

Canons

These Canons are the Constitutional Canons of the Holy Catholic Church - Anglican Rite, also known as the Anglican Rite Catholic Church, (in the Family of Catholic Churches). They provide a general framework for Local Diocesan Canons and are intended to reflect the Canonical Tradition of the undivided Catholic Church.

CONSTITUTIONAL CANONS

TITLE I: CONCERNING THE CHURCH AND THE FAITH

Canon 1: OF THE AUTHORITY OF THESE CANONS: The Canons given below possess authority and command obedience only as far as they witness to and embody that divinely ordered constitution with which Christ, abiding in His Church through the Holy Spirit, has endowed his Holy People (Quinisext Council I).

Canon 2: OF THE NAME OF THIS CHURCH: This Church shall be known in general as The Holy Catholic Church, Anglican Rite, or Anglican Rite Catholic Church. The name of this Church may be varied according to the particular circumstance and civil regulations of any country in which this Church maintains a presence. The identity of this Church is secured by the Standard of Faith which is maintained by all its members.

Canon 3: OF THE NATURE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH: "Wherever the Bishop shall appear, there let the multitude of the people also be; even as, wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church" (St. Ignatius of Antioch, Smyrnaeans VIII). This Church acknowledges that the Catholic Church (of which it is itself a manifestation) is the sacramental Body of Christ. Through the Holy Spirit, abiding for all time in the Church, Christ bestows His Risen and Saving Life upon His Holy People. The Catholic Church is both distinguishable and inseparable from her Lord.

Canon 4: OF THE STANDARD OF FAITH OF THIS CHURCH: The Standard of Faith of this Church is that of the "Teaching of the Holy Fathers and of the Oecumenical Councils and the Tradition of the Catholic Church" (Nicaea II, Session I, Anathema VIII). By this Teaching and Tradition the true saving interpretation of Holy Scripture, the Word of God, is secured for all time by the Holy Spirit. This Church recognises that the Teaching and (Holy) Tradition referred to above have been preserved faithfully, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, by all seven Ecumenical Councils - to which Councils this Church subscribes.

Canon 5: OF THE SACRAMENTS AND MINISTRY OF THIS CHURCH: The Holy Sacraments and Ministry of this Church are those which have continued in the Catholic Church since the time of the Apostles. This Church recognises seven Sacraments, namely: Holy Baptism and Confirmation, The Holy Eucharist (Mass), Holy Orders, Holy Matrimony, Penance, and Unction. In conformity with the Holy Tradition, Holy Orders may be bestowed only upon men (note Quinisext Council LXX).

Canon 6: OF THE CREEDS: This Church accepts, as the Baptismal Symbol (Statement of Faith), the Creed commonly called the Apostles Creed. This Church acknowledges the Creed known as the Athanasian Creed. This Church submits itself to the Creed of the First Ecumenical Council (Nicaea I) as received through the Second Ecumenical Council (Constantinople I) and commonly known as the Nicene Creed. This Church recognises that this Creed is to be maintained in its original form.

Canon 7: OF THE MOTHER OF GOD: This Church maintains devotion to Mary, Mother of God (Theotokos), in accordance with the witness of the Catholic Church. This Church therefore acknowledges not only that Mary is truly the Mother of God (St. Cyril, 12 Anathemas), but also recognises her personal sinlessness, her perpetual virginity and her glorification (Dormition/Assumption), body as well as soul (Constantinople II,

Capitulum VI, Nicaea II, Decree), in total fulfilment of the whole divine scheme of salvation - seeking her intercession also as foremost among the Angels, and the Saints departed this life.

Canon 8: OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THIS CHURCH: This Church is governed and directed under the Holy Tradition by Bishops (Apostolic Canon XXXIV) holding without reservation the orthodox Apostolic and Catholic Faith, and consecrated within the Apostolic Succession. The Bishops, as successors of the Holy Apostles, govern according to the Canons of the Seven Oecumenical Councils and of those other Councils recognised by them, and by such Canons approved by the Synods of the Bishops of this Church which do not conflict with the Canons approved by the Fathers of the Ecumenical Councils.

Canon 9: OF BISHOPS ORDINARY: The Bishops Ordinary of this Church, as successors of the Apostles, are charged with the entire care and government of all within their Dioceses. The Bishops Ordinary are the chief pastors of the flock entrusted to them. They maintain themselves, and all for whom they are responsible, in the Holy Tradition, ruling in accordance with the Canons of the Catholic Church.

