

THE CONSTITUTION AND LAWS



**OF THE
POLISH NATIONAL
CATHOLIC CHURCH**

2014

✠ Most Rev. Anthony A. Mikovsky, Prime Bishop

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NOTES

FAITH AND PRINCIPLES OF THE POLISH NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH

THE NICENE CREED

I believe in One God,
the Father, the Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten not made,
of one being with the Father.
through Him all things were made.

For us and for our Salvation
He came down from heaven;
by the power of the Holy Spirit
He was born of the Virgin Mary,
AND BECAME MAN.
For our sake He was crucified
under Pontius Pilate;
He suffered death and was buried.
On the third day He rose again
in fulfillment of the Scriptures;
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead,
and His kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord and Giver of Life,
Who proceeds from the Father.
With the Father and the Son
He is worshipped and glorified.
He has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in One, Holy, Catholic
and Apostolic Church.

I acknowledge one baptism
for the forgiveness of sins.

I look for the resurrection of the dead
and the + life of the world to come. Amen.

**Statement Regarding the Relationship
of the Polish National Catholic Church
with the Union of Utrecht
5 September 2006**

As of November 20, 2003 the Polish National Catholic Church of America and Canada is no longer in Communion with or affiliated with the Churches of the Union of Utrecht, except for the Polish Catholic Church in Poland. Therefore, the Polish National Catholic Church does not endorse any actions or decisions of the International Bishops Conference of the Churches of the Union of Utrecht. Nonetheless, the Polish National Catholic Church still holds the Declaration of Utrecht as a normative document of faith.

--Most Rev. Robert M. Nemkovich,
Prime Bishop, Polish National Catholic Church
--Rt. Rev. Thomas J. Gnat,
Diocesan Bishop of the Eastern Diocese
--Rt. Rev. Thaddeus S. Peplowski,
Diocesan Bishop of the Buffalo-Pittsburgh Diocese
--Rt. Rev. Jan Dawidziuk,
Diocesan Bishop of the Western Diocese

two-thirds (2/3) vote of the active members of the parish present at the meeting when such a resolution is to be acted upon and shall receive the approval of the Prime Bishop of the PNCC. Before any such resolution shall be presented to a meeting of the parish members, written notice of the same shall have been given in writing to the active members of the parish not less than 15 days before such meeting is held. A resolution for such a Mass shall be presented only to the annual or semi-annual meeting of the parish.”

IX General Synod, Buffalo, NY

August, 1964:

SPOJNIA MEMBERSHIP

“It shall be the moral obligation of the clergy and the laity of the PNCC to belong to the Polish National Union of America.”

VII General Synod, Scranton, Pa.

October, 1946:

INTERCOMMUNION

“The PNCC accepted the principle of Intercommunion between the PNCC and the Anglican and Episcopal Churches, based on the foundation of Intercommunion between the Anglican, Episcopal and Old Catholic Churches in 1931 at Bonn, Germany. The Foundation is based on the three cardinal points:

1. Each communion recognizes the catholicity and independence of the other, and maintains its own.
2. Each communion agrees to admit members of the other communion to participate in the sacraments.
3. Intercommunion does not require from either communion the acceptance of all doctrinal opinion, sacramental devotion, or liturgical practice characteristic of the other, but implies that each believes the other to hold all the essentials of the Christian Faith.”

AND WHEREAS both the “Sejm” and the General Synod were convened in the same years: 1963, 1967, 1971, and 1975;

BE IT RESOLVED that the date of the XV General Synod be transferred from October, 1979, to October, 1978, with all subsequent General Synods to be held every four years thereafter.

IN ORDER to have continuity and order, it is understood that the Standing Committees of the Church elected in 1975, only shall serve three years (rather than the usual four).

IT IS ALSO UNDERSTOOD that the Supreme Council members’ term of office and all appointed officers or commissions and committees, elected or appointed in 1975, only shall serve for three years (rather than the usual four).

AND IT IS FURTHER UNDERSTOOD that the eight year term of the Present Prime Bishop, which began in 1971, be to 1978, to coincide with the dates of the XV General Synod.”

XIV General Synod, Buffalo, N.Y.

October, 1975:

SPOJNIA SUNDAY

“That the fourth Sunday of September be designated annually as Spojnia Sunday throughout the Church.”

XII General Synod, Manchester, N.H.

October, 1967:

MUSIC SCHOLARSHIP SUNDAY

“that the last Sunday of January be designated annually as Music Scholarship Sunday in the PNC Church. At this time the parish choir or the committee would solicit donations for the Music Scholarship funds of the United Choirs.” (page 71, 72, 1967 Minutes)

X General Synod, Chicago, Ill.

