



CONSTITUTION OF THE NORDIC CATHOLIC CHURCH AND STATUTES FOR PARISHES BELONGING TO THE CHURCH

A. Canons ordering the common life of the Church and its institutions.

§ 1 The Bishop

1. The Bishop as successor of the apostles and sign of unity is the head of the Church.
2. By virtue of his canonical consecration the Bishop is entrusted with the responsibility for the apostolic tradition and the worship and the catechesis of the church.
3. In matters of faith, morals and discipline the authority of this church lies in the hand of the Bishop and the clergy united with him.
4. The Bishop calls, ordains and licences priests and deacons. The Bishop shall consult with the Parish Council before making clerical appointments.
5. According to approved procedures the Bishop may suspend laity and clergy in matters of doctrine, morals and discipline.
6. According to approved procedures the Bishop can be suspended and eventually relieved of his duties as a consequence of blatant heresy or conduct of life in manifest contradiction to the dignity of his office.
7. The Bishop appoints the Vicar General to whom he may delegate functions and who acts as administrator in his absence.
8. If serious, protracted illness hinders the Bishop in the exercise of his duties the Bishop may be relieved of them in accordance with established procedures.
9. In virtue of his office the Bishop is also the administrative leader with financial responsibility. The Bishop appoints the Archdeacon (the Chancellor) who functions as his deputy in matters administrative and financial according to approved regulations.
10. The Bishop represents the church in relation to ecclesial and secular authorities

§ 2 Membership of the Church

1. Membership of the Nordic Catholic Church is defined by baptism, chrismation and communion with the Bishop.
2. In a given area 9 chrismated members above the age of 18 may ask for the establishment of a mission. When all members concerned have voiced their opinion the Church Council shall decide whether the mission is to be erected as a juristic person and initiate the formal process leading to the election of a parish council. All members of the mission may suggest a name for the mission, to be approved by the Bishop.
3. Similarly, when a mission has reached 20 chrismated members above the age of 18 the Parish Council can ask the Church Council to be given status as a parish.

§ 3 Holy orders

1. Only those ordained according to canonically recognized succession may minister as bishop, priests or deacons in the Nordic Catholic Church.
2. Those in holy orders shall maintain and transmit the apostolic tradition and live as models for the faithful.
3. Priests and deacons are to attend the Clergy Meeting.
4. As leader of the clerical ministry in a 'parish the Pastor holds the responsibility for the spiritual life of the parish.

§ 4 Church Council

1. In its advisory capacity to the Bishop the Church Council deals with issues of common interest for the parishes and other matters delegated to it by the Bishop.
2. The Bishop is *ex officio* president of the Church Council, which shall consist of lay and clergy representatives.
3. The term of office for elected members is four years with possible re-election for a successive period.
4. The Vicar General participates with the right to speak and propose.
5. The Archdeacon (Chancellor) is the secretary to the Church Council with the right to speak and propose.
6. The Church Council may appoint committees with given mandate. Committee members are appointed with the approval of the Bishop.
7. The Clergy elect their representatives to the Church Council.
8. The lay representatives to the General Synod appoint among themselves three members to serve as nomination committee for the election of lay representatives to the Church Council. Motions presented from the floor must be supported by at least three lay members.

§ 5 General Synod

1. The Bishop convenes the Synod and is the president *ex officio*. In the Bishop's absence the Vicar General holds this function.
2. The General Synod discusses activity reports submitted by the Bishop and gives its recommendations in matters requested by the Bishop or the Church Council.
3. Faith, order and morals are received and the Synod is not competent to change them.
4. The Synod shall normally be convened every second year and always in connection with the election of representatives to the Church Council.
5. From each Parish the Secretary of the Parish Council or an other member, one representative elected by the annual meeting and the Pastor are by right voting members of the General Synod.
6. The Vicar General, the Archdeacon (Chancellor) and the President of the clergy meeting attend with the right to vote.
7. The elected members of the Church Council participate at the Synod with the right to vote.
8. The Bishop shall appoint two moderators, one lay and one ordained, and the Synod shall elect two members to sign the minutes.

