



Parish Council Candidate Seminar

“...the only true and valid model of Christian leadership is the Servant.”

~ Oriented Leadership ~

Scripture Reading: I Corinthians 12:14-20

Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot would say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear would say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many members, yet one body.

Opening Prayer

Shine in our hearts, loving Master, the pure light of your divine knowledge, and open the eyes of our minds that we may comprehend the message of Your Gospel. Instill in us also reverence for Your blessed commandments so that, putting down all bodily desires, we may pursue a spiritual way of life, both thinking and doing things that are pleasing to you. Amen.

“Parish councils help do the work of the church. And ‘the work of the church’ is to continue the work of Jesus Christ in the world. The council is one of the ways the laity of the Orthodox Church share in the church’s work of preaching, teaching, blessing, sanctifying, directing, guiding and realizing the community of believers.”

~ Fr. Stanley S. Harakas ~





UNIFORM PARISH REGULATIONS

of the

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

May be found on the Archdiocese web site:

WWW.GOARCH.ORG

(<http://www.goarch.org/en/archdiocese/documents/upr.asp>)



CHAPTER ONE

PARISH AND PARISH ORGANIZATION

ARTICLE 15: PARISH

Section 1: The Parish is the local **Eucharistic community** of the Church in a given locality; organized under the jurisdiction of the Archdiocese whose ecclesiastical authority is its canonically consecrated Hierarch. Locally, the Parish is headed by a canonically ordained and duly appointed Priest. The assignment of such appointed Priest shall bind the Parish to the Archdiocesan Regulations, Uniform Metropolis Regulations and Uniform Parish Regulations with the same force and effect as if the same were formally approved and adopted by the Parish.

The Eucharistic Community



In the Orthodox Church, the Eucharist is also known as the Divine Liturgy. ...the Eucharist is truly the center of the life of the Church and the principal means of spiritual development, both for the individual Christian and the Church as a whole. ...This sacrament-mystery is the experience toward which all the other activities of the Church are directed and from which they receive their direction. ...The Eucharist is a celebration of faith which touches not only the mind but also the emotions and the senses. (Father Tom FitzGerald)



Section 2: The aims and purposes of the Parish are to keep, practice and proclaim the Orthodox Christian Faith pure and undefiled.



Section 3: Parishes shall be governed in accordance with the **holy canons**, the **Archdiocesan Charter and Regulations** promulgated thereunder, and, as to canonical and ecclesiastical matters, by the decisions of the **Holy Synod** of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the **Eparchial Synod** of the Archdiocese. In accordance with the Charter, the Parish shall express the life of the Church in the local community according to the Orthodox Christian Faith and Tradition, sanctifying the faithful through the Divine Liturgy and the Holy Sacraments. It shall edify the religious and ethical life of the faithful in accordance with the **Holy Scriptures** and the **decrees and canons** of the Holy Apostles and the Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Church, as interpreted by the practice of the **Ecumenical Patriarchate**.

Ministry



Section 4:

The diakonia (ministry) of the Parish will include:

1. Proclaiming and teaching the Gospel in accordance with the Orthodox Faith;
2. Sanctifying the faithful through God's grace in worship, the Divine Liturgy and the other sacraments;
3. Enhancing its parishioners' spiritual life; and
4. Adding to the numbers of the faithful by receiving persons into the Church through instruction, baptism and/or chrismation.

In addition, the Parish shall establish educational and philanthropic activities to foster the aims and mission of the Parish and to edify its parishioners in the Faith and ethos of the Church. The Parish shall also engage in such inter-Orthodox, ecumenical and interfaith activities as are consistent with the policies of the Archdiocese.

