

## Parliamentarian's Report to the DCCW Board

January 28, 2023

We often hear the word *protocol* when discussing activities during our meetings and conventions – such things as who sits at the head table and in what order they should sit, how our officers should be addressed, or how to formulate an amendment to a motion. There are several versions of the definition of the word *protocol*, but they all are very similar: they are a “system of rules that explain the correct conduct and procedures to be followed in formal situations.” Some synonyms for *protocol* are *formality*, *decorum*, *rules*, and *propriety*; more interesting are the synonyms *etiquette*, *courtesy*, and *manners*.

In the booklet “Ask the Parliamentarian,” authored by Pat Reymann, a Professional Registered Parliamentarian, and published by the National Council of Catholic Women, Ms. Reymann states, “To me protocol means official good manners. It is a set of customs or code of etiquette that properly respects the offices that members and guests may hold.” She adds, “Good manners also dictate that only one person speaks at a time; side conversations are a breach of protocol as well as manners.”

It's safe to say that almost everyone (I'm guilty!) has had a side conversation or two during a meeting. It is very difficult not to, as we want to ask our neighbor a clarifying question or whisper our opinion about the topic at hand, or, unfortunately, chat about something totally off topic. “The fundamental right of deliberative assemblies requires all questions to be thoroughly discussed before taking action.” (RobertsRules.org) But if we do not listen attentively to the discussion, how will we know what action to take? If members shout out instead of waiting to be recognized, how will the discussion run smoothly?

Following Ms. Reymann's declaration – communicating honestly, respectfully, and with good manners – will foster goodwill and strengthen our organization.

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