

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE 1 MAIN OFFICE OF THE CHURCH

SECTION 1 - The main office of the Church shall be in Manila, Philippines.

ARTICLE II GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SECTION 1 - There shall be a General Assembly which shall be the governing body of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente. It shall perform the following functions:

- a. To elect the Supreme Bishop of the Church for a term of six years, without immediate reelection.
- b. To approve a three-year rolling plan of the Church which shall embody its general programs and policy guidelines, including a detailed budget of the programs for the ensuing year and estimates for the succeeding two years.
- c. To act upon the amendment or amendments to the Constitution, Canons, and Articles of Religion submitted to it in accordance with the procedure provided for here in after.
- d. To act upon any recommendation of the Supreme Council of Bishops on charges against the Supreme Bishops; provided, however, that if he is convicted, the General Assembly shall immediately elect a Supreme Bishop to serve the unexpired term only.
- e. To act upon appeals from the decisions of the Executive Commission regarding matters which fall within the jurisdiction of the General Assembly.
- f. To receive and approve bequests, donations, and contributions to the Church.

SECTION 2 - The members of the General Assembly shall consist of all consecrated bishops, two priests in active duty, and three delegates

(representing the men, women and youth) elected in each diocese in a diocesan convention held primarily for the purpose.

SECTION 3 - The regular meetings of the General Assembly shall be every three years starting on the 8th day of May in the City of Manila or in any other place designated by the immediately preceding Assembly; provided, however, that special or emergency meetings may be held on the call by the Supreme Bishop or by two-thirds of the members of the Executive Commission.

SECTION 4 - The Supreme Bishop and the General Secretary shall, ex-officio, serve as the Presiding Officer and Secretary, respectively, of the General Assembly, respectively, of the General Assembly.

SECTION 5 - The General Assembly shall create an Executive Commission and such other commissions and committees as it deems necessary for the proper discharge of its functions.

a. The Executive Commission - There shall be an Executive Commission which shall be created by the General Assembly during its session as a constitutional body and which shall consist of the following members:

- a. The Supreme Bishop, as ex-officio, Chairman.
- b. The Chairman of the National Lay Council, as ex-officio Vice-Chairman.
- c. The General Secretary, as ex-officio Secretary.
- d. The Chairman of the standing commissions provided for under 5b and 5c hereof, as ex-officio members.
- e. Five bishops elected by the Supreme Council of Bishops.
- f. Five priests elected by the priest delegates to the General Assembly.
- g. The President of the national men's organization.
- h. The President of the national women's organization.
- i. The President of the national youth organization.

1. In case the Chairman of the National Lay Council is also the President of any of the three national lay organizations, the corresponding Vice-President shall also serve as a member of the Executive Commission.
2. Except for the ex-officio members, the terms of office of the members shall be three years with any number of reelection; provided, however, that in case of resignation or incapacity of members before the expiration of their terms, the other members shall elect surrogates for the unexpired terms only.
3. All the members of the Executive Commission shall serve as such without compensation; provided, however, that they shall be entitled to the reimbursement of their transportation expenses necessary for their attendance at meetings.
4. The Executive Commission shall regularly meet quarterly during the fiscal year; provided that special meetings may be held at the instance of the Chairman or three members.
5. The duties of the Executive Commission are as follows:
 - a. To act for the General Assembly, when it is not in session, on matters ordinarily within the jurisdiction of the Assembly.
 - b. To pass upon the plans, programs and budgets of the Church and submit the same to the General Assembly for its consideration.
 - c. To approve or disapprove charges proposed on the three-year budget.
 - d. To confirm or reject recommendations for appointments of the General Secretary, the General Treasurer, the Auditor General and other appointees for the national offices in case of vacancy.
 - e. To create commission and committees as are necessary to perform its work.

- f. To elect an interim Supreme Bishop in case of death or permanent disability of the Supreme Bishop in pursuance of Section 12 Article IV of this Constitution and Canons.
- g. To designate a second signatory on checks of disbursement, in addition to the General Treasurer.
- h. To perform such other functions as the General Assembly may delegate to it.
- i. Submit a report on its operations to the General Assembly.

b. Commission on Business and Finance - There shall be a Commission on Business and Finance to be created by the Executive Commission.

1. The Chairman or presidents of all lay national organizations shall be ex-officio members of the Commission.
2. The General Treasurer and the Auditor General shall be ex-officio members of this Commission.
3. In addition, there shall be seven members in this Commission elected for three-year terms by the General Assembly; provided, however, four members shall come from the Metro Manila Area who shall be knowledgeable in business and finance.
4. In case of resignation or incapacity of members, the Executive Commission shall appoint surrogates for the unexpired terms only.
5. The Commission on Business and Finance shall discharge the following functions:
 - a. Implement the fund-raising plan adopted by the General Assembly.
 - b. Prepare annual financial plans and studies in consultation with the Chairman of the Commission on Programs and Projects and the General Treasurer for submission to and approval of the Executive Commission.

- c. Devise other financial plans by which to raise funds for Church programs and operations.
 - d. Act on the investment of whatever funds received by or raised for the Church.
 - e. Set up an organization on the national, diocesan, and parish levels for the purpose of fund-raising.
 - f. Perform such other duties as may be assigned to it by the Executive Commission.
 - g. Prepare a detailed budget of the programs for the ensuing year and estimates for the succeeding two years, on the basis of a three-year rolling plan of the Church which embodies its general programs and policy guidelines, for the approval of the General Assembly and/or the Executive Commission.
 - h. Submit a report of its activities to the Executive Commission.
6. The Commission shall meet as often as necessary on the call of its Chairman, any four of its members, or of the Supreme Bishop.
7. The members of the Commission shall serve without compensations provided, however, that they are entitled to the reimbursement of transportation expenses necessary for their attendance at meetings.
8. The members shall elect a Chairman from among themselves.

c. Commission on Programs and Projects - There shall be a Commission on Programs and Projects which shall be created by the Executive Commission.

1. Its members shall consist of the following:

- a. Five Bishops elected by the Supreme Council of Bishops.

- b. Five priests elected by the Council of Priests.
 - c. A representative elected by each of the recognized national lay organizations.
 - d. The General Treasurer as ex-officio member.
 - e. Two other individuals who are knowledgeable regarding programs and projects and who are appointed by the Executive Commission.
2. The members shall elect a Chairman from among themselves.
3. In case of resignation or incapacity of members, the Executive Commission shall appoint surrogates for unexpired terms only.
4. The Commission shall meet as often as necessary on the call of its Chairman, any four of its members, or the Supreme Bishop.
5. The members of the Commission shall serve without compensation; provided, however, that they are entitled to the reimbursement of transportation expenses necessary for their attendance at meetings.
6. The Commission shall discharge the following functions:
 - a. Design a plan of viable programs and projects for the whole Church for submission to and approval of the Executive Commission.
 - b. Plan and supervise the implementation of programs and projects included in its general plan.
 - c. Coordinate other programs and projects on the diocesan and parish levels.
 - d. Submit annual reports of its activities to the Executive Commission.
 - e. Perform such other duties as may be assigned to it by the Executive Commission.

ARTICLE III
SUPREME COUNCIL OF BISHOPS

- SECTION 1 - There shall be a Supreme Council of Bishops consisting of all the consecrated bishops of the Church.
- SECTION 2 - The members of the Supreme Council of Bishops shall elect from among themselves a Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary who shall serve for a term of three years with any number of reelections; provided, however, that any of the said officers may be removed for cause before the end of his term; and provided, further, that the said officers shall perform the functions inherent in their positions.
- SECTION 3 - The Council shall be vested with the following powers and shall perform the following functions:
- a. To adopt any amendment or amendments to the Constitution, Canons, and Articles of Religion for ratification by the General Assembly.
 - b. To define the doctrines of the Church.
 - c. To adopt and prescribe official liturgical rites.
 - d. To act on cases instituted against bishops, provided, however, that such action shall be final and executory unless within thirty days after the receipt of the decision an appeal is directed to the Supreme Bishop for final adjudication within three months from receipt of the appeal.
 - e. To perform such other functions as provided for in the Constitution and Canons of the Church.
 - f. To report to the General Assembly in its immediately subsequent session any action it taken on ecclesiastical matters and administrative cases.
- SECTION 4 - The Council shall meet annually, provided however, that expenses shall be as equitable as possible through the institution of a travel pool; and provided, further, that special meetings may be called at the instance of the Supreme Bishop or Chairman of the Council, or upon request by one-fourth of its registered members.