Canon 10: OF THE UNITY OF THE EPISCOPATE: The Bishops of this Church hold their Apostolic authority both individually and collectively from Christ. In obedience to the ancient Canons of the Catholic Church (Apostolic Canon XXXIV) they choose one to be first, among equals, among them (in any provincial area determined by them) [as Metropolitan Bishop] and do nothing of consequence without his consent, just as he must do nothing without the consent of all - so that there may be unity and that God may be glorified. [(See also Canon Title II;11)]

Canon 11: OF SYNODS OF BISHOPS: The ancient Canons recognised by this Church direct that there shall be two Synods each year at which Bishops shall settle matters concerning the Church by the guidance of the Holy Spirit and in accordance with the Holy Tradition (Apostolic Canon XXXVII). See also Canon Title II: 7.

Canon 12: OF LITURGICAL USAGE: This Church has received a rich heritage of worship based on an ancient liturgical tradition of the Catholic Church. While accepting that there will be local variations of usage, the ancient liturgical tradition remains the standard by which all forms of acceptable worship are to be measured.

Canon 13: OF MARRIAGE VOWS: This Church upholds the sanctity of Marriage as a life-long, indissoluble, commitment of a man and a woman in fidelity to one another for the procreation and nurture of children, for the formation of family, and for mutual support and companionship. This Church recalls that the Catholic Church herself is the Eternal Bride of Christ.

Canon 14: OF SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE: It is required of all members of this Church to strive to achieve holiness of life, relying upon the strength given them by the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit and encouraged by the examples of the Saints who have gone before them to their eternal reward.

Canon 15: OF RECEIVING COMMUNION: Those whose Baptism and Confirmation are recognised by this Church may receive Holy Communion at its Altars. In normal circumstances only those who have been formally accepted into the fellowship of this Church receive communion.

Canon 16: OF FURTHER MATTERS UNDER THIS TITLE: Where further matters arise which require the decision of the Synod of Bishops, such decisions can be entered as Canons under this Title.

TITLE II: CONCERNING THE TEMPORAL STRUCTURE OF THE CHURCH

Canon 1: OF THIS CHURCH: This Church is a manifestation of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church of Christ.

Canon 2: OF THE DIOCESE AND OF THE BISHOP ORDINARY: This Church recognises that each Diocese (that is, the area over which a Bishop Ordinary presides and in which he must be resident) manifests the fullness of the sacramental Body of Christ (see Canon Title I:3). Every Bishop Ordinary of this Church has authority over his own Diocese "to manage it with piety, to make provision for the Faithful, to Ordain Priests and Deacons, and to settle everything with judgement" (Dedication Council, Antioch, Canon IX). The Priests and Deacons of every Diocese "must do nothing without the sanction of the Bishop for it is he who is entrusted with the People of the Lord, and of whom will be required the account of their souls" (Apostolic Canon XXXIX).

Canon 3: OF THE RECOGNITION OF BISHOPS AND THEIR DIOCESES: Where there is a Bishop Ordinary recognised by the Bishops of this Church there also is a Diocese (St. Cyprian Letter XXVI). To the Provincial Synod of Bishops belongs the responsibility to elect, and consecrate new Bishops and grant recognition to other Bishops Ordinary and Assistant Bishops holding the Standard of Faith maintained by this Church.

Canon 4: OF ASSISTANT BISHOPS: Where there is pastoral need, the Synod of Bishops may elect and consecrate an Assistant Bishop to a Bishop Ordinary. Such Assistant Bishops shall be members of the Synod of Bishops (seat and voice only and see below Canon Title II:6), but the conditions and extent of their ministry within the diocese will be subject to determination by their respective Bishops Ordinary. A Bishop Ordinary may also appoint as his Assistant any man who is already a member of the Synod of Bishops and resident within his Diocese.

Canon 5: OF THE LIMITATION OF EPISCOPAL AUTHORITY AND MINISTRY: The authority and episcopal ministrations of a Bishop of this Church are subject to the limitations imposed by the Ecumenical Canons. Bishops Ordinary confine their episcopal ministrations to their own Dioceses (I Constantinople Canon II, Apostolic Canon XXXV) unless requested to act by the Bishop Ordinary of another Diocese on his behalf. (Dedication Council, Antioch XXII). Assistant Bishops are likewise subject to the same canonical limitation.

