

# Justice and Peace Committee Constitution and By-Laws

St. Mary's Catholic Church  
Blacksburg, Virginia  
Adopted January 15, 2019

## Justice and Peace (J&P) Committee Vision and Mission

**Vision:** The people of St. Mary's parish promote fair and supportive communities within the New River Valley, commit to solidarity with our twin parish in Haiti, and make possible dignified lives for all as envisioned by Jesus's words to love one another as he loved us.

**Mission:** 1) Provide information, financial assistance, and volunteer services to those in need within the New River Valley and our Haiti parish twin; and 2) integrate social justice activities and increase charitable works within parish life at St. Mary's: *to be the hands and face of God in our midst*

J&P Committee plans, implements and evaluates the social justice ministry of the parish. It helps the parish to meet the needs of the poor and oppressed, both locally and globally; to reflect on the Gospel's social teaching and on the underlying causes of social problems (in collaboration with Christian Formation and Worship); and to transform social structures through legislative advocacy, peacemaking, and other efforts. This ministry encourages parishioners to build a culture of life through their family, work, and citizenship. [*Called to Serve*, Diocese of Richmond]

## Membership

Members of the J&P Committee are comprised of leaders involved in ongoing St. Mary's community social outreach ministries (one voting position per ministry and one vote per person) listed in the following Organization Section. Eligible members are registered parishioners of St. Mary's Catholic Church who volunteer or are recommended and who are approved by the Pastor. J&P voting membership is approved by the Pastor for each parish fiscal year.

## Officers and Elections

The J&P Committee elects three officers from its membership each year:  
Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer.

The *Chair* and *Treasurer* shall be members who have served on the J&P Committee at least one full year. The *Chair* sets the agenda for each monthly meeting, informs the J&P Committee of meetings and agenda, leads the meetings, and meets with the Pastor as needed. The *Treasurer* receives financial statements from the St. Mary's Business Manager, reconciles them with J&P decisions, and reports them to the J&P Committee. The *Secretary* takes notes at the meetings, writes the meeting minutes, and submits them to the Chair before the next meeting. The officers are subject to approval by the Pastor.

## Organization

The following ongoing J&P ministries at St. Mary's shall designate a representative to serve on the J&P Committee as a standing voting member.

*Hunger Relief and Food Insecurity  
Haiti Twin Parish  
Prison Ministry  
Sanctity of Life  
Social Outreach Ministry*

Voting Members 2018–2019  
Barbara and Russ Macdonald  
John Galbraith  
Dick Neves  
Bob Canfield  
Suzi Austin  
Amelia Ball  
Lisa and Mike Goatley  
Rick Disalvo  
Barbara Wheeler

J&P Committee may vote to recommend new parish ministries, which may have a representative as a voting member of J&P Committee, for approval by the Pastor. The J&P Committee also may recommend to the Pastor other parishioners as at-large voting members. The pastor may approve parishioners who serve in social ministries, such Angel Tree, Christmas Store, Glean Team, Interfaith Food Pantry, His Hands, Knights of Columbus, Montgomery County Emergency Assistance Program, Pregnancy Resource Center of the New River Valley, To Our House, and the Valley Interfaith Childcare Center, as additional voting members.

## **Meetings**

J&P Committee meetings are held monthly from August to June of each year. The Chair shall schedule and announce the meeting at least a month in advance. Routine business, such as call for agenda items and distribution of agenda and meeting minutes, normally will be by email communication. J&P votes to approve the allocation of its budget and Parish Charity applications. The Chair decides if a meeting will be cancelled or postponed and when to reschedule it.

A 50% quorum of J&P Committee *Membership* is required. A simple majority vote of the quorum is required to vote on proposals, except that two-thirds majority is required for changes to the Constitution and Bylaws. If a quorum is not present at the meeting, then J&P Committee will use email to inform the members and request votes to be submitted with a deadline provided, normally within one week. Votes on *Parish Charities* funds are expected to occur quarterly. The J&P Committee does not employ proxy votes.

## **Funds**

The J&P Committee recommends to the Pastor, throughout the year, use of budgeted parish funds and donations to St. Mary's for Parish Charities. It administers an award process, using a J&P-approved application form, to provide financial resources to parish ministries and local organizations for projects that support social justice activities. Applications are accepted on an ongoing basis and remain eligible to receive funds for the current parish fiscal year. Preference goes to projects that will help to reduce hunger and loneliness, provide elder and youth care, support those going through divorce or separation, and provide support for those who need food or shelter. The J&P Committee favors applications that align with the Catholic social teaching, involve parishioners of St. Mary's, and serve the communities in the New River Valley and Haiti. Decisions will be made after the end of each quarter of the parish fiscal year (Sept, Dec, Mar, and June). The Chair will ensure that all current applications, awarded in the current fiscal year and pending, are reviewed.

## **Other Situations**

The J&P Committee defers to *Robert's Rules of Order*, when applicable, for situations not addressed here, including the procedures to amend the Constitution and By-laws.