Parliamentary Rules

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Parliamentary Procedure

Parliamentary Procedure: set of accepted rules
- for the conduct and decorum at meetings that allow everyone to be heard
- for making decisions in an orderly and timely fashion
- for recording those decisions in a reliable and consistent manner.

The councils and conferences of the Society **follow the Rule and Statutes and the Operations Manual** of the Society as articulated through the International Confederation and the National Council.

In addition, incorporated councils (and some conferences) have by-laws, governances and/or policies that further define the scope and function of their activities and how the business of that assembly is conducted. **All such by-laws, governances and/or policies are valid if and only if they are congruent with and in agreement with the Rule of the Society.**

Guiding Principle

The well-being of the group, organization or society is paramount.

All members are equal and should have equal rights and access to participation.

Matters should be considered one at a time according to their importance.

There should always be full discussion on a matter before action is taken.

Discussions and actions should focus around propositions rather than persons.

Under normal circumstances, no proposition may be placed before the assembly in the same form for a second time.

Under normal circumstance, the majority rules and makes all decisions. A majority is based on a majority of the full (active) members present and voting. Members not present are not counted as present and voting.

A two-thirds majority is required for extraordinary questions or propositions. It is important to note whether the vote required for these extraordinary propositions is 2/3 of those present and voting or 2/3 of the entire membership.

Key for Effective Meetings

Participants should:

- consistently display courtesy and respect for other members and opinions expressed in both face-to-face and electronic communication;

Participants should not:

- have an independent conversation during a meeting;
- spend time texting or reading personal emails

Interventions should be less than 3 minutes.

Suggestion: Prior to making an intervention, write down what to say in order to stay on point.
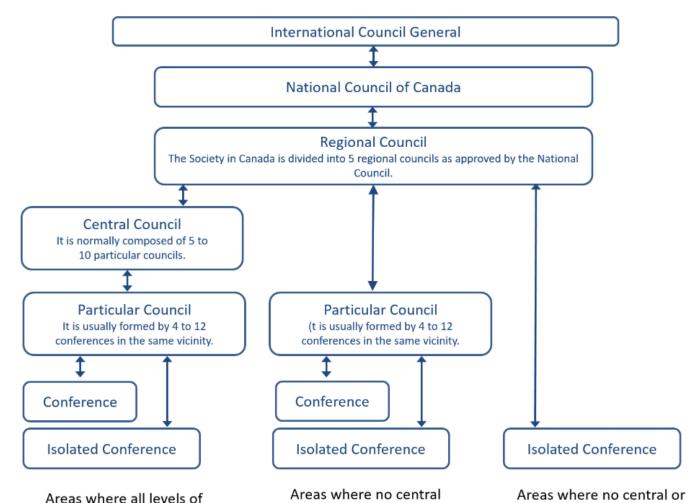
Organizational Chart – Vincentian Family Tree Society of Saint Vincent de Paul in Canada

National Council

Works of the Society

- Promote spirituality and Vincentian formation
- Implement accountability practices
- Manage national projects
- Coordinate and approve public messaging
- Coordinate and approve national advocacy / systemic change initiatives
- Develop education and training tools
- Initiate fundraising for national and international activities
- Consolidate Society's statistical and financial position

Promotion of the Society

- Dialogue with Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops
- Advocate to government
- Safeguard and protect the Society's name, image, logo and brand
- Nationally advertise, promote
- Safeguard the Society's charitable status
- Facilitate communication and best practices

Regional, Central and Particular Councils

Works of the Society

- Provide for equity of service amongst conferences and councils
- Ensure appropriate governance of special works and stores
- Member education
- Reporting and accountability

Promotion of the Society

- Dialogue with bishops
- Dialogue with local and provincial governments
- Submit grant applications for funding

Conference

Works of the Society

- Home visitation
- Conference special works
- Local systemic change projects
- Member recruiting and retention

Promotion of the Society

- Dialogue with pastors and parishioners
- Promotion in the community
- Fostering relationships with other service providers

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Fundamentals of Parliamentary Procedure (Operations Manual)

It is important to keep in mind that every meeting should have an "order of business" or "agenda".

