

The Articles of the Constitution of
The Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East Diocese of Western
Europe
The Episcopal See of London, United Kingdom

CHAPTER ONE: THE DIOCESE

ARTICLE ONE: THE NAME

The name of this religious organisation is: -

***"The Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East Diocese of Western
Europe"***

Central Committee

ARTICLE TWO: AUTHORITY

Section 1. LEGAL - This organisation derives its legal authority to function as a religious body by the laws governing incorporated organisations in the United Kingdom.

Section 2. ECCLESIASTICAL - The Diocese derives its ecclesiastical authority to function from His Holiness the Catholicos Patriarch of the East, who is presently, His Holiness, Mar Gewargis III Sliwa, the 121th successor of the Holy See of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, the Supreme head of the Church in the world, and the Chairman of the Holy Synod of the Church or from his legitimate canonically consecrated successor.

Also, it derives its authority from "The Holy Synod of the Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East" which consists of the Catholicos Patriarch and all the Metropolitans and Bishops. This college of episcopal functionaries is the highest authority in the Church and shall have official Syndical status when in session and shall have the authority to enact Syndical legislation when His Holiness, the Catholicos Patriarch, is presiding over the Synodal meeting. Hence, the Bishop of the Diocese, being a member of the said Synod and the duly appointed prelate serving the Diocese under the mandate of His Holiness the Catholicos Patriarch, shall be the Patriarchal Representative and the head of the Diocese.

ARTICLE THREE: MEMBERSHIP AND JURISDICTION

The Diocese shall comprise of all the churches, missions, parishes, congregations, properties, societies, committees, councils, organisations, and bodies corporate in all of Western Europe which are under the jurisdiction of the Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East, as exercised by its duly authorised Diocesan Bishop acting under the canonical mandate of His Holiness, the Catholicos Patriarch.

ARTICLE FOUR: PURPOSE

This organisation is a religious organisation and is not organised for the private gain of any person, it is organised under the [non-profit Religious Corporation Law] exclusively for religious purposes, to maintain spiritual unity, co-ordinate religious work or activities, promote, practice and perpetuate religious worship, services, ministrations, sacraments, and teachings in full accord and unity with the doctrine, rules, ritual, Syndical laws, faith, practice, discipline, tradition, and usage of our Christian faith, to establish religious, educational, and cultural institutes, and to exercise governing and advisory authority over all of the component divisions of the Diocese aforementioned.

ARTICLE FIVE: HEADQUARTERS

The headquarters of the Diocese shall be in London, United Kingdom. The name and address of this Organisation's initial agent for the services of process is:

His Grace Mar Awraham Youkhanis, Bishop
Westminster Road, Hanwell, London W7 3TU, United Kingdom

ARTICLE SIX: GOVERNMENT

Section 1 - The Syndical Laws (that is, the Church Canon Laws) and this constitution shall be the governing code of the Diocese.

Section 2 - The Catholicos Patriarch shall be the highest governing authority in the Church, represented by the Diocesan Bishop as the governing authority of the Diocese.

Section 3 - The Diocesan Bishop is a trustee and will be assisted by a Diocesan Committee formed as follows: -

Each Parish or congregation shall be represented by two delegates, and shall include the Parish Priest and the president of the Parish Committee and in his absence, the vice-president or any other designated member of the Parish Committee. The term for the elected lay member shall be for two years.

Section 4 - In the Diocesan Committee meetings voting will be the adopted mechanism to complete the transaction of the assembly. One privilege vote per delegate.

Section 5 - All interim administrative authority is vested in the Diocesan Bishop. His advisory contingent being the Diocesan Executive Committee; comprised of the Treasurer, Secretary and those officers deemed necessary by the Bishop, shall assist in the normal affairs of the Diocese.

Section 6 - The presiding officer of the Diocese shall be the Diocesan Bishop. Or when the Episcopal See is vacant, another Bishop shall be appointed by the Catholicos Patriarch to serve as his vicar, in full capacity as the Diocesan Bishop in accordance with this constitution.

Section 7 - The parish committee(s) and/or sub-committee(s) may be terminated (dissolved) by the Bishop if he feels that the committee(s) have overstepped its/their authority - by not redeeming their pledge to this constitution - and its/their continuance

will bring harm to the Church. In this event an election shall be held to fill the vacated offices within thirty days of such a termination. The Episcopal authority may also be selective as to certain officers or members of the aforementioned committee if the same situation prevails. All action must be confirmed by written notice.

ARTICLE SEVEN: LIMITATIONS

Section 1 - No substantial part of the activities of this organisation shall consist of promoting through propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence secular legislation, and the organisation shall not participate in or intervene on behalf of, any political campaign, including the publishing or distribution of statements, on behalf of any candidate for public office.

Section 2 - The English text of this constitution shall be deemed the official text for all purposes, and all other translations shall be considered informational.

Section 3 - This constitution may be amended by either one or both of the following procedures:

A) Whenever the Diocesan Committee deems it necessary to make amendments to this constitution, they shall present their suggestion(s) to the Diocesan Bishop who, in turn, shall present them to the Holy Synod when it is in session under the chairmanship of the Catholicos Patriarch. The amendment(s) will become valid only by a decree from the aforementioned Synod.

B) The Holy Synod, under the chairmanship of the Catholicos Patriarch shall have the power to make amendment(s) by a decree whenever deems it necessary for the well being of the Church. The Diocesan Bishop shall include the amendment(s) in the constitution of his Diocese.

ARTICLE EIGHT: MEETINGS

Section 1 - GENERAL MEETINGS - The general meetings of the Diocesan Committee shall be held at least once a year and shall be located at the Diocesan See or at a place determined by the Bishop.

Section 2 - SPECIAL MEETINGS - The Diocesan Bishop alone may call a special meeting at any time he deems it necessary and advisable.

