

**St Thomas Aquinas and St John Church & Student Center**  
**Matthew 25 Committee**  
**Articles of Understanding**  
**Effective: July 1, 2018**

**Parish Mission and Vision Statements:**

***We are a Roman Catholic parish in a university community, joining students of all ages, joining people from all walks of life and from all corners of the world through Jesus Christ, our Lord.***

***As Eucharistic people, we nurture spiritual growth through worship, evangelization, stewardship, education, service, justice, outreach and hospitality.***

**Matthew 25 Mission:**

***The Matthew 25 Committee represents our faith, our action, and our hope by sharing our parish resources with our brothers and sisters in dire need throughout our region, our nation, and our world.***

**The Gospel, Matthew 25:31-46**

*The Judgment of the Nations*

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

Then the king will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.’

Then the righteous will answer him and say, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?’ And the king will say to them in reply, ‘Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.’

Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, a stranger and you gave me no welcome, naked and you gave me no clothing, ill and in prison, and you did not care for me.’

Then they will answer and say, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and not minister to your needs?’ He will answer them, ‘Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.’ And these will go off to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

## **Purpose**

Entrusted by the Pastor and serving as a subcommittee to the Parish Finance Council, the Matthew 25 Committee is responsible for oversight of the distribution of 5% of our parish collection plus the extra funds donated by parishioners for the current cause. These funds are designated for bona fide nonprofit organizations working to meet the needs of our brothers and sisters in our region, our nation, and throughout the world.

Our disbursements are to fund critical-needs programs which conform to our Catholic beliefs and teachings. They should be directed as developmental aid offering long-lasting, meaningful change (i.e. dire human survival needs, providing food, water, shelter, and health care).

## **Membership**

Matthew 25 Committee members should represent the diversity of our parish; and be people who are committed to the parish community and tithing. Traits should include enthusiasm, being prayerful, supportive, and humble; and being of an open-minded and faithful heart. We work together to promote the Gospel and share a commitment in responding to the call of the Holy Spirit.

There will be eight Committee members. Committee members may volunteer; be recruited by the committee, the Pastor, or by the Parish Leadership Team. The Pastor and Parochial Vicars are ex-officio members. Appointments are affirmed by the Pastor and are for a six years with eligibility for a second, six-year term (12 years).

*Implementation Note: By July 1, 2022, the Committee will be at 8 members and have a schedule of staggered terms. Term expiration dates will be included on the roster.*

The Pastor will appoint a liaison from the Parish Leadership Team (currently the Denise Zakerski, Communications). A college student intern will also be assigned to help in recording of the meeting minutes and other related Committee duties (assist with the website, circulating new applications, background research, etc.)

## **Revenue Sources for Disbursements (implemented of July 1, 2017)**

The parish fiscal year begins on July 1. Each year the Parish Finance Council budgets 5% of the projected parish weekly offerings to be used to calculate the base amount for our weekly disbursements. This amount is divided by the number of disbursements being allocated during the upcoming year (i.e. \$90,000 / 52 weeks = \$1,731).

This weekly base grant is then augmented by the donations by parishioners in the basket provided at the end of each weekend mass plus any donations received through the Matthew 25 page on the parish website. (The Matthew 25 collection basket is *not* put out on key liturgical holy days including Christmas and Easter.)

### **Revenue Sources for Disbursements (continued)**

There are also special Offertory collections on Ash Wednesday (shared by 3 recipients including ASB), Holy Thursday (shared by 2 recipients) and Good Friday (the Pontifical Collection for the Holy Land). These recipients do not receive the base grant; however, they receive the entire Offertory collection. They are included in the Matthew 25 Committee deliberations.

*Note: For informational purposes, an addendum to this Articles of Understanding lists the extra collections directed by the US Conference of Catholic Bishops and our Diocese each year.*

### **Scheduling Disbursements**

The Matthew 25 Committee is responsible for creation the upcoming schedule of disbursements based upon local, national, and international applications. The Committee may choose to allocate multiple weeks to a nonprofit organization based upon its assessment of need. Generally, a nonprofit organization should not expect a disbursement more than once a year.

### **Meeting Times — 3rd Sunday in September, January and May**

The Matthew 25 Committee meets three times annually usually later in the afternoon on the 3rd Sunday in September, January and May. The chair may adjust the calendar, call an extra committee meeting, or call a committee work-session as needed.

The committee meeting time and location is published on the parish website and in the *Connections* bulletin in the weeks preceding the meeting. It is desirable to rotate the meetings between the two parish sites. A committee work-session time does not have to be published.

### **Conduct of Meetings**

Meetings begin and close with prayer. The Committee meets for informational presentations and discussion. Parishioners may participate in the initial presentations and discussion; however, the meeting closes for final discussion and deliberations.