SECTION 5 - The places of meeting shall be rotated from among the centers of the different dioceses.

SECTION 6 - The Council may appoint as many committees, standing and ad hoc, as it finds necessary for the discharge of its responsibilities.

ARTICLE IV SUPREME BISHOP

SECTION 1 - Leadership in the church is vested in the Supreme Bishop who is the Spiritual Head, Chief Pastor, and the Chief Executive Officer of the Church. He shall be elected for a term of six years, without immediate re-election; provided, however, that this shall not apply to the Supreme Bishop elected on May 8, 1977 whose term shall be for four years ending in 1981. His compensation shall be fixed by the General Assembly.

SECTION 2 - He shall exercise general supervision over all business and financial operations of the Church in accordance with the general policies and decisions made by the General Assembly and the Executive Commission.

SECTION 3 - With the exception of the General Treasurer and the Auditor General, all officers and members of the administrative staff of the Church shall be directly responsible to and under the direction of the Supreme Bishop.

SECTION 4 - The Supreme Bishop shall carry out the general policies laid down by the General Assembly and the Executive Commission and shall have the power and responsibility to act within the purview and sphere of said general policies.

SECTION 5 - He shall be the channel of communication and information.

SECTION 6 - In addition to the foregoing, he shall have the following powers:

- a. To determine and cause to be prepared the agenda of all meetings of the General Assembly and the Executive Commission.

- b. To recommend suitable persons to fill all vacancies and new positions for approval or disapproval of the General Assembly or by the Executive Commission if the former is not in session.
- c. To accept resignation of members of the staff, lay and clerical.
- d. To grant or deny leaves of absence to bishops and to the members of the staff.
- e. To approve the retirement of lay and clerical personnel.
- f. To enforce rules and regulations promulgated and approved by the Executive Commission for the safekeeping and proper disbursements of funds.
- g. To authorize expenses in accordance with the approved budget.
- h. To act on recommendations for purchases of equipment within the limits set in the budget.
- i. To supervise the clergy and laity in matters of discipline.<
- j. To exercise such other powers as may be authorized by the General Assembly and Executive Commission and as may be inherent in the position of Chief Executive of the Church.

SECTION 7 - He shall be the representative and spokesman of the Church with respect to its external affairs; provided, however, that in the case of a stand of the Church on national issues, he shall consult the Executive Commission; and provided, further, that on issues concerning faith and morals, he shall consult the Supreme Council of Bishops.

SECTION 8 - He shall prepare annual reports to the Executive Commission and to the General Assembly, respectively, on the work and activities of the Church.

SECTION 9 - He shall execute and sign on behalf of the Church all contracts, deeds and other instruments necessary for the proper conduct of the business of the Church and in accordance with the stipulations of the Executive Commission or General Assembly.

SECTION 10 - Upon the termination of this incumbency, the Supreme Bishop shall continue to enjoy by honors, privileges and emoluments equal to twice the pension of a bishop; provided, however, that he has not been removed from the office for cause; and provided, further that, if he chooses to serve in another capacity in the Church, he shall choose only one compensation beneficial to him.

SECTION 11 - In case of temporary absence or incapacity of the Supreme Bishop, he shall designate from among the Bishop-members of the Executive Commission one who shall serve as officer-in-charge of the Church during such temporary incapacity or absence.

SECTION 12 - In the event of death or permanent disability of the Supreme Bishop, the senior bishop-member of the Executive Commission, based on the dates of consecration shall automatically act as Officer-in-Charge of the church; provided, however, that if two or more have been simultaneously consecrated, the basis of selection shall be seniority in age; provided, further, that, within two weeks of such death or permanent disability, the Executive Commission shall effect an interim Supreme Bishop from its bishop-members; and provided, still further that, within thirty (30) days of the death or disability, the Executive Commission shall convene the General Assembly for the election of the Supreme Bishop.

ARTICLE V COUNCIL OF PRIESTS

SECTION 1 - There shall be a Council of Priests consisting of all official priest-delegates to the General Assembly.

SECTION 2 - The members of the Council shall elect from among themselves a Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary who shall serve for a term of three years with any number of re-elections; provided, however, that any of the said officers may be removed for cause before the end of his term; provided, further, that the said officers may be removed for cause before the end of his term; provided; further, that the said officers shall perform the functions inherent in their positions.

SECTION 3 - The Council shall be vested with the following powers and shall perform the following functions:

- a. To recommend to the General Assembly through the Executive Commission, amendment or amendments to the Constitution and policies for the conduct of the government of the Church.
- b. To perform such other functions as provided for in the Canons of the Church.
- c. To report to the General Assembly in its immediately subsequent session any action and activities in has taken.
- d. To cooperate with the Supreme Council of Bishops, the National Lay Council, and other commissions in promoting the interests and welfare of the Church.
- e. To discharge such functions as may be assigned to it by the General Assembly and the Executive Commission.

SECTION 4 - The Council shall meet triennially; provided, however, that expenses shall be as equitable as possible through the institution of a travel pool; and provided, further, that special meetings may be called at the instance of the Chairman or upon request by one-fourth of its members.

SECTION 5 - All the officers of the Council shall serve without compensation.

SECTION 6 - The place of meeting shall be rotated from among the centers of the different dioceses.

SECTION 7 - The Council may appoint as many committees, standing and ad hoc, as it finds necessary for the discharge of its responsibilities.

SECTION 8- There shall be established a National Priests Organization for the interest and welfare of the Church.

ARTICLES VI NATIONAL LAY COUNCIL

SECTION 1 - There shall be a National Lay Council whose members shall consist of one of each from the Laymen, Women, and Youth organizations of every diocese.

SECTION 2 - The Council shall meet triennially at a place and date decided upon in its immediately preceding meeting; provided, however, that special meetings may be called at the instance of the Chairman or on request of at least one-third of the membership.

SECTION 3 - For the conduct of its business, the Council shall elect a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer, and Auditor, who shall serve for a term of three years, unless removed for cause, with as many- re-elections as the members may choose.

SECTION 4 - All the officers of the Council shall serve without compensation.

SECTION 5 - The duties of the National Lay Council are as follows:

- a. To recommend to the General Assembly, through the Executive Commission, amendment or amendments to the Constitution and policies for the conduct of the government of the Church.
- b. To assist the Commission on Business and Finance in the raising of funds for the Church.
- c. To adopt such measures as will enhance the participation of the laity in Church affairs.
- d. To cooperate with the Supreme Council of Bishops, Council of Priests, and other bodies in promoting the interests and welfare of the Church.
- e. To coordinate and/or supervise the work of the Organizations under it.
- f. To discharge such functions as may be assigned to it by the General Assembly and the Executive Commission.

SECTION 6 - There shall be established a national laymen's organization, a national women's organization and a national Youth organization under the National Lay Council.

- a. The above organizations shall organize themselves in a manner as to contribute to the interest and welfare of the Church.

- b. They shall adopt their own constitution and by-laws; provided, however, that nothings in said constitution and by-laws shall conflict with the Constitution, Canons, and Articles of Religion of the Church.
- c. The said lay organizations may propose, through the National Lay Council, amendments to the Constitution, Canons, and Articles of Religion and/or policies for the government and administration of the Church.

ARTICLE VII
OTHER OFFICERS OF ADMINISTRATION

SECTION 1 - The other officers of the administration of the Church are the General Secretary, who shall be a bishop, the General Treasurer, and the Auditor General, who shall be elected by the General Assembly from among candidates certified by the Nominating Committee, an Executive Assistant who shall be appointed by the Supreme Bishop and confirmed by the Executive Commission.

SECTION 2 - General Secretary

- a. He shall perform such duties as are inherent in the position.
- b. He shall keep and maintain all records of the meetings of the Executive Commission and the General Assembly.
- c. He shall have administrative supervision over the secretariat personnel.
- d. He shall directly responsible to the Supreme Bishop.
- e. He shall perform such other functions as may be assigned to him by the General Assembly, Executive Commission and the Supreme Bishop.

