

**CODE OF CANON LAW  
of the ANGLO CATHOLIC CHURCH**

*MMXVII*



## ***General Remarks***

1 The Canons of this Code regard only the Anglocatholic Church and come in to force only after official promulgation by Church Decree.

2 Ecclestical Laws are binding on those baptized within the catholic faith, or officially received into her within the jurisdiction of the Anglocatholic Church.

Members are understood to possess sufficient reason and to be at least seven years of age.

3 Ignorance or error concerning invalidating or disqualifying Laws does in no way impede the effect of the Laws unless established otherwise by official process.

4 Civil Laws to which the Law of the Church yields are to be observed in Canon Law with the same effects, insofar as they are not contrary to Divine Law and unless Canon Law provides otherwise.

5 Custom : only customs introduced and practised by a community of faith supported by competent authority have the force of Canon Law. No custom which is contrary to Divine Law can obtain the force of law.

6 Laws regard the future, not the past, unless they expressly provide for the past. Laws are interpreted by an authorized legislator entrusted officially by the Church with the power of interpretation.

7 Decrees concerning legislation relating to a specific person or persons, or a specific case, require that an authority seek out the necessary and verifiable information, and as possible, hear those whose rights can be injured.

8 A Decree of Judgment is to be issued in writing explaining in summary the decision reached. Every effort is to be made to ensure that the person or persons subject to the Decree receive and understand the judgment.

9 A Diocesan Bishop, when he judges that it contributes to a person or persons spiritual good may dispense from universal and disciplinary laws within his jurisdiction. Dispensation should be made only upon just and reasonable cause. However, a Bishop is not able to dispense with procedural or penal laws. In case of difficulty, disputes should be addressed directly to the Patriarch or to his designate.

## CANON 1 : *The Church of God*

- 1.1 Members of the Church are those who have heard and answered the call of God in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, in the power of the Holy Spirit. Members seek to model their lives after the pattern of Jesus Christ by walking with Him in paths of humble service and love and by renouncing self, taking up the cross and following Jesus.
- 1.2 The Church of God is a community of the faithful called to holiness of life in relationship with God that leads to an active witness within the theatre of the world. A Christian is formed by a living relationship with Jesus Who witnesses to us of God's enduring love. A Christian seeks to live in the light of the revelation of God's Will presented in the corpus of the Holy Scriptures and interpreted within the tradition of the Catholic Church.
- 1.3 A Christian lives within the unfolding years of God's kingdom by the cultivation of an active worship life informed by a prayerful relationship with God within the community of the faithful and a regular access to the grace flowing from the Sacraments of the new Covenant. A Christian seeks to live in harmony with others, friends and enemies alike, seeking always God's rule of justice and peace.
- 1.4 The life of a Christian is informed by the intimate relationship of Jesus the Son to God His Father as perfectly expressed in the words of His *Abba Prayer* and within the concept of divine Providence.
- 1.5 The Christian's faith is perfectly summarized comprehensively in the received texts of the ancient Creeds which may not be altered, changed or revised. The **Apostles' Creed** summarizes the original Christian message directly communicated throughout the ages from the Apostles as the core of the Christian confession. The **Nicene Creed**, resulting from the General Councils of Nicaea(325) and Constantinople(381), has become the chosen expression of the faith at the celebration of Holy Mass. The so called **Creed of Saint Athanasius, *Quicumque vult***, provides insights into the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity and into Christology. Our faith in God implies that we understand that God is

with us, a fact that transforms life by abiding trust and fresh hope that in God everything is possible.

- 1.6 A Christian seeks, not to be conformed to the world, but to be transformed by the renewal of mind that proves the good, acceptable and perfect will of God expressed by the outflow of grace within the one body of Christ.

## **CANON 2 : *Channels of Grace in the Sacraments***

The life of a Christian is thus far more than a received body of doctrine. In her beliefs, the Church becomes the expression and practice of the faith of all Christians seeking to come to God in spirit and in truth. The Church of God is thus for men the sign of salvation ' for us and for our salvation ' now made visible through the ministry of her members in the world. This becomes most evident when the Church celebrates openly her faith by clearly perceptible rites or signs of the transformative relation with God that she enjoys.

## **CANON 3 : *The Sacrament of Holy Baptism***

- 3.1 The Christian faithful are incorporated into Christ's one Body the Church through Holy Baptism wherein they become members of the people of God. Thus they come to share in Christ's priestly, prophetic and royal ministry and begin to exercise in His Name the mission entrusted to the Church in the world, each within his or her proper station under the leadership of their Bishop expressed by bonds of profession of faith, the sacraments and ecclestical rule.
- 3.2 In Baptism, a person is constituted as one seeking to be guided by the life of Jesus with rights and obligations insofar as the believer remains in communion. Baptism is a new birth or re-birth as a new creation that speaks to the renewing gift of God's grace. The newly baptized is brought out of salvery to sin into the light of Christ's presence, being set free from both original sin and personal sin. Despite this infusion of grace, the believer must always seek to fight against those forces in this world that seek to throw him off course,

and when so afflicted, should seek reformation and return to the flock of Christ's faithful ones.