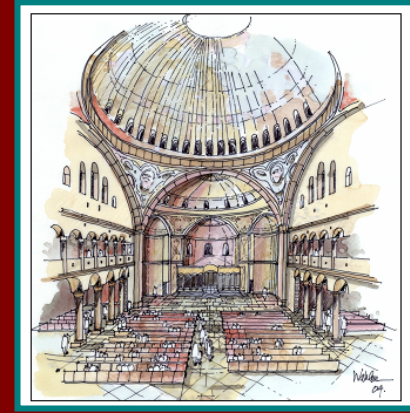


ARTICLE 15

Sections 5, 6, 7 & 8

Conformance to worship, sacramental life, doctrines, canons, discipline, Archdiocesan Charter, Regulations and Hierarchical encyclicals.

ARTICLE 16: PARISH PROPERTY



Church facilities are to be used for the ministries of the Parish.

The Parish shall hold title to all real estate and personal property in its corporate name.

Purchase of property must follow specific procedures for approval by Parish Assembly and the respective Hierarchy.

Architecture, Iconography & Artistry must be in accordance with Orthodox tradition.

All plans for building, renovation, iconography must be approved by the respective Hierarchy.

Special contributions, bequests, and gifts beyond stewardship must be used for the purposes for which they were made.

Any Parish in heresy, schism or defection may have its administration and control of its properties assumed by the respective Hierarchy

Article 17: Clergy

Section 1: The Priest by virtue of his canonical ordination and assignment heads and administers the Parish and exercises on its behalf the priestly duties, which consist in shepherding the Parish entrusted to his care, directing its orderly life, preserving its unity and keeping it faithful to its divine purpose.

Section 2: Clergy are assigned or transferred by the respective Hierarch within his Archdiocesan District/Metropolis by virtue of the authority of his office and in accordance with the canons, ecclesiastical procedure and the needs of the Archdiocesan District/Metropolis.

A. In accordance with the canons and ecclesiastical procedure, neither the Parish Council nor the Parish Assembly is authorized to dismiss a Priest.

Section 3: The Priest shall have charge of all matters pertaining to the spiritual life and growth of the Parish, including, but not limited to, divine worship and related personnel.

Article 17: Clergy

Section 4: When transferred, reassigned or removed, the Priest shall deliver to his respective Hierarch or his successor as may be appropriate: all sacred vessels and other liturgical items belonging to the Parish; and all registry books and other pertinent records of the Parish. In addition, the Priest shall also provide a written inventory of all such items to the respective Hierarch, his successor and the Parish Council.

Section 5: Where more than one Priest is assigned to a Parish, the head of the Parish Clergy is the Presiding Priest. Any other Clergy shall be directly responsible to him. The assignment of additional Clergy to a Parish shall be made by the respective Hierarch in consultation with the Presiding Priest.

Section 6: When a Priest must be reassigned for any reason, the respective Hierarch will make every effort to give him another assignment. In the event that a Priest is removed without cause, or cannot perform his priestly duties, and has not arbitrarily refused reassignment, the Archdiocese will provide for maintenance of his current remuneration and benefits, until he is reassigned, provided he does not refuse reassignment.

Article 17: Clergy Compensation & Benefits

Section 8: The Archdiocesan Council and the Archdiocesan Benefits Committee will establish remunerative standards for the Clergy. These standards, for the following year, shall be sent to each Parish annually, by September 30.

- A. After the review and approval of the respective Hierarch, each Parish shall be obliged:
1. To assume the moving and travel expenses when a Priest is assigned to a Parish.
 2. To compensate the Priest appropriately according to the established remunerative standards for the Clergy as found in the Clergy Compensation Plan.
 3. To provide a housing allowance or a parish house including the payment of all utilities for such parish house. This designation is to be in the form of a Parish Council resolution and should be designated in advance of payment.
 4. To provide the family Orthodox Health Plan Coverage (or single coverage as applicable).

Article 17: Clergy Compensation & Benefits

5. To pay the full cost of existing Social Security (FICA/SECA) coverage at the full self-employment rate.
 6. To either purchase or lease an automobile for use by the Priest and cover all related expenses.
 7. To defray all expenses incurred in attending Clergy-Laity Congresses or Local Assemblies.
 8. To provide for an annual vacation period of fifteen (15) calendar days, plus an additional week for each five (5) years of ordained service (up to a maximum of five (5) weeks), regardless of the amount of time served in his current Parish. Prior to absenting himself from his Parish, a Priest shall obtain written permission from the respective Hierarch.
 9. To provide for a paid sabbatical of three (3) months after six (6) years of continuous service in the same Parish.
- B. No Parish shall reduce, withhold or adversely alter a Priest's remuneration without the consent of the respective Hierarch.

