

Statutes of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion

This document contains statutes created through the legislation process and approved by the body at Synods. While non-constitutional in nature, they have been legislated and require a majority vote by both Houses and approval by the Presiding Bishop for additions, revisions, or deletions unless there is a specific assignment of responsibility to one person or body.

I. Synod:

1.0 The Leadership Council shall establish a timely and orderly process for receiving proposals for legislation or other action to be taken up by the Synod. The Order of Business shall be published for comment and consideration at least sixty (60) days prior to the Synod. Unless otherwise adopted by a vote of the House of Laity (HOL) or House of Pastors (HOP) prior to or at the Synod, the Order of Business shall be prioritized as follows:

- a. Legislation on the action proposed by the elected bodies (the HOL, HOP or the Council of Bishops (COB))
- b. Legislation or other action proposed by the Office of Presiding Bishop (OPB)
- c. Legislation or other action proposed by a Region in the ECC;
- d. Legislation or other action proposed by individual delegates or an individual ECC organization. Proposals offered in this sub-paragraph (d) shall first solicit signatures of support and the number of signatures shall be a factor in the priority of the proposal.
(Amended 10-29-2010)

2.0 The voting delegates from each community in good standing gather in Synod. In order to maintain right relationship of clergy and lay delegates as well as equitable representation based on the size of the community, the proportionality of delegates is determined as follows:

- a. House of Laity: Each faith community has the right and responsibility to designate at least two (2) voting delegates to the HOL from the members of the community. When a faith community reaches 50 currently registered adult members, an additional voting HOL delegate is authorized for each additional unit of fifty (50). For example, a faith community between 3 and 49 currently registered adult members would have two (2) delegates, while a parish with 50 to 99 would have three (3) delegates; and a parish of 100 to 149 would have four (4) delegates, and so on. The number of voting delegates representing a single community in the HOL shall not exceed one third (1/3) of the total number of voting delegates in the HOL.
- b. House of Pastors: Each faith community has the right and responsibility to designate two (2) voting delegates to the HOP, a Pastor Delegate and a Ministerial Delegate. The Pastor Delegate is ordinarily the Pastor. In addition to the Pastor Delegate, each parish shall select one Ministerial Delegate from the clergy of that parish to serve as a voting member of the HOP. Each delegate of the HOP must be a clergy member in good standing with the ECC. If there are no other clergy of the Communion within the faith community, an alternative delegate may be selected from the laity to serve as the Ministerial Delegate of that parish. The term of office is two (2) years and the number of terms shall be determined by each parish.

3.0 Members of the HOL are elected every two years and shall be elected in accordance with the constitution or guidelines of each faith community.

- a. Members must be at least 18 years of age and cannot be ordained clergy.
- b. Each Faith Community or other Parish shall adopt language in their Constitution or Bylaws, which defines who shall be considered "a currently registered adult member" in the faith community for the purpose of determining the number of HOL delegates. In adopting such definition, each Faith Community or other Parish shall include the following requirement: (i) all Members that are over 18 years of age who attend services; and (ii) each Member contributed money or other services provided to their local community. Each community can further define membership and local requirements as needed to meet the local community's needs, but cannot diminish the above mandatory requirements.

4.0 Pastors shall be members of the HOP for as long as they are serving in the office of pastor at a parish. Bishops are not permitted to serve in the HOP. In parishes whose pastor is a bishop, a designated person shall serve in lieu of the pastor as the Pastoral Delegate of that parish according to the guidelines of the parish.

II. Presiding Bishop:

1.0 The term of the Presiding Bishop may be reduced to less than four years under written mutual agreement between the Presiding Bishop and the Leadership Council. (*Amended 10-2014*)

If the Presiding Bishop does not serve a full term and the Council of Bishops (COB) has no bishops, the president of the House of Pastors (HOP) shall serve as senior officer in the office of the Presiding Bishop until a new presiding bishop is chosen.

2.0 The Presiding Bishop shall present a pastoral plan for the Communion every two years. This plan shall be developed in dialogue with the HOP, the HOL, and the COB (*Amended 10-26-2012*)

3.0 Intercommunion agreements with other ecclesial bodies shall be negotiated and signed by the Presiding Bishop and become effective through a vote of confirmation by both the HOP and the COB.

4.0 The Nominating Committee for Presiding Bishop shall determine its nominees nine months prior to the date of the proposed election. The Nominating Committee may propose no more than three nominees. The composition of the nominating committee is defined in Article VIII, Section 1 of the Constitution.

4.1 Additional nominations from the Communion must be announced during the period of 90 days following the announcement of the Nominating Committee. The 90 day period shall begin to run upon the posting of the announcement on the ECC website. A nomination from the Communion at large ("Floor Nominee") shall be considered made upon receipt by the Nominating Committee of the following:

- a. Endorsement signatures by at least 15% of the HOL Delegates and 15% of the HOP Delegates in the ECC at the time the Nominating Committee is constituted.
- b. The signatories to the petition shall represent at least six (6) different ECC organizations in at least three (3) different regions in the ECC;

- c. The Floor Nominee must be eligible for election as Bishop according to the Constitution and Statutes of the ECC;
- d. The nomination must be accompanied by a signed statement by the Floor Nominee that she or he is eligible and is willing to be nominated and agrees to the other conditions of the nomination form.
- e. If not already performed pursuant to other requirements of the Constitution, Floor Nominees shall be subject to the same background checks as applicable to clergy.
- f. Written materials presented to HOL and HOP delegates, other than ballots, shall clearly distinguish between nominees of the Nominating Committee and Floor Nominees.

4.2 All pre-election activities and all activities on the day of election should be aimed at prayerful discernment and seeking the presence of the Holy Spirit. Those who are considering active advocacy for a particular nominee, and nominees who are considering campaigning activities should consider honestly and prayerfully whether their actions are consistent with spiritual discernment.

4.3 The Presidents of both Houses shall preside over the Election. Except for Nominating Committee Nominees and Floor Nominees as defined herein, there shall be no further nominees for Presiding Bishop and no further nominations from the floor of the Synod. (Synod 2010, October 29, 2010)

III. Finances:

1.0 All provisions of the Constitution and Statutes regulating finances of the Communion must originate and be passed in the HOL and be confirmed by the HOP.