§ 6 Rules for the establishment of a diocese and the election of a Bishop

1. The Church Council shall decide the establishment of any new diocese with the approval of the General Synod.
2. Before the election of a Bishop, the Church Council shall decide on the number of candidates to be nominated.
3. The decision of the Church Council is signified to the Clergy Meeting, which in its turn nominates the prescribed number of candidates.
4. The decision of the Clergy Meeting is submitted to the General Synod, which recommends one of the nominated candidates for consecration.
5. The principal consecrator approves the recommendation or requests the General Synod for a new name.

§ 7 **Dissolution of the Church**

1. At the dissolution of the Nordic Catholic Church all real property and funds held by or for the benefit of the Church are to be used for ecclesial activities based on the catholic and orthodox faith of the Undivided Church in accordance with the general purpose of the Nordic Catholic Church as stated in paragraph B § 1.1.

B. Statutes governing Parishes of the Nordic Catholic Church

§ 1 General purpose

1. Parishes of the Nordic Catholic Church are worshipping communities based on the catholic and orthodox faith of the undivided church.
2. It is the purpose of a Parish of the Nordic Catholic Church, through worship and teaching, to nourish and sustain the faith of its members, incorporating them in a sacramental community devoted to mission and diaconia.
3. The Bishop of a diocese oversees the activity of the Parish.
4. The Parish may acquire and own what is needed for its activity.
5. To reach the objectives the Parish may appoint and remunerate personnel.
6. By dissolution of the Parish all real and personal property held by or for the benefit of the Parish passes to the Nordic Catholic Church.

§ 2 Membership of a Parish

1. All members of a Parish must be baptized in the name of the triune God.
2. The apostolic tradition is the rule of life of all members of the Parish in both doctrine and morals.
3. All chrismated and communicant members of the Parish who have attained the age of 18, may vote at the Annual Meeting.
4. Members of the Nordic Catholic Church living at locations where there is no parish may be assigned to a parish by the Church Council.

§ 3 The Parish Council

1. The Parish Council assists the Pastor and the Bishop in realizing the objectives stated in § 1.1 and 1.2.
2. The Parish Council is responsible for the finances of the Parish and administers the resources of the Parish in compliance with its general purpose.
3. Within its area of responsibility the Parish Council implements resolutions carried at the Annual Meeting and General Synod.
4. The Pastor is *ex officio* the Chairman of the Parish Council. The number of members and substitutes is decided by the Annual Meeting. The Parish Council shall elect a Secretary and a Treasurer at its first meeting after the Annual Meeting.
5. The Parish Council keeps all of the Parish documents establishing title to the Parish property, Parish charter, and other important Parish documents in a bank safe deposit box.
6. The annual report is submitted to the Bishop.
7. The Parish Council may voice its opinion before clerical appointments to the Parish.
8. The Parish Council keeps record of members with right to vote.

§ 4 Annual parochial meeting

1. The Parish Council shall give three weeks notice of date and agenda of the Annual Parochial Meeting, which shall normally be held annually on or before March 15th
2. The Pastor of the Parish is *ex officio* the chairman of the Annual Meeting and the Secretary of the Parish Council is the secretary. The meeting appoints two members to sign the minutes.
3. On the basis of reports from the Pastor, Parish Council and the Treasurer, the Annual Meeting discusses the activities of the Parish since the last Annual Meeting. Members should receive the reports at least one week before the meeting.
4. The Annual Meeting discusses plans for the coming year and approves the budget.
5. The Annual Meeting may pass resolutions in matters proposed by the Parish Council, the Pastor, and the Bishop or suggested in writing by at least three members of Parish one week before the meeting.
6. The Annual Meeting shall elect the Parish Council from among members who are qualified to vote, who have been nominated by the existing Parish Council or by three members of Parish and who have the approval of the Bishop.
7. The Annual Meeting shall elect an auditor and other commissioners on the advice of the Parish Council and/or the Pastor.
8. An Extraordinary General Meeting may be convened, with at least ten days notice, when the Parish Council, the Pastor or a third of the members with the right to vote requests it.

§ 5 Licensed lay ministries

1. Licensed lay ministries may be established according to need and resources.

§ 6 External representation

1. As leader of the parochial life the Pastor represents the Parish in relation to ecclesial and secular authorities.
2. The Pastor, one member of the Parish Council and one lay representative elected at the Annual Meeting represent the Parish in the General Synod.