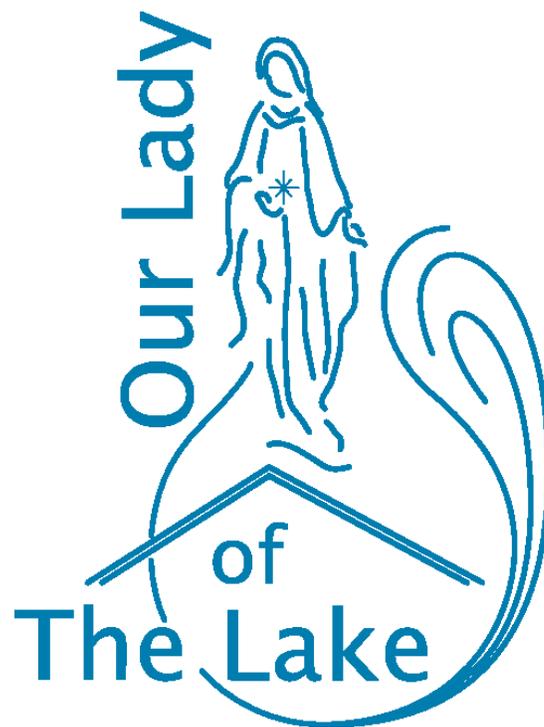


Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Church Social Concerns Commission Charter



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Social Concerns Commission
Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Church,
Lake Ozark, Missouri
Charter of Structure, Procedures and Policy

1. Mission

- 1.1. Purpose Statement:** The purpose of the Social Concerns Commission is to identify the significant social issues that either enhance or compromise the well-being and sanctity of individuals and the community and direct the parish's response to those issues in the light of the Gospel and the Tradition of the Catholic Church. The Commission provides leadership to all parishioners in helping them live out their baptismal calling to preach the Good News by word and works on a local, regional and global level.
- 1.2. Values:** The Commission will act in such a manner that these core values are put into practice in the work of the commission and in the lives of the parishioners:
- 1.2.1. Compassion** is the state of being emotionally attuned to the suffering of others. Compassion intuitively understands the experience of another in pain and leads one to alleviate that suffering. Compassion is experienced through a personal involvement in the fortunes and misfortunes of others realizing that we are all brothers and sisters in the Lord. Compassion is ultimately more than an emotion; it is a virtue, a disposition that prompts acts of charity especially in response to profound suffering.
- 1.2.2. Solidarity** is the natural state of human kind that reveals our common dignity as members of one family. Solidarity recognizes that what unites us as human persons made in the image and likeness of God is greater than those things which mark us as different from one another. To act in solidarity with others is to presume that no one can experience the fullness of joy while another person is suffering. Solidarity assumes that the goods of creation are meant to be shared by all. Solidarity requires that all people examine their own actions since what one person does always has an effect upon another human being.
- 1.2.3. Transparency** is a manner of deliberation, policy and action that empowers the members of a community by allowing the maximum flow of information among all interested parties. Transparency is achieved by allowing others fair access to the resources of the community. Transparency is not only a dedication to the truth in all times and circumstances, but is the realization that the truth cannot be arrived at without prayer, collaboration and consultation.
- 1.2.4. Patience** is the constancy of character and purpose that allows one to postpone self-concern and attend to the needs of all in accomplishing a noble purpose. Clear structure and guidelines for the commission will allow us to be patient with one another as each does his or her own work. Patience necessarily requires listening to others in a respectful manner. Patience is putting the Beatitudes into practice in all our words and actions.
- 1.2.5. Charity** is the virtue of love which acts for the good of others without expecting reward, even at great personal sacrifice. Charity is known by its works and by its fruits. The works of charity put into practice the great commandment to love God above all things and to love our neighbor as

ourselves. The fruits of charity are joy, peace and mercy. Charity is a theological virtue in that without God's aid, we are unable to truly love others unselfishly.