- 3.3 **Baptism** imparts an indelible character to the believer that marks the individual as Christ's own forever.
- 3.4 **The Minister of Baptism** is a Bishop, Priest or Deacon. The Sacrament should normally be administered in the Parish Church of the individual seeking Baptism. Baptism may be administered in case of necessity by anyone using water and this formula ' I baptize you in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. ' If in a case of necessity water is not available, the placing of hands on the head of the person will suffice accompanied by the baptismal statement.
- 3.5 The Sacrament is to be administered according to the official liturgical use current in the Diocese. It may be administered by immersion in water, by pouring of water or sprinkling of water that has been blessed for this purpose. For those who are of the age of reason, the method of administration may be discussed with the candidate. The Baptism is sealed with the anointing with Holy Chrism blessed by the Bishop. All baptisms shall be duly recorded in the records of the Parish.
- 3.6 **Adult Baptism** and those of the age of reason : The candidate should have manifested the properly formed will to be baptized, should receive sufficient instruction in the truths of the Christian faith and the obligations of membership in Christ's Church while still a catechumen. The minister of Baptism is to discern that the individual is intent on leading the new life in Christ and thus ready to receive the Sacrament. Confirmation by the Bishop should follow shortly on Baptism of an adult when this is practical.
- 3.7 **Infant Baptism** : It is the responsibility of Christian parents and guardians to ensure that a child receives this Sacrament in a timely manner and that the infant is nurtured in the Catholic Faith and brought to the Bishop for Confirmation. Parents and guardians are to clearly indicate their support of the Baptism. It is the responsibility of the Parish Priest to encourage the parents and guardians in this matter. God Parents, men and women of faith willing to undertake this

responsibility, should be chosen for a child.

- 3.8 **Conditional Baptism** : Where doubt exists concerning the reception of this Sacrament, or that Baptism was validly conferred, Baptism is to be administered conditionally. A foundling or abandoned child is to be baptized unless adequate proof of prior Baptism is established. An aborted fetus should be baptized.
- 3.9 When possible, it is desirable that the Sacrament be administered in the presence of the faith community during a Sunday liturgy. The community is to share with the parents, guardians and God Parents a joint responsibility for the newly baptized in their new life in Christ.

#### **CANON 4 : *The Sacrament of Confirmation***

- 4.1 This Sacrament completes the process of Christian initiation by strengthening the baptized believer in his commitment to Christ by word and by deed. It imparts a distinct character through a further gift of the Spirit as it binds believers more firmly to the holy Church.
- 4.2 The Sacrament is conferred by the laying on of hands with prayer and by anointing on the forehead with Holy Chrism that has been duly consecrated by the Bishop.
- 4.3 The Sacrament is to be conferred in a Church during the communal celebration of Holy Mass except for just cause as determined by the Bishop.
- 4.4 The Minister of Confirmation is the duly consecrated Bishop of the Diocese or another Bishop empowered to act on his behalf.
- 4.5 Those who have received infant Baptism and have reached the age of discretion, being duly prepared and with the support of their parents, sponsors, God parents and the community of faith, are to be encouraged to receive this Sacrament.
- 4.6 Both the Parish and the Diocese are to maintain records of the reception of the Sacrament.

## **CANON 5 : *The Most Holy Eucharist***

- 5.1 In this holy Sacrament, the Lord Christ is Himself contained, offered and received that His Church may continually live and grow. In the Sacrifice of the Altar is made a memorial of the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ that continues His work on the Cross throughout the ages.  
In this Sacrament, the faithful enter into the very heart and source of all Christian worship; here God's own people, the new Israel, are nurtured with heavenly Food, food that brings life, within the one Body of her Lord; here the Church of God is built up and sustained.
- 5.2 The holy Sacrament is to be held in highest honour by all the faithful. They should participate in the celebration as frequently as possible, receiving at the Altar the holy food and being instructed concerning its nature and reception. The faithful are bound by obligation to receive the Sacrament at least once a month, and always on Christmas Day, Easter Day and the Day of Pentecost.
- 5.3 In the Sacrifice of the Mass, Christ Himself acts along with His Church, through the ministry of the Priest. Christ offers Himself as substantially present under the species of Bread and Wine. He offers Himself to God, His Father, giving Himself as spiritual food to the faithful who thereby unite themselves in His offering.
- 5.4 The Priest or Bishop celebrating the Mysteries acts *in persona Christi*, in the person of Christ, that all who participate may receive the benefits flowing from the eucharistic Sacrifice made for both the living and for the dead.
- 5.5 The work of Christ present in the Eucharistic Sacrifice is exercised continually for the redemption of souls. Priests are to celebrate the Mysteries frequently. A daily celebration is highly recommended, even if the Priest be alone, since it is in this Act of Christ and His Church in which the priesthood finds its prime function.