Typical Meeting Agenda for Conferences and Councils
- Opening Prayer
- Welcome & Roll Call
- Spiritual Reflection
- Reading from The Rule and Statutes
- Approval of the Agenda
- Declaration of conflicts of interest
- Approval of the Minutes of the previous meeting
- Correspondence
- Communiques from Higher Councils
- Finance Report

- Secret Collection
- Committee Reports
    1) Social Justice
    2) Home Visits Reports (Conferences)
    3) Training
    4) Special Projects
    5) Strategic Planning
- New Business
- Good of the Society
    1) Prayer Requests
    2 Deceased Members
    3) Roundtable Discussion
- Next Meeting
- Adjournment
- Closing Prayer

Conflicts of Interest

A **conflict of interest** (COI) is a situation in which a person or organization is involved in multiple interests, financial or otherwise, and serving one interest could involve working against another. Typically, this relates to situations in which the **personal interest of an individual or organization might adversely affect** a duty owed to make decisions for the benefit of a third party.

The presence of a conflict of interest is independent of the occurrence of impropriety. Therefore, a **conflict of interest can be discovered and voluntarily defused before any corruption occur**s. A conflict of interest exists if the circumstances are reasonably believed (on the basis of past experience and objective evidence) to create a risk that a decision may be unduly influenced by other, secondary interests, and not on whether a particular individual is actually influenced by a secondary interest.

Putting Ideas Before the Group

1. Obtaining the Floor

Address the Presiding Officer by his or her official title. **Wait for recognition**. Once you have the floor, you may speak and, with exceptions, no one may interrupt you.

2. Making a Motion

A "motion" must present all proposals for action by the group. Begin by saying: "I move that"... Make your motion brief and concise. If possible, have it written out ahead of time. The Secretary may request a written copy of any motion.

3. Seconding a Motion

Before an idea may be discussed, it must be seconded. You need not agree with a motion in order to second it. If the Presiding Officer overlooks the absence of a seconder and debate or voting has begun, the seconder becomes immaterial.

Putting Ideas Before the Group
(con't)

4. Amending the Motion

To add to, substitute or subtract from a motion that someone else has made, submit your idea to the group by "*amending the motion*".

- Ask if the motion is considered "Friendly"; the mover must agree to the amendment. If yes, no vote is required.

5. Amend the Amendment

Altering the motion can be carried one step further by "an amendment to the amendment". You now have a primary amendment and a secondary amendment to the MAIN motion. You may not have more than these two.

Putting Ideas Before the Group (con't)

6. Divide the Question

It is often possible that a motion may contain two or more parts that you wish to be considered separately. You may ask each part to be considered separately. This often helps clarify the entire motion and keeps only those parts that most benefit the group. This is usually done by general consent, as it requires only a majority vote.

7. Point of Information

If the issues become confusing, you may ask for clarification by asking for a "point of clarification" from the Chair.

Difference: Motion vs Resolution

A *resolution* is a main motion that needs to be expressed formally in writing, to attach a special level of importance. Because of the form, beginning with the word *Resolved* and following with either a statement of opinion or a statement authorizing or directing some action, such a motion is called a resolution.

Difference : Resolution vs Suggestion

	A RESOLUTION			A SUGGESTION	
ADDRESSED TO	SUBJECT		**ADDRESSED TO**	SUBJECT	
Council	Intended to effect significant change, e.g.	a new orientation	**Targeted group**	Intended to improve operations by means of a practical suggestion	**Example:** The Mission Statement should be given more prominence on the National Web
		a policy direction			
		a strategy			
It contains	The name of the person moving the resolution, the name of the seconder; context; and the resolution itself, and the proposed recipient group who would consider the resolution.		**It contains**	The name of the person making the suggestion, plus the name of someone supporting it, the suggestion itself, and the proposed recipient group who would consider the suggestion.	
Its treatment	Resolutions are debated and subject to approval by formal vote.		**Its treatment**	Suggestions are presented briefly . A brief discussion of a suggestion may be held if required.	