- 1.3. Vision:** The Commission envisions a parish where the sharing of material resources, personal gifts and talents, and economic advantages are the first options for all parishioners, not just members of the commission. The commission envisions the role it plays as the most effective means to guide the community into being true disciples of Jesus Christ. We envision a parish where these core themes of Catholic Social Teaching are the backbone of our efforts to evangelize:
 - 1.3.1. Life and Dignity of the Human Person:** the measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person.
 - 1.3.2. Call to Family, Community, and Participation:** The person is not only sacred but also social, especially as a member of a specific human family.
 - 1.3.3. Rights and Responsibilities:** The Catholic tradition teaches that human dignity can be protected and a healthy community can be achieved only if human rights are protected and responsibilities are met. Rights and responsibilities are inseparable from the Common Good.
 - 1.3.4. Option for the Poor and Vulnerable:** A basic moral test is how our most vulnerable members are faring. In a society marred by deepening divisions between rich and poor, our tradition recalls the story of the Last Judgment (Mt 25:31-46) and instructs us to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first.
 - 1.3.5. The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers:** The economy must serve people, not the other way around. Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God's creation.
 - 1.3.6. Care for God's Creation:** We show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation. The Earth is a gift for all people to share.
 - 1.3.7. Subsidiarity:** No higher level of organization (such as government) should perform any function that can best be handled at a lower level (such as families and local communities) by those who are closer to the issues or problems.
- 1.4. Patronage:** Saint Mother Theresa of Calcutta is the patron saint of the commission. Her life of apostolic zeal, fervent prayer, and utmost concern for the poorest of the poor will inspire the commission to follow her example. Her intercession in heaven will assist in time of need.

2. Structure

- 2.1. Membership:** Recruitment of the members of the commission necessarily takes into account the various age groups, special needs, and variety of experiences that make up the whole parish. In order to focus the efforts of the commission effectively, members will be chosen through a process of discernment. An executive committee will work with the pastor in arriving at a consensus on core team membership on the commission. Discernment takes place in the summer of the year and new terms begin on September 1.
- 2.1.1. Terms:** Core team members will be commissioned in a public ceremony for three-year terms, renewable only for a second consecutive term. Terms will be staggered in such a way to ensure that only one-third of the core team ends their term each year. Any core member may resign at any time by giving written notice. Any such resignation shall take effect at the time specified therein, or if the time is not specified therein, upon its acceptance. The commission chair in consultation with the pastor will appoint an interim member to fill out a vacated position for the remaining term. After a period of discernment, a new core team member will be chosen from volunteers to begin the designated three-year term of the vacated position.
- 2.1.2. Number:** The commission will have six core team members to ensure that the key responsibility areas enumerated in the Commission Charter have adequate oversight without undue hardship.
- 2.1.3. Associate Members:** Other parishioners will be invited to serve as associate members of the commission according to the needs of the community and their desire to serve.
- 2.2. Leadership:** There is an executive committee that provides leadership for the commission and is the public face of the commission for the rest of the community. The executive committee serves from October to October after prayer and discernment in the first meeting after new commission members are presented.
- 2.2.1. Chairperson:** The chairperson of the executive committee formulates commission goals, prepares for and chairs commission meetings, consults with the pastor and other parish leadership on key issues and activities, and in general ensures that the commission charter is put into practice in such a way that the abundant parish resources of people and material goods are effectively engaged in the commission's work. The chair serves for a one year term after having been chosen through a consensus deliberation of the core team. The chair may serve only for two consecutive years.
- 2.2.2. Vice-Chairperson:** The vice-chairperson of the executive committee assists the chair in his or her duties, prepares in consultation with the commission a budget for commission work to present to the Finance Commission according to assessed needs and identified priorities, facilitates commission meetings in the absence of the chair, heads the membership discernment committee that ensure a full complement of commission members. The vice-chair ensures that the meeting place is arranged and appropriate hospitality and prayer leadership is provided for those attending.
- 2.2.3. Secretary:** The secretary serves to document the work of the commission, to communicate to parish staff and the whole community the workings of the commission, to assist in communication among the various members of the commission, to prepare publications that

are necessary to the work of the commission, and issues and collates the self-study instrument each year to assess the commission's work.

- 2.3. Oversight:** the hierarchical governance of the Catholic Church requires that the pastor assume the final responsibility of pastoral leadership. In effect, all activities which the commission engages in must enjoy the implicit—and where stipulated, explicit—approval of the pastor. Nevertheless, the commission enjoys a certain freedom in that the gifts and talents of the laity are essential to the material and spiritual well-being of the parish. The commission designates one of its members to serve on the parish pastoral council which is the main consultative body for the pastor.
- 2.4. Accountability:** The pastor of the parish has the primary obligation in the parish to manifest the Church's concern for social justice and to be the merciful face of Christ to all persons in need. The commission will understand that its work is a service to the pastor, to the entire community and to all those in need. Personal preferences and tastes are subordinate to the good of all. The commission will work closely with the administration commission and the finance commission of the parish to ensure that good stewardship of parish resources is practiced.
- 2.5. Universal, United States, and Diocesan Policies and Norms:** The commission's work must at all times be in keeping with the universal norms, policies and teachings that are published by the Universal Church. Care must be given to the policies and guidance that comes from the U.S. Bishop's Conference, especially in regard to family life, economic justice and the protection of all human life. The diocesan bishop is the chief shepherd of the diocese. The commission will look to him and his practices for guidance, especially in establishing priorities, setting goals and clarifying expectations. The Missouri Catholic Conference, the diocesan offices for family life and Catholic Charities will be resources to consult frequently, especially in seeking opportunities to collaborate with others in its mission.
- 2.6. Prayer:** The commission will structure prayer and reflection into all aspects of its work so that the spiritual foundation of its mission be evident to all. Decisions should only take place after a period of prayer and reflection by individuals and the group. The commission will work with the parish worship commission to provide for opportunities to allow the sacred liturgy and the sacraments to inspire, guide, and celebrate its initiatives. At least one meeting in a year shall be dedicated to prayer and reflection on Catholic social teaching and discernment of spirit prior to setting yearly goals.