Article 17: Clergy

Section 9: Should a Priest become seriously ill or disabled while in the service of a Parish, he shall be compensated fully by the Parish during such illness for a period of at least three (3) months and at fifty percent (50%) for the next three (3) months.

Continuing Education

Section 10: At every reasonable and practical opportunity, as approved by the respective Hierarch, each Priest shall be encouraged to pursue his ongoing education by attending workshops, seminars and appropriate continuing education programs. The Parish, if approved by the Parish Council, shall subsidize the cost of such education and the Priest will receive his remuneration during this period.

Pension & Health Plan

Section 11: It shall be mandatory for each Priest to join and maintain current his participation in the Archdiocesan Pension Program and the Orthodox Health Plan in accordance with the provisions of said program/health plan.

ARTICLE 18: Parishioners

Good Standing:

Canonically Baptized & Chrismated;

18 Years of Age or over;

Live according to the tenets of the Orthodox faith;

Faithfully attend Divine Liturgy & participate in the sacraments;

Contribute toward the progress of the sacred mission of the Church;

Remain current in stewardship obligation to the Church (*the priest may waive this under special circumstances*);

Cooperate in every way towards the well-being of the Parish.

ARTICLE 18: Parishioners

Factors negating good standing:

Affiliation with an Orthodox parish which defies the jurisdiction or ecclesiastical authority of the Archdiocese;

Membership in or practice of a non-Orthodox faith or other religion; &

Deliberately disregarding & transgressing the moral law of the Church.

A parishioner in Good standing may:

Attend, participate and vote in Parish Assemblies and vote in Parish Council elections; &

Serve as a sponsor in another parish by presenting a letter of good standing in his/her own parish without becoming a member in good standing of that other parish.

ARTICLE 19:

Parish Ministries & Organizations

Section 1: All Parish ministries and organizations shall be under the guidance and supervision of the Priest.

Section 2: A communicant under 18 years of age may be a member of any Parish youth organization, irrespective of whether his or her parents are parishioners in good standing of the Parish, upon approval of the Priest.

Section 3: Each Parish shall endeavor to have at least the following ministries: Chanter(s); a Choir; Acolytes; a Sunday (Catechetical) School; a Greek Language/Cultural School; chapters of the Greek Orthodox Youth of America (GOYA), Young Adult League (Y.A.L.), a Junior Orthodox Youth (JOY) program; a chapter of the Ladies Philoptochos Society; an Outreach and Evangelism Ministry; and such other ministries as are necessary to meet the spiritual and cultural needs of the Parish.

Section 4: The Bylaws of any Parish organizations shall comply with the Charter and Regulations and shall be subject to the approval of the Priest, Parish Council and the respective Hierarch.

“The most basic task of the Church leader is to discern the spiritual gifts of all those under his authority, and to encourage those gifts to be used to the full for the benefit of all.”

~ Saint John Chrysostom ~





Article 20: Organizing New Parishes

Article 21: Organization & Parish Bylaws

Article 22: Non-Viable Parishes

Article 23: Merger of Parishes

Chapter 2: Parish Council

ARTICLE 24: PARISH COUNCIL

Section 1: To serve on a Parish Council is a ministry and all those who serve are called to represent Christ and the Orthodox Faith to all whom they meet in all aspects of life. The Parish Council shall consist of the Priest, as the head of the Parish, and a number of elected lay members fixed by the Parish Bylaws or by local statute according to the needs of the Parish. The Parish Council is responsible to the Parish Assembly and to the respective Hierarch for conducting all Parish affairs in keeping with the mission, aims and purposes of the Church as set forth in the Charter and these Regulations. The Parish Council shall be deemed to mean also Board of Trustees or Board of Directors when such designations are required by local statute. The Priest shall be a nonvoting member of the Parish Council.