- 5 .6 **Reservation of the Eucharistic Elements** : The Eucharistic Elements are to be reverently reserved in one Tabernacle or Ambry only under the direct care of the Parish Priest. Consecrated Hosts in sufficient quantity for local use are to be kept in a Pyx or Ciborium duly veiled. The elements should be renewed frequently and the older Hosts reverently consumed. Before the place of reservation should burn a perpetual lamp.
- 5 .7 The ordinary Minister of the Eucharist is the Bishop, whose ministry is extended throughout his Diocese by his Priests.
- 5 .8 Any baptized Christian, not prohibited by Church Law, is to be admitted to Holy Communion. The clergy have no right to prohibit the reception of the Sacrament nor to interfere in a relationship between God and a believer.
- 5 9 All who are sick and in danger of death and those in need of spiritual consolation are to be encouraged to be sustained by the regular reception of this Sacrament.
- 5 .10 The sacramental gifts are to be the best and purest Bread of wheat, whether leavened or unleavened, and the Wine pure grape wine with which a little water is to be mingled.
- 5 .11 The Sacrament may be given under the form of Bread alone or under both kinds in accordance with the liturgical norm of the community. Under necessity, it may be received under the form of Wine alone.
- 5 .12 **Vesture** : The traditional vestments worn during the celebration of the Mass are a white Alb, Amice and Cincture, over which are worn the Stole, (Maniple) and Chasuble in the colour of the Mass of the day.
- 5 .13 **The Liturgy of the Mass** shall be celebrated according to the Use of the local Diocese.
- 5 . 14 **Eucharistic Adoration** :In addition to the Celebration of the Mass, the Church permits the practice of Eucharistic Adoration, the act of worshipping God as He is present in the consecrated Eucharistic elements. The gaze of the Church should be constantly turned towards

her Lord present in the blessed Sacrament of the Altar as she discovers anew the full manifestation of His boundless love. The faithful should be encouraged to spend time before the blessed Sacrament in prayer and devotion. As well, the Church permits the Exposition of and Benediction with the blessed Sacrament. The minister of the rite should be a Priest or Bishop. The rite used should follow the liturgical norms of the local Diocese.

5 . 15 **The Homily or Sermon** : celebration of Mass is to be closely linked to the Church's ministry of preaching the Word of God. God's Word should influence the head, heart and mouth of every Christian. The preacher should always seek to open to the faithful an historical understanding of the Gospel and as well reveal its relevance in the contemporary world.

## **CANON 6 : *Holy Matrimony***

- 6.1 Christian marriage is a covenant of life-long fidelity made between a man and a woman, blessed by the Church and supported by the community of faith. As a Sacrament of the New Covenant, it is compared to the bond between Christ and His Church, a sign through which Jesus Christ Himself is present in the love of the two partners. As a social and legal contract expressed between Christians, the normal concept of marriage is elevated to a new dignity that expresses the acceptance, fidelity and love that God has for creation.
- 6.2 Before blessing and celebrating a marriage, the clergy are obliged to discern that no legal or ecclesial impediment stands in the way of the union. They must also insure that both parties have freely consented to enter into this marriage and have obtained the necessary civil documentation or that banns have been properly proclaimed. It is also their responsibility to inform the couple concerning the duties of Christian marriage and to provide such counselling as will contribute to the health of the marriage as a permanent union before God.
- 6.3 The community of the faithful are obliged to reveal any impediments of which they are aware to the Minister who is to celebrate the Marriage

Rite.

- 6.4 It is strongly recommended that persons seeking Christian Marriage should be confirmed in their Christian faith, be regular communicants in their local Parish and approach the Sacrament of Confession.
- 6.5 The Marriage ceremony shall be conducted in accordance with the Liturgical Rite of the Diocese. It must as well meet all civil requirements mandated by law in the territory or country in which the marriage rite is celebrated. It shall be reported to the appropriate civil authority and recorded within the records of the local parish and the record kept securely. The Minister who celebrates the Marriage Rite must hold the appropriate civil authority required by law.
- 6.6 The wedding ceremony must be conducted in the presence of at least two witnesses. Permission from the local Ordinary is necessary if a marriage is to be celebrated in secret.
- 6.7 The appropriate location for the celebration of a Christian marriage is before the Altar of the couple's parish Church in the presence of the faith community. Permission from the Ordinary must be sought before clergy agree to conduct the ceremony in a secular location.
- 6.8 The Priest of the local Parish is the appropriate minister of the Sacrament. He may delegate his role to other valid ministers within his Diocese. Participation by clergy from other jurisdictions requires approval from the Bishop.
- 6.9 The validity of the marriage contract presumes the consummation of the Marriage.
- 6.10 **Dissolution of Marriages** :The Church recognizes that problems occur within marriages. Every opportunity should be taken to assist the couple in times of need and to offer resources for reconciliation. However, the Church understands that in certain cases irreconcilable differences cause the marital union to effectively cease. Thus the sacramental grace no longer remains between the two parties. The Priest should seek to aid couples in this process of discernment and be an effective

minister of healing for both individuals. It is recommended that priests assist in this process by presiding at a **Liturgy of Termination of a Marriage** that seeks to encourage forgiveness and open a path for renewal and wholeness.

**6.11 Consecutive Marriages :** As the Church seeks to aid couples in gracefully leaving relationships of infidelity, pain and distress, she may, with appropriate pastoral preparation, permit the opportunity to invite Christ into a new Spirit-filled marriage. The parish Priest will begin the process and, if, after due investigation, he deems it appropriate for one of the party, he will forward the case to the Diocesan Marriage Tribunal. The person who wishes to enter into a consecutive marriage must furnish documented evidence of such conditions under the previous marriage that resulted in the termination of the relationship. The Tribunal will weigh the evidence and return their decision to the person and the parish Priest in a timely manner. Candidates for re-Marriage must be provided with extended Pastoral counselling prior to the celebration of a second marriage. A suitable interval of time between marriages must be observed.