July, 1958:

ENGLISH MASS

“It shall be lawful for a parish to celebrate one entire Mass on Sunday in the English language, provided, that the parish shall first adopt a resolution setting forth the need for such a service, which resolution shall be adopted by

THE DECLARATION OF UTRECHT A TRANSLATION OF THE PROFESSION OF FAITH, OR DECLARATION, FORMULATED BY THE OLD CATHOLIC BISHOPS ASSEMBLED AT UTRECHT, HOLLAND SEPTEMBER 24, 1889

1. We adhere faithfully to the Rule of Faith laid down by St. Vincent of Lerins in these terms: “Id teneamus, ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est; hoc est etenim vere proprieque catholicum.”*** For this reason we persevere in professing the faith of the primitive Church, as formulated in the ecumenical symbols and specified precisely by the unanimously accepted decisions of the Ecumenical Councils held in the undivided Church of the first thousand years.

2. We therefore reject the decrees of the so-called Council of the Vatican, which were promulgated on July 18th, 1870 concerning the infallibility and the universal Episcopate of the Bishop of Rome, decrees which contradict the faith of the ancient Church, and which destroy its ancient canonical constitution by attributing to the Pope the plenitude of ecclesiastical powers over all Dioceses and over all the faithful. By denial of his primatial jurisdiction we do not wish to deny the historic primacy which several Ecumenical Councils and the Fathers of the ancient Church have attributed to the Bishop of Rome by recognizing him as the Primus inter pares.

3. We also reject the dogma of the Immaculate Conception promulgated by Pius IX in 1854 in defiance of the Holy Scriptures and in contradiction to the tradition of the first centuries.

4. As for other Encyclicals published by the Bishops of Rome in recent times – for example, the Bulls Unigenitus and Auctorem fidei and the Syllabus of 1864 – we reject them on all such points as are in contradiction of the doctrine of the primitive Church, and we do not recognize them as binding on the conscience of the faithful. We also renew the ancient protest of the Catholic Church of Holland against the errors of the Roman Curia, and against its attacks upon the rights of national Churches.

5. We refuse to accept the decrees of the Council of Trent in matters of discipline, and as for the dogmatic decisions of that Council, we accept them only so far as they are in harmony with the teaching of the primitive Church.

6. Considering that the Holy Eucharist has always been the true central point of Catholic worship, we consider it our duty to declare that we maintain with perfect fidelity the ancient Catholic doctrine concerning the Sacrament of the Altar, by believing that we receive the Body and the Blood of our Savior Jesus Christ under the species of bread and wine. The Eucharistic celebration in the Church is neither a continual repetition nor a renewal of the expiatory sacrifice which Jesus offered once for all upon the Cross; but it is a sacrifice because it is the perpetual commemoration of the sacrifice offered upon the Cross, and it is the act by which we represent upon earth and appropriate to ourselves the one offering which Jesus Christ makes in Heaven, according to the Epistle to the Hebrews IX:11,12, for the salvation of redeemed humanity, by appearing for us in the presence of God (Heb. IX:24). The character of the Holy Eucharist being thus understood, it is, at the same time, a sacrificial feast, by means of which the faithful, in receiving the Body and the Blood of our Savior, enter into communion with one another (I Cor. X:17).

7. We hope that Catholic theologians, in maintaining the faith of the undivided Church, will succeed in establishing an agreement upon all such questions as caused controversy ever since the Churches became divided. We exhort the priests under our jurisdiction to teach, both by preaching and by the instruction of the young, especially the essential Christian truths professed by all the Christian confessions, to avoid, in discussing controversial doctrines, any violation of truth or charity, and in word and deed to set an example to the members of our churches in accordance with the spirit of Jesus Christ our Savior.

8. By maintaining and professing faithfully the doctrine of Jesus Christ, by refusing to admit those errors which by the fault of men have crept into the Catholic Church, by laying aside the abuses in ecclesiastical matters, together with the worldly tendencies of hierarchy, we believe that we shall be able to combat efficaciously the great evils of our day, which are unbelief and indifference in matters of religion.

***We hold that, which has been believed everywhere, always, and of all men: for that is truly and properly Catholic.*

BINDING SYNODAL RESOLUTIONS

NOTE: At the post-synodal meeting of the Supreme Council (November, 1975) it was decided to place this addendum containing the most important binding Synodal Resolutions in the booklet following the Constitution and Laws of the Polish National Catholic Church.

XVI General Synod, Scranton, Pennsylvania

October, 1982:

UNITED YOUTH ASSOCIATION SUNDAY

That the last Sunday in August be set aside for the youth of our Church and that a collection be taken for that purpose.

XV General Synod, Chicago, Illinois

October, 1978:

REGARDING ENGLISH MASSES

Hereafter, the Pastor and Congregation of a Parish of the Polish National Catholic Church, with the concurrence of the Bishop Ordinary, shall determine the number of times it may hold its several Masses in Polish or in its contemporary language.

