



## **Diocese of Lansing**

### **DIOCESAN COMMISSION FOR CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING**

#### **BYLAWS**

##### **ARTICLE I – *Name***

The name of this body shall be the “Diocesan Commission for Catholic Social Teaching,” hereafter called the “Commission.”

##### **ARTICLE II – *Mission***

The Commission exists to assist the Bishop in his ministry to catechize all the baptized in the Diocese of Lansing on Catholic Social Teaching.

##### **ARTICLE III – *Purpose and Functions***

**Section 1. Purpose:** For the glory of God and the salvation of souls, the Commission is established by the Bishop of Lansing to promote sound formation in Catholic Social

Teaching, in order to equip the faithful to recognize and fulfil in society the obligations of charity and justice, according to the mind and heart of the Church.

As such, the Commission will be attentive to the following:

- (1) It belongs to the Church always and everywhere to announce moral principles, even about the social order, and to render judgment concerning any human affairs, insofar as the fundamental rights of the human person or of the salvation of souls requires it. (CIC, can. 747, 2).
- (2) While “the role of the hierarchy is to teach and to interpret authentically the norms of morality to be followed ... it belongs to the laity ... to infuse a Christian spirit into the mentality, customs, laws and structures of the community in which they live.” (Pope St. Paul VI, Encyclical *Populorum Progressio*, 33).
- (3) Lay persons are bound by the obligation and possess the right to acquire knowledge of Christian doctrine appropriate to the capacity and condition of each in order for them to be able to live according to this doctrine, announce it themselves, defend it if necessary, and take their part in exercising the apostolate. (cf, CIC, can. 229, §1).
- (4) “It must always remain clear that our promotion of the social doctrine of the Church is an articulation of principles. It is for those active in the civil order - including political parties, schools of economic thought, and other academicians and appropriate leaders - to determine the most practical and effective means of applying those principles. While the Church's steadfast witness to life, for the poor, for marriage and families can never be compromised, we must always be open to the possibility in other areas that some may, in good conscience, interpret the application of principles differently. We must continue to teach moral absolutes in the public arena so that ... all will be drawn to the splendor of truth, and thus find the God who is the source of that truth. (Pastoral Letter of Bishop Earl Boyea, Diocese of Lansing: *Go and Announce the Gospel of the Lord*, 51, April 5. 2012)

**Section 2. Functions:** The functions of the Commission are:

- (1) To serve as counsel to the Bishop on matters of Catholic Social Teaching.
- (2) To spur the faithful of the diocese to the conviction that following and practicing Catholic Social Teaching is constitutive to lived faith by virtue of our Baptism.
- (3) To provide a focus for parish and diocesan efforts to inform and inspire both the Catholic faithful and persons of good will regarding the truths of Catholic Social Teaching.

- (4) To promote mutual cooperation between parishes in their efforts to propagate Catholic Social Teaching.
- (5) To facilitate and sponsor formational and educational programs, including conferences, seminars, and trainings, which foster greater understanding of the Church's social doctrine.
- (6) To establish norms and oversee the distribution of grants from the annual Catholic Social Teaching Collection.
- (7) To collaborate as needed with the Michigan Catholic Conference toward preserving, protecting, and improving within the civil order the rights and protections that advance the dignity of the human person, secure religious liberty, and promote the common good of society.
- (8) To cooperate with public and private organizations, associations, and persons in fostering and promoting issues in conformity with Catholic Social Teaching.
- (9) To encourage and foster the study of Catholic Social Teaching among current and future leaders, particularly in the areas of government, education, and culture.
- (10) To give active support and appropriately commemorate and honor persons and organizations which have significantly advanced and exemplified Catholic Social Teaching.
- (11) Through on-going formation, the Commission will continually deepen its own knowledge and understanding of Catholic Social Teaching, always with Scripture and Church Tradition as its foundation.

**Section 3. Diocesan Resources:** The Commission should readily engage resources within the Diocesan Curia.

#### **ARTICLE IV – *Membership***

**Section 1. General Eligibility:** Each member of the Commission shall be a practicing, fully initiated adult Catholic, active in his or her parish, whose life is reflective of the Gospel and the teachings of the Catholic Church, and who is willing and available to participate effectively in fulfilling the Commission's purposes and functions.