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Four Basic Types of Motions

Main Motion: The purpose of a main motion is to introduce items to the assembly for consideration. They cannot be made when any other motion is on the floor, and yield to privileged, subsidiary, and incidental motions.

Subsidiary Motion (amendment): Their purpose is to change or affect how a main motion is handled, and such a motion is voted on before a vote on the main motion is taken.

Privileged Motion: Their purpose is to bring up items that are urgent about special or important matters unrelated to pending business.

Incidental Motion: Their purpose is to provide a means of questioning procedure concerning other motions and must be considered before the other pending motion.

Restrictions to a Main Motion

A Main Motion:

a.   must not be in conflict with the Rule and Statutes, by-laws or parliamentary procedures of the Society;

b.   must not conflict with or duplicate a motion or resolution previously made and rejected;

c.   must not conflict with or duplicate a motion previously made, but not yet disposed of;

d.   must be offered at a time when no other business is before the assembly;

e.   if presented as a resolution, must always be in written form.

Presiding Over a Motion Debate

A member is recognized by the chair and proposes a motion or submits a resolution.

Resolution must be seconded by another member before it can be considered.

The mover of the motion has the right to speak first.

Any member wishing to speak may then address the motion under discussion (members must be recognized by the chair before speaking).

Members may only speak once on a given motion, unless given permission by the chair to speak again.

Debate is closed when:
- Discussion has ended, or
- A member "calls the question" (see **Key Terms** next) and a two-thirds majority supports the closing of debate

Once debate is closed, the chair restates the motion and calls for a vote.

Vote will be registered by a show of hands ("for" and "against"). A simple majority is required for passage of a resolution, unless otherwise stated.

The chair announces the result and the resolution is either adopted or rejected

Means of Taking A Vote

The means used is determined by the by-laws of the voting assembly and/or by the situation.

By Voice – The Chair calls for those in favor the "ayes", and those opposed, the "nays". Any member may move for an exact count.

By Roll Call – Each member answers yes or no as their name is called.

By General Consent – When a motion is not likely to be opposed, the Chair says, "If there is no objection…" The membership shows agreement by their silence; however if one member says, "I object" the items must be put to a vote.

By Division – This is a slight variation of a voice vote. It does not necessarily require an exact count. Members raise their hands or stand.

By Ballot – Members write their vote on a slip of paper or ballot. This method is used when secrecy is desired. The results are then announced with an exact count.

Key Terms - Motions

Motion to Amend – seeks to make a specific amendment to a motion under discussion. If the original mover of the motion does not accept the amendment (i.e. not considered "Friendly), then the amendment is debated by the membership. Any such amendment requires a seconder. Any amendment must be debated and voted on before the debate resumes on the original motion.

Motion to Table – moves to defer further debate on the main motion until some future time.

Motion to Call the Question – ends debate and moves immediately to a vote on the resolution. This motion must receive support of 2/3 majority.

Key Terms - Points

Points have priority over all other motions or discussion; however they are only to be used when necessary. If required, points may interrupt a speaker to address an issue.

Point of Order – raised when a member feels that the process is not proceeding correctly. The chair then agrees or disagrees with the point raised. A member may also raise this point if they do not understand the proceedings or wish to have clarification on a specific ruling.

Point of Privilege – raised if a member feels that their rights as a member have been violated. May also be used if the member is unable to participate due to some circumstance which needs to be addressed (inability to hear the speaker, unclear on the procedure, problems with translation, for example). **If you do not understand what is happening, you can interrupt the speaker and request clarification on a Point of Privilege.**

Point of Information – this point is raised for a member to **ASK** for information that the member feels is essential to his or her understanding of the debate. **It is not used to give information.** The member being asked for information may decide not to answer a question.

Techniques to Write a Resolution

Each resolution should be worded to accomplish the following:

- identify the problem or issue;

- propose an action;

- specify who is meant to be responsible to carry out the action.

Cite facts whenever possible. Be precise, succinct and provide a detailed resolution

- E.g., if your resolution calls for a new program, think about how it will be funded and what body will manage it

Be realistic

- Do not create objectives for your resolution that cannot be met.

Whereas / Pre-ambulatory clauses

- are historic justifications for action. Use them to cite past resolutions, precedents and statements about the purpose of action.