TERMINATION OF INTERCOMMUNION

The XV General Synod of the Polish National Catholic Church by majority vote 312 to 106 ratified the position of its Prime Bishop and adopted a resolution stating that the Polish National Catholic Church regretfully acknowledges and confirms the fact that by their unilateral action, the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States of America and the Anglican Church of Canada have effectively terminated sacramental intercommunion with the Polish National Catholic Church.

XIV General Synod, Buffalo, N.Y.

October, 1975:

RESOLUTION TO CHANGE YEAR OF THE NEXT SYNOD

“WHEREAS the 1962 General Synod of the Polish National Catholic Church was called one year late (in 1963);
WHEREAS the National Convention (“Sejm”) of the Polish National Union (“Spojnia”) is held every four years;

take such appeal the decision of the Supreme Tribunal shall be final. An appeal by a Bishop to the General Synod shall be heard during the General Synod sessions at a time to be fixed by the Synod.

III. PRIME BISHOP

SECTION 1. The court of first and final resort for the Prime Bishop is the General Synod.

SECTION 2. The decision of the General Synod shall be final.

ARTICLE XXIII AMENDMENTS

The Constitution and Laws of this Church may be amended only by the General Synod of this Church upon two-thirds (2/3) of the votes of the delegates present and voting.

A proposal to amend the Constitution and Laws of this Church must be submitted in writing to the Constitution Commission at least six (6) months prior to the start of the General Synod, and shall be distributed to each Parish of this Church, together with the action taken thereon by the Commission, at least sixty (60) days prior to the start of the General Synod.

COMMENT:

For example, if the General Synod is to convene on October 5, all proposed amendments to the Constitution must be submitted by midnight of April 5.

THE CONFESSION OF FAITH OF THE POLISH NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH

1. I BELIEVE in Almighty God, the cause of all existence, in a Being who permeates the universe and is the source of its life and development, both material (physical) as well as spiritual and moral. In relation to man, God reveals Himself through His creative power, His inexpressible wisdom, His provident influence on the formation of the destiny of individual man, nations, states and all of humanity. In a more particular way, God as the Spirit of Life, Light and Goodness, influences chosen spirits of nations, who in a given epoch of human development, are the creative agent in the building of God's Kingdom on earth. This direct influence of God – is not limited to one nation, to one epoch, but is directed to all nations and times – for the purpose of stimulating life, progress and the attainment of the highest degree of culture by individual nations, states and all mankind; it is the outpouring of Divine forces acting upon humanity and the benefiting from these forces by individuals, nations, states and all mankind.

2. I BELIEVE in Jesus Christ, the Savior and Spiritual Regenerator of the world.

3. I BELIEVE that Christ the Lord was the Emissary of God, of one substance with Him, and as to humanity born of the humble woman Mary. I believe that this Nazarene Master revealed His Divine mission on earth through His life, an unsurpassed ideal of goodness, wisdom and self-sacrifice for others, especially for sinful and disinherited people; that by His work, teaching and sacrificial death, He became the glowing ember of a new life of mankind, taking its beginning and deriving its strength and fullness in knowing God, loving Him and fulfilling His Holy Will.

4. I BELIEVE that the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, rules the world in the natural as well as in the moral order; that all the laws of the universe, as well as those by which the soul of individual man and humanity as a whole are guided, are an emanation of the will, goodness and righteousness of the Divine Being.

5. I BELIEVE that from the Holy Spirit flows grace, that is an invisible power which brings it to pass that, when a man cooperates and works in harmony with it, he becomes better, more perfect, better fitted for his tasks, a

participant in the peace of heart and soul, until one day, through union with God in Eternity, he finds infinite bliss and the fulfillment of his own being.

6. I BELIEVE in the need of uniting all followers of Christ's religion into the one body of God's Church, and that the Church of Christ, Apostolic and Universal, is the representation of this Divine community of mankind, which the Savior proclaimed, for the realization of which all noble minded people labored, are still laboring and for which the soul of man yearns, desiring truth, light, love, justice and consolation in God.

7. I BELIEVE that the Church of Christ is the true teacher of both individual man as well as of all human society, that it is a steward of Divine Graces, a guide and a light in man's temporal pilgrimage to God and salvation; in so far as the followers and members of this Church, both lay and clerical, are united with the Divine Founder through faith and life proceeding from this faith.

8. I BELIEVE that every true Christian should take an active and vital part in the spiritual life of the Church, through the hearing of the Word of God, through the receiving of the Holy Sacraments, through fulfilling the laws and regulations established by Christ and His Apostles, as defined and given to us by the Church.

