

VARIOUS CONSULTATIVE BODIES

IX-C: THE DIOCESAN RURAL LIFE COMMISSION

A. Name

This organization shall be known as the Diocesan Rural Life Commission of the Diocese of Crookston.

B. Mission

The mission of the Diocesan Rural Life Commission is to promote the Church's role and ministry in addressing ecological, social, political and moral/spiritual concerns of diocesan people related to food, agriculture and the viability of rural communities.

C. Purpose

The Diocesan Rural Life Commission is to advise and assist the Office of Christian Service and Bishop in the promotion of the diocesan rural life mission; this includes assessment of needs, development of projects and programs to meet these needs, and evaluation of rural life efforts.

D. Areas of Concern (in cooperation with the Pastoral Office of Christian Service)

1. The Commission will help maintain a full-time Advocate;
2. It will aid in the implementation of pastorals concerning rural life, social justice, stewardship and the economy;
3. It will network with other church and community based rural organizations;
4. It will help educate priests and pastoral associates on the problems and needs of people in rural America;
5. It will provide advice to the Bishop on rural affairs;
6. It will develop a list of parish-level affiliates and resource persons;
7. It will try to raise awareness to improve rural, small town/city interrelations;
8. It will promote the integration of rural culture and values in our liturgies and religious events;
9. It will promote and develop ways to minister to the hurting community members through support groups, peer ministers and workshops;

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10. It will encourage the use of Christian values when rural issues are addressed.

E. Membership

1. Composition

The Commission is composed of 10 men and women or couples from the Diocese of Crookston, to include representatives of groups such as farmers, small business operators, educators, service agency workers, media personnel, clergy/religious, etc.

2. Expectation of Members

- a. Study and support the Church's social teaching and participate in the dialogue whose goal is the implementation of that social teaching;
- b. Be open in support of a sustainable and family system of agriculture;
- c. Listen and participate well in a group;
- d. Inform themselves on issues;
- e. Maintain an objective view without a personal, political or a religious agenda;
- f. Give time and effort relative to Commission projects and programs;
- g. Attend meetings regularly;
- h. Give three years as a Commission member.

3. Nominations

Nominees to the Commission will be named by the Nominating Committee in accordance with the operating procedures of the Commission. The names will be presented to the Commission for recommendation to the Bishop. Those nominated will number two more than one-third of the Commission membership. The Bishop will appoint the new members from the list of nominees.

4. Term of Office

- a. The regular term of office is three years. It is renewable for a second three-year term, subject to the nominating process. The annual term will follow

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the fiscal year, July 1 to June 30.

- b. The terms of the charter Commission members will be determined by casting lots so that no more than one-third of the Commission will retire in any given year.
- c. Members who have three unexcused absences in a year must be contacted by the Chairperson to determine whether they wish to continue to serve. It is understood that a member who is unavoidably absent three or more times is still considered a responsible and productive member of the Commission.
- d. Any resignation from the Commission may be voluntary and/or upon the recommendation of the Commission. Vacancies by reason of resignation, death, disability, loss of residential qualification or termination of term of office will be filled according to the nominating process.

5. Remuneration

Members of the Commission serve in a voluntary capacity. There is not remuneration unless specifically authorized by the Chairperson.

F. Meetings

The Commission will meet 4-5 times a year. The date, time and place for each meeting shall be determined by the Rural Life Advocate. Additional meetings may be called by the Advocate when it is deemed useful or necessary.

G. Officers and Duties

1. The officers of the Commission shall be a Chairperson, Vice-chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer. The officers will be elected at the first meeting following the appointment of new members.
2. The Secretary shall record minutes of the meeting.
3. The annual term for officers will follow the fiscal year, July 1 to June 30.

H. Voting Procedures

Since the Commission is advisory, the normal process in conducting business is done by consensus.

I. Committees

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1. The Nomination Committee is made up of three members of the Commission. This Committee will be appointed by the Chairperson annually to recruit and present names of nominees according to the nominating procedures.
2. Other committees or task force groups may be developed by the Chairperson as needed. Non-board persons may be asked to serve on a task force.

J. Amendments

Amendments to operating procedures shall be made only upon approval of the Bishop.