

St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Catholic Church

Parish Council By-Laws



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Article I. The Purpose and Functions

The Parish Council shall be a representative body of the St Mary Parish family. The Council shall serve as an advisory body to the pastor and support the community aspect of the Parish as it strives to be a sign of Jesus Christ to all. The Council shall meet to deliberate and decide by common agreement matters for which they are responsible - such as worship, spiritual life, education, service. The Council will assist the pastor to affect the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the Universal Church, as witnessed through the parishioners of St. Mary Church.

Section 1 The Council pledges to serve as a consultative and visioning body for the pastor.

Section 2 The Council pledges to coordinate, encourage and promote every apostolic activity within the Parish.

Section 3 The Council pledges to review and prayerfully discern the needs of the Parish and the community, and to implement programs aimed at meeting those needs.

Section 4 The Council pledges to establish dialogue among clergy, religious and laity working in cooperation for the betterment of the Parish.

Section 5 The Council pledges to provide leadership and encouragement in accordance with the goals of the Parish and the Universal Church.

Section 6 The Council pledges to cooperate with and to effectively carry out the guidelines, policies, and directives given by the Archbishop of Indianapolis.

Section 7 The Council pledges to elicit, to call forth, and to make the best use of the talents of all the members of the Parish.

Section 8 The Council pledges to establish clear and concise goals and objectives based upon the Parish mission statement and emerging needs of the community.

Article II. Membership

Section 1 The Parish Council shall consist of nine (9) voting members.

Section 2 Every person who is an active Catholic, eighteen (18) years or older, and a member of St Mary Parish is eligible to serve as a Member of the Council.

Section 3 The Pastor/Parish Administrator is an ex officio, non-voting member of the Parish Council.

Section 4 All active members of the Parish who will be entering grades nine (9) through twelve (12) at the time of the Council selections are eligible to hold office as non-voting youth representatives. One or two youth representatives may be appointed by the pastor with nominations coming from the Council members and Youth Group Director.

Section 4 The School Principal, ARE (Administrator Religious Education), and the Youth Group Director are ex officio, non-voting members of the Parish Council. They are welcome to attend any council meetings but are expected to attend at least one meeting each year.

Article III. Selections and Terms of Office

Section 1 Selections to the Parish Council shall be held annually according to the following schedule:

- January – Collection of Names for Nomination
- February – Period of Discernment for Nominees (i.e., each nominee will be contacted and invited to prayerfully consider serving the parish on council)
- March – Election of new Parish Council members
- April, May, June – Transition Period – The newly elected Parish Council members are asked to attend and audit Parish Council meetings as non-voting members.
- July 1 – Newly elected members take office and become voting members of the Council

Section 2 The term of office of all voting members shall be three (3) years. The terms of the voting members shall be staggered so approximately a third of the Council is elected annually. Adult members may serve two (2) consecutive terms.

Section 3 Should a term of office by a voting member of the Council become vacant prior to the conclusion of that member's term of office, the remaining members of the Council shall fill the vacant term through discernment. Council members shall select from the slate of parishioners in the last previous election, who were nominated but not elected to the Council. This person shall complete the remainder of the three (3) year term of the vacated position.

Section 4 Youth representatives are appointed by the Pastor to a one (1) year term for up to three (3) consecutive terms.

Section 5 The Pastor/Parish Administrator reserves the right to remove any member from the Parish Council.

Article IV. Officers

Section 1 At the first meeting of the St Mary Parish Council in July or August, the members of the new council shall elect a chairperson, vice-chairperson and secretary from among their membership. They shall serve a one (1) year term. These officers, together with the pastor, shall constitute the Executive Committee. A quorum is required for a vote. A simple majority of the present voting members is required for election.

Section 2 Chairperson Responsibilities:

- a) call and preside at Council meetings
- b) provide to new members of Council a copy of the Parish Council By-Laws
- c) organize and plan all Council meetings in conjunction with the Executive Committee
- d) recommend council members for commissions for appointment by the Pastor.

Section 3 Vice Chairperson Responsibilities:

- a) preside at Council meetings in the absence of the chairperson
- b) lead research efforts required to resolve Parish Council issues
- c) assist in the planning of all Parish Council meetings in conjunction with the Executive Committee.

Section 4 Secretary Responsibilities:

- a) record the minutes of each meeting and distribute them to the Council membership and to the Parish secretary within one (1) week following each meeting,
- b) be responsible for all Parish Council publicity and public relations,
- c) maintain an official copy of the Council minutes and Guidelines at the Parish office,

d) coordinate all information and updates to the Parish Council page of the Parish website with the site coordinator.

Article V. Commissions

Section 1 The Parish Council shall form the following standing commissions, which shall assist the Council and Pastor in their duties. All Parish organizations and groups are to be affiliated with one of the parish Commissions.

The Commissions shall be:

- Faith Formation
- Family Life and Youth
- Finance and Stewardship
- Outreach and Social Concerns
- St Mary School
- Worship and Spiritual Life

Section 2 Each Commission will provide a brief written or oral report to the Parish Council each month. Reports are due one (1) week prior to the Parish Council Meeting.

Section 3 Each Commission will provide a written annual report to be included in the Parish Council Annual Report (see Article VIII).