2.0 Recognizing that we have chosen to come together as a Communion and that there are necessary costs to facilitate that Communion, we enter into a covenant with one another to fund these needs. Faith Communities are encouraged to contribute generously. Faith communities will pledge and contribute a "tithe" of at least seven percent (7%) of undesignated gross receipts to the ECC. These tithe contributions may be reported to the broader ECC. Payments shall be submitted monthly or at least on a quarterly basis. All individuals, Specialized Ministries and Orders, ministering on behalf of the ECC but not included in the budget of a Faith Community shall have a written agreement with the OPB regarding their ministry which will include a financial commitment to the ECC. (Revised at 2018 Synod)

3.0 No single Faith Community will contribute more than fifteen percent (15%) of the total ECC annual operating budget; however, additional contributions can be made for designated purposes.

IV. External relations:

1.0 Where the relationship of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion with other jurisdictions or denominations includes 1) the integration of a jurisdiction into the Communion; or 2) shared ministry or involvement in the governance of the other, an intercommunion agreement is required pursuant to the procedures in the Constitution to describe the relationship. (*Amended 10-26-2007*)

V. Guideline process:

1.0 Proposed changes to guidelines for the following areas shall be initiated in the HOP:

- a. Guidelines for new faith communities to be received into the Communion.
 - b. Guidelines for the ordination of bishops, priests or deacons of the Communion.
 - c. Guidelines for the reception of ordained clergy from other ecclesial bodies into the Communion.
 - d. Guidelines for the discipline and the termination of faculties of clergy of the Communion.
- Synod 2014, October 10, 2014

VI. Code of Conduct:

1.0 An Ethical Code of Conduct shall be developed by an ad hoc committee composed of both houses and administered and amended by the COB.

VII. Termination of Faculties of Clergy:

1.0 When clergy faculties are terminated, the faith community is to be notified by the local Ordinary within 72 hours by telephone or e-mail and by formal letter within one week.

1.1 Faith Communities must remove clergy from staff positions within 30 days if their faculties are terminated without cause. Faith Communities who do not follow this shall be placed on probation status without voting rights for a period of three months, with termination of membership in the Communion after three months of failure to conform to this Statute.

1.2 An immediate administrative leave is required for those clergy accused of sexual misconduct or fraud or for acts of physical assault, homicidal or suicidal threat or attempt, or major psychotic episode.

1.3 Termination of clergy faculties is immediate for conviction of a crime of sexual or physical assault, sexual or physical abuse of a minor or dependent elder, or a psychiatric episode in which there is a professional psychiatric determination of the inability to perform duties.

1.4 Parishes must remove clergy from staff positions immediately if their faculties are terminated with cause. Parishes which do not follow this shall be placed on probation status without voting rights for a period of three months, with termination of membership in the Communion after three months of failure to conform to this canon.

1.5 When clergy choose to terminate faculties with the Communion, faculties may be withdrawn.

1.6 The termination of faculties by the Communion shall be administered by the local Ordinary. All granting and termination of faculties by the local Ordinary shall be reported to Office of the Presiding Bishop. Termination of faculties with cause shall be reviewed by the Episcopal Council. An exit interview may be administered by the Office of the Presiding Bishop upon termination of faculties.

1.7 Petitions for the restoration of clergy faculties are administered by the local Ordinary. When such faculties are restored they shall be affirmed by the majority vote of the COB. Faculties shall not be restored in cases of:

- a. Conviction for sexual assault of an adult or minor
- b. Conviction of homicidal threat or attempt.

Faculties may be restored following a psychiatric episode upon the recommendation of two (2) qualified medical examiners.

VIII. Statutory Guidelines

1.0 The following "Guidelines" documents have their origin in ECC Constitutional Canons and have been accepted as legislative by ECC Synods. They are legally Statutes of the ECC.

- a. Guidelines for the Formation of Faith Communities
- b. Guidelines for Existing Faith Communities
- c. Guidelines for Ordination
- d. Guidelines for the Selection of Bishops
- e. Sacramental Guidelines

Ecumenical Catholic Communion Guidelines for the Formation of Faith Communities

1.0 Guidelines for the Formation of Faith Communities are administered and amended by the COB.

2.0 **Introduction:** The growth of the household of faith has always had two-dimensions:

- a. Growth is understood in terms of numbers, as seen in the increase of local communities, and the increase of members in each community. The scriptural model for such growth is found in the second chapter of Acts, concluding with the sentence: “Day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.”
- b. Growth is also understood in terms of the maturation of the members of the Church. This is exemplified in Saint Paul’s concern that the Corinthian community (I Corinthians 3) develop from the infancy of spiritual milk to the solid food of faith.

It is therefore our desire to aid the clergy and people of the Communion, as well as those who wish to join the Communion, with these guidelines for the formation of faith communities, and their incorporation into the Ecumenical Catholic Communion.

The following points are not meant to be an exhaustive treatment of the process, but rather, an aid in discerning the readiness of any group to join the Communion.

3.0 The Discovery of a Faith Community: This article purposely acknowledges the place of grace in the idea that a community is “discovered.” People who find themselves in a continual communal experience of sharing and celebrating their spiritual journey in Christ come to discern their need to formally create a faith community, commonly understood as a church, parish or mission. These communities are somewhere along the continuum of being established as a permanent association of faithful individual members. This corporate experience may be that of regular Eucharistic celebration; change in identity from connection with another ecclesial body; or the outgrowth from an established community of the Communion (such as second community arising from a specific geographical location that affords some members easier and more frequent access to communal functions). Such a discovery is generally confirmed by the members of the specific group meeting and agreeing upon the affinity they feel, and the lead of the Spirit in creating a sacramental community. Conversely, it is not usually the action of a single person – even a member of the clergy – who attempts to establish a community with no other members. We may be reminded of the words of Scripture that the presence of the Living Christ is felt where *two or three* are gathered in faith.

