. This type of situation should be a rare occurrence. Parish councils do NOT make personnel decisions, which are rightfully the responsibility of the pastor who is the chief administrative officer of the parish.

## **Article VI: STANDING COMMISSIONS**

**Section 1: Purpose:** Each standing commission implements the Council's priorities and goals in its own areas of responsibility in the collaborative spirit of working together to accomplish the parish's stated mission. All committee work leads to building a faith community, proclaiming the Word of God, calling people to prayer and motivating people to serve others.

**Scope:** All commissions are accountable to the Council. Commissions make decisions in their areas of responsibility following the principle of subsidiary, which means making decisions at the most appropriate level in the parish commission structure. All parish groups/organization should relate to the council through the standing commissions, and be accountable to the parish mission as expressed in the parish mission statement.

**Functions.** The basic functions of each council standing commission are :

1. **Identify needs** of the parish within its areas of responsibility and in keeping with the parish mission.
2. **Establish priorities** among the needs and communicate how these needs can realistically be addressed and where inter-committee collaboration might be effective.

3. Formulate long-range and short-term **goals and objectives**.
4. Research and investigate **options** to implement goals.
5. **Submit the proposed programs to the Council** for support.
6. **Communicate** with the pastor and pastoral staff about the **implementation**.
7. **Maintain communication with the parish** concerning programs, encouraging active support and involvement.
8. Maintain communication **with the respective archdiocesan offices and agencies** for guidelines and resources.
9. Provide **on-going formation** of commission members in its areas of responsibility through workshops, study, spiritual formation, etc.
10. Determine **budget** priorities in the area of the commission's responsibility and make recommendations to the Council through the Finance Committee.
11. Periodically **evaluate** existing programs and activities.
12. The standing commission chair, or designee, shall **provide the council** with regular, oral or written **reports** of the work of their committees.

**Section 2:** The **descriptions** of the individual standing commissions of the Council are:

**Prayer and Worship Commission:** The purpose of the Prayer and Worship Commission is to help the parish fulfill the Worship aspect of the mission of the Church. It does this in partnership with the parish committees and staff by:

Providing parish members opportunities to participate in liturgical celebrations which are prayerful, communal experiences of God

Pursuing parish liturgical renewal through the education of the parish as a whole

Developing the spiritual life of the parish

Subcommittees/committees or parish groups are accountable to Prayer and Worship Commission. They include but are not limited to the following: ushers, choir, lectors, Eucharistic ministers, art and environment, acolytes, cantors, ecumenism and liturgy planning.

**Christian Formation Commission (CFC):** The purpose of CFC is to help the parish develop an understanding of its responsibility for the total educational mission of the Church, providing opportunities for growth in faith for all parishioners. It does this in partnership with the parish committees and staff by providing:

- Religious education for adults and children
- Parochial school
- Youth Ministry
- Special education

Subcommittees/committees or parish groups are accountable to Christian Formation Commission. They include but are not limited to the following: Vocations, Child Ministry, Youth Ministry, Adult & Family Ministry, Scouting, Athletics, MOMS Group, Men's Ministry, and Catholic Memorial High School Liaison.

**Human Concerns:** The purpose of this commission is to discern the needs of people within the parish and wider community (elderly, hurting families, minorities, etc.) and to identify resources to meet those human and social needs. This committee also works with parish committees, staff and community groups by:

- Helping to solve major social problems
- Informing parishioners of issues relating to justice and peace on local, national and international levels

Subcommittees/committees or parish groups are accountable to Human Concerns. They include but are not limited to the following organizations and/or groups: Missions, Food Pantry, Senior Citizens and St. Vincent DePaul Society.

**Governance and Administration:** The purpose of the governance and Administration commission is to oversee and administer the financial well being of the parish. Governance and Administration makes recommendations to the parish council concerning all aspects regarding:

- Monitoring financials and budget
- Stewarding Human and Material Resources
- Educating parishioners regarding Stewardship and Church support
- Assuring needed resources for the ongoing ministries of the church

Subcommittees/committees or parish groups are accountable to Governance and Administration. They include, but are not limited to Stewardship, Human Resources, Technology, Parish Festival, Auction, Buildings and Grounds and Strategic Planning. This commission works closely with the parish council and is supportive of all other commissions.

**Section 3:** The Council may establish and discontinue Ad Hoc committees from time to time as need requires. Each Ad Hoc committee chairperson shall meet with the Council at least once a year. A committee is able to make decisions only if a quorum is present which means a majority of its members. There may be majority and minority reports presented to the Council if agreement cannot be achieved.

**Section 4: Commission Officers.** The chairperson of each commission shall be discerned by and from the committee members, based on competence, leadership ability and knowledge of the commission's area of ministry. The term of office for the chairperson is one year. Other officers determined by the commission, e.g. secretary, are selected in a similar manner. Neither an employee of the parish nor an *ex officio* member of the council shall be eligible to be an officer.

## **Article VII: AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS**

The council may amend the bylaws by consensus or a two-thirds vote of the members at two consecutive meetings of the council.

Date of Approval by the Archdiocese: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Most Recent Amendment: \_\_\_\_March 9, 2006\_\_\_\_\_

PC Approval #1 \_\_\_\_April 6, 2006\_\_\_\_\_

PC Approval # 2 \_\_\_\_May 11, 2006\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Next Full Review: \_\_\_\_\_2007-2008\_\_\_\_\_

Submitted by: Michael Ricci, Parish Council Secretary