

ORLANDO DIOCESAN COUNCIL

*of*

CATHOLIC WOMEN

**Parliamentary  
Procedure  
Manual**



**"Where there is no law,  
but every man does what is right in his own eyes,  
there is the least of real liberty.\***

**— Henry M. Robert —**

*Prepared by Julie Drake for Orlando Diocesan Council of Catholic Women  
1994*

*Reviewed and accepted March 4, 2020*

# Table of Contents

PARLIAMENTARY LAW .....	1
HOW TO PRESENT A MOTION TO THE ASSEMBLY FOR CONSIDERATION .....	2
MAKING A MOTION .....	2
SECONDING A MOTION .....	2
THE STATING OF THE MOTION BY THE CHAIR .....	2
DEBATING THE MOTION .....	3
PUTTING THE QUESTION .....	4
FORM OF TAKING A VOICE VOTE .....	4
FORM OF TAKING A RISING VOTE .....	4
CONTENT OF COMPLETE ANNOUNCEMENT OF RESULT OF VOTE .....	4
FORM OF ANNOUNCEMENT .....	5
TIE VOTES AND CASES IN WHICH CHAIR'S VOTE AFFECTS THE RESULT .....	5
MOTIONS AND PURPOSES .....	6
A MAIN MOTION .....	6
SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS (Ranking Motions) .....	6
POSTPONE INDEFINITELY .....	6
TO AMEND .....	6
TO REFER TO A COMMITTEE .....	6
POSTPONE TO A DEFINITE TIME .....	6
LIMIT DEBATE OR EXTEND DEBATE .....	6
PREVIOUS QUESTION .....	7
LAY ON THE TABLE .....	7
PRIVILEGED MOTIONS .....	7
CALL FOR ORDERS OF THE DAY .....	7
QUESTIONS OF PRIVILEGE .....	7
TAKE A RECESS .....	7
TO ADJOURN .....	7
TO FIX TIME TO WHICH TO ADJOURN .....	7
INCIDENTAL MOTIONS .....	8
POINT OF ORDER .....	8
AN APPEAL .....	8
SUSPEND THE RULES .....	8
DIVISION OF THE ASSEMBLY .....	8
CLOSE NOMINATIONS .....	8
REOPEN NOMINATIONS .....	8
OBJECTION TO CONSIDERATION OF A QUESTION .....	8
DIVISION OF THE QUESTION .....	8
CONSIDER SERIATIM OF PARAGRAPH BY PARAGRAPH .....	9

REQUESTS OR INQUIRIES .....	9
MOTIONS THAT BRING A QUESTION AGAIN BEFORE THE ASSEMBLY ...	9
TO TAKE FROM THE TABLE .....	9
RESCIND .....	9
DISCHARGE A COMMITTEE .....	9
TO RECONSIDER.....	9
TO RATIFY .....	9
SUMMARY .....	9
THREE STEPS INVOLVED IN HANDLING A MOTION.....	9
RULES OF DEBATE.....	9
DECORUM.....	10
GENERAL PLAN OF BY-LAWS .....	11

## PARLIAMENTARY LAW

The fundamental purpose of parliamentary law is to determine "the will of the assembly" and then make that will effective.

The principles underlying parliamentary law are based on the regard for the rights:

- of the majority to rule;
- of the minority to be heard;
- of individual members;
- of absentees; and
- of all these together.

The application of parliamentary law is the best method yet devised to enable assemblies of any size, with due regard for every member's opinion, to arrive at the general will on a maximum number of questions of varying complexity in a minimum time and under all kinds of internal climate ranging from total harmony to hardened or impassioned division of opinion.

## **HOW TO PRESENT A MOTION TO THE ASSEMBLY FOR CONSIDERATION**

All business should be brought before the assembly by a motion of a member or by the presentation of a communication to the assembly.