4.0 The Formation of Community Leadership: When a group of the faithful believers express their awareness of their identity as a community of faith, they must ask if that identity is a share in the ancient Catholic tradition of sacramental ministry and liturgical celebration. If so, then they are ready to approach the Communion through the appropriate means. In doing so, it shall be necessary that both lay leaders and the clergy of the community to begin the dialogue with the Communion. This means that there must be a sufficient number of lay leaders in the community to allow for a variety of voices in this dialogue. Such a process is not the sole realm of the pastor of the community. It must reflect the diversity of the members of the faith community. (Synod 2014, October 10, 2014)

Although it is normative that a community would have its own ordained pastoral leader, a community may find that it has no permanent clergy. This is not an obstacle to applying to become a part of the Communion. Indeed, it is sometimes the case that a community comes to the Communion, often through the bishop, precisely because it has no permanent member who is an ordained priest or deacon.

A leadership council should be elected by the members of the community before applying for acceptance into the Communion. While the structure of the council may differ from those of other faith communities, in general, it should include lay leaders as the president or chairperson, the financial officer and financial committee members, the recording secretary, and various committees to coordinate functions of the community.

5.0 Clergy of the Community: Faith communities have generally joined the Communion with established clergy as a part of their regular life. The clergy of such communities must make a separate application to the Communion for faculties. Their acceptance as clergy of the Communion may begin with an interim or probationary period. It is important for the lay leaders of a community to understand that their application to the Communion is separate from that of their clergy – though it is related to the clergy applications. Should the community find that it has no permanent clergy, it may apply to the Communion for temporary and voluntary coverage of sacramental ministries through the established clergy of the Communion. However, qualified priests and deacons should be sought by the community to serve in their various permanent ministries. And qualified men and women should be encouraged to consider ordination. The Communion seeks a return to the understanding that each community shall cultivate such vocations to ordained ministry; and that the ordained leadership of the Church arises from within the Eucharistic community itself.

Clergy who have resigned from other ecclesial jurisdictions have often been the primary individuals in the formation of new faith communities. In such cases, the Ordinary shall review the background of applicants who desire faculties with the Communion. Such members of the clergy may require appropriate actions to regularize their ministerial orders (and additional training in some cases). However, it is always the primary concern of the Ordinary that the call to ministry by the faith community is seen as a substantial affirmation of the call to orders for those who apply for ordination or for faculties with the Communion. The reception of clergy shall be administered by the Ordinary and confirmed by the Office of the Presiding Bishop. (Synod 2014, October 10, 2014)

6.0 Financial Considerations: Newly formed faith communities have the task of gathering assets from members and wisely distributing revenue for employee salaries and other expenses of the business side of community life. Congregations should form a committee to oversee this activity within one month of application for acceptance into the Communion. This committee *should not be chaired by the pastor of the community*, and should generally not include members of the pastor's immediate family. This allows the committee members a sense of freedom in dealing with financial considerations of pastoral salaries, etc. Committee members should include individuals who are accustomed to business practices, yet understand the spiritual and social mission of a faith community.

Accounting of all funds should also reflect standard business practice in accordance with federal and state laws. All contributions and expenditures should be recorded in a timely fashion, and the finance committee should publish a summary of its activities on a regular basis – minimum once a year. *Within three* months of incorporation, the governing board of the faith community should establish in writing any contractual relationships it has with clergy. This should include reimbursement of stipends or

salaries, benefits and allowances for living expenses. Reimbursements and stipends to non-staff clergy should also be established as to amount and procedure, through a joint effort of the community's pastor and its finance committee or governing board.

7.0 Legal Considerations: At the time of application for acceptance into the Communion, the faith community should also have applied for not-for-profit status to the appropriate authorities of the state and federal governments. The formation of a non-profit board or council, as required by law, should take place in accordance with the legal requirements. This formation of such a board or council would also fulfill the requirement set forth in Section 4.0 of this Guideline. A chairperson or president and other appropriate officers should be elected in accordance with bylaws of incorporation. And all committees of the faith community should make regular reports to the board.

Before application for acceptance into the Communion, the board or council of the faith community should apply for insurance to cover liability for clergy and the community's council or board. This can be aided by contacting the Communion for possible referrals to agents who provide such coverage, or by the recommendation of members of the community who are familiar with this process.

8.0 Episcopal Visitation Status: Before a faith community discerns that it shall seek application to the Communion, it may require the presence of the bishop to fulfill the needs of our Catholic heritage in terms of sacramental celebrations, such as the call to holy orders or the sacrament of confirmation. A community may find that it is not ready for application to the Communion, yet stands in need of the specific ministry of the bishop. In such cases, the community should at least be in the initial stages of discernment of the appropriateness of application to the Communion. If its pastor has received faculties from the Communion, it may consider this the first step in this process. Any visit from the bishop or episcopal representatives may include expenses incurred by the Communion. The community being visited should expect to reimburse the Communion for these expenses unless alternate arrangements are made with the Communion. (Synod 2014, October 10, 2014)

9.0 Conclusion: The journey of faith is one that is experienced by individuals and by the faith community. These are intertwined in such a way that they are "not two." A community is impacted by the life of its members, and the converse is also true. It is our hope that these guidelines may be seen as a way to assist both the community and its members in establishing a path of justice and service, as well as a foundation for the continued spiritual life of all concerned. The liturgical, sacramental, and service ministries of each community depend upon wise and just decisions and practices by its leaders. So too, the social life of the community develops into friendships that are entries into the walk of faith – but only if there is a sense of consensus and justice in the dealings of the community with those who are a part of it and those whom it serves.

The people of the Ecumenical Catholic Communion pray that communities applying to the Communion shall flourish in faith, be well served by ministries of the Church, and grow in the awareness of the Living Christ, who makes us ever new. The bishop, governing boards and clergy of the Communion extend hands of support to these new communities, in the name of Lord Jesus.

The reception of a newly formed faith community shall be administered by the Ordinary and confirmed by the Office of the Presiding Bishop. Probationary status may be granted until legal incorporation of the faith community is completed. (Synod 2014, October 10, 2014)

Ecumenical Catholic Communion Guidelines for Existing Faith Communities

1.0 Guidelines for Existing Faith Communities are administered and amended by the COB.

2.0 A faith community may choose to withdraw from the Communion. This shall be administered by the Office of the Presiding Bishop, and reviewed by the COB. An exit interview shall be conducted with the leadership of the withdrawing faith community by a member of the COB.