3. Procedures

- 3.1. **Meetings:** Each year in the fall, the commission will publish a schedule of meetings. Meetings should happen at least every other month, with extra meetings to be called with clear notification to the pastor and other parish leadership. All parishioners should consider themselves welcome to attend the meetings; however, meeting agendas should be organized in such a way to ensure that discussion and decision is efficient and effective. Meetings in general should last no more than an hour and a half. In coming to a consensus on commission goals and parish policy, care must be taken to ensure that sufficient members of the commission are present to represent all points of view.
- 3.2. **Communication:** The time, date and location of the meetings should be published each year. If other meetings dates are required throughout the year, the secretary ensures that all commission members, parish leadership, and parishioners are well-informed. The secretary works with parish staff in providing for a summary of the meeting highlights and activities of the commission for the bulletin. The commission regularly reviews the priorities and goals that are arrived at regarding the social mission of the parish and ensures parishioners and ministers are aware of their particulars. Commission will make flyers and brochures available for the ministries of the parish so as to ensure that all parishioners know what opportunities for service, collaboration and contribution are available.
- 3.3. **Goal Setting and Review:** In the spring of the year, the commission will review the progress of previous goals and set new goals for the coming year. These goals will guide the process of budget formation and assist the other parish commissions and parish leadership in their own key responsibility areas.
- 3.4. **Policy Formation:** The commission will work to ensure that all parishioners have access to documents regarding the policies, norms and action plans which guide our engagement in social concerns. The brochures, manuals, policies and procedures should be clear and helpful, but also be documents that inspire joyful service. All policies and initiatives should be approved by the pastor, with an exemplary copy signed by the pastor and chairperson in the commission archives.

4. Key Responsibility Areas

- 4.1. **Terms:** The commission will name one ministry coordinator for each of the following ministries chosen from either the core team, associate members or parish staff. Ministry coordinators will be duly commissioned in a public ceremony and appropriately honored for their service. Coordinators will commit to one year of service, without a renewal limit. Each summer as the Commission reviews its work, ministry coordinators will provide the commission with an evaluation of the area of ministry. At that time they may request to remain in their positions for another year; to serve in a different ministry; or to not continue as a ministry coordinator. If a position is vacated, the commission will then appoint a new ministry coordinator. A ministry coordinator may resign at any time by giving written notice to the commission. Any such resignation shall take effect at the time specified therein, or if the time is

not specified therein, upon its acceptance. The commission chair in consultation with the pastor will appoint an interim coordinator to fill out a vacated position for the remaining term.

- 4.2. Levels of Engagement:** Since the principal of subsidiarity is central to Catholic social teaching, each ministry's initiatives will first of all consider the needs of the local community as its first order of business with a preferential option for the poor. Subsidiarity should also be balanced by considerations of solidarity with the whole human family. Thus each ministry will also consider how it may extend its ministry beyond the local community to the global human family.
- 4.3. Key Ministries:** Each ministry shall have a brief description of the key responsibilities of that ministry. The ministry coordinator will be charged with keeping a binder with policies and best practices to guide the work of the commission and the ministers themselves regarding their particular area of concern. The ministry coordinator will ensure that there are resources to assist ministers in their service. Recruitment and retention of ministers and assistants in the ministry will be a central duty.
 - 4.3.1. Ministry to Families:** The coordinator of the ministry to families educates, recruits, and inspires parishioners to assist families in such a manner that they may embody the divine plan for families to be the first and most sacred relationship where God is found. Particular areas of concern are marriage preparation and enrichment, guiding parents in their sacred duties, young adults, ministry to the divorced and annulments, and single parent households.
 - 4.3.2. Ministry to the Poor:** The coordinator of the ministry to the poor educates, recruits, and inspires parishioners to put the needs of the poor foremost among the pastoral efforts and programs of the parish. Particular areas of concern are the advent giving tree, direct charity, food security, Hope House, and economic privation.
 - 4.3.3. Ministry for Protecting Life:** The coordinator of the ministry for protecting life educates, recruits, and inspires parishioners to protect the sanctity of human life and the dignity of the human person, especially in regard to the most vulnerable: the unborn, the disabled, the elderly, and those approaching death.
 - 4.3.4. Ministry to the Community:** The coordinator of the ministry to the community educates, recruits, and inspires parishioners to share their gifts and resources in the parish community and the local area to promote faithful citizenship, stewardship of natural resources, enhance mutual cooperation and promote the common good. Particular areas of work would include working with the Knights of Columbus and Auxiliary, the Wednesday Workshop, Missouri Catholic Conference and Catholic Charities and assisting in the promotion of the universal collections.
 - 4.3.5. Ministry of Hospitality and Fellowship:** The coordinator of the ministry hospitality and fellowship recruits and inspires parishioners to engage in acts and programs of hospitality and fellowship so that a joyful welcome and a sense of belonging is experienced by all who come to our community. Examples of hospitality and fellowship are funeral dinners, parish prayer line, reaching out to inactive Catholics, welcoming new members, and parish communal celebrations and picnics.
 - 4.3.6. Ministry to the Oppressed:** The coordinator of the ministry to the oppressed educates, recruits, and inspires parishioners to reach out to those whose freedom and dignity is diminished by immigration, neglect, violence, crime, addiction, incarceration, homelessness or