Canon 6: OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS: The provincial Synods of Bishops of this Church include all Bishops Ordinary and Assistant Bishops in full communion with their Metropolitan and active in ministry.

Canon 7. OF MEETINGS OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS: The ancient Canons acknowledged by this Church require that the Synod of Bishops of a Province meet as a Synod twice a year to "examine among themselves the decrees concerning religion and to settle ecclesiastical controversies which have occurred" (Apostolic Canons XXXVII). Moreover it is required that the same Bishops meet in Synod to elect suitable men to fill up the number of the episcopal Order (Laodicea XII, Nicaea IV). To enable the intention of these Canons to be fulfilled this Church directs that the Synod of Bishops establish a means by which full consultation takes place so that the Bishops of the College may register their synodical judgements.

Canon 8: OF OBTAINING SYNODICAL CONSENT: The decisions taken by a Synod of Bishops on matters of importance are to be attained through moral unanimity or, failing that, by majority approval (see Dedication Council, Antioch, Canon XIX). Where a dispute remains unresolved, the provisions of the Dedication Council, Antioch, Canon XIV are to be followed. Care shall be taken to record all decisions accurately and notify the whole of this Church accordingly.

Canon 9: OF MATTERS RESERVED TO THE SYNOD: All matters concerning doctrine, moral discipline and liturgical custom are reserved to the judgement and direction of the Synod; subject only to the Holy Tradition of the Catholic Church (see

Canons Title I:4 and 8). Accusations against a Bishop must be brought before the provincial Synod for judgement.

Canon 10. OF MATTERS OF COMMON RESPONSIBILITY: Matters concerning the temporal administration and well-being of this Church are the common concern and responsibility of all members of this Church. Decisions of this nature are to be taken as set out in the Administrative Canons of this Church (see Canons Title III;3 and 8).

Canon 11: OF THE METROPOLITAN BISHOP: The Metropolitan Bishop (Metropolitan or Archbishop) shall be chosen from among his fellow Bishops Ordinary in accordance with Apostolic Canon XXXIV (see also Canon Title I:10). Over and above the care of his own Diocese, the Metropolitan shall take thought for all within his metropolitan province (Dedication Council, Antioch, Canon IX). Where a Diocese shall be without a Bishop, the Synod of Bishops shall appoint one of their number as the acting Bishop Ordinary (or Episcopal Visitor) of that Diocese. The Metropolitan shall, nevertheless, arrange for the vacancy to be filled as swiftly as conditions allow (Chalcedon, Canon XXV).

Canon 12: OF THE RIGHT OF ACCESS TO THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS: Every member of this Church, whether of the Lay or Clerical Order, has the right of direct and unhindered access to the Synod of Bishops where a case of serious and persistent contravention of the Doctrine, Discipline, or Worship of this Church occurs. Since the Metropolitan has the duty, as noted in Canon 11 above, to take thought for all within his metropolitan province, it is normally his responsibility to notify the Synod of any such concern.

Canon 13. OF THE POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS: It belongs to Synod of Bishops, with the concurrence of the Metropolitan, to announce, authorise, and summon all Provincial Conferences. The Metropolitan ratifies all decisions made for the good ordering of the Church at such Conferences. If the Metropolitan withholds consent, any such decision is of no effect, but he is required to give reasons for any decision to withhold his consent. The reasons for withholding of consent by the Metropolitan can be reviewed and overridden by a unanimous vote in the Synod of Bishops. The Metropolitan is required to initiate and authorise the election of Bishops Ordinary to vacant Sees (see Canon Title II:11 above). Without confirmation by the Metropolitan no election or consecration of a Bishop shall stand. The Metropolitan shall normally be the chief consecrator of all Bishops Ordinary and other bishops within his Province.

Canon 14: OF THE ACTING METROPOLITAN: The Acting Metropolitan who, on those occasions when it is not fitting that the Metropolitan himself should preside directly over all or any part of a Synod of Bishops, a Provincial Conference, etc., shall be the next most senior Bishop Ordinary by date of consecration, willing and able to act in this capacity. Likewise, if the Metropolitan is unable to carry out his duties for a prolonged period - due to illness or some other unforeseen and unavoidable cause - the Acting Metropolitan shall perform such duties until the Metropolitan resumes or vacates his Office. If the Office of Metropolitan falls vacant the Acting Metropolitan shall, with the least possible delay, call the Synod together to elect another Metropolitan.