3.0 There shall not be any commingling of assets between the Communion and local parishes, orders and specialized ministries. The Communion claims no right to the property or assets of local ECC entities. The Communion may own real property for investment or other purposes authorized by law, and it shall maintain these assets separate from local ECC entities. (Amended 10-26-2012)

4.0 Each person with faculties through the ECC shall exercise their faculties through a locally incorporated parish, religious order or specialized ministry, each recognized as such by the ECC. (Amended 10-29-2010)

5.0 Parishes

5.1 A parish is a recognized local and geographical faith community with full rights of polity as established by the ECC Constitution and Statutes. Legal incorporation and the formation of a parish council are required in order to be admitted with parish status into the Communion.

5.2 Each parish shall select and send the appropriate number of voting Laity to the synod of this Communion. The pastor of each parish must also attend the synod.

5.3 Parishes shall receive a bi-annual episcopal visit unless otherwise determined by mutual agreement between the bishop and the pastor.

- a. Parishes with bishops as pastors shall receive a bi-annual episcopal visit by another bishop of the communion, unless otherwise determined by mutual agreement between the Office of the Presiding Bishop and the pastor.
- b. Parishes with bishops must also be visited once a year by another bishop of the Communion or designated representative from the Episcopal Office.
- c. The parish shall cover all costs associated with the episcopal visit.

5.4 Clergy and staff are required to maintain standards in accordance with the Ethical Code of Conduct, as outlined by the Constitution and Statutes.

6.0 Religious Orders

6.1 A religious order is a community of individuals who are united for an evangelical mission in pursuit of the spiritual life and/or social service.

- a. Legal incorporation by the religious order and the selection of administrative leaders of the order are necessary for recognition by and admission to the polity of the Communion.

- b. The process of recognition and admission of Religious Orders into the Communion is administered through the Office of the Presiding Bishop.

6.2 A religious order shall adhere to the guidelines of the Communion for religious orders as administered by an appropriate representative of the COB and/or the Office of the Presiding Bishop.

6.3 The religious order shall be represented at the synod of the Communion in the HOP by its senior administrative member and one additional member as selected by the order, and by the appropriate number of laity (representing lay members of the religious order) in the HOL, as prescribed by the formula for the representation of parishes. These representatives shall serve with full voting rights in their respective houses of governance.

6.4 The religious order shall review its administration and ministries with an appropriate representative from the COB no less than once every two years. The order shall be responsible for all costs involved with this review.

6.5 The religious order shall publish a code of ethical conduct to which all members of the order shall subscribe.

6.6 The religious order, as a legal corporation, is the responsible authority for any members of the order.

6.7 The religious order has the right and responsibility to govern and guide its members through its own regulations and administrative practices. The administrators of the order have the obligation to screen potential members through appropriate psychological examinations, criminal background checks, and inquiries concerning sexual misconduct. All those employed by the order shall also be screened through the processes of background checks and inquiries concerning sexual misconduct.

6.8 The religious order is responsible for the investigation of any allegation of misconduct by its members or staff. Allegations of misconduct and the findings of the investigation shall be reported, according to established guidelines, to the appropriate representative of the COB and the Office of the Presiding Bishop, and appropriate actions taken by the representatives of the Communion.

7.0 Specialized Ministries

7.1 A specialized ministry is a faith community independent of a parish or religious order devoted to the service of a particular need or population such as:

- a. An educational institution such as a school, college, university or seminary;
- b. An association of chaplains to a school, hospital, prison, military service or other institution;
- c. A ministry organization created by members of the Communion, for the purpose of developing particular missions of spiritual development or social need.

7.2 A specialized ministry shall adhere to the guidelines of the Communion for Specialized ministries as administered by an appropriate representative of the COB and/or the Office of the Presiding Bishop.

7.3 A specialized ministry shall receive the endorsement of the Communion according to guidelines established by the Communion as administered by an appropriate representative of the COB and/or the Office of the Presiding Bishop.

7.4 The institution at which a chaplain endorsed by the Communion serves shall be the employer of record for that chaplain. No financial obligation is assumed by the Communion for a chaplain in such service.

7.5 A specialized ministry, other than an institutional chaplaincy, shall be legally incorporated and shall establish appropriate governing boards and finance committees. The corporation established for the specialized ministry shall be the employer of record for all employed by the incorporated specialized ministry, and no financial obligation is assumed by the communion for that specialized ministry.

7.6 A specialized ministry shall be financially self-sustaining to be admitted to the Communion and form a finance committee prior to admission.

7.7 The specialized ministry shall uphold its financial obligations to the Communion by regular and appropriate contributions as established by the synod.

7.8 Each specialized ministry shall conduct a review with the appropriate and designated member of the COB no less than once every two (2) years. The specialized ministry shall assume all costs involved with this review.

7.9 Any individual engaged in a specialized ministry shall abide by a code of ethics appropriate to that ministry and to the code of ethics established by the Communion for clergy, if the individual is an ordained member of the Communion.

7.10 Each specialized ministry, as a legal corporation, is the responsible authority for the ministry and the employer of record for its staff. The Communion holds no legal responsibility or liability for the conduct of the members or employees of the each specialized ministry.

7.11 Specialized ministries shall be represented at the synod in the following manner:

- a. Educational institutions shall be represented in the HOP at the synod of the Communion by its senior administrative member and one additional member as selected by the institution. Representation in the HOL shall be the appropriate number of lay members of the educational institution, as prescribed by the formula for the representation of parishes.
- b. Chaplains shall be represented in the HOP, through an association of all chaplains, by two (2) ordained members.
- c. Each ministry organization shall be represented in the HOP by its senior administrative member and one additional member as selected by the ministry organization. Representation in the HOL shall be by the appropriate number of lay members of the ministry organization, as prescribed by the formula for the representation of lay members in parishes.

7.12 Each specialized ministry, (each educational institution, the associations of chaplains and each ministry organization), is responsible for the investigation of any allegation of misconduct by its own members or staff. Allegations of misconduct and the findings of the investigation shall be reported, according to established guidelines, to the appropriate representative of the COB and the Office of the Presiding Bishop, and appropriate actions shall be taken by the representatives of the Communion.