The Committee goal is to achieve consensus. Consensus is solidarity in sentiment and belief — concurrence or being in harmony. If one or more of the Committee members continue in dissensus, the deliberation of the application is tabled or is denied.

*Note: An addendum is included at end of these Articles of Understanding which explains much more about Consensus as a Decision-Making Process.*

### **Matthew 25 Committee Leadership**

A meeting chair/facilitator is chosen by the Committee and serves for three years. Also chosen are a secretary and a technology/website liaison with their role having an unspecified term.

### **Duties of the Committee Chair**

The Matthew 25 Committee chair is responsible for oversight and continuity of the Committee between meetings with the assistance of the liaison to the Parish Leadership Team. The chair represents the Matthew 25 Committee with the Pastor and the Parish Finance Council. The chair works with the Committee Secretary to create the agenda for the upcoming meeting. The Committee Chair may designate any member to act in his/her absence.

### **Duties of the Committee Secretary**

A committee member works with Committee Chair and the liaison from the Parish Leadership Team (currently Denise Zakerski) to reserve the time and meeting location, maintain the committee roster, and place announcements about committee meetings in the bulletin and on the parish website. Assistance of the College Student intern is available.

Duties include working with the Committee Chair and the parish staff to circulate new applications to Committee members.

The Committee Secretary is also responsible for coordinating with the college intern in capturing meeting minutes and, upon completion, works with the parish staff to publish and distribute them. The Committee Secretary also ensures that the most recent list of recipients and the description of their program/project is available to the liaison for the Parish Leadership Team.

The Committee Secretary works with Committee Chair and parish staff to correspond with applicants acknowledging receipt of the application and follow-up after the Committee meeting.

### **Duties of the Technology/Website Liaison**

A committee member works with the Committee Chair, parish staff liaison, Committee Secretary, and college intern to oversee and monitor the Matthew 25 Committee's on-going presence on the parish website **elcatholics.org**. (A website description is provided near the end of this document.). Assistance of the College Student intern is available.

### **Mission Sunday and Special Emergency Collections**

The Diocese asks each parish to host at least one annual Mission Appeal. The Matthew 25 Committee assists the pastor/parish staff in choosing the mission speaker. For this event, the Matthew 25 base collection, the after-mass collection baskets, and any donations received through special envelopes or parish website are distributed to the missionary's organization.

If there is a calamitous event somewhere in the world, the Diocese may request and/or our Pastor may divert our Matthew 25 Collection to that incident. The Matthew 25 Collection schedule is pushed back accordingly.

### **Our Two Parish' St Vincent de Paul Chapters**

Our parish has two chapters of the Society of St Vincent de Paul. The chapter based at St John Student Center operates the Saturday-morning Food Pantry and is usually well-supported in food and other monetary donations used to buy food. The chapter based at St Thomas Aquinas ministers through emergency home visits and helps families with housing, utilities, furniture, etc. While also well-supported, occasionally the St Thomas Aquinas chapter will need extra support from our Matthew 25 Committee. In this situation, they are quickly afforded a slot.

### **Sharing Information with the Parish Community**

Each week the *Connections* bulletin will identify the recipient for that week and provide a brief description of the program/project being funded. The bulletin also identifies the amount disbursed to the most recent recipient, and information about the recipient(s) for the upcoming week(s).

The end-of-mass announcements also include a brief description of the weekly recipient and also that the money deposited in the basket now being brought forth augments the 5% from the Offertory collection. (Donations deposited in the Matthew 25 baskets after mass are kept separate from the other Offertory collections.)

For an upcoming Matthew 25 Committee meeting, its date, time, and its location are included in *Connections* and on the parish website.

When practical and as space is available in *Connections*:

- Periodically include information on how to apply for a Matthew 25 disbursement and refer parishioners to the parish website.
- Share some of the responses from Matthew 25 recipients. This correspondence should also be available on the parish website.

### **Application Process for the Recipients**

The Matthew 25 application is available any time on both the parish website and in a paper format in the parish offices. It asks for:

- Contact information of the person supporting the application;
- The contact information and the website of the nonprofit organization that would benefit from the disbursement;
- A detailed description of the dire human need and how it would be addressed in a long-lasting, meaningful way (i.e. providing food, water, shelter, health care, etc).
- How the applicant assessed the nonprofit group's credibility; and
- Background information about the nonprofit group's administrative costs, fundraising expenses, and typical funding sources.

### **Application Process for the Recipients (continued)**

The applicant is encouraged to provide the nonprofit group's latest income/expenditure report. There are also some questions about how the applicant learned about the Matthew 25 Committee; and, if the disbursement is awarded, how best the funds should be delivered. The applicant is welcome to attend the meeting, but it is not necessary.

The Committee through the parish office staff will send a letter to the applicant acknowledging receipt of the application and inform the applicant of the next committee meeting date.