**6.12 The Diocesan Marriage Tribunal :** With this Tribunal, rendering judgment in the name of the Ordinary of the Diocese, rests the power of decision for a **Grant of Dissolution of a Marriage** celebrated in a Church. Such a decree will not be granted prior to the finalization of a civil Decree of Divorce. Petitioners who have had two or more previous marriages must make their petition directly to the Bishop. Those petitions that contain false information or omit information will be summarily dismissed.

## **CANON 7 : *The Sacrament of Reconciliation***

**7.1** Actions of a Christian concern the whole community of the faithful for sin offends both God and His Church, the community established and sanctified by God as His holy people. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is the opportunity for forgiveness of serious sins. In the Name of Christ and of the community of faith, the Priest or the Bishop receives the confession of sins of the sinner and gives to him in God's Name

absolution. This act presupposes contrition on the part of the sinner, an hearty intent to lead a new life and the will to make satisfaction for sin.

- 7.2 Individual and integral Confession and Absolution constitute the ordinary way by which an individual effects this reconciliation.
- 7.3 The Confessor acts both as a judge and as a minister of healing dispensing on behalf of God divine justice and mercy within the concept of divine honor and salvation. Thus, in posing questions, he is to proceed with prudence and discretion, with due attention given to the condition and age of the penitent. He is to refrain from asking the name of an accomplice. If the Confessor is in any doubt as to the disposition of the penitent asking for absolution, absolution is not to be refused or delayed.
- 7.4 The Confessor is to enjoin beneficial and suitable penances in keeping with the severity and numbers of the sins and the condition of the penitent. These the penitent is obliged perform personally and in a timely manner.
- 7.5 The sacramental seal of the confessional is inviolable. Therefore, it is a serious sin for a confessor to betray the confidence placed in him and in the Sacrament by the penitent by word, or in any other manner for any reason. In all cases, a confessor must not use any knowledge acquired from a confession in any manner that may cause harm to the penitent.
- 7.6 In all cases, a faithful Christian is obliged to confess, in kind and number, all serious sin committed after his baptism and not yet directly acknowledged in individual confession, the knowledge arising from a diligent examination of his conscience.
- 7.7 It is the duty of a Priest or Bishop to absolve any penitent who is in danger of death and who sincerely repents.

## **CANON 8 : *The Sacrament of Anointing***

- 8.1 Christians understand all forms of illness as a conscious sharing in Christ's redeeming passion and as a significant belonging to the Lord.

- 8.2 The anointing of the sick and the dying is conferred by anointing with Holy Oil consecrated by the Bishop for this purpose and by the use of the liturgical formulae approved by the local Diocese.
- 8.3 The anointing is administered in a seemly and discrete manner in the context of a prayerful approach to God. In cases of necessity, it is sufficient that one anointing be made upon the forehead or on another appropriate part of the body. Traditionally, the anointing was for the organs of the five senses – eyes, lips, nostrils, ears and hands. The anointing may be combined with a Laying on of Hands.
- 8.4 Following the anointing, the Priest cleanses his hands.
- 8.5 The sick should not be anointed more than once in the same illness, however, it may be administered after a period of recovery that leads to further illness.
- 8.6 In ministry to the dying, this Sacrament, known as **Extreme Unction**, is a strengthening of hope in God's fidelity and saving purposes as well as a source of encouragement in the faith of the dying person. It is administered along with Confession, and reception of the Sacrament of the Eucharist and prayers of commendation.
- 8.7 The Holy Oils are to be kept in a safe location under the care of the priest of the parish. Traditionally, a purple Veil hangs before their location.

## **CANON 9 : *Holy Orders***

- 9.1 By divine institution, this Sacrament sets apart certain members of the Christian faithful as Sacred Ministers sealed by a special indelible character with which they are marked by the Spirit. Those who hear and respond to the call of the Lord and undergo a period of discernment are set apart, each in his own order, to minister to the people of God, fulfilling in the person of Christ by deputation the role of a shepherd to God's people through the functions of teaching, sanctifying and governing. The Sacrament is conferred by laying on of hands with prayer, and anointing with Holy Oil in the case of Priests and Bishops.

The Minister of this Sacrament is a validly consecrated Bishop in direct succession from the Apostles. The Sacred Orders are conferred upon Bishops, Priests and Deacons.

- 9.2 The celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Orders takes place within the celebration of Holy Mass upon a Sunday or Holy Day or, if deemed necessary, on other days as appointed by the Ordinary. The Liturgical Rites for Ordinations are to follow the rites of the See of Utrecht. The Sacrament may be conferred once only upon each degree.
- 9.3 The primary location of the celebration is to be the Cathedral Church of the Bishop or another consecrated location as needed. Orders are to be conferred in the presence of the faithful of the Diocese.
- 9.4 The Minister of Ordination is a consecrated Bishop possessing valid succession. He ordains with the express permission of the Patriarch.
- 9.5 A Bishop ordains within his own Diocese and requires written permission of the local Ordinary when without his jurisdiction.
- 9.6 For an Episcopal Consecration, tradition specifies the participation of three Bishops where this is possible. If this is not possible, consecration by a single Bishop suffices for valid transmission of the episcopal order.
- 9.7 A baptized and confirmed male alone receives the Sacrament of Holy Orders. This Church does not ordain homosexual men.
- 9.8 Candidates are to possess the freedom to be ordained, an integral faith and a sound mind duly formed. They are to be mature, found worthy of this high calling and to be moved to receive ordination by a right intention.
- 9.9 A period of Postulancy is to precede ordination. This is to be initiated by a public celebration of the **Rite of Admission to Postulancy**.
- 9.10 Deacons should have reached the age of 23, Priests of 25, and Bishops of 35 years before Ordination. A suitable time is to be spent within each order as determined by the Ordinary.