Ecumenical Catholic Communion Guidelines for Ordination

1.0 Guidelines for Ordination are administered and amended by the COB.

2.0 Common Guidelines for Ordaining or Incardinating Persons to the Presbyterate or Diaconate of the ECC:

Once a candidate has completed a written inquiry or equivalent conversation to the local Ordinary, he/she should complete each of the following requirements:

1. Letter of Intent: Submit a formal Letter of Intent including a *curriculum vitae* or resume highlighting educational background (please provide original transcripts), work experience, and ministerial experience.

- a. A minimum list of educational requirements should be met before continuing. For ordination or incardination to the Presbyterate, a Masters of Divinity degree or equivalent degree of theology is required. Candidates for ordination to the Diaconate must complete an approved program of diaconal formation. A list of resources is available at the Communion Office
- b. A theological assessment will be administered in order to determine a candidate's theological proficiency.
- c. A copy of the candidate's baptism certificate should accompany the *curriculum vitae*.

2. Background Evaluation:

- a. Completion of a psychological evaluation using the following or similar instruments:
 - Clinical observations and interview with a designated psychologist
 - PPCA (Personal Problems Checklist for Adults)
 - MMPI (Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory)
 - 16 Personality Factors
 - The FIRO-BThe expense of this evaluation will be incurred by the candidate.
- b. Completion of the Sexual Misconduct Inquiry [SMI].
- c. Completion of standard Criminal Background Check, administered by the Communion Office.

3. Autobiography: An autobiographical statement regarding the reasons he/she feels called to serve in the ministerial office of deacon or priest.

4. Letters of Recommendation: A minimum of five letters of recommendation from those that have had a ministerial relationship with the candidate seeking ordination or incardination. This would include individuals who may have been involved in the ministerial formation of the candidate as well as individuals who have served as co-workers in ministerial work.

Once the above requirements are completed satisfactorily, the candidate can expect the final stages of discernment as follows:

5. Final Evaluation: An Evaluative Team will be assigned to the candidate by the office of the Presiding Bishop.

- a. The Evaluative Team serves with the Ordinary Bishop as the decision making body in regard to application for ordination or incardination in the Communion. This Team will review the candidate's complete file, including all the above-mentioned materials.
- b. The candidate will be personally interviewed by each of the members of the Evaluative Team. This may involve a travel expense to be incurred by the candidate.

6. Community Presentation: Candidates are to be presented by an established ECC faith community. Members of the faith community are invited to submit letters of support and/or concern regarding the ordination or incardination of the candidate. A statement and petition signed by a majority of the members of the faith community would suffice. (Amended 10-2005)

3.0 Checklist for Incardinating Persons Who Have Already Been Validly Ordained to the Presbyterate (Priesthood) outside the Communion: The candidate for incardination as an ordained priest in the ECC should complete, in the order listed, the following steps described in Section 2.0 of this guideline:

- Letter of intent (Section 2.0 step 1)
- Background Evaluation (step 2)
- Autobiography (3)
- Letters of Recommendation (4)
- Final Evaluation. (5)
- Community Presentation (6). If an established community does not present the candidate for incardination and if the bishop believes that the circumstances are extraordinary, the bishop may incardinate the individual after consultation and approval by the COB. In the absence of the COB, the Leadership Council will assist the bishop in the above process. (Amended 10-2005)

4.0 Checklist for Presbyteral Ordination of Persons Who Already Are Validly Ordained to the Diaconate in the Communion: The deacon desiring ordination as a priest in the ECC should complete the following steps described in Section 2.0 of this guideline:

- Letter of Intent (Section 2.0 step 1). In terms of educational background, the deacon should have already completed an approved program of diaconal formation. Additional coursework may be required to achieve a Masters of Divinity or equivalent level of theological education.
- Background Evaluation (step 2)
- Autobiography (3)
- Letters of Recommendation (4)
- Final Evaluation (5)
- Community Presentation (6)

5.0 Checklist for Ordaining Candidates to the Diaconate in the Communion: An individual desiring ordination to the diaconate in the ECC should complete the following steps described in Section 2.0 of this guideline:

- Letter of Intent (Section 2.0 step 1)
- Background Evaluation (see step 2)

Upon approval of the above list of requirements, the candidate is expected to select a mentor to assist them as they continue this very important period of discernment. The local Ordinary will provide a list of clergy who have agreed to act as mentors to incoming candidates; however the candidate may choose to select their own mentor. This period may expect to continue for a minimum of one year, including monthly contact between the mentor and candidate as well as a minimum of two scheduled visits. Frequent contact between the mentor and local Ordinary, regarding the progress of the candidate, is also expected.

Toward the end of this mentoring period, the candidate can expect the progression of the final stages of discernment to proceed as follows:

- Autobiography (3)
- Letters of Recommendation (4)
- Community Presentation (6)
- Final Evaluation (5)

6.0 Checklist for Ordaining Lay Candidates to the Presbyterate (Priesthood): The lay person desiring ordination as a priest in the ECC should complete the following steps described in Section 2.0 of this guideline:

- Letter of Intent (Section 2.0 step 1)
- Background Evaluation (step 2)

Upon approval of the above list of requirements, the candidate is expected to select a mentor to assist them as they continue this very important period of discernment. The local Ordinary will provide a list of clergy who have agreed to act as mentors to incoming candidates; however the candidate may choose to select their own mentor. This period may expect to continue for a minimum of one year, including monthly contact between the mentor and candidate as well as a minimum of two scheduled visits. Frequent contact between the mentor and local Ordinary, regarding the progress of the candidate, is also expected.

Toward the end of this mentoring period, the candidate can expect the progression of the final stages of discernment as follows:

- Autobiography (3)
- Letters of Recommendation (4)
- Community Presentation (6)
- Final Evaluation (5)
- Transitional Diaconate: the candidate shall serve as a transitional deacon for a period to be determined by the sponsoring community in consultation with the office of the local Ordinary.