The application and attachments are scanned electronically and forwarded to the Matthew 25 Committee members as directed by the Chair.

### **Committee Deliberations**

The Matthew 25 Committee is responsible for ensuring that the nonprofit organization applying for the disbursement is eligible according to these Articles of Understanding. Our evaluation should include: Has the nonprofit group been given a disbursements before, and if so, when? How did they respond in following-up with the parish? How did they use our previous disbursement?

Applications received will be researched including consulting with the many online resources such as Charity Navigator. (It may be necessary ask the nonprofit group for its 501(c)3 tax exempt number or its federal Employer Identification Number (EIN) to search *charitynavigator.org* if the nonprofit cannot be easily identified.)

The Committee also reviews the accountability and transparency of the nonprofit group, examines its ratios of administrative and fundraising expenses, and considers its goals, challenges and accomplishments. Finally, the Committee assesses whether the nonprofit group is in harmony with the mission of the Matthew 25 Committee and looks for any incompatibility with our Catholic beliefs and teachings.

### **Description of Recipients for the Schedule**

Upon deciding to award a recipient a disbursement, the Committee through its Secretary identifies:

- The date(s) designated for recipients' cause.
- The exact name (nonprofit payee) receiving the disbursement from the parish.
- The name of the contact for the recipients and their address in the United States.
- And, any special notation to be included on the check.

The Committee Secretary also provides a thorough description of the Matthew 25 recipients and its program/project to assist the parish staff in preparing the bulletin and end-of-mass announcements.

### **Accompanying Cover Letter from the Parish**

With each disbursement, the parish will include a cover letter that identifies:

- The amount to be used for the program/project identified, and that it not be used for administrative or fundraising purposes.
- That our Matthew 25 Committee appreciates receiving an acknowledgement and then a follow-up report of how our disbursement was used. This information could be a factor for future disbursements, if sought.
- That the parish name and names of our committee members are not to be sold or used for solicitation.
- Generally, the goal of the Matthew 25 Committee is not to offer a disbursement more than once a year.
- The receipt of this disbursement does not guarantee another one in the future.

Applicants not given a disbursement will be informed.

### **Matthew 25 Committee on the Parish Website**

There will be a section/page on the *elcatholics.org* parish website for the Matthew 25 Committee with oversight and monitoring by the Committee's Technology/Website liaison. It includes but is not be limited to:

- A simple explanation of the Committee' purpose and procedures.
- The list of past disbursements and the upcoming schedule.
- A secure, electronic link to make donations to a Matthew 25 recipient.
- The date, time and location of the next meeting.
- Minutes of past meetings.
- An on-line application to request a disbursement.
- A roster of the committee members including contact information.

Desired website enhancements include providing links to the nonprofit organization's website and responses and photos from recipients. A format to share comments and concerns about the Matthew 25 Committee (must be regularly monitored).

### **Modifying these Articles of Understanding**

These Articles are subject to change through Committee action in collaboration with and affirmation of the Pastor and Parish Finance Council. They should be reviewed every 3 years, the first occasion should be no later than July 1, 2021.

## **ADDENDUMS:**

### **Schedule of Annual Collections from the US Conference of Catholic Bishops through the Diocese of Lansing:**

Local Catholic Charities, St Vincent/Cristo Rey -- January, Third Sunday  
Worldwide Evangelization -- January, Last Sunday  
Home Missions, Black and Native American -- March, Second Sunday  
Catholic Relief Services -- Lent, Fourth Sunday  
Holy Land – Good Friday  
Peter’s Pence, Papal Collection -- August, Second Sunday  
Help Spread the *Faith* Appeal -- September, Last Sunday  
World Mission Appeal -- October, mid-to-late  
Campaign for Human Development – November, Third Sunday  
Retired Religious – December, Second Sunday

### **Consensus as a Decision-Making Process**

As a decision-making process, consensus decision-making aims to be:

- **Agreement Seeking:** A consensus decision making process attempts to help participants reach as much agreement as possible.
- **Collaborative:** Participants contribute to a shared proposal and shape it into a decision that meets the concerns of all group members as much as possible.
- **Cooperative:** Participants in an effective consensus process should strive to reach the best possible decision for the group and all of its members, rather than competing for personal preferences.
- **Egalitarian:** All members of a consensus decision-making body should be afforded, as much as possible, equal input into the process. All members have the opportunity to present, and amend proposals.
- **Inclusive:** As many stakeholders as possible should be involved in the consensus decision-making process.
- **Participatory:** The consensus process should actively solicit the input and participation of all decision-makers.

Consensus means that:

- I can live with the decision
- I will support my colleagues in implementing the decision
- I will do absolutely nothing to impede the implementation of the decision

If one or more of the Committee members continue in dissensus, the deliberation for that application is tabled or is denied. The people who are not in consensus are responsible for meeting with the proposing group to negotiate issues.