**Section 2. Number of Members and Representation:** The Commission shall consist of no fewer than eight (8) and no more than fifteen (15) members of the clergy,

consecrated men and women, and laity as the Bishop shall determine. The Commission shall strive to maintain representation from the various deaneries within the Diocese of Lansing. Insofar as is practical, the membership of the Commission shall include women and men of diverse age, ethnicity, and race.

**Section 3. Nominations:** An eligible Catholic desiring to be a member of the Commission will submit a letter of interest to his or her pastor. The pastor will provide his recommendation of the applicant's suitability to serve on the Commission to the Chancellor. The Chancellor and Chair of the Commission will review the nomination, interview the candidate, and make recommendations to the Bishop.

**Section 4. Appointment and Terms:** The Bishop shall appoint a member of the Commission for a term of three (3) years. Each member of the Commission may serve for not more than two (2) consecutive terms. The term will run from July 1 to June 30. The appointments shall be staggered equally over a period of three (3) years to provide for continuity of a majority of the membership from year to year. Any member of the Commission who cannot fulfill his or her obligation of office shall submit a letter of resignation to the Bishop through the Commission Chair or the Chancellor.

**Section 5. General Provision. Members:** Members appointed under the previous Bylaws, unless they have resigned, retain their membership according to the norms in force on June 30, 2023.

**Section 6. General Provision. Officers:** Those appointed to office continue in the capacity in which they served on June 30, 2023, but in accord with the norms established in the Bylaws promulgated on September 25, 2023.

**Section 7. Removal:** The Commission may recommend to the Bishop that a member be removed from the Commission for absences from three (3) meetings within a year without advance notice. The Bishop may remove a Commission member at will.

**Section 8. Subject Matter Experts:** The Commission may, from time to time, call on the knowledge and experience of subject matter experts to help accomplish their functions of consultation, formation, catechesis, and counsel on matters related to Catholic Social Teaching.

## **ARTICLE V – *Leadership***

**Section 1. Leadership:** The leadership of the Commission shall consist of the roles of the Chair, the Vice-Chair, the Secretary, and, as an *ex-officio* non-voting member, the Chancellor. This leadership group is named the Executive Committee.

**Section 2. Nomination and Terms of Office:** The Chancellor will seek the consent of members who are eligible to serve as Chair and Vice-Chair and shall make recommendations to the Bishop regarding their appointment to these roles. The Bishop will appoint members to serve as Chair and Vice-Chair for a term of three (3) years, renewable consecutively once.

**Section 3. Chair.** The Chair shall carry out the following responsibilities:

- (1) To preside at all meetings of the Commission, and have the general powers and perform the duties usually vested in such an office, including the obligation to maintain the efficient and timely conduct and order of meetings, and to enforce the Bylaws.
- (2) To prepare the agenda for all meetings of the Commission, in concert with the Executive Committee, according to the provisions of the Bylaws, Article VI, Sec. 6.
- (3) To represent the Commission before the Bishop.

**Section 4. Vice-Chair.** The Vice-Chair, in the absence or incapacity of the Chair, shall carry out the responsibilities of the Chair and, when so acting, shall have the authority of the Chair. In the event of a vacancy in the office of Chair, the Vice-Chair fills the remainder of the Chair's term.

**Section 5. Secretary.** The Secretary shall be nominated by the Commission members and elected to this office by a vote of the members serving. The Secretary shall carry out the following responsibilities:

- (1) Keep accurate meeting minutes, including a permanent record of attendance.
- (2) Keep a record of terms of office and appointments to all committees of the Commission.
- (3) Keep a record of all consultations, reports, documents and correspondence related to the Commission's activities and decisions.
- (4) Distribute the agenda and any related meeting materials one (1) week in advance of the Commission meeting.
- (5) Distribute Commission meeting minutes within one (1) week of the end of the meeting.
- (6) Annually, the Secretary will deliver the finalized and approved minutes of the meetings, as well as all other relevant documentation, to the Chancellor for preservation in the Diocesan Archives.