**MAKING A MOTION.** Before a member in an assembly can make a motion or speak in debate (the parliamentary name given to any form of discussion of the merits of the motion) she must obtain the floor; that is, she must be recognized by the Chair as having the exclusive right to be heard at that time. The Chair must recognize any member who seeks the floor while entitled to it. To claim the floor, a member rises at her place, when no one else has the floor, and says, "Mr. Chairman," "Mr. President," or "Madam President," "Madam Chairman" (there is no such title as Mr. Chairperson). If the member is entitled to the floor at that time, the Chair recognizes her, normally by announcing, as applicable, the person's name or title. The member then has the floor and can remain standing and speaking on a question already on the floor or if there is no main motion on the floor, she makes a motion by stating, "I move that. . ." or "I move to . . ." and then states the motion.

**SECONDING A MOTION.** After a motion has been made, another member who wishes it **to be considered** says, "I **second the motion**" or "I **second** it," without obtaining the floor, and in small assemblies, without rising.

If no member seconds the motion, the Chair must be sure that all have heard it before proceeding to other business. In such a case, the Chair normally asks, "Is there a second to the motion?" If there still is no second, the Chair says, "The motion is not seconded," or "for the lack of a second the motion is not before the assembly." Then she immediately says, "The next business in order is ..." or "Is there any further business?" (The requirement of a second is for the Chair's guidance as to whether she should state the question on the motion, thus placing it before the assembly. Its purpose is to prevent time from being consumed by the assembly having to dispose of a motion that only one person wants to see introduced.) A second merely implies that the seconder agrees that the motion should come before the assembly, and not that she necessarily favors it. A member may second the motion because she would like to see the assembly go on record as rejecting the proposal, if she believes a vote on the motion would have such a result.

A motion made by direction of a board or a committee (of more than one person) requires no second from the floor, since its introduction has been directed by a majority vote within the board or a committee and is therefore desired by more than one person.

**THE STATING OF THE MOTION BY THE CHAIR.** When a motion that is in order has been made and seconded, the Chair formally places it before the assembly by

stating the question, that is, she states the exact motion and indicates that it is open to debate. The basic form used by the Chair in stating the motion is, "It is moved and seconded that, (or "to")----- Are you ready for the question?" (This means, it is now open for debate or discussion).

Once the main motion has been brought before the assembly through the three steps described above, there are three further steps by which the motion is considered in the ordinary and simplest case. These normal steps are as follows:

- (1) Members debate the motion (unless no member claims the floor).
- (2) The Chair puts the question (that is, puts it to a vote).
- (3) The Chair announces the result of the vote.

**DEBATING THE MOTION.** Immediately after stating the motion, the Chair should turn toward the maker of the motion to see if she wishes to be assigned the floor first in debate — to which the maker has the right, if she claims it before anyone else has been recognized, even though others may have risen and addressed the Chair first.

Debate must be confined to the merits of the pending question. Speakers must address their remarks to the Chair, maintain a courteous tone, and, especially in reference to any divergence of opinion, should avoid injecting a personal note into debate. To this end they must never attack or make an allusion to the motives of members. Speakers should refer to officers only by titles and should avoid the mention of other members' names as much as possible.

In debate, each member has a right to speak twice on the same question on the same day, but cannot make a second speech on the same question so long as any member who has not spoken on that question desires the floor. The member who has spoken twice on a particular question on the same day has exhausted her right to debate that question for that day.

While members are speaking in debate, the presiding officer should remain seated, unless the view between her and the members would be obstructed. In the latter case, she should step back slightly while a member is speaking.

Although the presiding officer should give close attention to each speaker's remarks during debate, she cannot interrupt a person who has the floor so long as that person does not violate any of the assembly's rules and no disorder arises. The presiding officer must never interrupt a speaker simply because she knows more about the matter than the speaker does.

The presiding officer cannot close debate so long as any member who has not exhausted her right to debate desires the floor, except by order of the assembly, which requires a two-thirds vote.

