



Catholic Diocese of Saginaw

Bulletin Insert: June 18, 2020

Incorporation of Diocese of Saginaw Parishes

The Diocese of Saginaw is moving forward on a project that has been many years in the making: parish incorporation.

Parish incorporation is an effective way of ensuring that the distinct existence of parishes is respected according to church law and civil law.

Very soon, articles of incorporation will be filed with the State of Michigan to establish each parish in the Diocese as a nonprofit corporation. Bishop Robert D. Gruss will transfer legal title of real estate to each parish corporation. The bishop will have reserved powers over matters according to current practice, canon and civil law.

Each parish's board of directors will consist of 4 individuals: the pastor, the chair of the parish finance council, the chair of the parish pastoral council, and the regional vicar. The pastor will also serve as president and chief executive officer of the parish corporation. In a parish entrusted to a Director of Parish Life, this individual will assume the role of the regional vicar. The board of directors will meet at least once a year to review and ratify the annual actions of the parish and will meet more frequently as needed, if for example major actions (such as capital campaigns, building or renovation projects) are contemplated.

Incorporation will not have a substantial impact on the normal operation and administration of a parish. Pastors, parish staff, councils, and committees will continue to function as before.

Incorporation highlights the role of the Baptized, allowing for direct involvement by the laity in stewardship of parish resources. Incorporation also reinforces parish finance and pastoral councils - the main advisory groups in pastoral outreach and financial operations. While the finance and pastoral council chairs individually serve on the Board of Directors, it is anticipated that decisions of major importance would have been discussed and recommended by the respective councils prior to reaching the Board of Directors. Employees of a parish may not serve on these councils.

As foreseen in church law, each parish will hold the title to its own properties and assets in service to its parish mission. Transferring property into each parish corporation provides the additional benefit of civil corporate protections to individual parishes in the event of claims against another parish or the diocese.

The formal legal name for each parish will add a geographic designation to its current name: for example: Resurrection of the Lord Parish of Standish. The new title will distinguish this Parish from any other Parish with a similar title in the State of Michigan. The title will be used in formal legal paperwork, but the common name of the parish will remain.

For additional information on the civil incorporation of the Diocesan parishes, please contact the Chancellor: Sister Mary Judith O'Brien, R.S.M. via mobrien@dioceseofsaginaw.org.