**Section 6. Chancellor:** The Chancellor of the Diocese of Lansing shall be an *ex officio* non-voting member of the Commission. The Chancellor serves as the Bishop's liaison to the Commission.

## **ARTICLE VI – *Meetings***

**Section 1. Meetings:** The Commission shall meet quarterly or as otherwise decided by vote of the Commission.

**Section 2. Meeting Attendance:** Commission members may participate in Commission meetings through available technology.

**Section 3. Conduct of Meetings:** The Commission shall operate in a spirit of collegiality, always seeking consensus.

**Section 4. Quorum:** A simple majority (half plus one) of the members of the Commission constitutes a quorum for voting on any recommendation, nomination or document transmitted to the Bishop. A simple majority of those present voting ‘aye’ is required to support such a motion.

**Section 5. Participation by Non-members:** If any other person, other than a Commission member, requests to present a matter to the Commission, that person must obtain approval of the Chair and the Chancellor prior to the distribution of the agenda of that meeting. The request for inclusion of a matter on the agenda must be submitted in writing and accompanied by an explanation of the item and related documents.

**Section 6. Agenda:** The meeting agenda and any related documents shall be prepared and distributed seven (7) days prior to the meeting date.

**Section 7. Annual Meeting:** The first meeting of the Commission following July 1<sup>st</sup>, or another date determined by the Commission, will be designated as the Annual Meeting. The Commission shall strive to meet fully in person at least once per year, preferably at the Annual Meeting. The purposes of the Annual Meeting include the following:

- (1) To support Commission members in growing as committed disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- (2) To deepen Commission members' spirituality and commitment to Catholic Social Teaching, embodied in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- (3) Evaluate the past year's activities and the accomplishments of the Commission in relationship to its annual objectives and special requests from the Bishop or his cabinet.
- (4) Set objectives for the new year, identify opportunities for the Bishop, the curia and clergy to form the Catholic faithful and the wider community on Catholic Social Teaching.

- (5) Other planning as necessary.

**Section 8. Resignation:** In the event that a Commission member resigns from the Commission, the Chancellor will contact one or more pastors to seek out and recommend nominees to the Commission as appropriate. Commission members are welcome to recommend nominees to the Chancellor.

## **ARTICLE VII – *Committees***

**Section 1. Committees. *Ad Hoc Committees:*** The Chair may establish *ad hoc* committees as the Commission identifies need.

**Section 2. Committee Duties:** All committees shall perform such duties as may be assigned by the Chair.

## **ARTICLE VIII – *Communications***

**Section 1. Public Communications:** The Commission will work in collaboration with the office of the Diocesan Director of Communications in communicating information and actions related to the mission, purposes, and functions of the Commission in areas including:

- (1) Identifying existing outlets and establishing new outlets for the Commission to promote Catholic Social Teaching and the efforts being made throughout our diocese in applying Catholic Social Teaching for the common good.
- (2) Establishing a consistent vehicle for parishes and parishioners to communicate with the Commission on matters of Catholic Social Teaching.

## **ARTICLE IX – *Periodic Review of Bylaws***

**Section 1. Bylaw Review:** At least once every 5 years, or more often if determined by the Commission, a review of the current bylaws shall take place.

## **ARTICLE X – *Amendments to Bylaws***

**Section 1. Amendments:** These Bylaws may be amended by a simple majority of the voting members of the Commission and upon approval by the Bishop, provided, however, that any proposed amendments shall have been presented in writing to the Commission at a regular meeting preceding the meeting at which such a vote will be taken.

## **ARTICLE XI – *Promulgation***

**Section 1. Promulgation:** These Bylaws, issued with immediate effect, replace the norms previously issued under my authority on 25 April 2020.

Anything to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given at the Curia in Lansing on this the twenty-fifth day of September in the year of our Lord 2023.

Most Reverend Earl Boyea  
Bishop of Lansing

Mr. Michael Andrews  
Chancellor