**PUTTING THE QUESTION.** When the debate appears to have closed, the Chair again asks, "Are you ready for the question?" If no one then arises to claim the floor, the Chair proceeds to put the question — that is, she puts it to a vote after once making clear the exact question the assembly is called upon to decide.

In putting the question, the Chair should stand and should especially project her voice to be sure that all are aware that the vote is being taken. The vote on a motion is usually taken by voice (or *viva voce*). In putting the question, the Chair calls first for the affirmative vote, then she calls for the negative vote, no matter how nearly unanimous the affirmative vote may appear, except that this rule is commonly relaxed in the case of noncontroversial motions of a complimentary or courtesy nature, but even such a case, if any member objects, the Chair must call for a negative vote.

**FORM OF TAKING A VOICE VOTE.** A vote by voice is a regular method of voting on a motion that does not require more than a majority vote for its adoption. In taking the vote, the Chair puts the question by saying, "The question is on the adoption of the motion to . . ." (repeating or clearly identifying the motion). "As many as are in favor of the motion, say 'Aye' . . . (pausing for a response). Those opposed, say 'No.'"

**FORM OF TAKING A RISING VOTE.** The simple rising vote is used principally in cases where the voice vote has been taken with an inconclusive result, and is a normal method of voting on a motion requiring a two-thirds vote for adoption. In such cases the vote can be taken in a form like this: "Those in favor of the motion to invite Mr. Jones to be guest speaker at our next meeting will rise (or please stand) Be seated Those opposed will rise----- Be seated. If a rising vote remains inconclusive, the Chair or the assembly can order the vote to be counted. The form then used is, "As many as are in favor of the motion will rise and remain standing until counted \_\_\_\_\_ Be seated. Those opposed will rise and remain standing until counted . . . . Be seated."

**CONTENT OF COMPLETE ANNOUNCEMENT OF RESULT OF VOTE.**

1. Report of the voting itself, stating which side has "it;" that is, which side is more numerous. Or in the case of a motion requiring a two-thirds vote for its adoption, whether there were two-thirds in the affirmative. If the vote has been counted, the Chair should first give the count before announcing the prevailing side.
2. Declaration that the motion is adopted or lost.
3. Statement indicating the effect of the vote or ordering its execution.
4. Where applicable, announcement of the next item of business, or in the case of a "secondary" motion, stating the question on the next motion that consequently comes up for a vote.



## **FORM OF ANNOUNCEMENT.**

- For voice vote... "The ayes have it and the motion is adopted," or "The noes have it and the motion is lost."
- For a rising vote... "The affirmative has it and the motion is adopted," or "The negative has it and the motion is lost."
- For a rising vote for which a count has been ordered... "There are thirty-two in the affirmative and thirty in the negative. The affirmative has it and the motion is adopted."
- For motions requiring a two-thirds vote for adoption... "There are fifty-one in the affirmative and twenty-three in the negative. There being two-thirds in the affirmative, the motion is adopted." or "There being less than two-thirds in the affirmative, the motion is lost."

## **TIE VOTES AND CASES IN WHICH CHAIR'S VOTE AFFECTS THE RESULT.**

If the presiding officer is a member of the assembly, she can vote as any other member when the vote is by ballot. In all other cases the presiding officer, if a member of the assembly, can (but is not obliged to) vote whenever her vote will affect the result — that is, she can vote either to break or to cause a tie; or, in a case where a two-thirds vote is required, she can vote either to cause or block the attainment of the necessary two-thirds. In particular:

- On a tie vote, a motion requiring a majority vote for adoption is lost, since a tie is not a majority. Thus, if there is a tie without the Chair's vote, the presiding officer can, if she is a member, vote in the affirmative, thereby causing the motion to be adopted; or, if there is one more in the affirmative than in the negative without the Chair's vote (for example, if there are seventy-two votes in favor and seventy-one opposed), she can vote in the negative to create a tie, thus causing the motion to be rejected.
- Similarly, in the case of a motion requiring a two-thirds vote, if, without the Chair's vote, the number in the affirmative is one less than twice the number in the negative (for example, if there are fifty-nine in the affirmative and thirty in the negative), the Chair, if a member, can vote in the affirmative and thus cause the motion to be adopted; or, if there are exactly two-thirds in the affirmative without her vote (for example, if there are sixty in the affirmative and thirty in the negative), the Chair can vote in the negative, with the result that the motion is rejected. Similarly, the Chair's vote might affect the result in cases where a majority of the members can decide a question.

The Chair cannot vote twice, once as a member, then again in her capacity as presiding officer.

In an appeal from the decision of the Chair, a tie vote sustains the Chair's decision, even though her vote created the tie, on the principle that the decision of the Chair can be reversed only by a majority.

## **MOTIONS AND PURPOSES**

Motions are tools and everyone engaged in organization work should know the proper motion to use to accomplish a certain objective. The following list of motions should be studied, so to participate effectively in business meetings of an organization.

A MAIN MOTION introduces a subject to the assembly for its consideration.

- (a) Member must obtain the floor and be recognized.
- (b) Form . . . . "I move that. . . ." or "I move the adoption of the following resolution

### **SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS (Ranking Motions)**

Definition: Secondary in importance; subordinate motions which assist in treating or disposing of a Main Motion and sometimes of other motions.

**POSTPONE INDEFINITELY** proposes to reject the MAIN MOTION without the risk of bringing it to a vote. "I move to postpone indefinitely the motion that

**TO AMEND** proposes to modify or alter the Main Motion. I move to amend the motion. . . by inserting — striking-out — adding or by substituting for it. . ."

**TO REFER TO A COMMITTEE** proposes to authorize a committee to act for the assembly, or to investigate and report or to study and make suitable recommendations.

**POSTPONE TO A DEFINITE TIME** proposes to authorize a delay in considering the Main Motion to some definite day or meeting or hour or until a certain event.

**LIMIT DEBATE OR EXTEND DEBATE** proposes that debate be limited by any of these forms:

1. to limit the number or length of speeches, i.e., one speech of two minutes for each member.
2. to fix the hour for closing debate.
3. to limit debate or the length of it.

To Extend Debate proposes to extend the limits of debate.

PREVIOUS QUESTION proposes to close debate and take the vote; to stop the making of subsidiary motions except "to Lay on the Table." This motion, if carried by a two-thirds vote, stops debate immediately and any further amendments. .

LAY ON THE TABLE proposes a temporary postponement with the intent of taking the question up again later in the same meeting, by motion, To Take From The Table.

- A. Often misused to "postpone something to another day or time," when the proper motion is really to "Postpone."
- B. The motion To Table is used as a means to temporarily set aside a matter in order to take care of an emergency that has arisen with the intention of resuming the handling of that matter as soon as the emergency has been taken care of.
- C. "Madame Chairman, seeing that the guest speaker must unexpectedly catch the 2:00 p.m. flight, I move To Table the matter under discussion giving the speaker ample time for her presentation."  
(Second-Majority vote)

As soon as the speaker is finished, the discussion on the matter tabled is resumed.

PRIVILEGED MOTIONS, while not relating to the pending question, are of so great importance as to require them to take precedence over all other questions and, on account of this high privilege, they are undebatable. They are also ranking motions.

CALL FOR ORDERS OF THE DAY (the lowest ranking privileged motion) is a demand that business prescribed for that particular time be taken up or resumed. Orders Of The Day means the order of business of the meeting.

QUESTIONS OF PRIVILEGE are raised by members concerned with questions relating to the rights and privileges of the assembly or to any of its members, or to those of personal privilege. It may be a question as to the comfort of the members such as heating, lighting, ventilation, etc., or to ask the speaker to speak louder or closer to the microphone. The question may also relate to charges against the character of the member or to other personal matters.