- 9.11 The normal time spent in the Transitional Diaconate is one year. The minimum time spent in the Diaconate before receiving the Priesthood shall be a period of six months.
- 9.12 The Permanent Diaconate is to be entered upon only after appropriate formation.
- 9.13 Each Bishop and his Diocese must maintain a secure data base of all Ordinations and is to issue authentic testimonials of Ordination.
- 9.14 Clergy are permitted to marry. A place is to be reserved for those whom God calls to celibate ministry.
- 9.15 No Bishop may consecrate to the episcopate without a Patriarchal Decree that mandates the consecration
- 9.16 **The Divine Office** : All those who have received the seal of Holy Orders are obliged by tradition to pray daily the the Offices of the Church in a form recognized by the local Ordinary.
- 9.17 All Clergy owe as an obligation reverence and obedience to their Ordinary, to his successors and to the Patriarch and his successors. They are to unite themselves to them in bonds of brotherhood, prayer and worship and to promote the mission of the Church and her ministry.
- 9.18 All clergy are to live in a manner befitting their high calling after the model of their Master and seek a deepening of their spiritual lives. They are to foster peace and harmony among their people and to show charity to all alike.
- 9.19 **Loss of Clerical Status** The seal of the Spirit imparted in Ordination is irrevocable. However, a cleric may loose his clerical status and be prohibited from exercising the power of Holy Orders and deprived of all offices and function of his order. Loss of status shall be deemed necessary only after a thorough investigation of allegations against the cleric made by the Ordinary. The cleric shall be notified in writing.

### ***Canon 10 : The Process of Discernment for Candidates for Holy Orders***

- 10.1 A central right and responsibility of the Church is to foster and support



vocations to the ministry from men called by God to service in His holy Church.

- 10.2 The candidate for Holy Orders must provide documentation of baptism, confirmation and any marriage undertaken as well as the dissolution of any marriage. In addition, he must freely submit to a criminal background check by civil authority and complete a standard psychological examination. It is to be noted that a criminal history does not automatically exclude a candidate from Holy Orders.
- 10.3 All necessary documents and application forms are to be submitted to the Diocese in a timely manner. The candidate must fulfill the residency requirements of the local Diocese.
- 10.4 The Diocesan Bishop may modify or waive local requirements only with the permission of the Patriarch. The requirements of Canon 10 may not be modified.
- 10.5 The local Ordinary will consider the applications of all candidates and determine a final decision. Appeal of a negative decision may be made to the Patriarch.
- 10.6 It is the responsibility of the Ordinary to ensure that all candidates possess sound learning and mastery of sacred Theology, Holy Scripture, Doctrine, Liturgy and pastoral skills. In addition, they must possess adequate knowledge of the customs and legislation of the Church.
- 10.7 It is the responsibility of the Church to ensure that this culture of learning extends throughout the course of the ministry of her clergy. This culture must be joined to the practice of a solid and continuing state of spiritual formation coupled with a life of prayer that has at its heart the celebration of the Eucharistic Mysteries.

### **Canon 11 : *Postulants for Holy Orders***

- 11.1 The process of Discernment for Candidates for Holy Orders is to aid both the potential candidate and the Church in creating an effective vision for Ministry and in the discernment of the particular form of

vocation for which God is calling and equipping the person and to continue the process for successful candidates by a careful process of mentoring and formation.

- 11.2 The process begins at the parish level in prayerful discussions between a potential postulant and his Parish Priest. This process should be supported by a process of parish discernment. The recommendation of the Parish Priest is to be submitted in writing to the Diocesan Bishop who will consult with his advisors before agreeing to meet with the candidate.
- 11.3 Candidates accepted as Postulants of the Diocese will be assigned to the care of an experienced priest who will become their advisor and guide them until ordination.
- 11.4 All Postulants are to be under the direction of an experienced Spiritual Director appointed by the Bishop.
- 11.5 All Postulants are to gain experience in field placements, summer internships and in parish ministry under the direction of the priest of the parish to which they are assigned by the Bishop.
- 11.6 Postulants are to meet with and maintain regular communication with their Bishop and to report to him on the nature of their personal, spiritual and intellectual pilgrimage, its successes and its challenges.

## **Canon 12 : *The Ministry of a Bishop***

- 12 .1 The Bishop is an ecclestical dignitary possessing the fullness of the Priesthood conferred upon him by Episcopal Consecration. He is called to rule a Diocese as it's Chief Pastor in due submission to his Archbishop, Metropolitan Archbishop and the Patriarch of the Anglocatholic Church. As a successor to the Apostles, he possesses powers superior to the Order of Priests and Deacons.
- 12.2 The Bishop possess the power of Order and Jurisdiction which he licitly exercises within the boundaries of his Diocese. He is forbidden to exercise Episcopal functions in another Diocese without the express

written permission of the Ordinary of that Diocese.