SECTION 3 - General Treasurer

- a. He shall perform such duties are normally inherent in the position.

- b. He shall be directly responsible to the General Assembly and/or the Executive Commission.
- c. He shall submit regular and other reports as may be required by the Executive Commission and/or General Assembly.
- d. He shall see to it that the funds of the Church are properly safeguarded and accounted for.
- e. He shall coordinate and cooperate with the Commission on Business and Finance in the receipt and investment of funds of the Church.
- f. He shall be ex-officio member of the Commission on Business and Finance and the Commission on programs and Projects.
- g. He shall keep and maintain all records to safeguard the funds and other assets of the Church.
- h. He shall be bonded in a reputable bonding firm in the amount approximating his responsibility.
- i. He shall be one of the two signatories on checks of disbursements; provided, however, that in addition the signature of the Supreme Bishop shall be required for expenditures exceeding P10,000.00.
- j. The Treasurer shall submit and publish, with the proper certification of the Auditor General, reports on the financial operations of the Church every quarter, listing donors and contributors (with the amounts, unless same want to remain anonymous) and cause the widest circulation of these reports.
- k. He shall disburse funds on properly approved vouchers and in accordance with the actions taken by Executive Commission and the General Assembly.
- l. He shall perform such other duties as may be assigned to him by the Executive Commission and the General Assembly.

SECTION 4 - Auditor General

- a. He shall pass upon the books and accounts kept by the General Treasurer and certify as to the correctness of the financial reports published.
- b. He shall make ocular inspection of the funds and records in the General Treasurer's Office.
- c. He shall submit, through the Supreme Bishop, the procedure of disbursements for the approval of the Executive Commission.
- d. He shall see to it that disbursements follow the procedure adopted and in accordance with the action of proper bodies.
- e. He shall be directly responsible to the General Assembly and/or the Executive Commission.
- f. He shall perform the necessary management audit of the whole Church inherent in the position of an internal auditor.
- g. He shall be a member, ex-officio, of the Commission on Business and Finance.
- h. He shall exercise such other duties inherent in his position and assigned to him by the General Assembly and the Executive Commission.

SECTION 5 - Executive Assistant - There shall be an Executive Assistant to the Supreme Bishop who shall be appointed by him and confirmed by the Executive Commission. He shall help the Supreme Bishop in the administration of the Church and shall perform such other functions as the Supreme Bishop may assign to him. He shall be directly responsible to the Supreme Bishop. His salary shall be fixed by the General Assembly.

ARTICLE VIII TEMPORALITIES OF THE CHURCH

SECTION 1- The temporalities of the Church consist of real and personal properties derived from donation and contributions of the followers of the Church and others, as well as those by purchase or lucrative title. Real properties can only be disposed of under the following regulations:

- a. All real properties of the Church located or situated in a parish can be disposed of only by the Executive Commission upon the recommendation of the Parish Council, the parish priest and the Diocesan Bishop.
- b. The disposition of real properties, if acquired by means of donations, shall be governed by the terms and conditions in the deed of donation and by the provision of Paragraph (a) preceding.
- c. The real properties which are national in character and which have been acquired through popular contributions can only be disposed of by the Executive Commission upon the recommendation of the National Lay Council and the Council of Bishops.
- d. All properties acquired by the Church in conformity with preceding paragraphs a, b, and c or any other kinds of real estate properties shall be registered in the name of the "Iglesia Filipina Independiente", City of Manila, the Church's official domicile, as a Religious Corporation Sole.

ARTICLE IX GENERAL PROVISIONS

- SECTION 1- Disbursements of the funds of the Church shall be made only in accordance with the actions of the General Assembly and the Executive Commission and on vouchers and checks properly signed and countersigned, pursuant to Article VII, Section 3(k) and Section 4(d) of the Constitution and Canons; provided, however, that the Supreme Bishop may authorize expenditures of P500 or less without the previous approval of the two bodies; and provided, further that these expenditures are within the limits provided for such expenditures in the budget.
- SECTION 2- Whenever an incumbent of a national position resigns or is incapacitated to continue performing his duties before the end of this term, a surrogate properly appointed shall serve for the unexpired portion of the term only.
- SECTION 3 - The procedure of amending this Constitution in the future, either in the whole or in part, shall be as follows:

- a. The amendment initiated in the Council of Bishops, in the Council of Priests and in the Council of Laity shall be referred to and recommended by the Commission on Amendments and Structure.
 1. Any proposed amendment shall be submitted by the Commission on Amendments and Structure to the National Council at least six months before the meeting of the General Assembly.
 2. After careful consideration, the National Council shall refer the proposals to the dioceses for study and comments.
 3. The Commission on Amendments and Structure presents the proposed amendment including the comments from the dioceses, to the General Assembly for approval.
- b. Any amendment shall be considered approved if at least two-thirds of the delegates of the General Assembly, present and voting, voted for it.
- c. The approved amendment shall become part of this Constitution, and shall take effect three months after adjournment of the General Assembly which enacted it.

CANONS

INTRODUCTION

1. The Church is the Body of which Jesus Christ is the Head, and all baptized people are the members.
2. The Philippine Independent Church is a congregation of new men educated in and liberated by the teaching of Christ, dedicated to the worship of God in spirit and in truth, nourished and sustained in the Eucharist, and commissioned to be witnesses to God's love in the world.
3. When Jesus gave to the Apostles the Divine Commission to reach the Gospel to all nations and gave them the special gift of the Holy Spirit to carry on his work of bringing men to God he ordained them for the Ministry, to preach, to administer the Sacraments, to declare God's forgiveness of sins and to guide

God's family. Thus, the Ministry is an essential part of the Church. The Apostles preserved and continued this Ministry through the laying of hands with prayer, and the Church guided by the Holy Spirit persisted ever since to hold that Ministry.

4. The Church as a human institution shall promulgate ecclesiastical laws and rules for the clergy and laity in the exercise of their respective ministries, in their participation in the Holy Sacraments, and in regard to their obligation both in their interior life and their exterior behavior.
5. Thus, the laws of the Church are binding upon the clerical and lay members thereof whom they are issued and promulgated.
6. Official interpretation of the laws and rules of the Church rests in the Executive Commission.

CHAPTER ONE

General Provision

- SECTION 1 - All the policies, policy-making decisions, rules and regulations of general application approved by the General Assembly and the Executive Commission shall be made part and parcel of the canons if so approved by the said constitutional bodies.
- SECTION 2 - At the appointed time, the Supreme Bishop will call to order the bishops, priest and a laymen, previously appointed by the Supreme Bishop, shall report to the Assembly on the delegates, bishops, priests and laymen who have presented their credentials and have been found in order. The General Secretary then will read the list of delegates duly accredited to verify that they are present. If the number of delegates is sufficient to constitute a quorum the presiding Supreme Bishop will so declare.
- SECTION 3 - If the Supreme Bishop is a candidate for election at a General Assembly, the Senior Bishop Member of the Executive Commission shall take his place as presiding officer of the General Assembly.
- SECTION 4 - On the day of the election, all the bishops and delegates with their substitutes shall meet in the designated church at the appointed time.

- SECTION 5 - On the day of the meeting of the General Assembly, there shall be a general communion of all delegates and officers before the session.
- SECTION 6 - The election of the Supreme Bishop shall be by secret ballot. Before the distribution of ballots to the delegates, a bishop, priest, a layman, laywoman and a youth among the delegates shall be designated by the Executive Commission to act as members of the Board of Canvassers with the presiding Bishop as Chairman.
- SECTION 7 - Before filling out the ballots, all the delegates shall take the required oath prescribed for the occasion.
- SECTION 8 - The delegates shall cast their ballots one by one as their names are called by the General Secretary.
- SECTION 9 - After canvassing the ballots, the candidate or nominee obtaining the majority of the votes shall be proclaimed of Supreme Bishop.
- SECTION 10 - The elected Supreme Bishop may address the General Assembly, and then the Assembly may continue with the meeting for the consideration of other matters submitted to it. The General Assembly shall close its meeting with a prayer said by one of the bishops present.
- SECTION 11 - Parish and diocesan council shall create stewardship committees to take care of implementing the national stewardship program on the parish and diocesan levels; respectively.
- SECTION 12 - A commission, committee, office or a similar body created by the General Assembly shall function within a month after its creation, unless otherwise stipulated by the General Assembly.
- SECTION 13 - A new officer of the Church elected or appointed by the General Assembly shall assume his position within a month after his election or appointment, or upon the turn-over of the office by his predecessor, whichever is the sooner.
- SECTION 14 - Whenever a member of a committee, commission, council or a similar body resigns or is unable to discharge his duties for one reason or another a surrogate may be designated by proper authorities for the unexpired term only.