Section 3 - AGENDA - The items which each parish committee wishes to be placed on the agenda of the general meeting, should be received fifteen (15) days before the date of the meeting, and must be posted on parish stationery, duly signed by the parish Priest and president (and/or the secretary of the Parish Committee).

Section 4 - NOTICES - General meeting notices shall be sent no less than thirty (30) days prior to the aforementioned meeting.

Section 5 - LANGUAGE - The [English] language shall be considered the official language of correspondence. However, the Diocesan Committee or the Parish Committee may conduct their meetings in Assyrian and/or [English], depending on the representatives in attendance and the understanding of those assembled.

Section 6 - QOURUM - Two thirds (2/3) of the Diocesan Committee shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of the official business of the Diocesan Committee.

Section 7 - VOTING - Each parish will have two votes, the Parish Priest and the lay representative as described in Article Six, Section 3 and 4.

Section 8 - RESOLUTION - Questions arising at any Diocesan Committee meeting shall be decided by a majority vote, their recommendations being then forwarded to the office of the Bishop. The Bishop as the head of the Diocese shall have the power to revise and/or overturn any resolution passed by a committee, either at the Parish or the Diocesan level, if he is convinced that the committee in question has overstepped its authority in passing such resolution.

ARTICLE NINE: DUTIES OF THE DIOCESAN COMMITTEE

Section 1 - HOLDINGS - The Diocesan Executive Committee shall accumulate and administer all funds and properties belonging to the Diocese and such properties shall consist of all funds, property deeds of the Diocese and of the Parishes (see general list of parishes below - please note that smaller communities exist in other countries within Western Europe), insurance policies, trusts, foundations and any other properties regardless of the nature of the same.

- A - United Kingdom
- B - Netherlands
- C - Belgium
- D - Luxembourg
- E - France
- F - Austria
- G - Greece
- H - Spain

Section 2 - ADMINISTRATION - The committee may vote on items submitted by the parish committees and members but shall not vote on any matter which would affect a breach of Canon Law or the laws of the State (Country) of incorporation. Any matter of a spiritual nature shall remain solely within the domain of the Diocesan Bishop for determination.

Section 3 - INDEMNIFICATION - Every director, officer or delegate and his/her heir, executor, administrator, estate and/or estates, respectively, shall at all times be indemnified and saved harmless out of the funds of the organisation, from and against:

A) All costs, charges, expenditure and whatever he/she sustains or incurs in or about any action, suit, or proceeding that is brought or commenced against him/her for or in respect of any act, deed, matter or thing whatsoever, made/done or permitted by him/her in or about the execution of his/her office.

B) All costs, charges, expenses and other indebtedness that he/she sustains or incurs in/or about, or in relation to the lawful affairs of the organisation, within the scope of the authority granted said director/officer as contained within these by-laws.

Section 4 - REMUNERATION - The Organisation shall not bestow remuneration upon its directors, officers or delegates for pecuniary gain or dividends, except for clergymen and employees in reasonable compensation or to members for services, labour and materials actually rendered. However, reimbursement for costs and expenses incurred by the official representative and/or delegate should be borne by the delegating body of the organisation if they are deemed to be reasonable expenditures and valid receipts are furnished.

Section 5 - DIOCESAN SEAL - The Committee shall have the power to commission a seal for the Diocese. The seal shall remain in the custody of the Diocesan Bishop. Any document executed under seal, shall be attested by the Diocesan Bishop and at least one other member of the Diocesan Executive Committee.

ARTICLE TEN: ADMINISTRATION AND OFFICERS

Section 1 - (ADMINISTRATION) Catholicos Patriarch

In accordance with the Canon Laws, the Catholicos Patriarch is to have the highest spiritual, ecclesiastical and administrative authority in the total body of the Church including each and every Diocese.

In the event the Holy Synod under the chairmanship of the Catholicos Patriarch should appoint a new Diocesan Bishop for a certain diocese, the concerned Bishop shall first submit his written affiliation (adherence) under the leadership of the Catholicos Patriarch, then he will be granted the Patriarchal representation charter in his new diocese.

Also, the Catholicos Patriarch shall have the authority to affect the transfer or the dismissal of a Diocesan Bishop from his Diocese, after a decree has been made by the Holy Synod in session under his chairmanship. The Diocesan Bishop shall submit and obey the Patriarchal (Synodal) decree and a new Diocesan Bishop or a Patriarchal Vicar shall be appointed.

Section 2 - (DIOCESAN EXECUTIVE OFFICERS)

(A) Diocesan Bishop - The Diocesan Bishop representing the Catholicos Patriarch in the Diocese, is to have complete spiritual, ecclesiastical and administrative jurisdiction over, and guidance of, the Diocese, and shall have the authority to appoint the officers of the Diocesan Committee, that is the Diocesan Executive Council, (and/or their assistants), with the advice of the Diocesan Committee if in session. Diocesan Executive Council members shall not vote, unless they are parish delegates.

(B) Treasurer - The Treasurer may be bonded at the request of the Diocesan Bishop, and shall fill the ordinary duties of the office of treasurer

(C) Secretary - The Secretary shall keep the Diocesan records, issue regular statistical reports and perform the duties of the Secretary of the organisation.

(D) DIOCESAN REPRESENTATIVES - Archdeacons (Archpriests), Piryadotas, and auditors shall have administrative authority to scrutinise records of the

organisation, parishes, committees, sub-committees, councils, etc., for whom they have been sent by the Diocesan Bishop and shall make their findings known in written form to the Diocesan Bishop.

Section 3 - DOCUMENT AND DISBURSEMENTS - The Diocesan Bishop and at least two executive officers will sign all deeds, titles, transfers, disbursements, cheques, drafts, etc. pertaining to the business of the Diocese.