TAKE A RECESS proposes an intermission in the day's proceedings.

TO ADJOURN proposes to close the meeting

TO FIX TIME TO WHICH TO ADJOURN proposes that the meeting continue on another day and fixes time for this "adjourned meeting." The adjourned meeting is a

legal continuation of the meeting. The day set for the adjourned meeting must not be fixed beyond that of the next meeting.

**INCIDENTAL MOTIONS** are motions which are incidental to the other motions or matter out of which they arise and, with few exceptions, are so related to the main question that it must be decided immediately before business can proceed. Once on the floor, it yields to any privileged question. The following are but a few Incidental Motions.

**POINT OF ORDER** is a motion to call attention of the Chair to the violation of a rule when the Chair neglects to do so.

**AN APPEAL** may be made from any decision or ruling of the Chair, and it can only be made at the time the ruling is made.

**SUSPEND THE RULES** provides an opportunity for the assembly to do something that cannot be done without violating its own rules. It must not be an action which is in conflict with the bylaws or with the fundamental principles of parliamentary law. The rules that can be suspended are those relating to the priority of business procedure or the admission to the meetings or something of that nature.

**DIVISION OF THE ASSEMBLY** may be called for, whenever a member doubts the Chair's decision as to the result of a vote that is taken by voice or by a show of hands. The division of the assembly must be called for immediately after the Chair announces the result of the vote. As soon as the division is called for, the Chair proceeds again to take their vote, this time having the affirmative rise, then when they are seated having the negative rise. This is not a counted vote, as it requires a majority vote to order a vote to be counted.

**CLOSE NOMINATIONS** is usually used only in very large bodies and only after a reasonable time has been given for members to nominate. Otherwise the Chair may declare, by general consent, the nominations closed.

**REOPEN NOMINATIONS** may be made, if for any reason it is so desired or for the purpose of permitting further nominations to be made. This motion requires a majority vote to carry, however to close nominations requires a two-thirds vote.

**OBJECTION TO CONSIDERATION OF A QUESTION** enables the assembly to avoid an original Main Motion altogether when it believes it would be undesirable for the motion to even come before the assembly. Objection to considering the motion must be made immediately after it is *stated*.

**DIVISION OF THE QUESTION** is used to divide a main motion or an amendment into separate questions so that each may be considered separately. That may be done

when a motion relating to a single subject contains several parts, each of which is capable of standing as a complete proposition.

**CONSIDER SERIATIM OF PARAGRAPH BY PARAGRAPH** allows the assembly to consider a question composed of paragraphs or selections all bearing on the same subject, paragraph by paragraph or section by section or any natural subdivision, i.e., Bylaws.

**REQUESTS OR INQUIRIES** are motions which allow members to obtain information or request permission of the assembly to do or to have something done. Requests grow out of business of the assembly

### **MOTIONS THAT BRING A QUESTION AGAIN BEFORE THE ASSEMBLY**

**TO TAKE FROM THE TABLE** is a motion which permits consideration of a Main Motion which was laid on the table to be resumed.

**RESCIND** is a motion on which an action previously ordered or carried can be changed, repealed, or annulled.

**DISCHARGE A COMMITTEE** is a motion by which further consideration of a question or subject may be taken away from the committee.

**TO RECONSIDER** is a motion of American origin which enables an assembly, within a limited time and without notice, to bring back for further consideration a motion which has already been voted upon.

**TO RATIFY** is used to make legal some emergency action, such as, one taken at a meeting when no quorum was present, or to make valid an action already taken that cannot be legally valid until approved by the assembly.

Motions are tools and one who is skilled in their use aids greatly in expediting the business of the assembly.