- SECTION 15 - A lay official or member of a diocesan or parish council shall not receive regular compensation; provided, however, that a council may vote an honorarium for any of such officials if and when the finances of the diocese or parish permit.
- SECTION 16 - No priests, deacon, or member of the administrative staff of a diocese shall accept salaries employment or appointment in an office outside the Church without the written permission of the diocesan bishop concerned; and no bishop or member of the administrative staff of the National Church shall do likewise without the written permission of the Executive Commission.
- SECTION 17 - The expenses of national, diocesan, and parish bodies shall be borne, respectively, by the National Church, diocese and parish concerned.
- SECTION 18 - All dioceses and parishes shall follow the business procedure regarding management of funds and properties as stipulated for the Church.
- SECTION 19 - Books of accounts shall be so maintained as to provide bases of satisfactory and accepted procedure of accounting.
- SECTION 20 - The General Treasurer and other custodians of funds shall be properly bonded in a company chosen by the Executive Commission or by the corresponding councils in the case of dioceses or parishes, provided, however, that custodians of funds not exceeding P1, 000 shall be exempted from such requirement.
- SECTION 21 - The custodianship or management of funds of the National Church, diocese and parish shall be vested. Respectively, in the General Treasurer, Diocesan Treasurer, and Parish Treasurer.
- SECTION 22 - All funds, whether general, trust or permanent as well as securities, received by the National Church shall be deposited in a banking institution approved by the Executive Commission.
- SECTION 23 - Books of accounts of funds shall kept showing date and source conditions governing use of principal and interest to whom reports shall be sent and manner of investment.
- SECTION 24 - Order of withdrawal of funds of the National Church, dioceses or parishes shall be by at least two authorized signatures.

- SECTION 25 - All funds of a diocese or a parish shall be deposited in a banking institution approved by the respective councils.
- SECTION 26 - All gross income of parishes from all section shall be apportioned in this wise: 5% for the National Church, 10% for the diocese, and 85% for the parish; provided that the National Cathedral shall be considered in this context as a parish; provided, further, that the amount due from the parish to the National Church shall be coursed, with proper transmittals, through the corresponding Diocesan Bishop.
- SECTION 27 - The fiscal year of the Church shall be the calendar year.
- SECTION 28 - The Auditor General of the National Church or his representative shall also examine the books of accounts of dioceses and parishes.
- SECTION 29 - New canons or amendments to existing canons may be adopted by the General Assembly by two-thirds vote of those present and voting; provided that said new canons or amendments have been previously recommended by two-thirds vote by the Executive Commission, Supreme Council of Bishops, Council of Priests, National or Lay Council.
- SECTION 30 - Each diocese or parish may adopt its own canons which shall be subject to the approval of the Executive Commission or the General Assembly.
- SECTION 31 - The Church shall adopt a pension plan for the clergy and regular administrative employees, which has been formulated by knowledgeable members of the Church and submitted to the Executive Commission, Supreme Council of Bishops, Council of Priests and Lay Council before it is finally submitted to the General Assembly for final approval. Its implementation shall be contingent on the recommendation of the Commission on Business and Finance as to its feasibility.
- SECTION 32 - In all conventions, synods and meetings of committees and other bodies, the Robert's Rules of Order shall be followed.
- SECTION 33 - On any question, the vote of a simple majority of those present and voting shall be sufficient unless otherwise stipulated by the Constitution and Canons of the Church.

SECTION 34 - In any meeting, whether of conventions, synods, commissions, committees, or others, the simple majority shall constitute a quorum, unless otherwise specifically stipulated by the Constitution and Canons of the Church.

SECTION 35 - These and subsequent canons shall take effect immediately upon approval.

CHAPTER TWO

National Office and Church

SECTION 1 - The General Secretary, the General Treasurer and the Auditor General shall be elected during the regular sessions of the General Assembly and their tenure of office shall be for six (6) years unless sooner revoked by the General Assembly if in session (regular or special) or by the Executive Commission; provided, however, that the above mentioned officials for the transition period of 1977-1981, shall be elected immediately and the terms of office shall be until the regular session of the General Assembly in 1981.

SECTION 2 - The Supreme Bishop shall submit a report annually to the Church within the first three months of the calendar year giving the members an account of his work, of funds received from all sources and disbursed for all purposes and of the state of the Church during the period of the report.

SECTION 3 - Not later than three months before the meeting of the General Assembly in which the Supreme Bishop will be elected, a list of nominees, arranged in alphabetical order, shall be submitted by the nominating committee to the Executive Commission for inclusion in the agenda. The said committee, which shall be appointed by the Executive Commission, shall consist of two bishops, two priests and three laymen (man, woman and youth) and shall draft rules and criteria for the selection of the nominees for the position of Supreme Bishop.

SECTION 4 - Delegates to the General Assembly shall be elected in the different dioceses not earlier than 90 days prior to the meeting of the General Assembly.

SECTION 5 - In addition to his duties stated in the Constitution, the General Secretary of the Church shall also serve as Historian of the Church.

He shall keep records of consecrations and ordinations and perform such other functions and duties are implied in this position.

- SECTION 6 - There shall be a standing Commission on Liturgy to be created by the General Assembly or by the Executive Commission if the former is not in session; provided that, in the latter case, the action of the Executive Commission shall be subject to confirmation by the General Assembly in its immediately subsequent session; and provided, further, that each diocese may create a standing Liturgical Committee whose functions shall correspond to that of the Commission but only on the diocesan level.
- SECTION 7 - The Commission on Liturgy shall consist of a Chairman appointed by the Supreme Bishop and two bishops. Two priests and two knowledgeable laymen appointed, respectively, by the Supreme Council of Bishops, by the Council of Priests and by the National Lay Council.
- SECTION 8 - The functions of the Commission on Liturgy shall be to collate material for future revisions of the Filipino Missal and Ritual, to present to the General Assembly, through the Supreme Council of Bishops and the Executive Commission, recommendations regarding the liturgy of the Church; to decide questions on the liturgy; and to furnish advice to interested parties of the Church on matters involving the liturgy of the Church.
- SECTION 9 - The Commission on Liturgy shall appoint from among its members a secretary who shall record the proceedings of the Commission and perform such other functions as are inherent in the position.
- SECTION 10 - There shall be a standing Commission on Church Music to be created by the General Assembly or by the Executive Commission if the former is not in session provided that, in the latter case, the action of the Commission shall be subject to confirmation by the General Assembly in its immediately subsequent session; and provided, further, that any diocese may create a standing Committee on Church Music on the diocesan level.
- SECTION 11 - The Commission on Church Music shall consist of a Chairman appointed by the Supreme Bishop and two bishops, two priests and two laymen, appointed by their respective councils.
- SECTION 12 - The Commission on Church Music shall appoint from among its members a secretary who shall record the proceedings of the

commission and shall perform such other functions as are inherent in the position.

SECTION 13 - The Commissions on Liturgy and on Church Music shall collaborate with each other as regards musical and liturgical text.

CHAPTER THREE

Bishops and Dioceses

SECTION 1 - The formation, division, merger, or dissolution of dioceses shall be subject to the approval by the Supreme Council of Bishops and confirmation by the General Assembly.

SECTION 2 - The elevation of a priest to the episcopate shall be the sole prerogative of the Council of Bishops; provided that such elevation shall have been approved by the Council by at least two-thirds of the members present and voting in the meeting.