ARTICLE ELEVEN: DIOCESAN TREASURY FUND

A) Annually every parish must remit ten percent (10%) of the gross annual membership collections.

B) Each parish will also contribute ten percent (10%) of the balance income as indicated on the year-end annual financial statement. The amount in item [A] shall be used as an expense item in figuring the net balance.

C) Monies donated and/or raised for church properties or buildings are excluded from item [B] of this section.

D) All parishes and congregations under the jurisdiction of the Diocese shall contribute on a monthly basis their share of the episcopal expense, according to the percentage set by the Diocesan Committee.

Section 2 - DIOCESAN RESPONSIBILITIES

A) The Patriarchal Fund - All funds and donations raised at spiritual or social activities held on the anniversary of the Patriarchal Consecration, shall be directed to the Patriarchal Fund, through the Diocesan Treasury Fund.

B) The Remuneration of the Patriarchate - In accordance with the standards set by the Holy Synod, each diocese is under obligation to pay its percentage share of the total yearly remuneration and expense of the staff of the Patriarchate. This is an annual obligation, to be paid one year in advance through the Diocesan Treasury Fund.

ARTICLE TWELVE: CHURCH PROPERTIES

Section 1 - All existing Church properties in Western Europe (tangible and non-tangible) are owned by the Church, and are to be registered under its name, that is, The Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East - Diocese of Western Europe.

Members of the Holy Synod, that is, "The Catholicos Patriarch, all Metropolitans and all Bishops" shall be considered the official board of directors of all church properties. Each Diocesan Bishop in his own jurisdiction shall be considered a Trustee and representative of the Holy Synod in all legal matters concerning any transaction related to the church properties in his Diocese.

Section 2 - The Church properties are to be managed and maintained in accordance with this constitution by the Diocesan Committee on the level of Diocese, and by the parish committee on the level of parish.

Section 3 - Concerning the limitation of sale of any Church property, the Diocese shall not affect the sale of any of Church property without: -

- (A) Informing the parishioners who are affected by the sale through a meeting of the general membership or, in case of a lack of time, through a written communication.
- (B) The investigation and approval of the Diocesan Bishop.
- (C) Finally, after having a written consent of the Catholicos Patriarch.

Section 4 - When any church property in any parish is sold, the funds shall be deposited in the Diocesan Treasury Fund under the ledger of the parish which effects the sale. These funds may be re-used to purchase other property(ies) for the same parish, provided that the buying procedures are carried out according to this constitution (that is, **Article twelve, section 5**).

Section 5 - Any purchase of a new property for a parish shall be in accordance with these steps:

- A) The new property shall be registered under the name of the Church, that is, "The Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East Diocese of Western Europe"
- B) All cases of buying property(ies) in the parish shall be subject to these considerations: -
 - 1. The parish's financial capability.
 - 2. The official number of parish members.
 - 3. The ecclesiastical and the spiritual needs and priorities in the parish (to determine the kind of the property to be purchased or built).
 - 4. The final approval of the Diocesan Bishop.
- C) The Diocesan Bishop shall sign all contracts. The parish priest and/or parish committee president shall countersign the contract.

Section 5 - A parish seeking financial assistance from the Diocesan Treasury Fund shall be eligible only if it is:

- A) A newly established parish.
- B) And/or a financially weak (financially troubled) parish.

If so then, the concerned parish shall submit a written request to the Diocesan Bishop asking him for a certain amount of funds to assist the said parish. The Bishop shall have the power to approve, review or reject the request, after discussing the matter with the Diocesan Committee, if in session, or the Diocesan Executive Council. All financial assistance shall be given as a loan, to be repaid in monthly payment at the same interest rate that the money was bearing at the time of the loan. Other details of the loan shall be established by the Diocesan Committee, if in session, or the Diocesan Executive Committee.

ARTICLE THIRTEEN: THE PARISH ORDINANCE

Each parish in the jurisdiction of the Diocese shall be a subsidiary branch of the main organisation (that is, the Diocese) according to the Syndical Law and the constitution (**Chapter Two** - Parish Ordinance).

ARTICLE FOURTEEN: DISSOLUTION

Section 1. The property of this organisation is irrevocably dedicated to religious purposes and no part of the net income or assets of this organisation shall ever inure to the benefit of any of its directors, officers or members thereof, except for reasonable salaries for those persons who serve as clergy and/or employees of the church.

Section 2. In the event of dissolution or winding up of this organisation, its assets remaining after the payment of, or provisions for payment of, all debts and liabilities of this organisation shall be distributed to another "Assyrian Church of the East" Diocese (as determined by the Holy Synod) which is organised and operated exclusively for religious purposes and which has established its tax status. If this organisation holds any assets in trust, or an organisation is formed for charitable purposes, such assets shall be disposed of in such manner as may be directed by decree of Superior Court of the county (City) in which the corporation has its principal office, upon petition thereof by the Attorney General or by a person concerned in the liquidation, in proceeding to which the Attorney General is a party.

CHAPTER TWO: THE PARISH ORDINANCE

ARTICLE ONE: THE PARISH

Section 1 - The Parish is the local body of communicants of the Church in a given locality, organised and/or incorporated in submission to the jurisdiction of the Diocese, whose ecclesiastical authority is its canonically consecrated Bishop. Locally, the Parish is entrusted to and headed by a canonically ordained Priest, who is its shepherd and has been duly appointed by the Diocesan Bishop and is under his authority. Hence the Parish, being a local body headed by Parish Priest under the jurisdiction of the Diocesan Bishop, shall be constituted within the organisation of the Diocese as a subsidiary branch of the main body (the Diocese).