Guidelines for the Selection of Bishops

1.0 Guidelines for Selection of Bishops shall be developed by the COB in consultation with an ad hoc committee composed of both houses. The bishop is the primary missionary in establishing new faith communities. Therefore, when a local faith community is large enough and begins to establish two (2) or more missions, a pastor may be ordained bishop as spiritual leader for that faith community and its missions. Qualified clergy may be elected as Vicarial Bishops by the Communion (and given episcopal ordination, if necessary) to serve particular geographic areas or particular populations.

The call of a bishop, as the servant of Christ and the People of God in a particular place, is to continue the Apostolic ministry of the Church entrusted to us by the women and men who followed Jesus. Episcopal ministry is centered in a faith community's commission to teach, lead, and sanctify. The bishop represents the people that he or she was elected to serve. The bishop serves as a unique symbol of unity in the diversity of the Church as the Body of Christ. *(Amended 10-27-2007)*

2.0 Admission of Bishops and their faith communities into the ECC from other ecclesial bodies. *(Amended 10-2005)*

2.1 A bishop shall not be received into the ECC with the full privileges and authority of the Episcopal Office apart from the reception of his/her local faith community.

2.2 A bishop who is a candidate for reception into the ECC must fulfill the guidelines for reception as set forth in the Constitution and Statutes of the ECC.

2.3 The bishop petitioning for reception into the ECC, along with his/her faith community, shall be presented to the HOL, HOP and the COB for a vote of affirmation.

2.4 The petitioning bishop, along with his/her faith community, shall promise to uphold the Constitution and Statutes of the ECC prior to their reception.

2.5 The newly received bishop shall retain the pastoral responsibilities for his/her local faith community or communities.

2.6 Faith communities that are received, along with their petitioning bishop, shall be accorded all the rights, responsibilities and privileges of all member faith communities, as provided by the Constitution and Statutes of the ECC.

2.7 The newly received bishop becomes eligible for election to the COB according to the Constitution and Statutes of the ECC.

3.0 The Office, Role and Selection of Regional Bishops. *(Amended 10-26-2007)*

In the following Statutes, any reference to action required of the regional bishop, or authority belonging to the regional bishop, will, in the absence of an elected regional bishop, be understood to refer to the Presiding Bishop of the Communion. Any reference to a region is understood to include groups of churches, faith communities and/or common ministries that are not necessarily geographic in nature.

3.1 A candidate for the regional episcopacy need not be an ordained priest at the time of election, but shall be an ordained priest at the time of consecration as bishop.

3.2 Whenever a number of faith communities of the ECC begin to discern the need for the closer, more immediate spiritual leadership of a bishop, that assembly of communities is encouraged to gather together. These communities will further discern and prayerfully deliberate their needs and desires. The prior approval of the ECC Synod or of the Presiding Bishop is not required for a group of communities to engage in these initial steps.

3.3 If the assembly determines that the spiritual and ecclesial leadership of a bishop will best serve the spiritual needs of the People of God, it will notify the Leadership Council of their Request for Recognition of an Episcopal Vacancy. Respecting the principle of subsidiarity, the Leadership Council should promptly attend to this Request, and will counsel and assist the petitioning assembly. The Leadership Council may for good reason withhold approval of the Request, in which case the petitioning assembly will be asked to wait at least one year before renewing its request.

3.4 The churches seeking a new bishop will carefully discern, nominate, screen, interview, and in due time will elect from among worthy candidates the person they choose to serve them as their bishop. While the initial selection processes of screening and interviewing will ordinarily be deputed to the HOP and HOL leaders of the affected churches (or to a special group they may appoint), the actual election must afford every individual of the affected churches the opportunity to cast a conscientious vote in favor or against the election of particular candidates.

3.5 Confirmation by the ECC Synod by majority vote is necessary for final approval of the election of the candidate for episcopacy. The ECC Leadership Council may not substitute for the ECC Synod in this decision.

3.6 If the next Synod of the Communion is more than one year distant from the date of the affected communities' election, the Leadership Council should develop a means of communication with the whole Communion to announce the choice made by the affected communities and to solicit affirmations or negations from all the voting members of the ECC Synod. A reasonable, modest and efficient period of time should be allowed for this. If the next ECC Synod is within one year's time, the process for confirmation of the election will be deferred until the scheduled ECC Synod.

3.7 The decision of the ECC Synod is final. If the candidate is denied, he or she may not be re-presented to the ECC Synod for a period of three years.

3.8 Upon confirmation of a Regional Bishop, the churches that have formed the new Region shall establish a form of governance that evidences a Regional Synodal polity that includes both Laity and Clergy and is representative of the diversity of the Communities in that Region. (Amended 10-29-2010)

3.9 A bishop's term of office, when serving a Region, is to be six years, renewable by official re-election by the people of the region and subject to confirmation by the ECC Synod. A bishop's tenure in office will not exceed two consecutive terms. A bishop may be re-elected to a Regional Episcopal office following a period out of office for at least two years.

3.10 The communities in the region are responsible for the financial needs of the Regional Bishop in addition to their national financial responsibilities.

3.11 In the event of an Episcopal vacancy arising from death, resignation, retirement or removal from office of a bishop, the same selection process described above shall be engaged. However, in such a case provision should be made for continuing the regular affairs of the Region. The affected Region, in consultation with the ECC Leadership Council, may itself appoint an interim spiritual leader for the jurisdiction, to serve for the period of vacancy. Such consultation is imperative.

3.12 The bishop enjoys the power of appointment for special needs of the jurisdiction not already provided for in its regional Constitution, Statutes or bylaws. These appointments are at the pleasure of the bishop in consultation with the regional leadership council, and terminate when the bishop's office concludes.

3.13 Subject to 3.16, every bishop in good standing and holding elected Episcopal office within the Communion shall be a voting member of the COB. All bishops in the ECC not holding elected office shall be non-voting members of the COB.

3.14 An ECC bishop not currently in an elected Episcopal office may serve the Communion in other ways, including in any pastoral capacity at the invitation of any Region or the Communion itself.

3.15 It belongs to the Synod to decide upon the jurisdiction of a bishop from another communion or jurisdiction being received into the ECC. The question of a newly received bishop having Episcopal office within the ECC is separate and distinct from the matter of reception into the Communion of a jurisdiction, and must be addressed independently by the required process.