9. I BELIEVE that all people as children of one Father, God, are equal in themselves; that privileges arising from differences in rank, from possession of immense riches or from differences of faith, sex and race, are a great wrong, for they are a violation of the rights of man which he possesses by his nature and the dignity of his divine origin, and are a barrier to the purposeful development of man.

10. I BELIEVE that all people have an equal right to life, happiness and those ways and means which lead to the preservation of existence, to advancement and salvation, but I also believe that all people have sacred obligations toward God, themselves, their nation, state and all of human society.

11. I BELIEVE in the ultimate justice of God, in a future life beyond the grave, which will be a continuation of this temporal life and which, as to its condition and degree of perfection and happiness is dependent on our present life, but above all on the state of our soul in the final hour before death.

D. PRIESTS, BISHOPS AND PRIME BISHOP

1. PRIESTS

SECTION 1. Except as provided in Article XXII, Section 1., the court of first resort for a Priest is his Diocesan Bishop.

SECTION 2. An aggrieved Priest shall state his complaint clearly and concisely in writing, which writing shall be filed with his Diocesan Bishop within twenty (20) days from the date when the matter complained of occurred. Notice of the hearing shall be given by certified mail by the Diocesan Bishops to all parties named in the complaint of their last known address not less than ten (10) days before the time fixed for the hearing and within thirty (30) days from the date of filing the complaint.

SECTION 3. From the decision of the Diocesan Bishop, the Priest shall have the right to appeal to the Diocesan Tribunal, and from the decision of the Diocesan Tribunal to the Supreme Tribunal. Said appeals shall be taken in accordance with the provisions governing appeals to said Tribunals as contained in this Article XXII.

II. BISHOPS

SECTION 1. Except for the Prime Bishop, the court of first resort for a Bishop is the Prime Bishop.

SECTION 2. An aggrieved Bishop shall state his complaint clearly and concisely in writing, which writing shall be filed with the Prime Bishop within twenty (20) days from the date when the matter complained of occurred. Notice of hearing shall be given by certified mail by the Prime Bishop to all parties named in the complaint to their last known address not less than ten (10) days before the time fixed for the hearing and within thirty (30) days from the date of filing the complaint.

SECTION 3. From the decision of the Prime Bishop, the Bishop shall have the right to appeal to the Supreme Tribunal. Said appeal shall be taken in accordance with the provisions governing appeals to said Tribunals as contained in this Article XXII.

SECTION 4. From the decision of the Supreme Tribunal, the Bishop shall have the right to appeal to the General Synod. An appeal to the General Synod by a Bishop shall be made and filed with the secretary of the Supreme Council within six (6) months from the date of the mailing by certified mail of the decision of the Supreme Tribunal. Upon failure to

members; one member from each of the Dioceses of this Church, one member from the Supreme Council, and the Prime Bishop of the Church. Each diocesan member shall be elected by a caucus of the diocesan lay delegates to the General Synod held at the time of the General Synod. The Supreme Council member shall be elected by the members of the Supreme Council at the first meeting of the Supreme Council held after each General Synod. The Prime Bishop shall act as chairman of the Tribunal and preside over it. In case the Prime Bishop for any reason cannot act as the chairman, the vice-president Bishop of the Supreme Council shall act as chairman in his stead. In all matters before the Supreme Tribunal which affect the Prime Bishop's office, the vice-president Bishop shall act in the Prime Bishop's stead and preside over the Tribunal. A vacancy in the office of a Tribunal member caused by death, resignation or any other cause shall be filled as follows: in the case of a diocesan member the office will be filled by such member's Diocesan Council at its earliest convenience; in the case of the Supreme Council member the office will be filled by the Supreme Council at its earliest convenience.

SECTION 2. The Supreme Tribunal shall have jurisdiction over all appeals from the Diocesan Tribunals and original jurisdiction in the expulsion of a Parish. It shall also have original jurisdiction for all controversies for which there is no other judicial remedy in this Constitution. Appeals on matters arising from Parish Tribunals shall be entertained only upon leave of the Supreme Tribunal. A petition for allowance of such appeal shall be in writing and filed with the secretary of the Supreme Council within twenty (20) days from the date of the decision of the Diocesan Tribunal. (1982)

SECTION 3. From the decision of the Supreme Tribunal, Bishops shall have the right to appeal to the General Synod.

SECTION 4. Appeals to the General Synod by Bishops shall be made and filed with the secretary of the Supreme Council within six (6) months from the date of the decision of the Supreme Tribunal. Upon failure to take such appeal, the decision of the Supreme Tribunal shall be final.

SECTION 5. The decision of the Supreme Tribunal, except as provided in the foregoing Section 4, pertaining to appeals of Bishops, shall be final.