Components of a Resolution

Resolution from (individual, group, region, etc.):

Addressed to:

Context of the request (*Whereas*):

What is the request (*Resolved*):

Proposed by:

Seconded by:

Components of a Suggestion

Suggestion from (individual, group, region, etc.):

Addressed to:

The suggestion:

Proposed by:

Seconded by:

Good Resolution?

Whereas 2016 was a good year for Tempranillo grape-based wine in the Tuscany region in Italy;

Whereas the enclyclical Laudato Si' put some emphasis on the stewardship of creation.

Be it resolved that the Canadian Society of Saint Vincent de Paul purchases a vineyard in the Tuscany region as part of Special Works to raise funds.

Tips in Parliamentary Procedure

A main motion must be moved, seconded and stated by the Chair before it can be discussed.

If you want to move, second, or speak to a motion, obtain the floor and address the Chair.

If you approve the motion as is, vote for it.

If you disapprove of the motion, vote against it.

If you approve the idea of the motion but want to change it, amend it or submit a substitute for it.

If you want advice or information to help you make your decision, move to refer the motion to a committee with instructions to report back to the assembly.

If you feel that the pending question(s) should be delayed so a more urgent business can be considered, move to lay the motion on the table to a new date.

If you want time to think the motion over, move that consideration be postponed to a certain time.

Tips in Parliamentary Procedure
(con't)

If you think further discussion is unnecessary, move to call the question.

If you think that the assembly should give further consideration to a matter already voted upon, move that it be reconsidered or rescinded.

If a motion has several parts, and you wish to vote differently on these parts, move to divide the question.

If you wish to consider a matter outside of the time lines of the assembly's own house rules, move to Suspend the Rules. The suspension must be limited in nature and specified in the motion.

If you wish to consider items out of the normal order or the order listed on the assembly's agenda, move to change the Agenda.

If you wish to avoid discussing or taking action on a given matter, object to the consideration of the question. This action should be taken if the matter for consideration is clearly outside of the mission or scope of the assembly's responsibilities or areas of control or in conflict with the Rule and Statutes of the Society or existing by-laws and/or governance.

Motions Chart - Privileged

	In order when another has the floor	Requires a seconder	Debatable	Vote required
PRIVILEGED MOTIONS				
To fix the time to which to adjourn	No	Yes	No	Majority
To adjourn	No	Yes	No	Majority
To recess	No	Yes	No	Majority
To rise to a question of privilege	Yes	No	No	Chair rules
To add to the agenda	Yes	No	No	None

Motions Chart - Incidental

	In order when another has the floor	Requires a seconder	Debatable	Vote required
INCIDENTAL MOTIONS (Non-ranking motions)				
To suspend the rules	No	Yes	No	Two-thirds
To withdraw a motion	Yes	No	No	Majority
To call for reading of papers	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
To object to consideration	Yes	No	No	Two-thirds (opposed)
To rise to a point of order	Yes	No	No	Chair rules
To rise to a parliamentary inquiry	Yes	No	No	Chair responds
To appeal from the decision of the Chair	Yes	Yes	No (if relates to priority business or decorum)	Majority (in negative)
To call for a division of the question	No	Yes	No	Majority

Motions Chart – Main

	In order when another has the floor	Requires a seconder	Debatable	Vote required
MOTIONS THAT BRING A QUESTION				
To reconsider	No	Yes	Yes	Majority
To rescind	No	Yes	Yes	Majority (previous notice)
To take from table	No	Yes	No	Majority
MAIN MOTION	No	Yes	Yes	Majority

Motions Chart - Subsidiary

	In order when another has the floor	Requires a seconder	Debatable	Vote required
SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS (amendment)				
To lay on the table	No	Yes	No	Majority
To call for the previous question	No	Yes	No	Two-thirds
To limit or extend limit of debate	No	Yes	No	Two-thirds
To postpone to a definite time	No	Yes	Yes	Majority
To refer to a committee	No	Yes	Yes	Majority
To amend	No	Yes	Yes	Majority
To postpone indefinitely	No	Yes	Yes	Majority