SECTION 3 - The following are the requisites of a candidate for the episcopate:

- a. He/she must have undergone formal theological training.
- b. He/she must be at least thirty-three years of age.
- c. He/she must be an ordained priest and must have been in active service of the priesthood for seven (7) years continuously and must have served as a parish priest for at least five (5) years in a parish.
- d. He/she must be of good moral character, pious, zealous for souls, prudent and capable to govern a diocese.
- e. He/she must have taken and passed a physical and medical examination by a medical doctor approved by the Obispo Maximo.
- f. He/she must be a consistent pledgor and/or tither in the parish.
- g. He/she must be recommended by at least two-thirds of the members of the Diocesan Convention present and voting.

h. He/she shall have fulfilled the other following requirements:

1. Submit a letter of Intent/Application addressed to the Chairperson of the Council of Bishops.
2. Submit an autobiographical statement that shall deal with the candidate's spirituality and desires.
3. Submit a theological essay that seeks to answer questions pertaining to the mission and vocation of the IFI as a Church; the office and ministry of the Bishops to the whole life, faith and mission of the Church; and the candidate's perceived contribution to improve or enhance the ministry of Bishops in the IFI.
4. Submit the certificates (of both the Diaconate and Priesthood) clearly indicating the Dates and Places of ordinations and the Ordaining Bishops.
5. Submit a certification from the Search Committee.

i. There is a vacant position to be filled.

SECTION 4 - In the consecration of a bishop, the ceremonies prescribed in the official ritual of the Church shall be strictly followed.

SECTION 5 - The Consecration of a bishop shall always be held on Sundays or any feast day.

SECTION 6 - As soon as possible but not later than ninety (90) days after election to the episcopate the Supreme Bishop shall order the ordination and consecration of the bishop-elect in the seat of the diocese and in proper ceremonies.

SECTION 7 - Only an ordained bishop in active service shall be eligible for election as a Diocesan Bishop; provided, that each nominee shall have submitted a certification before the diocesan convention meets that, if and when elected, he shall accept the appointment; provided, further, that if after election he refuses to occupy the position, he shall be subject to disciplinary action.

- SECTION 8 - Whenever a vacancy occurs in the position of Diocesan Bishop, a convention for the purpose of electing the Diocesan Bishop shall be convened and presided over by the Chairman of the Supreme Council of Bishop.
- SECTION 9 - The candidate for a diocesan episcopate shall only be those endorsed by the Supreme Council of Bishops; all other candidates not so endorsed shall not be voted upon.
- SECTION 10 - The Diocesan bishop shall be the chief executive and spiritual leader in the diocese.
- SECTION 11 - The Diocesan Bishop s obliged to reside in his diocese, whether or not he has a coadjutor bishop. He shall not be absent from his diocese for more than three months in a year, either continuous or interrupted, without the consent of the Supreme Bishop.
- SECTION 12 - The Diocesan Bishop shall visit the entire diocese at least twice a year, and shall submit a report of each visitation to the Supreme Bishop within thirty days after the visitation.
- SECTION 13 - A Diocesan Bishop shall confine the exercise of his office to his diocese; provided, however, that he may perform Episcopal acts in another diocese upon the consent of the latter and the Supreme Bishop; and, provided, further, that he may act temporarily within a territory not yet organized as a diocese upon the instruction of the Supreme Bishop.
- SECTION 14 - Each Diocesan Bishop shall submit an annual report to the Supreme Bishop, giving an account of his work, funds received from all sources and disbursed for all purposes and recommendations for the further development of the diocese.
- SECTION 15 - A Diocesan Bishop shall call a diocesan synod to consider questions of importance and interest to the clergy and people of the diocese.
- SECTION 16 - The tenure of office of a Diocesan Bishop shall be seven years with reelections; provided that such reelections shall be in accordance with the provision of the Constitution and Canons of the Church.
- SECTION 17 - Not longer than ninety (90) days before the date set by the Constitution and Canons for the election of the Supreme Bishop,

the Diocesan Bishop shall call a convention to elect delegates and substitutes to the General Assembly, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and Canons.

SECTION 18 - The Diocesan Bishop shall certify to the Supreme Bishop the election of the delegates and their substitutes and shall give them their respective credentials.

SECTION 19 - A Diocesan Bishop may not resign his jurisdiction without the consent of the Supreme Council of Bishops.

SECTION 20 - Each diocese shall elect through a diocesan convention five priests, two laymen, two laywomen, and two youths to constitute a Diocesan Council. The diocesan bishop shall be ex-officio the Chairman or presiding officer of the said Council.

SECTION 21 - The Diocesan Council shall be the governing body of the diocese on all temporal matters pertaining to the diocese; provided, however, that when the occasion demands, it shall assist the Diocesan Bishop in implementing plans, carrying out projects, and conducting such activities as shall redound to the welfare of the diocese; and provided, further, that in purely religious or spiritual matters, the Diocesan Council shall be only advisory or recommendatory to the Diocesan Bishop.

SECTION 22 - Each Diocesan Council shall elect from among its members a Vice-Chairman, a Secretary, and other officers necessary. The Secretary shall perform the usual functions and duties of a secretary. He shall also be the secretary of the diocese, serving as such in diocesan meetings like conventions. He shall see to it that the minutes or journals of the official meetings in the Diocese shall be forwarded to the members of the Council and the Central Office of the Church.

SECTION 23 - A diocesan convention, whether convened for the election of a Diocesan Bishop or for any other purpose, shall consist of all bishops, priests, canons, deacons serving in the diocese, the Diocesan Council, and two other laymen, two laywomen, and two youths elected by their respective accredited organizations from each parish and mission of the diocese.

SECTION 24 - Each Diocesan Council shall elect from among its members a treasurer auditor and such other officers necessary for the diocese,

who shall perform such functions and duties as are inherent in their respective offices, with respect to the diocese.

- SECTION 25 - The Diocesan Council shall create committees, as it deems necessary for the proper discharge of its functions or for the expeditious and prudent management of the affairs of the diocese.
- SECTION 26 - The members of the Diocesan Council shall serve for a term of three years, with a number of reelections if the diocesan convention so decides.
- SECTION 27 - The meeting of a diocesan convention or synod shall be held in the seat of the diocese; provided, however, that it maybe held in another place within the diocese in accordance with the two-thirds vote of the Diocesan Council.
- SECTION 28 - The positions of auxiliary and/or coadjutor bishop may be created in any diocese, if and when necessary, as certified to by the Diocesan Bishop and approved by the Supreme Council of Bishops. The election of officials to such positions shall follow the procedure stipulated in these Canons for the Diocesan Bishop.
- SECTION 29 - The coadjutor and the auxiliary shall perform the pontifical and other functions of a bishop if they are so instructed by the Diocesan Bishop.
- SECTION 30 - The Diocesan Bishop may appoint a Vicar and/or Vicar General for his diocese with administrative jurisdiction over the entire diocese. The terms of office of such officials shall be at the pleasure of the Diocesan Bishop.
- SECTION 31 - The Vicar and Vicar General must be priests of the diocese of at least thirty years of age.
- SECTION 32 - The Vicar or Vicar General shall avoid assuming the powers of the Diocesan Bishop, especially in matters of importance, whenever the bishop is available and can attend to them himself, unless so authorized by the Diocesan Bishop.
- SECTION 33 - The Vicar or Vicar General shall report to the Diocesan Bishop the principal acts of the diocese, to inform him of what has been done or what is to be done to safeguard discipline among the clergy and the people.

- SECTION 34 - No "dowry" or any fee shall be required of a priest for elevation to a higher clerical position.
- SECTION 35 - There shall be no more than two Domestic Prelates in a diocese whose positions shall be considered as between those of an ordinary parish priest, on the one hand, and of the Vicar General and Diocesan Bishop, on the other.
- SECTION 36 - Each aspirant to the title of Domestic Prelates must be at least fifty years of age, must be of high un-impeachable character, must have served at least ten consecutive years as Parish Priest in any diocesan or five meritorious years of service in the diocesan jurisdiction to which he is presently assigned.
- SECTION 37 - Every aspirant shall be chosen or elected by all the clergy of the Diocese to which he belongs, subject to the approval of both the Diocesan Bishop and the Supreme Bishop.
- SECTION 38 - A Domestic Prelate shall use only the vestments authorized by Supreme Council of Bishop.
- SECTION 39 - On specific occasions, the Domestic Prelate can perform confirmation rites upon the written consent of the Diocesan Bishop.
- SECTION 40 - Any Domestic Prelate who violates the Constitution and Canons of the Church shall be subject to disciplinary action provided for in the Canons of the Church.
- SECTION 41 - The actions of the Diocesan Committee on Liturgy shall be subject to the approval of the Commission on Liturgy; provided that in case of conflict or disagreement the matter shall be settled by the General Assembly or by the Executive Commission if the former is not expected to meet within three months of the elevation of the matter to the Executive Commission.
- SECTION 42 - The Secretary of the Diocese shall keep charge of the diocesan seal.