3.16 No bishop shall serve as a member of the COB unless affirmed as such by a majority vote of each of the two houses and the COB. (Amended 10-2005)

Ecumenical Catholic Communion Sacramental Guidelines

1.0 Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration through water and the Word. Baptism, which begins the sacramental life of the faithful, is open to all who desire to follow Christ and affirm the Profession of Faith, such as is formulated in the Nicene Creed.

2.0 Confirmation may be administered to anyone, regardless of age, as a part of the restored order of the Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. Confirmation may also be administered to all baptized persons who have completed a course of preparation and requested the sacrament. The Bishop of the diocese is the ordinary minister of Confirmation, though in response to local custom and pastoral need, the bishop may delegate this responsibility to another bishop or presbyter.

3.0 Eucharist is open to all the faithful who come forward to receive – no test of faith or moral standing is allowed as a requirement. Local custom and pastoral need shall determine the administration of the sacrament of First Eucharist.

4.0 Reconciliation is open to all who request it. A clear delineation is made between external and internal (confessional) forum.

5.0 Anointing of the sick is open to all who request it.

6.0 Marriage is affirmed for couples who seek recognition and blessing of their union with the following guidelines:

- a. It must be freely affirmed by the two parties.
- b. Legally recognized marriages must conform to the laws of the civil jurisdiction.
- c. Clergy cannot be compelled against their conscience to recognize and bless the union of any couple.
- d. All couples must conform to the requirements and pastoral direction of the local faith community.

7.0 Holy Orders shall conform to the guidelines administered and amended by the COB, and are understood as follows:

- a. The whole church, in all its members, is called to share in Christ's ministry of reconciliation. "The essence of the Church is reconciliation as the restoration of broken relations between God and humankind, and human beings with one another." This is because "Whoever is in Christ is a new creation. The old is gone. The new has come. All this is from God, who reconciled us to God through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to God in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And God has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making God's appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: be reconciled to God." (2 Cor. 5:17-20) This ministry of reconciliation extends to everyone and everything - to all of God's creation: "Creation waits in eager anticipation for God's sons and daughters to be revealed...that

creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.” (Romans 8:19,21) Baptism and Confirmation may rightly be understood as “ordination” into the Laos, the people of God. By virtue of these “Sacraments of Initiation,” every Christian is called to be an ambassador of Christ and minister of Reconciliation, “reconciling the world to God in Christ.”

The ordained ministries of bishop, presbyter, and deacon exist within the Church to safeguard the peace and unity of the Church, to preserve it in holiness, to affirm its catholicity in word and sacrament, and to challenge, support, and equip the Church to conduct the apostolic ministry of reconciliation to which it is called. Bishops, presbyters and deacons minister within the church – not above it – as servants of the servants of God. In the words of St. Augustine, “I am a Christian with you and a bishop for you.”

- b. The ministry of bishop is primarily one of guidance as first shepherd. The Episcopal ministry is particularly one of evangelism, continuity and unity. Like Peter in the midst of the apostles, the bishop is a person “set on unity.” For this reason, the bishop has been called “pontifex” – the local church’s “bridge builder.” The bishop encourages consensus and facilitates reconciliation, both within the bishop’s diocese and within the Communion by working collaboratively with other bishops. St. Ignatius used the term “peace of the church” to describe ecclesial unity.* It implies a corporate sense of mutual care, concern, attentiveness, accountability and fidelity. The bishop’s role in preserving the peace of the church is a proactive one, exercised collegially with the presbytery, and the deacons, and interactively with the laity. Indeed, the word “bishop” (“episkopos”) translates as “the attentive or watchful one,” the “guardian” -- a term applied to Christ in the First Letter of Peter. The bishop preserves the peace of the church by attending not only to the church’s “oneness,” but to its holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity as well, since all of these are dynamically and inextricably inter-related. A church’s bishop also serves as the representative of the local church (diocese) working collegially with bishops of other churches within the Communion – sharing ideas, insights and concerns, fostering collaboration and cooperation for the benefit of all the sister churches – and interprets the church at large to the local church. It is in this sense of bishops working collegially together that they act as “successors to the apostles” – by being members of an “apostolic collegium.” In the words of St. Cyprian of Carthage, “this unity we ought firmly hold and assert, especially those of us that are bishops who preside in the church, that we may also prove the episcopate itself to be one and undivided...The episcopate is one, each part of which is held by each one for the whole.” For this reason, a newly elected bishop is confirmed in his or her election by the bishops of the communion, and consecrated by a plurality of bishops.
- c. The ministry of presbyter (priest) is particularly one of unity of the faith community, and care among its members, with a focus upon the celebration of the Eucharist and other Sacraments, teaching the Gospel and preaching, and spiritual guidance. Presbyters share in the administration of the church, in unity with the bishop and in consensus with the laity of their local church (diocese) and their parishes. Joined with the bishop, the order of presbyters shares in the bishop’s role of teaching, sanctifying and administering the Church, but always in harmony with the leadership and authority of the bishop. Each priest participates actively as a member of the presbytery of the diocese, working collegially with other priests as “the council of the bishop,” to strengthen the bond of union among the church’s diverse communities, and to preserve the apostolic tradition of “binding and loosing,” understood as rightly interpreting the scripture to discern the will of God in a particular circumstance. This collaborative process is

integral to the church's apostolicity. "The bishops and the presbyters have the task to enable and lead this process of discerning the truth, a process in which all the members of the church participate." The collegiality of the presbytery is symbolized in the rite of priestly ordination, when presbyters participate in the ordination of other presbyters by the laying on of hands after the bishop – in accordance with the ancient practice of the Church.