Section 2 - Each parish shall use its official title in the following formula: -

The Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East
Diocese of Western Europe
Parish of St. [name]
City, Country

Section 3 - The Parish may have a committee chosen from the faithful to assist the Parish Priest in administering the parish affairs cooperatively and according to the Church Canons and to this constitution.

Section 4 - The Clergy, the Parish committee and the Faithful of the Parish shall conform faithfully to the doctrines, canons (syndical law), worship, discipline, this constitution, diocesan directives and the administrative rulings and encyclicals of the Church. Non-conformance shall be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of the Canons. The Bishop shall have the power to revoke the ecclesiastical authority of a parish and/or to suspend or remove the parish priest and/or Parish Committee from office whenever, in his judgment, there is sufficient cause for such action. In each case such revocation, suspension or removal, notice of the same shall be forwarded to the

Parish Priest and Parish Committee with a copy to His Holiness the Catholicos Patriarch.

ARTICLE TWO: AIMS AND PURPOSES OF PARISH

Section 1 - The aims and purposes of the Parish are to keep and proclaim pure and undefiled the Apostolic, Catholic and Orthodox Christian Faith and traditions in conformity with doctrine, Canons, worship, discipline, usage and customs of the Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East.

Section 2 - The work and ministry of the Parish consists of proclaiming the Gospel in accordance with the Church Faith; sanctifying its members, providing a place of worship (a Church building) of the Almighty God and the administration of the sacraments and all rites and ceremonies of the Holy Church according to its usage and forms; adding to their numbers by instructing others and admitting them to the Church through Baptism or Confirmation; educating in the Faith and in the language of the Church through the establishment of appropriate schools and needed philanthropic institutions; and carrying on conscientiously benevolent activities.

ARTICLE THREE: CLERGY

Section 1 - The Priest, by virtue of his canonical ordination and episcopal appointment, heads the local Parish of the Church and exercises in its behalf the priestly function. The ministry of the Priest consists in shepherding the Parish entrusted to his pastoral care, directing its orderly life, preserving its unity, keeping it faithful to its divine purpose, sanctifying his flock through the administration of the sacraments and the performance of all other prescribed services of worship, proclaiming the teachings of the Apostles and the Dogma of the Fathers, preaching the Word, teaching the commandments of the New Life, imparting a knowledge of the doctrines, traditions, canons, and disciplines of the Church, and guiding the growth, progress, and enlightenment of the congregation in the Christian life.

Section 2 - The clergy are assigned or transferred within the Diocese by the Bishop by virtue of the authority of his office and in accordance with the canons, ecclesiastical procedure, and needs of the Diocese. In accordance with the aforementioned canons and ecclesiastical procedure, neither the Parish Committee nor the Parish Assembly are authorised to dismiss a Parish Priest. Prior to the assignment or transfer of a Priest, the Parish Committee of the affected parish shall be informed by the Bishop regarding his decision.

Section 3 - Clergy have a special obligation to show reverence and obedience to His Grace, the Diocesan Bishop who is their Ordinary.

Section 4 - Clergy are always to do their utmost to foster peace and harmony based on brotherhood and justice, among people of the Church.

Section 5 - The Priest and Deacons shall have responsibilities of all matters of divine worship and the personnel connected with it, and the Priest shall file and keep the registers of baptisms, marriages and deaths.

Section 6 - Since all Clergy of the Church are working for the same purpose - namely, the building of the Church of Christ - they are to be united with one another in bond of brotherhood and prayer. They are to seek and cooperate with one another, in accordance of the provisions of the Canon Laws.

Section 7 - In accordance with the Canon Law, the Bishop in his Diocese shall have the authority to dismiss and/or suspend a clergyman from practicing his duties and authorities if he has violated the Canon Laws.

Section 8 - When transferred, or if dismissed or suspended from a Parish by the Bishop, the Priest shall deliver to his successor the sacred vessels, all registers and religious records.

Section 9 - Clergy are to continue their studies even after ordination to the priesthood. They are to hold solid doctrine based on sacred Scripture, which has been handed down by our forefathers, and which is generally received in the Church.

Section 10 - The Diocese has established remunerative standards for the Clergy including provisions for annual increments and cost of living increases. The parish shall also assume the following obligations:

- A) To provide a parish home or housing allowance.
- B) To provide a Major Medical Plan or similar coverage, if such plans are not established and maintained by the Diocese. The standards for such plans shall be established by the Diocese.
- C) To pay the cost of Social Security (Superannuation) or Individual Retirement Account plan.
- D) To defray all expenses incurred in attending Clergy Congresses or Diocesan Committee.
- E) To provide for an annual vacation period of three weeks (twenty-one days). If a priest vacations outside the country he may apply for another additional week, with regard to the time served in the parish, provided he has obtained written permission from the Bishop to absent himself from his Parish.
- F) The parish also shall provide a basic monthly salary (approved by the Diocese), and a (2.5%) cost-of-living raise of that basic salary effective on 1 December each year.

Section 11 - A priest's remuneration may not be withheld or lowered without the consent of the Bishop. Should a priest become ill while in the service of a parish, he shall be compensated fully during such illness for a minimum period of three months.

Section 12 - When a priest is assigned to a parish, his moving and travel expenses shall be defrayed by that Parish.

Section 13 - The parish priest shall have the obligation to fulfil the following duties set by the Holy Synod: -

- A) To carry out fully his spiritual, liturgical and ecclesiastical duties and ministries.
- B) To visit and bless the sick at homes and hospitals.
- C) To visit and bless his parishioners at their residence, in order to promote Church teachings and to establish a spiritual relationship with his flock.