CHAPTER FOUR
Priests, Deacons and Parishes

- SECTION 1 - The formation of a new parish shall be subject to the approval of the diocesan bishop and the Supreme Council of Bishops.
- SECTION 2 - A person may be ordained priest provided he has completed the regular course and other requirements for priesthood in its officially organized seminary or in an equivalent institution, has attained at least twenty-two years of age, and has been accepted by a Board of Admissions. The Board shall consist of the Diocesan Bishop as Chairman and a priest, a layman, a laywoman, and a youth appointed by the Diocesan Bishop.
- SECTION 3 - The tenure of office of a parish priest shall be five (5) years within reelection; provided however, that the diocese has an established scheme of rotation's parish assignment.
- SECTION 4 - The appointment or transfer of parish priests within a diocese shall be under the jurisdiction of the corresponding Diocesan Bishop; provided, however, that appeals from the decisions of the Diocesan Bishop in this regard may be made within fifteen (15) days of the promulgation of the decision to the Executive Commission. The decision of the latter shall be final.
- SECTION 5 - The tenure of office of a priest or deacon shall be five (5) years with reelections; provided that such reelections shall be in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and Canons of the Church.
- SECTION 6 - Only one priest should be appointed for a parish unless the size of the parish demands the assignments of a coadjutor or assistant to the pastor.
- SECTION 7 - The parish priest shall be the chief executive and spiritual leader in the parish. The manner of his installation shall be regulated by law or by custom. In the act of taking possession, the priest must make the profession of faith.
- SECTION 8 - All priests and deacons in charge of parishes shall report annually to their Diocesan Bishop, giving account of their work, funds received from all sources and disbursed for all purposes, and recommendations for the further development of the parish.
- SECTION 9 - It is advisable for a parish priest to say Holy Mass in his parish every day. Only one mass is allowed to be said on ordinary days, unless circumstances demand otherwise.

SECTION 10 - On Sundays and holidays of obligation, the priest is obligated to say Holy Mass in his parish. He may say two Holy Masses on Sundays and holidays of obligation. On Christmas and on All Saints Day, the priest is allowed to say three masses.

SECTION 11 - Other functions reserved to a priest are -

- a. To baptize,
- b. To administer Holy Viaticum and to give Holy Unction,
- c. To solemnize marriage, if authorized by the Civil Government,
- d. To perform services,
- e. To bless houses, buildings and objects, according to the ritual and local custom, and
- f. To have public procession outside of the Church.

SECTION 12 - The priest is obliged to live in the parochial house near the Church. For just reason, the bishop may permit a priest to live outside his parish provided his attendance to duties does not suffer.

SECTION 13 - If on account of some very urgent reason, the priest is obliged to leave his parish in which there is no assistant he must inform his Bishop or the priest whom he left in charge, if any, or he must request that someone be assigned to his parish during his absence. The unjustified absence from the parish for more than twenty-four hour shall subject the priest to disciplinary action.

SECTION 14 - The priest must take special care of the sick through prayer and in the administration of Holy Unction. He shall be watchful that nothing be done against the faith and morals, and he must advance and cooperate in the work of charity, faith and piety in the parish.

SECTION 15 - The priest must keep the parochial records of Baptism, Confirmation, Marriages, and the deceased. He shall take care of

the books according to the Constitution and Canons of the Church and the laws of the land.

- SECTION 16 - Deacons are ordained by the bishop. His duties are those of an assistant to the parish priest. He is not permitted to celebrate Mass nor to pronounce absolutions.
- SECTION 17 - Every deacon must belong to a diocese. By his ordination he is ascribed to, or incardinated to the diocese for the service of which he was promoted.
- SECTION 18 - Deacons are obliged to wear clerical garb in accordance with the custom of the place and with the order of the bishop.
- SECTION 19 - Deacons must abstain from things that are unbecoming to their sacred office.
- SECTION 20 - Excardinations cannot take place without good reasons, and it does not take effect unless incardination to another diocese has followed.
- SECTION 21 - A parish convention or synod for whatever purpose may consist of all priests serving in a parish, the Parish Council, and at least three representatives (laymen, laywomen and youth) from each out-station or similar aggrupation.
- SECTION 22 - Each parish shall elect through the parish convention three laymen, three laywomen, and three youths who, with the clerical staff constitute a parish council of which the parish priest shall be ex-officio the presiding officer.
- SECTION 23 - The parish council shall be the governing body of the parish on all temporal matters pertaining to the parish, provided, however, that when the occasion demands, it shall assist the parish priest in implementing plans, carrying out projects and conducting such activities as shall redound to the welfare of the parish; provided, further, that, in religious or spiritual matters, the Parish Council shall be only advisory and recommendatory to the Parish Priest; and provided still further that appeals from the actions of the Parish Council may be elevated, if pertaining to temporal matters, to the Diocesan Council or, if on religious or spiritual matters, to the Diocesan Bishop. The decisions on appeals shall be final and executory.

- SECTION 24 - The members of the parish council shall serve for three years, with a number of reelection if the parish convention so decides.
- SECTION 25 - The parish council shall create committees, as it deems necessary for the proper discharge of its functions or for the expeditious and prudent management of the affairs of the parish.
- SECTION 26 - Each parish council shall elect from among its members a secretary who shall perform the usual functions and duties of a secretary. He shall also be the secretary of the parish, serving as such in parish meetings like synods. He shall see to it that minutes of official meetings in the parish are furnished the corresponding members, the diocesan bishop and the Central Office.
- SECTION 27 - Each parish council shall elect from among themselves a Vice-Chairman, a Treasurer and an Auditor and such other officers necessary in the parish who shall perform such functions and duties as are inherent in their respective offices.
- SECTION 28 - It is advisable for the faithful members of the Church to organize pious associations within the parish to interest the laity in matters of religion, and in the teaching of Christian doctrine to the members, especially in the "going to the church" movement.
- SECTION 29 - Funds of the parish organizations like the congregation of deaconesses, Women's Auxiliary, etc., shall be held by the corresponding organization under the fiscal supervision of the parish priest. These funds shall be used exclusively for the needs of the parish church or the barrio chapels within the parish.
- SECTION 30 - The Parish Secretary shall keep charge of the Parish Seal.

CHAPTER FIVE

Disciplinary Matters

- SECTION 1 - A member of the clergy is liable for trial for any of the following offenses:
- a. Commission of any crime.

- b. Holding and teaching publicly or privately any doctrine contrary to that of the Church.
- c. Violation of the Constitution or Canons of the Church or of a diocese.
- d. Violation of ordination vows.
- e. Habitual neglect of his duties.
- f. Conduct unbecoming a clergyman.

In case of conviction, the punishment may consist of admonition, suspension or expulsion from the Sacred Ministry.

SECTION 2 - Charges against a diocesan bishop shall be lodged in the Supreme Council of Bishops which, upon being convinced that prima-facie evidence exists, shall create an ad hoc ecclesiastical tribunal consisting of five bishops and five lay persons who do not belong to the complainant group and who have been certified to by the Diocesan Council as not involved in the litigation or who have not expressed themselves pro or con regarding the complaint, provided that the Chairman of the ad hoc tribunal shall be designated by the Chairman of the Supreme Council of Bishops. The tribunal shall submit to the Supreme Council of Bishops their findings and recommendations; provided that a bishop who does not belong to a diocese shall fall, for the purpose of an inquiry or trial, under the jurisdiction of the Supreme Council of Bishops, which shall form a tribunal and prescribe such procedure as it deems right.

SECTION 3 - The recommendation of the Ecclesiastical Tribunal of the Supreme Council of Bishops shall be submitted to the Supreme Council of Bishops for final adjudication, which shall be final and executory unless, within thirty (30) days after receipt of the decision of the Supreme Council of Bishops, any of the litigants directs an appeal to the Supreme Bishop for final adjudication within three months from the receipt of appeal.

