

Parish Trustees

I. The Parish As A Corporation

Each Parish of the Diocese is a five-member Corporation. The members of the Corporation are as follows:

<i>President</i>	<i>Most Reverend Bishop</i>
<i>Vice President</i>	<i>Pastor</i>
<i>Director</i>	<i>Vicar General</i>
<i>Treasurer</i>	<i>Lay Trustee</i>
<i>Secretary</i>	<i>Lay Trustee</i>

The President, Vice President, and Director are *Ex Officio* members according to statutes of the Diocese of Fargo.

II. Recommendations Regarding The Appointment Of Lay Trustees

1. Annual Nomination and Appointment

Lay Trustees are appointed on an **annual** basis.

Statute 660. "The two lay members of the Corporation shall be appointed annually by the Ordinary from among the lay members of the congregation. Such appointment shall be made before the first Sunday of the fiscal year by the said Ordinary upon the recommendation of the presiding Pastor of said Parish.

Failing such recommendation made by the presiding Pastor of said Parish an election shall be held on the first Sunday of the fiscal year at which all members of the congregation who are in good standing shall be entitled to vote. At this election the voters shall choose from among their number four persons who shall be recommended by the Pastor to the Ordinary, and from among whom the Ordinary shall appoint two members to the Board of Directors.

2. One Year Term of Office

Trustees do not serve terms of office; e.g., two years, three years, four years. Trustees serve on a one-year basis. No Trustee should be informed that she/he is serving a term beyond one year.

3. Consecutive Annual Appointments

For the sake of continuity, a Trustee may serve additional one-year terms. The number of consecutive annual appointments is not more than four.

4. Qualifications for Trustees

Parishioners who are considering accepting nomination for the position of trustee must be:

- Catholic
- A registered, practicing parish member
- At least 25 years old.
- Contribute toward the Church according to their means
- Provide conscientiously for the religious education of their children
- Are not members of forbidden societies

They must be educated about the position. Trustee nominees should receive orientation from the pastor and by attending Diocesan Workshops.

Statute 663. Lay Directors shall keep in mind their sacred privilege in being associated with Bishop, Vicar General, and Pastor in the administration of the temporal possessions of the Parish. They shall, therefore, be persons who are imbued with a deep Catholic sense of reverence for and obedience to ecclesiastical authority. Associated with Bishop, Vicar General, and Pastor in an important and sacred office they shall keep themselves apart from all cliques, factions, and troublemakers in the parish. They shall remember at all times that they serve God and not men. They shall be persons of character, and hence shall be above all human respect for and low servile following of those who would hinder the proper administration of the affairs of the Parish. Should they find that they can no longer give the other members of the Board the co-operation desired, they should place their resignation into the hands of the Bishop as President of the Corporation and state the reasons for their action.

They shall acquaint themselves thoroughly with their respective duties of office lest they presume to take to themselves duties that appertain to the

other members of the Board, especially to the President or Vice-President of the Corporation.

CHURCH OFFICERS - ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES

The trustees shall continue in service until their successors are appointed. They shall not be removed during their terms except for a serious reason which the Pastor and/or Trustee must indicate in writing to the Bishop.

The lay members are to exercise independent judgment with respect to the management of all secular matters. They must defer to the judgment of the ex-officio members in matters relating to "the doctrine, discipline and ritual of the Roman Catholic Church." Lay members have the right to be frank, and should be given complete disclosure of all material facts, including financial data, in exercising independent judgment.

Trustees of a parish are an important part in order to have an effective secular management. A trustee needs to be sympathetic but also firm, they must care deeply for the parish so that the appropriate message is sent to its parishioners. The trustee must be a person of stature, and must be perceived as having a concern for their reputation. This will give credibility to the parish for its donors. A trustee must contribute money if they can afford to, as well as ideas, advice, and critical judgment. A trustee is a servant, and if they do not want to care enough to serve, they should not continue on the board. The trustee must see that the will to manage is exercised, and that secular management principles are actually applied. They must be willing to be discerning and perhaps answering awkward questions from parishioners. They may need to challenge to be effective stewards in a way that other parishioners may consider inappropriate. The trustee has the responsibility of monitoring a proper balance among the interests of clergy, staff and parishioners.

RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING DUTIES OF TRUSTEES

- The trustee shall be kept informed on the parish's performance in all secular areas.
- Since all management responsibilities concerning secular activities are shared by all trustees, lay trustees have the right to vote upon secular activities which the Pastor deems necessary after consultation with the lay trustees. To the extent that uniform policies are promoted within the diocese, the trustees should consider and, if deemed appropriate, adopt resolutions approving such policies.
- See to it that regular meetings are held by the parish finance council. Must keep the pastor aware of all important happenings of the parish affairs when the pastor is unable to attend meetings but authorizes the meeting to take place.
- Be cognizant of the administrative staff to insure they are competent, motivated individuals.

- Review, approve and sign the Annual Parish Finance Report.
- Attend the annual corporation meeting.
- Insure filing of all required reports.
- When applicable, vote on required banking resolutions (i.e. change in authorized signature on parish accounts).
- Assist with developing policies and monitoring results and convening long term strategies to insure the financial stability of the parish.
- If applicable, assist with developing strategies to accelerate repayment of parish debt.
- Assist with developing policies to insure maintenance of parish facilities.
- Assist with developing policies that produce proper insurance risk management control for protection of building and to minimize liability insurance claims.
- At least one trustee (usually the treasurer) along with the pastor must sign each check issued by the parish.
- Parish trustees and pastors are not to initiate or respond to any lawsuit in the name of the parish without the written permission of the bishop, who is president.
- The trustee-treasurer is an ex-officio member of the Parish Finance Council.

LEGAL MATTERS:

1. Lawsuits

Parish trustees are not to initiate or respond to any lawsuit in the name of the parish without the written permission of the bishop.

2. Acts of Administration Requiring Unanimous Consent of the Directors

Certain administrative matters dealt with by the parish corporation require that all five directors give their approval before the actions is valid and legal.

Since two of the directors of the parish corporation, the bishop and vicar general, are not ordinarily a part of the local parish scene, and since all five directors need to vote unanimously on the acts of administration listed below, the pastor and the two trustees must contact the bishop and the vicar general for their vote by proxy.

- A. Execution of any document (e.g. deed, mortgage) affecting the title to the real property of the Corporation.
- B. Acts of alienation or sale of property.
- C. Indebtedness exceeding ten percent (10%) of ordinary income

TRUSTEE-SECRETARY

Position Description

The secretary is responsible for corporate record keeping at the parish other than financial records, such as corporate minutes, documents, notices and correspondence. One of the major responsibilities of the trustee-secretary is to ensure that parish records are kept on parish grounds in an easily accessible and orderly fashion. The trustee-secretary is responsible for maintaining records of all real property, property tax exemption, the parish inventory and the parish census. The trustee-secretary is an *ex-officio* member of the Parish Pastoral Council.

Suggested Responsibilities of Trustee-Secretary

1. Arranges and keeps minutes of any meeting of the Board of Directors; is responsible for the corporate book of minutes.
2. Signs corporate documents and affixes the corporate seal.
3. Attends to corporate notices and correspondence; provides the parish councils with copies of resolutions and minutes as appropriate.
4. Records and files proxy documents and all corporate reports as prescribed by federal, state, local and diocesan authorities.
5. With the pastor signs parish checks as needed. (Checks must be signed by two members of the Board of Directors or other board authorized persons).
6. Assists in preparation of annual parish and diocesan reports.
7. Maintains records of all real parish property and property tax exemptions, ensuring that all originals are filed with the Diocese.
8. Assists in preparation of and maintains parish inventory.
9. Assists parish staff in maintaining a current parish census, including the names and addresses of all parish members.

TRUSTEE-TREASURER

Position Description

The trustee-treasurer is responsible for keeping accurate and detailed accounts of receipts and disbursements for the parish. Some parishes have paid staff who carry out these accounting functions. The trustee-treasurer's particular responsibility is that of parish treasury activities. This includes the care and custody of funds, assets, supervision of banking, credit, and insurance. The trustee-treasurer is an *ex-officio* member of the Parish Finance Council.

Suggested Responsibilities of Trustee-Treasurer

1. Oversees, coordinates or maintains accurate and detailed accounts of all receipts and disbursements of parish funds following the reporting operations of the parish.
2. Coordinates bank deposits of parish funds; is familiar with banking regulations.
3. With the pastor, signs all checks for disbursements of parish funds as needed. (Checks must be signed by two members of the Board of Directors or other board authorized persons.)
4. Coordinates parish property and casualty insurance coverage under Diocesan Self-Insurance Program.
5. Coordinates collection of parish contribution and special collections.
6. Assists in preparation of annual parish budget.
7. Oversees or assists in the preparation of financial reports of the parish and to the diocese.
8. Serves as the *ex-officio* member of the Parish Finance Council.