- d. The role of deacons is particularly one of assisting the bishop directly in the administration of the diocese, and facilitating the apostolic ministry of the local church. The word "diakonia," most often translated in the New Testament as "ministry," but sometimes as "service," is most accurately rendered as "the carrying out of a particular task." Traditionally, these "tasks" have been assigned to deacons by their bishop. So the broad ministry of deacons can be described as assisting the bishop in his or her role within the diocese. The deacons serve as the bishop's "hyperetai," or "executives" – the people who get things done. Historically, deacons have undertaken many diverse tasks on behalf of their bishops; but ordinarily, they have worked as the bishop's agents, representatives, or emissaries – as "boundary spanners," and assistant "bridge builders." In this capacity, their mission is integrative, interpretive, and prophetic. Deacons interpret the church to the world and the world to the church, challenging the local church to respond to the secular community in which it is embedded. Deacons do not simply minister to the marginalized on behalf of the church. The church itself is "diaconal." On behalf of their bishop, deacons work collaboratively with the presbytery and the laity to facilitate the kinetic "diakonia" of the local church.

Deacons assist the bishop and presbyters in the celebration of the Sacraments - especially the Eucharist – carrying out the liturgical actions that symbolize their unique ministry within the church (for example, the distribution of Holy Communion and their "dismissal" of the congregation at the end of Eucharist – actually a "commissioning" to go out and serve God in the community.)

Only the bishop lays hands on the candidate at an ordination to the diaconate, thus signifying the deacon's special attachment to the bishop in the living out of his or her diaconal ministry within the church.

Ecumenical Catholic Communion Statement on the Rights of Catholics

Bill of Rights: Rights and Responsibilities

The following are the Church members' fundamental rights, flowing either from their basic human rights or their basic baptismal rights. Each right entails a corresponding responsibility on the part of the rights holders, some of which are so obvious that they do not require specific articulation. In all instances these rights and responsibilities apply to all Catholics, regardless of race, age, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, state-of-life, social or economic position.

1.0 Basic Human Rights and Responsibilities We affirm the rights and responsibilities of all Christians as expressed in the following Bill of Rights as published by ARCC – Association for Rights for Catholics in the Church.

1.1. All Catholics have the basic human rights based on the following examples:

- a. freedom of action
- b. freedom of conscience
- c. freedom of opinion and expression
- d. the right to receive and impart information
- e. freedom of association
- f. the right to due process of law
- g. the right of participation in self-governance
- h. the right to the accountability of chosen leaders
- i. the right to the safeguarding of one's reputation and privacy
- j. the right to marry
- k. the right to education and the corresponding duty to exercise them responsibly

1.2 As a consequence of the basic human right of freedom of action, all Catholics have the right to engage in any activity which neither causes harm nor infringes on the rights of others.

1.3 As a consequence of the basic human right of freedom of conscience, all Catholics have the right and responsibility to follow their informed consciences in all matters.

1.4 As a consequence of the basic human right to receive and impart information, all Catholics have the right of access to all information possessed by Church authorities concerning their own spiritual and temporal welfare, provided such access does not infringe on the rights of others.

1.5 As a consequence of the basic human right of freedom of opinion and expression, all Catholics have the right to express publicly in a responsible manner their agreement or disagreement regarding decisions made by Church authorities.

- a. Laity have the right and responsibility to make their opinions known in a responsible manner, especially where they have first-hand experience of the issue at hand.
- b. Catholic teachers and scholars of theology have a right to, and responsibility for, academic freedom; the acceptability of their teaching is to be judged in dialogue with their peers and, when appropriate, Church authorities. Such scholars and teachers shall keep in mind that the search for truth and its expression entails following wherever the evidence leads, and hence, legitimacy of responsible dissent and pluralism of thought and its expression.

1.6 As a consequence of the basic human right of freedom of association, all Catholics have the right to form voluntary associations to pursue Catholic aims; such associations have the right to decide on their own rules of governance.

1.7 As a consequence of the basic human right to due process of law, all Catholics have the right to be dealt with according to commonly accepted norms of fair administrative and judicial procedures without undue delay, and to redress of grievances through regular procedures of law.

1.8 As a consequence of the basic human right of participation in self- governance, all Catholics have the right to a voice in decisions that affect them, including the choosing of their leaders, and a duty to exercise those rights responsibly.

1.9 As a consequence of the basic human right to the accountability of chosen leaders, all Catholics have the right to have their leaders render an account to them.

1.10 As a consequence of the basic human right to the safeguarding of one's reputation and privacy, all Catholics have the right not to have their good reputations impugned or their privacy violated.

1.11 As a consequence of the basic human right to marry, all Catholics have the right to choose their state in life; this includes the right for both laity and clergy to marry, remain single or embrace celibacy.

1.12 As a consequence of the basic human right to marry, with each spouse retaining full and equal rights during marriage, all Catholics have the right to withdraw from a marriage which has irretrievably broken down.

- a. All such Catholics retain the inalienable right to remarry
- b. All divorced and remarried Catholics who are in conscience reconciled to the Church retain the right to the same ministries, including all the sacraments, as do other Catholics.

1.13 As a consequence of the basic human rights to marry and to education, all Catholic parents have the right and responsibility:

- a. To determine in conscience the size of their families,
- b. To choose appropriate methods of family planning
- c. To see to the education of their children.

2.0 Basic Baptismal Rights and Responsibilities

2.1 As a consequence of their baptism, all Catholics have the right to receive in the Church those ministries which are needed for the living of a fully Christian life, including:

- a. Worship which reflects the joys and concerns of the gathered community and instructs and inspires it;
- b. Instruction in the Christian tradition and the presentation of spirituality and moral teaching in a way that promotes the helpfulness and relevance of Christian values to contemporary life;
- c. Pastoral care that applies with concern and effectiveness the Christian heritage to persons in particular situations.

2.2 As a consequence of their baptism, all Catholics have the right:

- a. To receive all the sacraments for which they are adequately prepared,

- b. To exercise all ministries in the Church for which they are adequately prepared, according to the needs and with the approval or commissioning of the community.

2.3 As a consequence of their baptism, all Catholics have the right to expect that the resources of the Church expended within the Church shall be fairly distributed on their behalf. Among other concerns, this implies that,

- a. All Catholic women have an equal right with Catholic men to the resources and the exercise of all the powers of the Church;
- b. All Catholic parents have the right to expect fair material and other assistance from Church leaders in the religious education of their children; and
- c. All single Catholics have the right to expect that the resources of the Church be fairly expended on their behalf.

2.4 As a consequence of their baptism, as well as the social nature of humanity, all Catholics have the corresponding responsibility to support the Church through their time, talents and financial resources.