

## DIOCESE OF EL CAMINO REAL

### BALLOT COUNTING FOR MULTIPLE POSITIONS

The Rules of Convention for the Diocese specify that all elections shall be by written ballot. The rules also state that if an election shall require three ballots, the third ballot shall decide the election, with the election determined in the order of votes received. (Rule 3.1)

Robert's Rules specify a vote by majority of those present unless an alternative method is specified (RRoONR §44). The Rule goes on to say that a majority means "more than half of the votes cast by persons legally entitled to vote, excluding blanks or abstentions, at a regular or properly called meeting at which a quorum is present." (page 387) The rule is fairly straightforward when only one person is being elected.

However, when there are multiple positions to be filled on the same ballot, the counting is trickier. Robert's Rule §46, page 427, comes to the rescue:

"In an election of members of a board or committee in which votes are cast in one segment of the ballot for multiple positions on the board or committee, every ballot with a vote for one or more candidates is counted as one vote cast, and a candidate must receive a majority of such votes to be elected. In such a case, if more than the prescribed number receive a majority vote, the places are filled by the proper number receiving the largest number of votes. If less than the proper number receive a majority vote, those who do have a majority are elected, and all other candidates remain on the ballot for the necessary repeated balloting. Similarly, if some candidates receive a majority but are tied for the lowest position that would elect, all of those candidates also remain on the next ballot."

Thus the ballot counters will need to count the number of ballots cast (counting as "one vote cast") in order to determine the majority. The number of votes cast for an individual must also be counted.

If a single ballot contains three candidates, two of whom are to be elected, the following might occur when there are 295 ballots cast, thus needing 148 for a majority:

Candidate	1 <sup>st</sup> ballot – vote for	2d ballot – vote for
	2	1
Alastair	<b>185</b>	Elected on first
Becky	<b>138</b>	<b>155</b>
Clarence	121	107

In the above Alastair was elected on the first ballot and Becky on the second ballot.

If neither Becky nor Clarence received at least 148 votes on the second ballot, the third ballot would choose the winner based on who received the most votes, even if no majority (ECR Rule 3.1).

If in the second ballot Becky received the 155 and Clarence had 149, Becky would win based on the second sentence quoted from Rule 46.