- 12.3 The Bishop possesses the right to teach Christian Doctrine. Within his Diocese, he possesses administrative power *sui juris* over his clergy and authority in matters of Divine Worship and the administration of the Sacraments. In his role as Teacher, he is to regularly issue Pastoral Letters to the up-building of the faithful under his charge. His teaching ministry is always to be guided by the inspiration of the Spirit of God who leads His people into all truth by strengthening them in their fidelity to His Word.
- 12.4 The Bishop bears the care for the visible unity of God's people entrusted to his pastoral oversight. He is bound to the Canon of Holy Scripture and the ancient Tradition of the Catholic Church as well as to the people entrusted to his care. As a leader of the people of God, his life must be beyond reproach and stand as an example to be imitated.
- 12.5 In union with his fellow Bishops, he supports, by membership in the College of Bishops, the Ministry of the Patriarch and the Holy Synod of the Church.

### **Canon 13 : *The Ministry of a Priest***

- 13 .1 The Priest is the Minister of Divine Worship, especially the highest act of worship, the offering of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, the figure of and renewal of Calvary, authoritatively appointed by his Bishop to the care of souls in a specific Charge and to render homage to God in the name of the Christian faithful assigned to his pastoral oversight.
- 13 .2 He possesses power as well to forgive or retain sins, to bless, to preach, to join in marriage, to care for the sick and bury the dead, and to sanctify under the authority of his Bishop to whom he owes canonical obedience. The nature of his service depends on the nature of the benefice granted to him.
- 13.3 The priest is obliged to celebrate the Sacraments, to ensure the centrality of Divine worship in his community, to preach the Word and teach the Faith, to govern and tend the flock assigned to his care.

13.4 The Priest acts as the juridic representative of his parish. He is to establish councils for governance and to maintain the records of the Parish. As well, he has responsibility to ensure its financial health, to maintain a transparency of administration and see to it that the Parish supports the ministry of the Diocese and the wider Church.

13.5 The Priest in parishes in which he shares his ministry with other assisting clergy for whom he holds responsibility, is to be to them a Father in God seeking their spiritual welfare and supporting them in their ministry.

#### **Canon 14 : *The Ministry of the Deacon***

14.1 The ministry of the Deacon is that of a servant or minister, who since Apostolic times has served the Church of God, especially in the liturgical proclamation of the Gospel, as an assistant in Prayers, as an aid in the administration of the Sacraments, and as a minister to the sick, needy and dying, In these roles, he actively supports the ministry of the Bishop and Priest. He shares as well in the administration of the Parish as directed by the Priest.

#### **Canon 15 *Modes of Address for those in Holy Orders***

Within the Anglo-catholic Church, the following modes of address are to be observed.

The Patriarch Your Beatitude

Metropolitan Archbishops and Archbishops Your Eminence

Bishops Your Excellency

Deans of Cathedrals Reverend Dean

Canons Reverend Canon

Priests Reverend Father

Deacons Reverend Deacon

Monks or Nuns Reverend Brother or Reverend Sister

#### **Canon 16 *The Hierarchical Constitution of the Church***

16.1 **The Supreme Authority of the Church**

By our Lord's decision, Saint Peter and the other Apostles constitute one college to whom the living hierarchy of the Church universal is joined. The hierarchy of the Church is shared between four levels of the office of a bishop. The head of the Church universal is the Patriarch of the Anglocatholic Church. Under his leadership are the ranks of Metropolitan Archbishop, Archbishop and Bishop.

## 16.2 The Office of the Patriarch

The Patriarch assumes office, authority and power in the Church by virtue of legitimate election accepted by him together with episcopal consecration. He holds the office for life unless he freely resigns this office or is significantly impeded by illness. He possesses by virtue of this office the power of primacy over the universal Church as her Chief Pastor, enjoying power over all Bishops, and Archbishops including Metropolitans and over the Christian faithful. This power he entrusts by delegation to his bishops to whom he is always to be united in communion and with the entire Church. A canonically elected Patriarch is empowered to teach sound doctrine, foster piety, correct abuses and recommend and approve such practices in the Church that promote her spiritual welfare. He is to issue Encyclical Letters and establish new jurisdictions and empower them. He is to resolve controversies between bishops ensuring that the Church is governed by the Code of Canon Law and as well shows due respect for civil regulations.

## 16.3 Sede Vacante

When the Patriarchal see is vacant or impeded, the senior Bishop in the Holy Synod holds temporary authority as **Vicar General** of the Church. He possesses no power to innovate in the governance of the universal Church. The Vicar General is to inform the Holy Synod of the vacancy of the Patriarchal See and convene in timely manner an **Electoral Synod** for the express purpose of electing a new Patriarch. All participants in the Electoral Synod are bound to obligation of secrecy concerning all matters regarding election. Upon acceptance of his election, the new Patriarch is to be enthroned and invested with the dignity and authority of the leadership of this Church.