ARTICLE 24: PARISH COUNCIL

Section 2: The officers of the Parish Council shall be a President, a Vice President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and such other officers as the Parish Bylaws require.

Section 3: The members of the Parish Council are elected for a term not to exceed three (3) years by the parishioners in good standing.

Section 4: No employee of the Parish may serve on the Parish Council, the Board of Auditors, or the Board of Elections.

Section 5: A vacancy on the Parish Council shall be considered to exist in the event of: the death or resignation of a member; the physical or mental incapacity of a member; the invalidation of the election of a member; or the failure of a member to be current in his Stewardship financial obligations to the Parish.

ARTICLE 24: PARISH COUNCIL

A. **Removal from the Parish Council** shall also be considered when a member: (1) is not or has ceased to be loyal to the doctrines, canons, worship, discipline, customs and practices of the Church; (2) is in violation of these Regulations or the Hierarchical Encyclicals of the Archdiocese; (3) does not recognize the duly constituted ecclesiastical authorities of the Metropolis or Archdiocese; (4) is guilty of a serious moral transgression; or (5) has violated his or her affirmation of office; or (6) has engaged in actions which do not further the administrative or spiritual well being of the Parish, the Metropolis or the Archdiocese.

B. In the event that the Priest believes that the removal of a Parish Council member is required for one of the reasons listed in subsections (1) through (5) above, the Priest shall submit his recommendation, in writing, for the removal of the member to the respective Hierarch.

C. If, the respective Hierarch, upon the recommendation of the Priest, or for any other reason, determines that the removal of a Parish Council member is necessary for one or more of the reasons listed in subsections (1) through (5) above, the respective Hierarch shall render a decision regarding the matter and shall notify the Priest and Parish Council of such decision. **If any member(s) of the Parish Council is (are) removed, the matter shall not be brought before a Parish Assembly.**

D. Prior to removing all or a majority of the members of a Parish Council for any reason(s) during the same twelve (12) month period, the respective Hierarch shall consult with and obtain the consent of the Synod.

E. When an individual or individuals are removed from the Parish Council by the respective Hierarch, the vacancy(ies) created shall be filled through direct appointment by the respective Hierarch, with a recommendation from the Priest and Parish Council, from among the Parish's parishioners in good standing to fulfill the term of the person removed. The interim Parish Council shall serve for such period of time as the Hierarch may determine, but in no event longer than twelve (12) months.

ARTICLE 24: PARISH COUNCIL

Section 6: Members of the Parish Council must attend Parish Council meetings. No proxies are permitted. To the extent permitted by applicable law, in the event of an emergency, a special telephonic meeting may be called by the Priest and Parish Council President. A member, who misses three (3) consecutive meetings without justifiable cause, may be relieved of his or her office upon prior notice to the member and the majority vote of the Parish Council.

Section 7: Except as specified above with respect to removals by the respective Hierarchy, a vacancy on the Parish Council shall be promptly filled by the Parish Council by electing a successor therefore from among the parishioners in good standing of the Parish. Such successor shall serve for the unexpired portion of the term of the vacant office. If a vacancy on the Parish Council occurs after the Parish Council elections but before the first meeting of the Parish Council at which officers are elected, the vacancy shall be filled after the election of Parish Council officers.

Section 8: All newly appointed members who fill a vacancy of the Parish Council, must attend a Parish Council Seminar to be conducted by the Priest prior to taking the affirmation of office and assuming the duties of their position.

ARTICLE 25: Election of Parish Council

ARTICLE 26: Ratification of parish Council Elections
& Affirmation of Office

"I, (name) do solemnly affirm that I will uphold the dogmas, teachings, traditions, holy canons, discipline, worship and moral principles of the Greek Orthodox Church, as well as the Charter and Regulations of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, and that I will fulfill faithfully and sincerely the duties and obligations required of a member of the Parish Council. So help me God."