SECTION 4 - The concurrence of at least two-thirds of the members of the tribunal is necessary in reporting out findings and recommendations; provided that in the case of the Supreme Council of Bishops; two-thirds of the members present and voting

shall be necessary to pronounce judgement on any case adjudged by it.

- SECTION 5 - A person, whether clergyman or layman, shall be disqualified to sit in an ecclesiastical tribunal or serve as investigator in a trial or case if he has shown beforehand some bias, pro or con, regarding the case, if he is related to the accused, he shall inhibit himself from participating in the judgement or trial of the case and the Supreme Bishop shall designate another bishop to take his place.
- SECTION 6 - Charges against a priest or deacon shall be lodged with the Diocesan Bishop concerned who, upon being convinced that prima-facie evidence exists shall create an ad hoc diocesan ecclesiastical tribunal consisting of three parish priests and three lay persons from three parishes in the diocese; provided that the Chairman of the tribunal shall be a vicar, if any or another priest designated by the Diocesan Bishop for the purpose; provided further that a priest who does not belong to a diocese shall fall, for purposes of an inquiry or trial, under the jurisdiction of the Supreme Council of Bishops which shall form a tribunal and prescribe such procedures as it deems right.
- SECTION 7 - The decision of the diocesan ecclesiastical tribunal shall be forwarded to the Diocesan Bishop for review of the decision of the ad hoc tribunal. His decision shall be final and executory unless, within thirty (30) days of the receipt of the decision by the respondent clergy, he directs an appeal to the Supreme Council of Bishops which shall render a decision on the appeal within ninety (90) days after receipt of the appeal. The decision of the Council shall be final and executory.
- SECTION 8 - The revision or modification of a sentence after some time that it has been served may be recommended to the Executive Commission by two-thirds vote of the members of the Supreme Council of Bishops present and voting, in the case of a bishop; or by the corresponding Diocesan Bishop, in the case of priests, deacons, and canons.
- SECTION 9 - Copies of the transcripts of any trial or investigation, whether diocesan or national shall be furnished the Office of the General Secretary and the diocesan secretary.
- SECTION 10 - Administrative cases against civilian employees shall be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of the Labor Code and other laws of the Philippine Government.

- SECTION 11 - All decisions regarding cases against civilian employees shall be implemented. If the respondent works in a diocese, by the Diocesan Council, or if the respondent works in the national office, by the Executive Commission.
- SECTION 12 - An expelled member of the Clergy by virtue of a judgment of an ecclesiastical tribunal may reenter the service of the Church if he is pardoned by the Supreme Council of Bishops.
- SECTION 13 - In every case brought for trial or investigation, the respondent shall always be furnished a copy of the complaint at least thirty (30) days before the scheduled trial. In case of decisions, both parties shall be furnished copies thereof.
- SECTION 14 - It is hereby declared that it is the duty of all members of the Church to attend and give evidence, when duly cited in any trial of investigation under the authority of the Church.
- SECTION 15 - On controversial matters which involve purely civil rights of the parties who are members of the clergy, the decisions or resolutions of the ecclesiastical tribunals shall be deemed only as directive not as an adjudication of the right or claim of any of the parties, and therefore, said decisions or resolutions would not constitute *re judicata* before the ordinary court of justice.
- SECTION 16 - Whenever a complaint has been filed against a member of the clergy or of the civil personnel, the respondent shall be furnished with a copy of the complaint who has thirty (30) days, beginning from the date of its receipt, to answer the complaint. After the answer is filed, a date for a pre-trial of the case shall be set where both parties shall appear before the tribunal. Efforts shall be exerted to have the parties settle the case amicably, especially when it involves only light offenses or is the result of misunderstanding. The parties shall also be given ample time to arrive at an understanding voluntarily. If the parties cannot agree, the proper body shall set the case for hearing for the purpose of receiving the evidence of both parties.
- SECTION 17 - In the meeting of delegates to the General Assembly for the consideration of any case against the Supreme Bishop, the Assembly shall be opened and presided by the Senior Bishop Member of the Executive Commission and the following be observed.

- a. If there is a quorum, the President shall call the case and the parties therein and their respective counsels. In case one of the parties is not present, the Presiding Officer shall verify if the said party has been notified of the holding of the assembly and if there is evidence to show that the notice was received on time.
- b. If both parties are present, the General Secretary will read the complaint or charges and afterwards the answer. The resolution of the Supreme Council of Bishops shall be read.
- c. The parties or their counsels may argue the case before the General Assembly. After the oral argument, the parties with their respective counsels shall retire from the hall to give time for the delegates to deliberate and to vote on the resolution under consideration.
- d. The General Assembly is not obliged to state in writing its findings. If the majority agrees with the recommendation of the Supreme Council of Bishops, it shall be signed by those in favor of the resolution. The General Assembly may publish its decision after arriving at it or may instruct the General Secretary to notify the interested parties in writing.
- e. The decision of the General Assembly is final and executory.

CHAPTER SIX

Baptism and Confirmation

- SECTION 1 - Baptism administered by the observance of all the rites and ceremonies prescribed by the ritual of the Church is called Solemn, otherwise it is Private.
- SECTION 2 - The ordinary minister of Solemn Baptism is the priest. The deacon may administer Solemn Baptism with the permission of the bishop or the priest, which may be granted, when necessity demands.
- SECTION 3 - Private Baptism may be given by any one who uses the proper matter and form and has the right intention. At least one witness must be present.

- SECTION 4 - Private Baptism shall only be given to those who are very ill or in danger of death.
- SECTION 5 - An adult shall not be baptized except with his consent and after due instruction in the principal mysteries of the faith. His assent to these points of faith and his promise that he will keep the commandments of the Christian religion shall be deemed sufficient for adult baptism.
- SECTION 6 - Persons who have been insane from birth should be baptized as infants. Those suffering from lethargy of delirium or insanity may be baptized only during lucid intervals while they are conscious and have expressed their desire to be baptized.
- SECTION 7 - Solemn Baptism shall be administered in churches, public oratories or chapels. In private houses Baptism cannot be given without the expressed permission of the ordinary.
- SECTION 8 - Ancient custom provides that no one is baptized unless he has, whenever possible, a sponsor, should be observed.
- SECTION 9 - In solemn Baptism the ritual of the Church shall be strictly followed.
- SECTION 10 - The parish priest or the pastor solemnizing a Baptism should carefully and without delay enter into the records of the parish the names of the baptized, the minister, parents and sponsors, date and place of birth of the baptized.
- SECTION 11 - He who is not baptized cannot validly be confirmed. A candidate for confirmation should have a sponsor to attend to him during the ceremonies.
- SECTION 12 - It is absolutely prohibited for a bishop to confirm in any other diocese not his own, unless the previous consent or permission of the Ordinary of the place has been given, or by express order or instruction of the Supreme Bishop.
- SECTION 13 - The bishop can confirm only in a church or chapel within his territorial jurisdiction. He may confirm upon request of those persons residing in other diocese under the condition stipulated in the immediately preceding section.

SECTION 14 - Only bishops can administer the Sacrament of confirmation, with imposition of hands, anointing of the forehead with holy chrism and the words prescribed in the ritual of the Church.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Holy Communion

SECTION 1 - Holy Communion is the partaking of the faithful in the reception of the Body of Jesus sacramentally present in the bread and wine after their consecration by the priest during the celebration of the Holy Eucharist or Thanksgiving popularly known as "Holy Mass."

SECTION 2 - In every celebration of the Holy Mass, the priest perform a Solemn memorial of the Last Supper which Jesus held with his disciples when He instituted the Sacrament of the Holy Communion. This Sacrament is often referred to as "The Holy Sacrifice"; a name which brings before us the sacrifice which Jesus made for us on the Cross.

SECTION 3 - Only priest have the power to offer the sacrifice of Holy Mass, according to the rite prescribed by and in the official language of the Church. In the celebration of Holy Mass, the priest should wear the cassock and sacred vestments prescribed by the rubrics of the rite of the Church.

SECTION 4 - It is prohibited for a priest to charge fees for special services in excess of the amounts fixed by the Supreme Council of Bishops. If there is no law fixing the fees the custom of the diocese should be followed.

SECTION 5 - It is advisable to observe the natural fasts from midnight if the priest will celebrate Holy Mass the next day.