SECTION 6. Every appellant who shall file an appeal from the Diocesan Tribunal shall pay a reasonable filing fee and the same shall be fixed and determined by the Supreme Tribunal for administrative purposes. Failure to pay such fee at the time of filing the appeal, the Supreme Tribunal may dismiss the appeal.

12. I BELIEVE in immortality and everlasting happiness in eternity, in the union with God of all people, races and ages, because I believe in the Divine power of love, mercy and justice and for nothing else do I yearn, but that it may be to me according to my faith.

The Most Rev. Francis Hodur

COMMENT

The above Confession of Faith is a summary and nucleus of Christ's revelation concerning God, the individual, family, nation and all mankind. These Truths were expounded by Jesus Christ, taught by His apostles and disciples and are embodied in our Confession of Faith. May they be a living rule and guide for our daily lives.

This Confession of Faith should be read in all Parishes on the Anniversary of the Polish National Catholic Church and may be read on any other occasion.

This Confession of Faith was first adopted in 1912, at Provincial Synods of the Polish National Catholic Church held at Wilkes-Barre, PA, Passaic, NJ and Chicopee, MA; and in 1914 at the Third General Synod held at Chicago, IL and has not since been modified.

THE DECLARATION OF SCRANTON **A Profession of Faith and Declaration** **formulated by the** **Polish National Catholic Bishops** **assembled at Lancaster, New York** **April 28, 2008**

We faithfully adhere to the Rule of Faith laid down by St. Vincent of Lerins in these terms: "*Id teneamus, ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est; hoc est etenim vere proprieque catholicum.*"¹ (We hold that which has been believed everywhere, always, and of all people: for that is truly and properly Catholic.) For this reason we persevere in professing the faith of the primitive Church, as formulated in the ecumenical symbols and specified precisely by the unanimously accepted decisions of the Ecumenical Councils held in the undivided Church of the first thousand years.

Therefore, we reject the innovations of the First Vatican Council that on July 18, 1870 promulgated the dogma of papal infallibility and the universal Episcopate of the Bishop of Rome, which contradict the Faith of the ancient Church and which destroy its ancient canonical constitution by attributing to the Pope the plenitude of ecclesiastical powers over all dioceses and over all the faithful. By denial of his primatial jurisdiction we do not wish to deny the historic primacy which several Ecumenical Councils and the Fathers of the ancient Church have attributed to the Bishop of Rome by recognizing him as the *Primus inter pares* (first among equals).

We also reject the dogma of the Immaculate Conception promulgated by Pius IX in 1854 in defiance of the Holy Scriptures and in contradiction to the Tradition of the first centuries.

We further reject the dogmatization of the Catholic teaching of the bodily Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary by Pius XII in 1950 as being in defiance of the Holy Scriptures.

We reject the contemporary innovations promulgated by the Anglican Communion and the Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht. We also regard these innovations as being in defiance of the Holy Scriptures and in contradiction to the Tradition of the first centuries, namely: the ordination of women to the Holy Priesthood, the consecration of women to the Episcopate and the blessing of same-sex unions.

Considering that the Holy Eucharist (Holy Mass) has always been the true central point of Catholic worship, we consider it our duty to declare that we maintain with perfect fidelity the ancient Catholic doctrine concerning the Sacrament of the Altar, by believing that we receive the Body and the Blood of our Savior Jesus Christ under the species of bread and wine. The Eucharistic celebration in the Church is neither a continual repetition nor a renewal of the expiatory sacrifice which Jesus offered once for all upon the Cross, but it is a sacrifice because it is the perpetual commemoration of the sacrifice offered upon the Cross; and it is the act by which we represent upon earth and appropriate to ourselves the one offering which Jesus Christ makes in Heaven, according to the Epistle to the Hebrews 9:11,12, for the salvation of redeemed humanity, by appearing for us in the presence of God (Hebrews 9:24). The character of the Holy Eucharist being thus understood, it is, at the same time, a sacrificial feast by means of which the faithful in receiving the

term of office of the three (3) lay members and clergyman shall be four (4) years, provided that the Diocesan Council in electing Diocesan Tribunal members upon adoption of this amendment to the Constitution shall elect one member for a term of one (1) year, one member for a term of two (2) years, one member for a term of three (3) years, and one member for a term of four (4) years. A vacancy in the office of a Diocesan Tribunal member caused by death, resignation or any other cause shall be filled by the Diocesan Council within thirty (30) days of notice thereof. The Diocesan Bishop shall act as chairman of the Tribunal and shall preside over it. In case the Diocesan Bishop for any reason cannot act as the chairman, then in such case, the vice-chairman of the Diocesan Council shall act as chairman of the Diocesan Tribunal.