ARTICLE 27: Election of Parish Council Officers

ARTICLE 28: Meetings of Parish Council

ARTICLE 29: Duties of Parish Council

Section 1

- A. Assist the Priest in the administration of the affairs and ministries of the Parish;
- B. Establish the appropriate committees, including but not limited to Stewardship, Finance, Fundraising, Planning and Real Estate committees;
- C. Utilize the Stewardship material provided by the Archdiocese to implement and expand the Parish Stewardship program and ministries;
- D. Prepare budgets for the Parish's administration and ministries and collect the revenue of the Parish;
- E. Provide for the Priest's remuneration and benefits in accordance with the Clergy Compensation Plan of the Archdiocese;
- F. Provide financing for the salaries of the Parish personnel;
- G. Provide financial resources for the Parish's administration and for the Parish's spiritual, educational and other ministries and expenses;
- H. Buy, sell or mortgage Parish property, subject to the approval of the Parish Assembly and the provisions of these Regulations;
- I. Provide for payments and assessments for support of the Archdiocese as fixed by the Congresses;
- J. Submit to the respective Hierarch and the Archdiocese, at the end of each year, the financial statement of the Parish for that year (certified by the Parish's Board of Auditors) and the Parish budget for the ensuing year;
- K. Submit annual Parish profile reports that may be required by the Archdiocese and the respective Archdiocesan District/Metropolis; and
- L. Adhere to the Charter, the Regulations and decisions promulgated at the Congresses.

ARTICLE 29: Duties of Parish Council (continued)

Section 2: All personnel employed by the Parish including schoolteachers, are engaged or discharged by the Parish Council with the consent of the Priest.

Section 3: The Priest and Parish Council shall be responsible for all personnel employed by the Parish. In addition, the Priest and the Parish Council shall be responsible for the Parish's adherence with all applicable personnel and volunteer policies promulgated by the Archdiocese.

Section 4: Upon the expiration of its term, the Parish Council shall surrender to the succeeding Parish Council all Parish records, including the list of Parishioners, minute books, bankbooks, checkbooks, financial records, and all other property of the Parish.

Section 5: The Priest and Parish Council and its officers may exercise any additional authority, consistent with the Charter, Regulations and the Parish Bylaws.

CHAPTER THREE: PARISH ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

ARTICLE 30: PARISH ADMINISTRATION

Section 1: The Priest as head of the Parish, by virtue of the ecclesiastical authority vested in him, shall guide and oversee the Parish. The Priest together with the Parish Council is responsible to the respective Hierarch for the whole life and activities of his Parish.

Section 2: Each Parish shall be administered by the Priest and Parish Council cooperatively.

Section 3: All committees or boards of the Parish, except for the Board of Elections and the Board of Auditors, shall be under the jurisdiction of the Priest and Parish Council.

Conflict

Section 4: If a problem should arise between a Priest and the Parish Council, the matter shall not be brought before the Parish Assembly. The Priest or the Parish Council shall have the right to refer the matter to the respective Hierarch.

ARTICLE 31: Parish Assembly

ARTICLE 32: Board of Elections

ARTICLE 33: Board of Auditors

ARTICLE 34: Parish Finances &

Total Commitment

Closing Thoughts...

The Church's leadership, though it cannot help but appear similar to worldly leadership, is understood theologically to be of a completely different nature, rooted in a spirit of love and communion.

Authority on all levels which seeks to impose itself through claims and counterclaims causes rivalry and the disruption of harmony. On the contrary, authority understood as an opportunity for service to others will promote the cause of unity both in the parish and in the Archdiocese as a whole.

Report to His Eminence Archbishop Iakovos by the Commission
Appointed to Establish the Theological Agenda for the Future of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese

“...the only true and valid model of Christian leadership is the Servant.”

~ *Oriented Leadership* ~

*Lord, now let your servants depart in peace,
For our eyes have seen your salvation
which you have prepared before the face of all people,
A light to enlighten the gentiles
And the glory of your people Israel.*