



ROMAN CATHOLIC
DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER

Parish Governance Policy

Issued by: The Most Reverend Matthew H. Clark
Revised by: The Most Reverend Salvatore R. Matano

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KEY POLICY STATEMENTS:

- **Parish By-Laws** [Link](#)
 - The standard Parish By-Laws must be ratified by the Officers and Lay Trustees.
 - The Board of Trustees shall consist of the Bishop, the Vicar General, the Pastor or Pastoral Administrator ("Pastor"), all acting *ex officio* ("Ex Officio Trustees"), and two elected Lay Trustees.
 - The Trustees shall have custody and control of all the temporalities and property belonging to the Corporation and of the revenues therefrom and shall administer same in accordance with the discipline, rules, and usages of the Roman Catholic Church and of the Diocese for the support and maintenance of the Church and of its various religious, charitable, benevolent and educational activities.

- **Conflict of Interest Policy** [Link](#)
 - Lay Trustees and Council Members are required to be aware of the Conflict of Interest Policy and complete and sign the Conflict of Interest Form.
 - New York State law requires all nonprofits to have a Conflict of Interest Policy to ensure that its directors, officers, key employees and key volunteer advisors act in the nonprofits best interest. Consequently, each aforementioned individual must:
 - Annually submit a Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement
 - Make known specific conflicts with particular items on the agenda when it is reviewed at the beginning of each meeting (this should be a specific item on the agenda)
 - Leave the room when the matter giving rise to such conflict is discussed, deliberated and/or voted on.

- **Parish Lay Trustees** [Link](#)
 - Parish Lay Trustees must be nominated and approved in accordance with the Parish Lay Trustee Procedure.
 - The term of office is one year. A trustee may serve five consecutive one year terms. After one year of a break in service, a new cycle may commence.
 - Lay Trustees are expected to attend the Parish Annual Meeting and regularly attend Pastoral Council and/or Finance Council meetings.
 - Lay Trustee duties include reviewing the year-end financial statements and acceptance of the current year budget.

- **Parish Finance Councils** [Link](#)
 - The Finance Council is a mandated body that advises the Pastor and Parish Pastoral Council on parish financial concerns. The Council should have a chairperson and a secretary.
 - The term of office is five years. A member may serve two consecutive five year terms. After one year of a break in service, a new cycle may commence.
 - The recommended size is from 5 to 7 parishioners. The Pastor and other employees of the parish are not considered members.
 - Meeting should be held at least once per quarter and minutes must be taken.
 - Pastor must seek Finance Council consultation on issues that require the Bishop's approval. (Generally, expenditures or alienation exceeding 10% of annual offertory or more than \$30,000, whichever is greater. See Attachment A for further details.)
 - Each parish must have a Buildings & Grounds Committee as a standing committee of the Parish Finance Council. See the Buildings & Grounds Committee Guidelines. [Link](#)

- **Parish Pastoral Councils** [Link](#)
 - The Diocese of Rochester requires each parish to have a Pastoral Council.
 - The term of office is three years. A member may serve two consecutive three year terms. After one year of a break in service, a new cycle may commence.
 - The recommended size is from 7 to 15 parishioners and should represent the demographic make-up of the parish. The Pastor and other employees of the parish are not considered members. The Council should have a chairperson and a secretary.
 - Meeting should be held at least four times per year and minutes should be taken.
 - The primary purpose of the Pastoral Council is to advise the Pastor on the development and implementation of a parish mission, vision, priorities and direction.

- All Parishioners that serve in these positions need to be aware of the expectations and responsibilities of these positions so the appropriate policies, procedures and guidelines should be shared with them.

- **APPLIES TO:** All Parishes