- D) To be diligent in establishing and directing a Church Choir Group, Bible Study Classes, and Sunday School.
- E) To establish Assyrian and Aramaic Language Classes where appropriate to insure the survival of the liturgical language among the faithful of the Church.
- F) To assist and guide the youth and women of his Parish in establishing and maintaining their respective organisations according to this constitution.
- G) To fulfil all other obligations set by directives from the Diocesan Bishop in accordance to the Church Canons and this constitution.

ARTICLE FOUR: PARISH ADMINISTRATION

Section 1 - The Priest, as head of the Parish by virtue of the ecclesiastical authority invested in him, shall be the Bishop's representative and shall guide and oversee the total Parish programmes, and is ultimately responsible to the Bishop for the entire welfare and all activities of his Parish.

Section 2 - The Parish Committee shall be an advisory and assistant body to the Priesthood represented by the Parish Priest. It shall consist of seven to fifteen members (7 to 15), depending on the size of the congregation. It shall include persons from the ranks of the diaconate as well as the laity. It shall serve according to this constitution and the canon laws of the Church.

Section 3 - The parish priest shall be a member of the parish committee, but shall not have a vote in the meetings of the committee. However, he (the priest) will have a conditional suspension power over the resolutions. This suspension power shall be in force until the next meeting of the committee, at which time the suspended resolution shall be reconsidered and offered to the parish committee meeting for a second vote. If after the second vote a harmonious decision and/or understanding is not reached the parties will take action per Section (4) below.

Section 4 - If a problem or a disputed decision between Parish Priest and the Parish Committee cannot be resolved (as per Section 3), the Priest and the Parish Committee should refer the matter to the Bishop in two separate reports, each stating the respective opinions and arguments. The Bishop's decision shall be the final one.

Section 5 - The Diocesan Bishop shall be the Chairman of the Board in all legal matters. All contracts and cheques in excess of (£500 or equivalent) shall be authorised by him.

ARTICLE FIVE: CHURCH FAITHFUL (PARISHIONERS)

Section 1 - Any person who is eighteen years of age or over, has been baptized according to the rites of the Church, or was received into the Church through confirmation, has met his financial obligation to the Parish, abides by the Canon Law and the Diocesan Constitution, is a member in good standing of the Parish.

Section 2 - No person shall be accepted for membership in a parish while belonging to a non-Christian religion, or a sect which defiles the faith, jurisdiction, and/or the ecclesiastical authority of the Diocese, or who deliberately disregards and transgresses the moral law as may be determined by the Holy Synod.

Section 3 - When transferring from one Parish to another, the Parishioners shall present to the Priest of the new parish a certificate of transfer signed by his or her former Priest, which shall include all the applicable information stated above.

Section 4 - The religious, moral and social duties of a faithful Church member are to apply the doctrine of the Church faith to his or her life and activities; to attend the divine liturgy and other services or worship faithfully on Sundays and Holy Days; to keep the rules and fasts; to receive frequently the sacraments; to train and teach the young according to the faith and spirit of Orthodoxy; to respect the clergy, the ecclesiastical authority, and all governing bodies of the church; to be obedient in matters of faith and ecclesiastical order; and to cooperate in every way towards the welfare and prosperity of the parish and the success of its sacred mission.

Section 5 - It is the obligations of the parishioners to pay regular financial obligations and special assessments, applying the minimum Diocesan standards.

A) Working parishioners, or parishioners having regular income, shall pay a yearly minimum of (one) 1% of their gross income, striving toward the goal of the Biblical standards of (ten) 10%, which is called the "tithe".

B) Financial obligations may be discharged in January of each year, or instalments of two or, at most, four. They will be considered delinquent if not paid by 30 November of each year.

Section 6 - The priest, after consulting with the parish committee, shall judge cases of indigence (or other special circumstances), which may justify the full or partial waiver of a parishioner's financial obligations.

Section 7 - It is a privilege for a parishioner to attend the Parish Assembly meetings, to take part in its discussions and to serve as a member or officer of the Parish Committee, taking part in the administration affairs of the Parish in this way.

Section 8 - As per Canon Law (*Sunhadus*), a church member of the congregation or the parish committee may be suspended by the parish priest, pending determination of the Diocesan Bishop, for any violation of Scriptural or Canon Law. The Diocesan Bishop may suspend an individual temporarily, or even permanently, depending on the gravity of his/her offence.

Section 9 - Any individual or group of individuals, whether ordained or non-ordained, when renouncing and/or withdrawing from the church for any reason, shall not be entitled to any part of the Church's movable or immovable properties, whatever they might have contributed while being under the Church's canopy, neither shall they have the right to speak or act on behalf of the Church, or represent it in any manner or form.

ARTICLE SIX: PARISH ASSEMBLY

Section 1 - The Parish Assembly is the general meeting of the members of the Parish.

Section 2 - The regular Parish Assemblies shall be convened by the Parish Committee at least once each year at dates fixed by the Parish Committee. Special Parish

Assemblies shall be held when Diocesan Bishop, Parish Priest and/or Parish Committee deem(s) it necessary.

ARTICLE SEVEN: PARISH COMMITTEE

Section 1 - The Parish Committee is a group of clergy and faithful organised to maintain the life of the parish, and to help unite it as a family in Christ, and do His work on earth in the parish.

Section 2 - The Parish Committee should help the parish priest in his overall conduct of parish affairs, and should be involved with him in:

- (A) **Spiritual life:** that is, helping and participating in liturgical and sacramental programs of parish.
- (B) **Education:** that is, planning the religious education of children and adult.
- (C) **Family life:** that is, planning programs for the young, the elderly and for the family.
- (D) **Community life:** that is, planning programs for the needs of the parish and the community.
- (E) **Communications:** that is, keeping the parish informed of all phases of the committee activities.
- (F) **Administration and finance:** that is, managing and maintaining parish properties and finance.