### **SUMMARY**

#### **THREE STEPS INVOLVED IN HANDLING A MOTION**

1. Obtain the Floor
  - a. Member rises and addresses the Chair: "Madam, Mr. President
  - b. In a large assembly, state name and identification.
  - c. Receive recognition.
2. Bring Motion Before the Assembly
  - a. Member makes the motion: "I move that

- b. Member seconds the motion.
  - c. Chair states the question on the motion: "It is moved and seconded that
3. Consider the Motion
- a. Debate the motion.
  - b. Chair puts question to vote: "The question is on the adoption of the motion to . . . as many as are in favor say, 'Aye' — those opposed say, 'No'."
  - c. The Chair announces the result of the vote: "The ayes have it; the motion is adopted, and we will " Or, "The noes have it, and the motion is lost."

## **RULES OF DEBATE**

1. Questions should be directed to or through the Chair.
2. Confine remarks to the merit of the question.
3. The maker of the motion has the first right to the floor to debate if she claims it promptly.
4. The maker of the motion cannot speak against the motion, but may vote against it.
5. When two or more rise, the member who addresses the Chair and receives recognition first is entitled to the floor.
6. No member is allowed to speak a second time to a question as long as any member who has not already spoken desires to speak.
7. It is the responsibility of the Chair to alternate debate between those in favor and those opposed to the motion.
8. When addressing the Chair to debate, say, "I speak for (or against) the motion..."
9. The Chair may not take part in the debate or express an opinion while in the Chair. If she wishes to speak, she must leave the Chair until that question has been disposed of.

## **DECORUM**

- A. Be recognized by the Chair before speaking.
- B. Place thoughts before the group in the form of well-thought-out motions.
- C. Offer a "second" to motions. This does not indicate that one necessarily agrees with the motion... only that you agree that it should come before the group.

- D. Confine remarks to the subject at hand. Refrain from personal "stories."
- E. Come to meetings prepared. Members with particular responsibilities have done the required "homework" and have brought with them all needed materials. Lengthy reports/resolutions, etc. are often put in writing and ample copies are made available for distribution.
- F. By careful attention to the agenda and the time available for the meeting, members can assist the Chair in expediting the business before them.

## **GENERAL PLAN OF BY-LAWS**

Article I. This article shall state the name of the Organization.

Article II. Object of the Organization.

Article III. MEMBERSHIP. In this article the different classes of members should be specified and distinction between them explained.

The method of joining the Organization. Initiation fee; time of payment of annual dues; the treasurer or the secretary should be required to notify of delinquents, a reasonable time for payment of dues. It should be stated if the member is in arrears and if not paid within a specified time after notice has been given, the member should be dropped from the roll without any action from the club. If it is desired to have Honorary members, a separate section in this article should cover this and should be clearly shown that the title does not confer membership.

Article IV. OFFICERS. In this article should be a list of Officers and the method of their election.

There is no need to state in the by-laws the duties of Officers, except such as are peculiar to the society.

Article V. MEETINGS. In specifying the time of the meetings, the days of the week should be used, never those of the month. Provisions should be made for changing the day of the meeting in an emergency, such as, if it falls on a holiday; for calling a special meeting; and for the quorum the proper size.

Article VI. BOARD. Who comprises a Board. Duties and powers.

Article VII. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE. If it is desired to have an Executive Committee it should be provided for, because unless authorized by the society, the Board has no power to appoint one. Delegated power cannot be delegated unless so authorized by the principle.

Article VIII. COMMITTEES. This article shall provide for all Standing Committees that will be required. It should also provide for the appointment of additional Standing Committees as experience has shown are needed.

Article IX. DEPARTMENTS. If the Organization desires to have different Departments, they should be provided for in a separate article.

Article X. PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY. Every society should adopt some parliamentary authority, so as to avoid as much as possible doubt as to the rules under which it is working.

Article XI AMENDING THE BY-LAWS. By-laws should be carefully drawn and seldom amended. A two-thirds vote should be required for amendment and it is well to require the amendment to be submitted in writing at the previous meeting.