SECTION 6 - Holy Mass should not be commenced earlier than one hour before the mass aurora not later than one hour after mid-day. However, on Christmas the mass can begin at mid-night.

SECTION 7 - Holy Mass must be celebrated on a consecrated altar, and in a Church or chapel consecrated or blessed according to law.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Penance

- SECTION 1 - Only a priest can minister the sacrament of penance or Sacrament of Absolution.
- SECTION 2 - The Bishop should not grant faculties to hear confession except to those priest who after examination have been found capable in solving problems of faith and moral arising out of confession. Only priests respected for their wisdom and virtue should be given authority to grant God's absolution.
- SECTION 3 - The Priest duly authorized by the Ordinary to administer this Sacrament of Absolution must announce the day and hour to hear confession in his church. No confessions shall be heard outside of the church, unless the penitent is sick.
- SECTION 4 - The confessor shall administer this Sacrament of Penance in the form prescribed by the Church.
- SECTION 5 - The confessor is prohibited from revealing to anybody, even to the civil authorities, the facts or matter confessed by a penitent. Violation of this sacred trust shall be punished by summary suspension or dismissal.
- SECTION 6 - In the administration of this sacrament the priest or confessor should neither demand nor receive compensation.
- SECTION 7 - Whenever a call is made for confession of the sick, under no circumstances is the priest allowed to deny the request without strong reason.

CHAPTER NINE

Holy Unction

- SECTION 1 - The sacrament of the Holy Unction can be validly administered only by a priest.
- SECTION 2 - In case of urgent necessity, even outside of his parish, a priest is obliged to administer this Sacrament to a sick person.
- SECTION 3 - Sick person, who have asked for Holy Unction while they are conscious may be given this Sacrament despite the fact that at the time of administration they may be deprived of their sense.

SECTION 4 - Although the Sacrament of Holy Unction is not a Sacrament absolutely necessary for salvation, care should be taken that the sick receive it while they are yet fully conscious.

SECTION 5 - The anointing is to be performed with the words and in the order and manner prescribed in the ritual.

CHAPTER TEN

Holy Orders

SECTION 1 - All candidates for Ordination must in due time manifest their intention to receive Holy Orders to the Bishop and submit the following documents:

- a. Certificate of Ordination as Deacons.
- b. Certificate of Rector of the Seminary duly recognized by the Church that they have successfully passed the final examinations on the subjects required by the church as a condition precedent to their ordination.
- c. Certificate of the rector of the Seminary duly recognized by the Church of their good moral standing.

SECTION 2 - Upon receipt of the application for Ordination of the testimonials referred to, the Bishop will forward them to the Supreme Bishop together with his resolution. If the Supreme Bishop finds no objection to the Ordination, then the papers shall be returned to the Bishop who in turn will notify the candidates and set the day for their ordination.

SECTION 3 - In conferring Holy Orders the Bishop must faithfully follow the ceremonials laid down in the ritual of the Church.

SECTION 4 - The Mass Ordination must always be said by the ordaining Bishop, and shall be given only on Sunday or holidays of obligation.

SECTION 5 - A bishop cannot give these Orders outside of his Diocese without the permission of the local Ordinary.

SECTION 6 - All bishops are encouraged to send men to a recognized seminary for the education of those who have a vocation for the priesthood. It is absolutely prohibited that any bishop ordain men to the priesthood without certification issued by the Dean of the Seminary recognized by the Church and the order of the Supreme Bishop.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Marriage

SECTION 1 - Christ the Lord Himself raised the matrimonial contract among baptized people to the dignity of a Sacrament; marriage, therefore, must be solemnized by a minister of the Church.

SECTION 2 - Before the marriage is performed, the Priest must be certain that there are no obstacles, moral or legal, to valid and licit celebration. The priest must strictly follow the law and regulations promulgated by civil authorities concerning marriage contracts.

SECTION 3 - If the Priest receives before solemnizing a marriage, reliable information that any impediment exists on the part of either of the parties, especially if it refers to a former marriage of one of the parties not legally dissolved, he must suspend the Ceremony until all doubts are removed through investigation.

SECTION 4 - Marriage shall be contracted in the parish church and in the manner prescribed by the ritual of the Church. Only in extraordinary cases and for good reasons that the marriage may be celebrated in a private house.

SECTION 5 - No priest is permitted to solemnize a marriage or perform the Church's ceremonies of marriage unless he is duly authorized by the government in accordance with the provisions of the Marriage Law.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Sacred Places

SECTION 1 - Sacred places are those which are blessed or consecrated either for divine worship or for the burial of the faithful, according to the rites prescribed by the Church's liturgy.

- SECTION 2 - By the term church is meant a sacred building dedicated to the divine worship, principally for the purpose of serving all the faithful in the exercise of public worship.
- SECTION 3 - No Church shall be erected without the explicit permission of the Bishop in writing.
- SECTION 4 - Before giving his consent to the erection of a church, the Bishop shall see to it that the land on which the church will be erected is donated or transferred by virtue of a valid deed in favor of the Philippine Independent Church through its Supreme Bishop, and that the properties are not encumbered or mortgaged.
- SECTION 5 - If a church is to be erected by donation or voluntary contributions of the faithful, steps should be taken by the Bishop to have the donors or contributors sign a deed acknowledging that the church one built, will be the absolute property of or under ownership of the Philippine Independent Church to be dedicated to divine worship.
- SECTION 6 - The blessing and laying of the corner stone of a church belongs to the Supreme Bishop who may delegate this privilege to the Bishop of the place.
- SECTION 7 - Before divine worship is held in a new church, it must be solemnly blessed by the Supreme Bishop or the Bishop.
- SECTION 8 - All persons concerned must see to it that such cleanliness is observed in a church as is becoming to the House of God. Business transaction, fairs, sales and, in general, everything that is not in accordance with the sanctity of the place, shall be kept away from the church.
- SECTION 9 - All documents concerning ownership of properties of the Philippine Independent Church shall be kept at the general office of the Church in the custody of the Supreme Bishop.
- SECTION 10 - It is absolutely prohibited to use the church or any portion thereof as dwelling place or dormitory.
- SECTION 11 - Civil possession of the Church is invested in the Supreme Bishop with the bishop of the place as deputy to the former. Thus, questions arising between members of the Church or between the priest or Bishop and laymen involving possessions or ownership of

either the land or the church should be taken upon with the Supreme Bishop who represents the Church as corporation sole under whose administration are placed all the properties, real and personal, belonging to the Philippine Independent Church.

- SECTION 12 - The admission to the sacred function in the church must be absolutely gratuitous and all contrary customs or regulations are disapproved.
- SECTION 13 - The Priest is the ex-officio caretaker of the church of his parish and directly responsible to the Ordinary for the up-keep thereof and for the loss of ornaments, records and furniture pertaining to the church of the parish.
- SECTION 14 - The funds for the construction, repairing and improvement of the parish church shall be provided for in the annual budget of the Parish.
- SECTION 15 - Before using the altars, they should be blessed in accordance with the ritual of the Church.
- SECTION 16 - Donation of altars or any portion thereof should be accepted only on conditions that they shall perpetually belong to the Church. This rule applies also, to all ornaments, sacramentals used in the church for divine worship donated by the parishioners.
- SECTION 17 - As sacred things, church, ornaments, images and sacramentals belong to the parish or the church, and are not subject to sale, mortgage, transfer or barter.
- SECTION 18 - Whenever, possible, a parish must have its own cemetery which should be blessed according to the ritual of the Church.
- SECTION 19 - Individual graves ought to be blessed according to the ritual each time the body of a member of the Church is buried.
- SECTION 20 - Every cemetery should be well enclosed on all sides and carefully guarded.
- SECTION 21 - Without the permission of the ordinary or the Supreme Bishop and the civil authorities it shall not be lawful to exhume a body which has received final burial by the Church.

NOTE

The above Constitution and Canons are as endorsed by the Executive Commission and approved and ratified by the General Assembly of the Philippine Independent Church on May 9, 2002, in the Cathedral of the Holy Child, Manila, Philippines.

(Amendments were made to the 1977 Constitution Article IX, Section 3-7, and in the 1977 Canons Chapter III, Section 2, 3 and Chapter IV, Section 3)