Section 3 - The Parish Committee should also help the parish members to participate more in the work of God by the means of:

- (A) Communication among all parish members reflecting the necessity of worshiping The Almighty God and showing obedience to His Church.
- (B) Cooperation towards common goals of the parish.
- (C) Coordination of efforts to enrich parish life.

Section 4 - The Parish Committee shall hold a fixed number of meetings each month. A simple majority shall constitute the quorum for transaction of the meeting. The minutes of the meeting shall be signed by the Parish Priest, the committee president and/or the secretary.

Section 5 - The officers of the Parish Committee (which consists of a minimum of 7 and a maximum of 15 members) shall be President, Vice-President, secretary, Treasurer, and such other officers as the Parish may require, including a chairwoman of the Church Daughters, and a chairman of the Youth Association.

Section 6 - The members of the Parish Committee are elected for a 2-years term by the members in good standing of the Parish (those who have met their financial obligations to the Church).

Section 7 - The Parish Committee may be appointed temporarily by the Diocesan Bishop if he determines that to be for the good of the parish.

Section 8 - No salaried employee of the parish may serve in the Parish Committee except the Parish Priest.

Section 9 - A vacancy on the Parish Committee shall be considered to exist under any of the following circumstances: The death or resignation of a member; the physical or mental incapacity of a member; the failure of a member to be current in his financial obligations to the Parish; the determination by a decision of the Diocesan Bishop that a member is not or has ceased to be loyal to the doctrines, canons, worship, and discipline of this constitution, or the administrative rulings, customs, practices and encyclicals of the Diocese, or does not recognize the Diocese duly constituted ecclesiastical authority, or the determination by a Spiritual Court of the Diocese that a Parish Committee member is guilty of a serious moral transgression or has violated his/her oath of office.

Section 10 - When a member of the Parish Committee has been absent without justifiable cause for more than three consecutive meetings, he/she may be relieved of his/her duties upon the resolution of the Parish Committee to that effect.

Section 11 - Members of the Parish Committee are especially obliged to show reverence and obedience to their Clergy and to all obligation and duties set for the Church Faithful, that they may be a good example for all parishioners.

Section 12 - No Sub-Committee shall have the authority to act for or on behalf of the parish, or to commit or bind the parish to any contract or course of action. All sub-committees in the parish including Church Daughters and Youth organisation shall report to and be supervised by the parish committee.

ARTICLE EIGHT: NOMINATION COMMITTEE

Section 1 - The nomination committee shall consist of the Parish Priest and three or four other members appointed by the Bishop from among those who will not be candidates for election to the Parish Committee.

Section 2 - The nomination committee shall make the list of candidates, send it to the Diocese for ratification, and notify all eligible members concerning the elections procedures, supervise the elections, and tabulate and report the results.

Section 3 - Nomination lists are to be viewed only by the nomination committee, according to the list of the Diocesan directives, and to remain confidential until the day of the election.

Section 4 - The nomination committee may not try to influence the nominations or voting to favour one candidate over another.

Section 5 - The nomination committee shall be dissolved right after the completion of the election process.

ARTICLE NINE: ELECTIONS OF PARISH COMMITTEE

Section 1 - The election of the members of the Parish Committee shall be held every two years in the month of January.

Section 2 - The persons nominated for elections must process the qualifications as indicated below:

A) A nominee for Parish Committee must be a member in good standing of the Church for at least one year immediately preceding the date of election and must conduct his or her life and activities in accordance with the faith and the Canons of the Church.

B) He/she must be a member in good standing and not delinquent in his/her financial obligation and/or other financial commitments required by Church.

C) He/she should not be less than 25 years of age and should have sufficient background in general education to be able to read and write fluently in English and/or Assyrian.

D) He/she must possess some knowledge of the Church's religious teachings, history, tradition, and structure.

E) He/she should not be an officer or a member of the Executive Committee of another religious, social, political or other organisation.

F) He/she should not be of the same family as another member of the Parish Committee serving in the same term.

G) In addition to the above, the Parish Committee will include the chairman of the Youth Association and the chairwoman of the ladies' committee (Church Daughters), who will be elected in separate meeting of their respective memberships.

Section 3 - Candidates for election to the Parish Committee shall be nominated at least two weeks prior to the election. Nominations will be made by a nomination committee through their own findings. If the final list of the nomination committee consists of the exact number of the parish committee members or less, then there shall be no election.

Section 4 - A member duly enrolled in the Parish register, but delinquent in his/her parish financial obligations, may vote in the election by meeting his/her financial obligations at any time prior to balloting.

Section 5 - A new member of the Parish may vote in the election if he/she has been enrolled at least three months prior to it taking place.

Section 6 - Elections shall be held at a place on Parish premises, which shall be nominated in advance by the nomination committee, and voting shall be by secret ballot, the results of which shall be retained by the parish priest for period of thirty days. Voting shall begin after the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy and shall terminate in the afternoon of the same day. Proxies shall not be permitted in the election.

Section 7 - The election results shall be entered in the minute-book of the Parish, showing the number of votes cast for each candidate, and shall be signed by each member of the nomination committee. The candidate receiving the largest number of votes shall be declared elected for the ensuing term.

Section 8 - Any member of the Parish questioning the validity of any election may, within five days after such election, lodge a written protest with the Bishop through the Parish Priest. Such protest shall be signed by the questioning member and at least four other Parish members. The decision of the Bishop concerning the protest shall be final.

Section 9 - In case of the resignation of any member(s)- elect of the incoming Parish Committee, or there is a vacancy for any other reason, the vacant position(s) shall be filled by a person nominated by the Parish Priest.

ARTICLE TEN: RATIFICATION OF ELECTION AND OATH OF OFFICE

Section 1 - Within six days after the election the Priest shall forward the results to the Bishop for review and ratification. The Bishop shall ratify the election. The Priest shall at the same time verify in writing that all candidates were qualified and that the election was conducted in accordance with the constitution.