#### 16 .4 **The Holy Synod of the Anglocatholic Church, the College of Bishops and the Convocation of the Anglocatholic Church**

The **Patriarch** as head of the worldwide Church is assisted by all the Bishops by virtue of sacramental ordination and hierarchical communion. The continuance of the apostolic body endures here together with its head, but never without him as subject of supreme and full power over the whole Church. The Holy Synod and the College of Bishops exercise power over the Church in a solemn manner when meeting together under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and when by deliberate vote these councils act in a truly collegial way. The Patriarch selects and promotes ways for these bodies to exercise their functions within the Church. He alone convenes them, determines the nature of their debates and presides over their deliberations. Decrees arising from them gain official status only when they receive official Patriarchal promulgation.

The governance of the whole Anglocatholic Church under her Patriarch is first exercised by her select executive council, the **Holy Synod**, which meets every two years or as necessity demands. Every four years is held the **Conclave of the College of Bishops**, a plenary gathering of all the Bishops of the Church throughout the world. From time to time as appropriate there may be held the **Convocation of the Anglocatholic Church**, a worldwide gathering of all the faithful.

#### 16. 5 **The Office of Metropolitan Archbishop**

A Metropolitan Archbishop presides over a designated province or geographic territory of the Church referred to as a Metropolitan Archdiocese. His duty is to be a Father in God to all those assigned to his care, to all Archbishops and Bishops under him within his province, and to act as juridic person within his province. In absence of the Patriarch of the Anglocatholic Church,, he consecrates bishops and enthrones them within his territory. He has the right to convene and preside over metropolitan Synods.

#### 16 . 6 **The Office of an Archbishop**

The Patriarch may at his discretion elevate to the office of Archbishop a Bishop to exercise pastoral care and jurisdiction over several diocesan Bishops thus forming a sub-unit of the larger Metropolitan

Archdiocese. This Archbishop remains under the jurisdiction of both the Metropolitan Archbishop of his province and the ultimate jurisdiction of the Patriarch.

### **16. 7 The Office of a Bishop**

The Bishop of a diocese is the senior cleric invested with authority by virtue of valid episcopal consecration within a designated portion of the whole people of God. He governs his diocese as its chief Shepherd exercising power with the co-operation of his priests in the name of Christ under the authority of his Metropolitan, his Archbishop, if one be set over him, and the supreme authority of the Patriarch. He gathers together his flock in the Spirit through the Gospel and in the celebration of the sacramental Mysteries and as such constitutes them as a church within the ministry of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church of Christ. He is responsible for the observance of the discipline of the faith within his diocese. Candidates for election as a Bishop should possess and demonstrate solid faith, good morals, piety, zeal for souls and prudence. They should be of good reputation, of a minimum age of 35 years having served as a priest for a minimum of 5 years. Candidates should display a solid grounding in sacred learning. Candidates names are to be proposed to the Patriarch after a period of discernment by the people and clergy of the vacant diocese. The final choice of the new Bishop rests with the Patriarch. Upon the vacancy of a See at the death, resignation, transfer or privation of the office of Bishop, the Patriarch is to be immediately informed. He will appoint a temporary administrator and set his mandate. In large dioceses , a Co-adjutor or Auxiliary Bishop may assist the diocesan Bishop.

### **16 .7 A Titular Bishop**

From time to time, the Patriarch may elevate to the rank of Titular Bishop a senior cleric who has served the Church with distinction. He does not possess powers of order or governance in the manner of a territorial Bishop who governs a Diocese. His title is understood to preserve the memory of an ancient see that is no longer functioning.

### **16. 8 Diocesan Governance**

The Bishop of a diocese is assisted in his ministry by a **Curia** or

Council appointed by the Bishop to assist in the governance of the Diocese. Members shall be devoted to the good of the Diocese. The Bishop is assisted by a **Chancellor** whose role is to act as Notary guarding and maintaining the Acts of the Curia and the relevant documents of the Diocese, Cathedral Church and parishes. A competent **Financial Officer** should assist the Bishop.

## 16 . 9 **Parishes and Pastors**

The Diocese is subdivided into pastoral units called Parishes under the care of a Parish Priest appointed by and responsible to the Bishop. The right of dedication of a parish belongs to the Bishop. The Priest is assisted in the governance of his parish by a Parish Council and two Wardens, one appointed by the Priest and one by the people. The Priest and the Wardens constitute the legal Corporation of the parish. The liturgical rites celebrated in parish churches should conform to the norm established by the Bishop in his cathedral church and be adjusted to suit local resources.

## **Canon 17 *Ecclestical Discipline***

Christ has left His followers a clear pattern of living that is to be imitated. The conduct of Jesus serves both as an example and the definitive standard of life, ministry and self-surrendering love. The words of Jesus provide the ultimate ethical norms for living by the Spirit in a world hostile to the good news that He came to bring. Both of these create an eschatologically resonant point of departure for the Christian in the formation of distinctive values and precepts that are paradigmatic in the lives of our Lord's followers who seek to imitate the example of His humility and His firm desire to act only according to the express will of His Father.

Holy Church acknowledges the manifest disproportion that exists between the demands of our God and our human ability to realize His will. Thus, believers must turn to God seeking the outflow of His transformative grace available to them through Him Who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead for our justification.