Section 4 In each Commission, standing committees may be established to assist in accomplishing the objectives for each ministry area.

Section 5 Each Commission shall develop its own by-laws that complement the St Mary Parish Council as well as Archdiocesan directives and Universal Church norms.

Article VI. Meetings

- Section 1** The Parish Council shall meet a minimum of 10 times a year, always on the first Tuesday of the month unless a conflict within the Parish requires a change. A meeting shall be scheduled for every month except July and December barring special circumstances that may require a meeting during one of those months as well.
- Section 2** One Council meeting annually shall be a retreat or day of recollection for Council members.
- Section 3** The chairperson and/or the Pastor may call special meetings of the Parish Council. Members must receive at least forty-eight (48) hours prior notice.
- Section 4** All decisions and actions of the Parish Council should be reached by consensus. If a consensus cannot be reached, each adult member of the Council has one vote. All Council decisions require the ratification of the Pastor/Parish Administrator. A record of the Pastor's ratification must be included in the minutes once granted. The Pastor's ratification will automatically be presumed upon his knowledge of said decisions or actions unless otherwise indicated to the Council within thirty (30) days. The Pastor shall provide grounds to the Council if ratification is withheld.
- Section 5** Fifty Percent (50%) of the Parish Council voting members plus one (1) shall constitute a quorum at any meeting.
- Section 6** The chairperson shall send out the proposed agenda for the upcoming Parish Council meeting at least 3 days before the meeting. All members of the Parish Council are encouraged to submit agenda items to the chairperson. All parishioners are encouraged to submit matters for the agenda to any Parish Council member. Registered parishioners are welcome to attend Parish Council meetings.

Section 7 The order of business for a general meeting shall include, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Opening Prayer
2. Attendance
3. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes
4. Commission Reports
5. Old Business
6. New Business
7. Action Item Review
8. Closing prayer

Section 8 As discerned necessary by the Parish Council, general assembly meeting(s) may be convened at a time determined by the Council. Parishioners shall be encouraged to attend and participate in the open-forum, town hall-style meeting.

Section 9 An Annual General Assembly Meeting shall be held in October to present the Parish Council Annual Report (see Article VII).

Article VII. Reports

Section 1 Parish Council Meetings

Minutes of the Parish Council meetings shall be made available to the parishioners on a regular basis. In addition, the secretary will make each month's meeting minutes available on the Parish Council section of the parish internet website.

Section 2 Annual Reports

The Parish Council shall prepare an annual report each year that provides the State of the Parish. The report will highlight parish activities of the council from the previous year, particular accomplishments and/or challenges of the parish, parish finances for the previous fiscal year and year-to-date, parish sacramental statistics, and parish goals and priorities for the coming year. The annual report shall be prepared and made available coinciding with the recognized fiscal year and annual Archdiocesan fiscal report due on September 15.

Article VIII. Additions and Revisions

Section 1 These Parish Council By-Laws may be amended and/or revised at any regular or special meeting of the St Mary Parish Council.

Section 2 Amendments and revisions must be presented in writing to all members of the Council at least ten (10) days prior to any meeting. Any amendment or revision submitted to the Council shall be discussed at the meeting at which it is presented, but not formally accepted until the next regular meeting.

Appendix 1: Parish Council Commissions (including current and possible subcommittees)

Faith Formation

Baptismal Preparation
Catechists
Confirmation Preparation (9-11)
Engaged Couple Preparation
RCIA
Religious Education (Pre-8)
Scripture Study Groups

Family Life and Youth

Boy Scouts
Girl Scouts
Family Life Development
Ladies Sodality
Parish Social Committee
Youth Group Ministry

Finance and Stewardship

Budget/Finance
Cemetery
Christ our Hope – United Catholic Appeal
Maintenance
Money Counters

Outreach and Social Concerns

Blood Donor program
Fall Festival
Food Pantry
Funeral luncheons
Pro-Life Committee

St Mary School

Golf Tourney
School Board
Scrip Committee
St Mary School Foundation

Worship and Spiritual Life

Altar Servers
Art and Environment
Choirs – Adult
Choir – Youth
Choir – Resurrection
Cantors
Extraordinary Ministers of Holy
Communion
Eucharistic Adoration
Lectors
Ushers
Ministers to the Sick

Appendix 2: Annual Parish Council Calendar

Month	Event(s)	Reference
June	General Meeting	VI,1
July	No Meeting	VI, 1
August	General Meeting Select Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary	VI, 1 IV,1
September	General and Topic Focused Meeting	VI, 1
October	General Meeting Annual General Assembly Meeting	VI, 1 VI, 9
November	General and Topic Focused Meeting	VI, 1
December	No Meeting	VI, 1
January	General and Topic Focused Meeting Collection of Names for Nomination Recommend that January meeting be scheduled as a retreat or day of recollection	VI, 1 III, 1 VI, 2
February	General Meeting Period of Discernment for Nominees	VI, 1 III, 1
March	General and Topic Focused Meeting Election of new Parish Council members	VI, 1 III, 1
April	General Meeting	VI, 1
May	General and Topic Focused Meeting	VI, 1
Annually	At least one meeting with representatives from each organization that fall under the area of one of the Commissions	