Section 2 - The election will be considered ratified upon receipt of verification (as provided for above) in the absence of the filing of any protest. In the event that a protest is filed, and such protest is upheld, the Bishop will declare the protested election void, and a new election will be ordered.

Section 3 - On the last Sunday in January, and after ratification of the election has been received from the Bishop, a special ceremony shall be held at the close of the divine liturgy in which all the members of the Parish Committee shall take oath of office jointly. The oath shall be administered by the Priest and shall be repeated by all the members of the Parish Committee.

Section 4 - Each member or member-elect of the Parish Committee is obliged, without exception, to take the following oath of office, and to subscribe his/her name to it:

"I do solemnly swear that I will uphold the dogma, teaching, traditions, holy canon, worship, and moral principles of the "Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East", as well as the constitutional authority, discipline, and regulations of the Diocese of Western Europe and that I will fulfil faithfully and sincerely the duties and obligations required of a member of the Parish Committee, so help me God."

A person refusing to take the oath or to subscribe to the same shall not assume duties as a member of the Committee or be elected as an officer of the Parish committee.

ARTICLE ELEVEN: ELECTION OF PARISH COMMITTEE OFFICERS

Section 1 - Following the administering of the Oath of Office, the Parish Committee shall convene immediately to elect its officers, under the chairmanship of the Priest who shall not vote.

Section 2 - The office of President may not be held by the same person for more than two terms consecutively, except by special permission of the Diocesan Bishop.

Section 3 - In the event that the office of the President of the Parish Committee shall become vacant by the demise, permanent incapacitation or resignation of the President, the Vice-President shall assume the office of the President, and if the office of the Vice-President should also be vacant, the Parish Priest may appoint person(s) to fulfil the remaining term, after consulting with the Diocesan Bishop.

Section 4 - A simple majority is required to adopt a resolution in favour of the election of the President, Vice-President, Secretary, and treasurer.

ARTICLE TWELVE: DUTIES OF PARISH COMMITTEE

Section 1 - The Parish Committee under the leadership of the Priest shall have the following duties: To attend divine services regularly and to participate in the sacramental life of the Church, thereby setting an example for the Parish, and to administer the affairs of the parish in such manner as to aid the Priest in the fulfilment of its aims and purposes.

Section 2 - The parish committee, under the leadership of the priest, shall be obliged to collect the revenue of the Church, issuing receipts thereof and paying by cheque the salaries of the parish personnel, Parish expenses, budgetary grants-in-aid for Parish educational, Church philanthropic organisations, and such sums as may be fixed by the Diocesan Committee for the support of the Diocese, to submit to the Bishop a report of its stewardship at the end of each year; and to submit to the Diocese each year, the audited financial statement of the parish for the previous year.

Section 3 - Upon the expiration of its term, the Parish Committee shall surrender to the succeeding Parish Committee all Parish records, including membership lists, minute books, bankbooks, chequebooks, journals and financial records of all other properties of the Parish. Such transfer shall be affected by letter of transmittal, a copy of which shall be sent to the Bishop.

Section 4 - The officers shall perform the generally prescribed duties as their title may indicate and shall be qualified to fill those posts. For example, the treasurer shall be competent in a standard form of accounting.

Section 5 - Any single expenditure over (£500 or equivalent) the parish committee must receive the permission of the Diocesan Bishop.

Section 6 - The issuance of any cheque, draft or other instrument for payment must be signed by the Parish Priest and either the, President or treasurer, thus providing two signatures per transaction. Any cheque or transaction over the value of (£500 or equivalent) must be signed or countersigned by the Parish Priest.

Section 7 - The Parish Priest and/or the president or any other member of the parish committee, shall not have the power to represent the Parish, the Diocese, or the Church in any legal or official matter before any social, religious, governmental or other organisation, unless they have first obtained a written permission from the Diocesan Bishop.

Section 8 - The Parish Priest and the parish committee shall submit to the Diocesan Bishop an annual written report stating the following: the number of the total members of the Parish, the names of all the clergy and committee members, the number of newly baptised persons, the number of weddings and the number of deaths.

ARTICLE THIRTEEN: FISCAL YEAR, FINANCIAL REPORTS

Section 1 - The Parish fiscal year shall be the calendar year. At the first Parish Assembly of each year the Parish Committee shall present a financial report covering all income and expenses for the preceding year.

Section 2 - The budget for the ensuing fiscal year shall be submitted annually to the Diocese each November for approval.

Section 3 - The Parish Budget shall include appropriations for its representatives to the Clergy Congress and Diocesan Committee.

Section 4 - The Diocesan Bishop shall have the power to suspend or otherwise discipline a Parish for its failure to meet its Diocesan financial obligations as set forth above.

ARTICLE FOURTEEN: ORGANISATIONS AND AFFILIATES

Section 1 - All Parish organisation shall be under the supervision of the Priest.

Section 2 - Any adult communicant of the Church desiring to join any Parish organisation shall be required first to become a member of any Parish. A communicant over 12 years of age may be a member of the Parish Youth Organisation, whether or not his/her parents are members of the Parish, upon the approval of the Priest.

Section 3 - It shall be the concern of each parish to have a Church Ladies' Auxiliary, a Youth Organisation and such other organisations as the needs of the Parish.

Section 4 - The local by-laws of such organisations shall comply with the Diocesan Constitution as approved by the Diocese.