SECTION 3. An aggrieved party shall state his or her complaint clearly and concisely in writing, which writing shall be filed with the Diocesan Tribunal within twenty (20) days from the date when the matter complained of occurred. Notice of hearing shall be given by certified mail by the chairman of the Diocesan Tribunal to all parties named in the complaint of their last known address not less than ten (10) days before the time fixed for the hearing and within thirty (30) days from the date of filing the complaint. The decision of the Diocesan Tribunal shall be in writing and rendered within twenty (20) days after the hearing is brought to an end, a copy of which decision shall be sent by certified mail to the parties named in the complaint.

SECTION 4. Every appellant who shall file an appeal from the Parish Tribunal decision and from decrees and decisions of its Diocesan Bishop, and all complaints filed by aggrieved parties in matters not subject to the jurisdiction of the Parish Tribunal shall pay a reasonable filing fee and the same shall be fixed and determined by the Diocesan Tribunal for administrative purposes. Failure to pay such fee at the time of filing the appeal or complaint, the Diocesan Tribunal may dismiss the appeal or complaint. (1986)

SECTION 5. Appeals from the decision of a Diocesan Tribunal to the Supreme Tribunal shall be taken within twenty (20) days from the date of the mailing of the decision of the Diocesan Tribunal by certified mail. Upon failure to take such appeal, the decision of the Diocesan Tribunal shall be final. (1986)

C. SUPREME TRIBUNAL

SECTION 1. The Supreme Tribunal shall be composed of seven (7)

other member for a term of two (2) years. A vacancy in the office of a Parish Tribunal caused by death, resignation or any other cause shall be filled by the Parish Committee at its next regular meeting. The Pastor shall act as chairman of the Tribunal and shall preside over it. In case the Pastor for any reason cannot act as the chairman then in such case the Chairman of the Parish Committee shall act as chairman of the Parish Tribunal.

SECTION 3. An aggrieved party shall state his or her complaint clearly and concisely in writing, which writing shall be filed with the Parish Tribunal within twenty (20) days from the date when the matter complained of occurred. Notice of hearing shall be given by certified mail by the chairman of the Parish Tribunal to all parties named in the complaint to their last known address not less than ten (10) days before the time fixed for the hearing and within thirty (30) days from the date of filing the complaint. The decision of the Parish Tribunal shall be in writing and rendered within twenty (20) days after the hearing is brought to an end, and a copy of said decision shall be sent by certified mail to the parties named in the complaint.

SECTION 4. Every aggrieved party who shall file a complaint with the Parish Tribunal shall pay a reasonable filing fee as the same shall be fixed and determined by the Parish Tribunal for administration purposes. Failure to pay such fee at the time of filing the complaint, the Parish Tribunal may dismiss the complaint. (1986)

SECTION 5. Appeals from the decision of a Parish Tribunal shall be taken to the Diocesan Tribunal within twenty (20) days from the date of the mailing of the decision of the Parish Tribunal by certified mail. Upon failure to take such appeal, the decision of the Parish Tribunal shall be final. (1986)

B. DIOCESAN TRIBUNAL

SECTION 1. Every Diocese shall establish a Diocesan Tribunal which shall have jurisdiction of appeals from decisions of Parish Tribunals within its Diocese and all decrees and decisions of its Diocesan Bishop. The Diocesan Tribunal shall be the court of first resort for all matters not subject to the jurisdiction of the Parish Tribunal.

SECTION 2. The Diocesan Tribunal shall be composed of five (5) members of the Diocese; three of whom shall be laymen and two (2) clergymen, one of whom shall be the Diocesan Bishop. The three (3) laymen and clergyman shall be elected by the Diocesan Council. The

Body and the Blood of our Savior enter into communion with one another (1 Corinthians 10:17).

We hope that Catholic theologians, by maintaining the faith of the undivided Church, will succeed in establishing an agreement in regard to all such questions that have caused controversy ever since the Church became divided.

We exhort the priests under our jurisdiction: to teach the essential Christian truths by the proclamation of the Word of God and by the instruction of the faithful; to seek truth and practice charity when discussing controversial doctrines; and in word and deed to set, in accordance with the teachings of our Savior Jesus Christ, an example for the faithful of the Church.

By faithfully maintaining and professing the doctrine of Jesus Christ, by refusing to accept those errors that have crept into the Church by human fault, and by repudiating the abuses in ecclesiastical matters and the tendency of some Church leaders to seek temporal wealth and power, we believe that we will effectively combat the great evils of our day, which are unbelief and indifference in matters of faith.

¹A Commonitory for the Antiquity of the Catholic Faith Against the Profane Novelties of All Heresies, ch. 2, par. 6.

The above Declaration was signed by the bishops of the Polish National Catholic Church on April 28, 2008 and was accepted together with the establishment of the Union of Scranton at the XXIII General Synod held in Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada in 2010.