When, for just cause, holy Church stands in judgment upon her clergy and people, tradition assigns the burden of legal responsibility to the



Magisterium. In every case, guided by the Spirit according to the will of the Father, the goal of the juridic process is to be the renunciation of retributive justice with a love that extends even to enemies according to the principles of the perfect love and mercy that are the hallmark of our Father in heaven Whose practice is that of restorative justice.

Thus, the Bishop of a diocese holds responsibility for those under his pastoral care. He may, as need arises, convene his Consistory Court to try ecclesiastical causes arising within his jurisdiction.

The Bishop of the diocese presides as judge or alternately, at his discretion, he may delegate his authority to the diocesan Chancellor. Following the decisions of the Court appeals may be made successively to the Archbishop if there be one, the Metropolitan Archbishop of the ecclesiastical province and finally to the Patriarch of the Anglocatholic Church.

In cases where concerns arise over the exercise of authority by the Patriarch, the responsibility to deal with this issue rests exclusively with the Holy Synod. If the Patriarch is deemed by the said Synod to be incapable of fulfilling the obligations of his office, the Synod, by a two thirds majority vote, has the power to demand his resignation and to appoint and install his successor.

It is the responsibility of the Bishop or his designate when sitting in judgment to turn over to the civil authorities in an expeditious manner all cases in which civil laws are broken.

## **Canon 18 *Intercommunion and Ecumenical Relations***

Jesus, the True Vine, chooses all whom He calls into faithful relationship and abundant fruitfulness of life. He calls His children to be one in love with Him as He is one in love with the Father. The Apostle Paul further urges believers to experience this unity within the one body as one in spirit and one in the hope of our calling. Thus, we live within the *unam sanctam Ecclesiam catholicam* by baptism, by the spiritual nourishment of the Sacraments of grace and the comfort of the holy Scriptures. In this fellowship, believers seek to keep faithfully the Deposit of the Faith that was imprinted on the hearts of the Apostles by the loving word of Jesus and the heavenly unction of the firey Spirit as

ministers of the New Covenant, as letters of Christ written on the tablets of the human heart not with ink but with the Spirit of the Living God. While faith is interior and personal, its corporate dimensions possess a profound unity within the fullness of the apostolic heritage as something precious that is received and passed on in purity of form and content within a spiritual fellowship. As Catholics, we seek to preserve intact the purity of this divine heritage by always conforming it to the Father's will, to the One Who invited us to feast at His table arrayed in fitting wedding garments.

Mindful of this, the Anglocatholic Church welcomes to the Lord's Table all those who have been baptized in water and the Spirit, who seek to live the new life in Christ in the Father's kingdom in love and charity with all and who believe that the Bread and Wine of the Sacrifice of the Altar are in truth the real and saving Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ at Whose command we keep His feast in sincerity and in truth.

Intercommunion at an official level between established catholic ecclestical bodies is a matter that needs careful consideration. It is appropriate that the whole Church, speaking through the voice of the Holy Synod, should, in a spirit of love and openness, enter at specific times into a dialogue with other catholic Christian bodies, with the goal of true brotherhood in the faith. The Church should seek at all times in these deliberations to maintain the purity of her heritage and should thus enter into intercommunion only after a period of careful deliberation, dialogue and prayerful discernment of the will of God bearing in mind the health of the church catholic and universal.

Where a relationship of intercommunion is deemed to be not desirable, every effort should be made to maintain a healthy relationship with our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.

## ***Canon 19 Support of the Ministry of the Church***

### **19 .1**

The people of God, as the one body of the faithful gathered in Christ's Name, are understood to participate fully in the mission of His Church. In looking after the spiritual welfare of her children, the Church needs and uses temporal goods after her proper ends, ends articulated in her

divine mandate. She does so especially for divine worship, works of the apostolate and works of charity most especially by a fitting support of her ministry in the Lord's Name throughout the world.

The faithful are encouraged as an obligation to support, promote and sustain the ministry of the Anglocatholic Church, both at the level of the local parish and as well the ministry of the greater church, by offering generously according to their means, means both spiritual and material, the gifts of their goods and of themselves in humble service after the perfect model of our Lord Jesus Himself.

19 . 2

**B**y reason of the bonds of unity and charity that exist within our communion in the body of Christ, bishops are, in the name of the faithful of their diocese, to participate in and assist regularly in the wider ministry of the Anglocatholic Church according to the economic means and conditions of their dioceses. This assistance is understood to be both financial and in the practice of charity, social justice and the Christian obligation to both neighbor and enemy alike in the spirit of the gospel.

19 . 3

The intent of the faithful who bestow upon the Church of their goods and service are to be scrupulously observed as a matter of principle.

19 . 4

The Church is dependent on the freewill offerings of her people. Thus her ability to minister in the Lord's Name rests solely on their generosity. This is especially true of the Office of the Patriarch of the Anglocatholic Church which relies totally on this support in order that it may provide fitting service to the universal Church and promote her work of spreading the good news of Christ, most especially in those areas of the world that are challenged by economic and social poverty.

**THIS CODE of CANON LAW becomes the legal code of the  
Anglocatholic Church by Decree of the Patriarch.**

**4 August, 2017**

**The Holy Synod of the Anglocatholic Church,  
meeting at Seekonk, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts,  
the United States of America.**