Section 5 - Each Parish shall organise the following Church Groups:

- A) SUNDAY SCHOOL:** Every parish is required to establish a Sunday School to hold classes for the children between the ages of 3 to 12, teaching them the Christian Faith, hymns, prayers and basic principles of our ancient Catholic and Orthodox heritage. In addition, the Assyrian Language should be taught where appropriate.
- B) CHURCH CHOIR:** The Parish Choir shall be selected by the Parish Priest and will sing during the services of the Church only the pre-selected hymns and anthems approved by the hierarchy. Disbursement for their uniforms and other necessary expenditures are to be sanctioned by the Parish Committee after the appointed Choir Director has made a written submission.
- C) BIBLE STUDY CLASSES:** The Parish Priest shall organise and teach the Faith and Bible Courses to parish members.
- D) YOUTH ASSOCIATION:** The Youth Association is under the direction of the Parish Committee to supervise the educational, social, cultural and recreational needs in a Christian manner. The age brackets shall be from 12 to 35 years of age. The Youth Association shall be administered by a committee elected from

its members, in accordance with their regulations and by-laws. The chairman of the Youth Association shall attend the Parish Committee meetings as a full member, provided he/she is at least 21 years of age.

E) CHURCH LADIES AUXILIARY: The Ladies Auxiliary of the Church will undertake the role of coordinators of Church social functions, specified charities, fund raising activities, the unifying the daughters of the Church, the propagation of our Christian heritage, and other related functions which do not depart from the purpose of the Church. The Auxiliary will have regular meetings and shall elect from its members, a board of officers. The elected chairwoman will automatically be a member of the Parish Committee, with all the rights and duties that pertain to such membership.

Note: Elections for Youth Association and Church Ladies Auxiliary will be held one month prior to general elections and shall be supervised by the parish committee.

F) THE LITERARY COMMITTEE: (at the Diocesan See), whose members are not elected but appointed by the Diocesan Bishop, are responsible for the editing and publishing of Church books, texts, pamphlets and other publications of Church literature. The Literary Committee is tied to the Diocesan Committee in matters of finance, which shall approve and provide its budget. Any income derived from its operations shall revert back to the Diocesan Committee. The literary Committee is authorised to maintain a petty cash fund not to exceed two five hundred pounds (£500) for its internal operations.

NOTE: All textbooks used for teaching purposes in Sunday School and Youth Association shall be approved by the Diocese.

ARTICLE FIFTEEN: DISSOLUTION OF PARISH

When it is determined by the Parish Committee, in concert with the Diocesan Bishop, that a Parish is incapable of sustaining itself because of lack of members and inability to maintain the financial obligation towards the parish Priest and/or Church building and other Church properties, and wishes to be dissolved, a Parish Assembly shall be called. If three-fourths of the existing members in good standing favour such dissolution, or in the event that a Parish has already been disbanded and a parish assembly cannot be called, the Bishop shall have the power to declare the said Parish dissolved or disbanded and its properties shall be devolve upon and be administered directly by the Diocese.

ARTICLE SIXTEEN: MERGER OF PARISHES

When it is determined by the Diocesan Officials that it would be in the best interests of two or more Parishes to merge and to have only one Church, approval of two-thirds of the members present at a Parish Assembly of each Parish duly called upon ten days written notice, shall be required for such merger, along with the consent of the Diocesan Bishop.

ARTICLE SEVENTEEN: ORGANISATION OF PARISHES

Section 1 - New Parishes shall be organised according to the following procedures; communicants wishing to organise a Parish must first file with the Diocesan Bishop an application for permission to organise. The application must be signed by the heads of more than thirty families and provide sufficient evidence to satisfy the Bishop that a Parish can be supported in a given locality, that is it can sustain the expense of maintaining a parish priest and a Church building. The prospective Parish shall form an organisation committee with several sub-committees as follows:

- A) A planning committee to study the situation, analyse the needs, formulate an overall program, and prepare a proposed budget for the community.
- B) A fund-raising committee.
- C) A Real Estate Committee to investigate, select, and arrange buildings for and other facilities for the parish's most urgent and immediate needs.
- D) The Bishop shall have the power to suspend or otherwise discipline a Parish for its failure to meet its Diocesan financial obligations as set forth above.

Section 2 - If permission is granted by the Bishop to organise a new Parish (after consultation with the existing parishes in the immediate area), a representative designated by the Bishop shall call an organisational meeting of those who executed the application for such permission, and the designated representative shall preside at such meeting. An interim Parish Committee shall be elected (or appointed) at such meeting until such time as the parish is fully organised and accepts this constitution.

Section 3 - Upon acceptance by a new Parish of the Diocesan Agreement to Organise, and upon its acceptance of this constitution, and upon the recommendation of the Bishop, the Diocese will grant to the said new Parish ecclesiastical authority, and the Bishop will appoint a Priest for it (if one is available).

Section 4 - The Priest and the interim Parish Committee shall be authorised (by virtue of the issuance of the aforementioned ecclesiastical authority) to take all the necessary steps required to form the proposed Parish according to this constitution. A permanent Parish Committee shall then be elected in the manner prescribed above.

Section 5 - If a new Parish is unable to fulfil its organisational objectives, fails, or refuses to comply with the Diocesan agreement to organise and to accept this constitution, the authority of the new parish, may be revoked by the Diocese.

ARTICLE EIGHTEEN: REORGANISATION OF PARISHES

Section 1 - A Parish which has not been organised in conformity with the requirements of the Diocese, must execute the Diocesan Agreement to organise, and the parish committee shall vote to adopt this constitution in order to qualify for the issuance to it of an ecclesiastical authority by the Diocese.

Section 2 - If a discrepancy exists in a Parish and its ecclesiastical authority from the Diocese, measures shall be taken to eliminate such discrepancy, so that it may fully comply thereafter with the ecclesiastical authority. Until such irregularity is amended, the Parish shall, in the interim, be bound by this constitution and the disciplines and directives of the Diocesan Chancery Office, which shall have the same force and effect as though the same were fully received by the Parish.

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