PREAMBLE

The first and foremost objective and aim of this Church is the salvation and sanctification of the Polish people and of all others united with this Church. Man is sanctified when he follows the guidance of the Church and uses the spiritual means which the Church receives from God through Jesus Christ our Lord, “for there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (I Tim. 2:5).

By divine imperative the sacred mission of this Church is to carry the light of Jesus Christ before the people, constantly reminding them that their aim is to live in the spirit of God, in truth, love and righteousness, seeking the truth by reading and studying the Holy Scriptures with the aid of the accumulated wisdom of the ages.

The most fervent desire and prayer of this Church is to emulate Jesus Christ in fulfilling obligations toward God, family, nation and society. This Church’s ideal and dream is to build for the Polish people and all others united with them a hearth around which they can rally, warm and strengthen themselves in their religious belief.

Religion is the source of life and regeneration. We see this in the history of the Jewish, Japanese, Hindu, Scandinavian and many Anglo-Saxon and American groups which are awakening from centuries of lethargic sleep, and which now are experiencing new life. In order to do this it is necessary that religion possess the character of a national religion. Its high altars, its main pulpit, its teachers must be within the heart of the nation. Otherwise it will only subject society to a slow death. Man’s universal outlook on the existence of a Supreme Being, His manifold creation, His relationship to the animate and inanimate world is crystallized in religion. Religion gives us moral principles on which are reared whole generations on whom in turn depend the growth, development and future of the nation, and its happiness, health, spiritual and material wealth. Therefore, we should not be indifferent to who teaches us, who controls the beat of our hearts and thoughts. If these spiritual and moral principles are within us, are a part of our people, then our whole life will flow as a wide stream toward the sea of the future. But if we permit others to regulate our spiritual life, then our people will never achieve real freedom and stature, but will always ruminate borrowed thoughts and fruits, will be subservient to others and become a moral and spiritual dwarf.

Christ our Lord earnestly desired the happiness of the Jewish people and came to seek and save that which was lost in Israel. Moses personified the

SECTION 21. The Administrative Fund is a fund established for general administrative uses and purposes. The sources of income for this Fund are as follows: the six (6%) percent levy; the apportionment of the General Fund dues; and contributions and bequests to the Fund. (2006)

ARTICLE XXII JUDICIARY

SECTION 1. The Judiciary system of this Church shall consist of the following Tribunals:

- A. Parish Tribunal
- B. Diocesan Tribunal
- C. Supreme Tribunal.

SECTION 2. In addition to the foregoing Tribunals, the Prime Bishop and the Diocesan Bishops shall exercise such judicial powers as are vested in them under the provisions of this Constitution.

SECTION 3. The jurisdiction and powers of each Tribunal shall be such as are provided for in this Constitution.

SECTION 4. Whenever the issue before a Tribunal shall involve or pertain to a question of doctrine, theology, liturgy or moral turpitude, it shall be referred to the Prime Bishop, Diocesan Bishops and Clergy united with them for decision, whose decision shall be binding and final.

SECTION 5. The rules and procedure before the Tribunals shall be as follows:

A. PARISH TRIBUNAL

SECTION 1. Every Parish shall establish a Parish Tribunal which shall be the court of the first resort and which shall have jurisdiction over all matters of disputes and controversies which involve its Parish and its members, the Parish Committee and its members, and the Parish and its Pastor.

SECTION 2. The Parish Tribunal shall be comprised of three (3) members; the Pastor and two members of the Parish who shall not be members of the Parish Committee. The two members of the Parish shall be elected by the Parish members at a Parish annual meeting (or at a meeting conducted prior to the annual meeting). The term of office of each of the said two members shall be two (2) years, provided, that in electing said Parish Tribunal members upon the adoption of this amendment to the Constitution shall elect one member for a term of one (1) year and the

apportionment of the General Church Fund, and voluntary contributions and bequests made to the Fund. (1986)

SECTION 14. The Clergyman's Hospitalization Plan (either individual or group) is established for the purpose of payment of medical insurance premiums for those clergy who shall qualify and comply with the provisions of the Clergyman's Hospitalization Plan in accordance with the direction of the Supreme Council. The sources of income for this Fund are as follows: the apportionment of the General Church Fund and a payment of two-thirds of the Hospitalization Plan premium for the priest by the Parish, and voluntary contributions and bequests made to the fund. (1986)

SECTION 15. The General Church or Supreme Council shall order annual or special collections to support causes within the Polish National Catholic Church or its affiliates, such as Spójnia, Inc. These collections will take place on the days designated and shall be remitted by Parishes through their Diocesan Bishop to the Treasurer of the Church within thirty (30) days. A list of these collections will be distributed to the Parishes of the Polish National Catholic Church each year. (2014)

SECTION 16. All monies collected and received by a Parish Committee from the sources of income set forth in Section 3 of this Article XXI shall be paid quarterly to its Diocesan Bishop. (2002)

SECTION 17. The Diocesan Bishop shall remit all monies due to this Church to the Treasurer of this Church within thirty (30) days, who shall give his receipt therefor.