Canon 15: OF THE CLERGY: The Priests and Deacons of this Church exercise their ministry only under the licence of their Bishop Ordinary and in obedience to him as his co-workers. They shall keep in mind constantly that their ministry is one with his and do nothing without his sanction (Apostolic Canon XXIX).

Canon 16: OF MARRIAGE OF THE CLERGY: No man who has abandoned or disavowed a valid sacramental marriage or who is "married" to a woman who has may be ordained or licensed.

Canon 17: OF LICENSED READERS: Bishops Ordinary of this Church licence fit men as Readers. Such men are authorised to conduct non-sacramental worship for the congregations to which they are licenced and may preach if so authorised by the Bishop Ordinary.

Canon 18: OF CONGREGATIONS. Where the members of this Church gather together on a regular and announced basis for worship, either in a dedicated building, hired premises, or a private dwelling, they shall constitute a congregation. Such congregations shall be placed under the direction and care of a Licensed Reader or an Ordained Minister of this Church.

Canon 19: OF THE WORSHIP OF THIS CHURCH: The worship of this Church shall be as the Synod of Bishops of this Church shall direct with due regard to Canon Title I:12.

Canon 20: OF FURTHER MATTERS UNDER THIS TITLE: Where further matters arise which require the decision of the Synod of Bishops, such decisions can be entered as Canons under this Title.

TITLE III: CONCERNING THE TEMPORAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE CHURCH.

Canon 1: OF THE EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE POWERS OF THE METROPOLITAN AND THE BISHOP ORDINARY: The executive and legislative powers of the Metropolitan are to be exercised through the Synod of Bishops; those of the Bishop Ordinary are exercised with the advice of the Diocesan Council of Advice and with the advice of the Diocesan Conference or Convention. No Council or Conference shall deal with matters reserved to the Synod of Bishops under Canon Title II:9. To the Synod of Bishops is also reserved the right to act directly where the good order of the Church is threatened.

Canon 2: OF THE JUDICIAL (DISCIPLINARY) POWERS OF THE METROPOLITAN AND THE BISHOP ORDINARY: The judicial (disciplinary) powers of the Metropolitan and of the Bishop Ordinary are to be administered through the Synod of Bishops, and, as appropriate, according to the Diocesan Canons in force in any diocese. All matters concerning false doctrine are reserved to the Synod of Bishops.

Canon 3: OF A PROVINCIAL FUND: If required, a fund may be established by the Metropolitan under the direction of the Synode of Bishops to meet expenses incurred in the running of the Province. The administration of the Fund will be answerable directly to the Synod of Bishops.

Canon 4: OF THE DIOCESAN CONFERENCE OR CONVENTION: The Diocesan Conference or Convention will be called according to the directions set out in the Local Diocesan Canons concerned. Appeals from decisions of the Bishop Ordinary in Diocesan Councils or Conferences lie to the Synod of Bishops.

Canon 5: OF THE BISHOP'S COUNCIL OF ADVICE: The Bishop's Council of Advice shall be constituted according to the Local Diocesan Canons concerned.

Canon 6: OF THE CANONS AND CANONICAL REGULATIONS: The Provincial Synod of Bishops alone has the power to pass or modify Canons for the good order of the Province. All such Canons are subject to the Canons approved by the Fathers of the Ecumenical Councils (see Canon Title I:8).

Canon 8: OF REGISTRATION WITH THE CIVIL AUTHORITIES IN MATTERS TEMPORAL: In whatever Country this Church maintains a presence, its existence shall be registered with the civil authorities in accordance with the Law of that Country in matters temporal and its financial affairs, accounting, and tenure of property, buildings and land shall be in conformity with such regulations as are required by the same civil authorities.

Canon 9: OF BUILDINGS AND LAND: The ownership of all buildings and land acquired and used by any Congregation of this Church shall be determined according to the Law of the country concerned.

Canon 10: OF RECOURSE TO CIVIL COURTS: Any member of this Church who shall, without the written consent of his Bishop Ordinary, initiate any action regarding a Church matter in any civil court is automatically excommunicated and removed from membership in this Church from the moment he sets pen to paper.

Canon 11: OF FURTHER MATTERS UNDER THIS TITLE: Where further matters arise which require the decision of the Synod of Bishops, such decisions can be entered as Canons under this Title.