other evils. Of special concern would be reaching out to those whose lives are in danger through public or military service, vulnerable immigrants, and those affected by disasters.

4.3.7. Ministry of Health and Well-Being: The coordinator of the ministry health and well-being educates, recruits, and inspires parishioners to assist those whose health and well-being are compromised by illness or disease, especially in facilitating a sense of belonging in those who may not be able to join community activities. Particular ministries would be visits to the homebound, assistance with transportation and household management, parish nursing, support for those with emotional or mental health issues, and public safety.

5. Resources

5.1. Budget: The commission will provide the finance commission in the spring of the year a detailed plan for costs to be incurred for projects to be completed in the upcoming fiscal year.

5.2. Purchase Requests: All items and programs that incur an expense for the work of the commission are to be submitted along with a purchase request to be reviewed by the pastor. Commission members are strongly encouraged to submit purchase requests rather than paid bills for reimbursement.

5.3. Training and Continuing Formation: The commission will regularly bring into the parish knowledgeable persons to assist in forming the commission in its work and the parish as a whole. It is suggested that each year one ministry become a focus for a more thorough workshop and a presentation to the parish with guest speakers.

5.4. Resource Materials: Each commission member, core team or associate, is to be provided with a copy of the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*. The following documents should be made available in the parish library.

5.5. From the Holy See

- *Quadragesimo Anno*
- *Lumen Gentium*
- *Dignitatis Humanae*
- *Populorum Progressio*
- *Octogesimo Adveniens*
- *Laborem Exercens*
- *Sollicitudine Rei Socialis*
- *Centesimus Annus*
- *Caritatis in Veritate*
- *Laudato Si'*
- *Amoris Laetitia*

5.6. From the United States Bishops

- *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*
- *Renewing the Earth*
- *Economic Justice for All*

- *A Place at the Table*
- *A Culture of Life and the Penalty of Death*
- *The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response*
- *The Harvest Of Justice Is Sown In Peace*
- *Married Love and the Gift of Life*

6. **Assessment**

The Social Concerns Commission engages in an ongoing evaluation of its ministries, programs and policies.

- 6.1. Significant Structural or Policy Change:** Major initiatives, committees and policy change should happen only after significant time for communication, study and feedback has occurred. Feedback must be intentionally solicited using concrete tools such as surveys or interviews. Experts in the field under study should be consulted on a diocesan or national level. All projects costing over \$10,000 must follow the guidelines for facilities published by the Diocese of Jefferson City.
- 6.2. Parishioner Input:** In order to solicit effective and comprehensive parishioner input, the commission will from time to time assess their work using surveys designed to elicit concrete feedback and reflections of parishioner and visitor concerns. An open forum after a Sunday mass is a good time to allow both parishioners and guests to offer feedback.
- 6.3. Self-Study:** In preparation for yearly goal setting, the commission core team, associate members and representative parishioners will complete a self-study instrument to guide their work. The instrument will solicit answers to questions as to how the commission is implementing its charter and note any points that need updating, clarification or additional policy.
- 6.4. Charter Changes and Adaptations:** This charter is a guide to the working of the social concerns commission. Additions, adaptations or changes are to be adopted only after consultation and deliberation, and are to be thoroughly documented. Policies, committees, initiatives and descriptions of the ministries should be clearly defined, regularly updated, approved, published, and archived as part of the regular work of the commission.

Pastor

Date

Core Team Members