SECTION 18. The Prime Bishop shall appoint an Auditing Committee of three (3) members whose duty shall be to examine and audit the financial books and records of this Church and to annually render a summary of the Church's Funds to each member of the Supreme Council.

SECTION 19. The Supreme Council shall establish a Finance Commission whose task will be to see to the performance of the enactments of the Synods pertaining to the securing of funds for the general purposes of this Church. The Commission shall consist of a chairman, secretary, treasurer and two members appointed by the Prime Bishop from among the members of the Supreme Council.

SECTION 20. All funds designated for the general use of this Church are to be transferred through the office of the Prime Bishop where the Treasurer of this Church shall enter the same into the Church's financial books, and, once a year, it will render a published record of the funds, which shall be sent to every Parish.

aspirations of the then youthful Jewish nation. Buddha yearned to teach the Hindu people the tenets of his faith. Mohammed fell in love with the picturesque Arab countryside and its nomadic people. Confucius and Lao Tse dedicated their lives to the moral uplifting of their people. Wycliffe, Huss, Savonarola, Luther, Calvin, Knox, Wesley and many other reformers labored primarily to awaken their people and enlighten their religious and social endeavors. The actions of these divinely inspired men reflected patriotism and national pride. This constitutes, for the most part, the power of their historical mission.

Should our people allow themselves to be forced to follow the dictates of alien powers? Should we renounce our God-given rights, freedom of conscience and national character with which God endowed us because of alien ecclesiastical authorities? If our people have any mission in the solution of humanity's greatest problems, then they must also have a faith which will bear an imprint of their character, a national Church, as all creative nations had in the past and have today. Our Polish National Catholic Church in these self-determining endeavors is the first step in the life of our people and, God granting, in the life of all people in the future.

TENETS AND AIMS

The principles of the Polish National Catholic Church are an expression of the convictions of those who believe that the salvation of mankind and their personal relationship to God cannot be the object of bargaining and cannot be forced upon mankind but must flow from the free conscience of man.

The Polish National Catholic Church is a voluntary union of those who recognize the religious principles of this Church as the norms and rules of their lives.

The Polish National Catholic Church teaches and professes all the religious truths which God revealed, Jesus Christ proclaimed, and the Apostles and their successors established as the foundation of the Christian Catholic Faith, namely: that God created the world; that man needs for his perfection, happiness and salvation God's gift of divine grace; that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world; that the human soul is immortal; and that through the Holy Spirit God governs the Church and enables it to regenerate and convert human society and to unite it under one Shepherd, Christ Jesus our Lord. In this manner the kingdom of God on earth is realized.

This Church possesses Apostolic Succession by reason of the consecration of the Reverend Francis Hodur by the following Bishops of the Old Catholic Church of Holland: Archbishop Gerard Gul of Utrecht, Bishop Jan van Thiel of Haarlem, and Bishop Michael Bartholomew Spit of Deventer, in Saint Gertrude's Cathedral, Utrecht, Holland, on September 29, 1907, as Bishop of the Polish National Catholic Church of America.

The religious principle of the Polish National Catholic Church is her teaching that the Church cannot save man without his sincere, personal cooperation with God. The Church teaches that the wisdom of God sanctifies and helps man in the fulfillment of his mission and the attainment of his goal on earth. A living faith in God and good works flowing from that faith will save man. The Church of Christ is the true way leading man to know the Truth and to salvation.

The clergy should reveal the will of God and expound it by word and deed – that is, live an exemplary Christian life. Churches which claim that only through them man can be saved misrepresent the teaching of Christ and openly mislead people. Jesus Christ taught differently. He said that he “who believes and is baptized is saved.” (Mark 16:16, John 3:5) Those who believe in His mission are regenerated through repentance and grace of God to lead a life of good works and are saved through Christ's redemptive action. No blind faith in a specific church but righteous living brings salvation. St. Paul, the foremost interpreter of the Gospel, says “Though I speak with tongues of men and of angels and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal; though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge; and though I have all faith so that I can remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.” (I Cor. 13:1-2)

The same Apostle confirms in the concluding words of chapter 13, verse 13, that deeds arising from the love of God and neighbor mean more than faith...“Faith, hope and charity, these three, but the greatest of these is charity! Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.” (Romans 13:10)

Christ Himself spoke to those who had faith and performed miracles in His name but lead a godless life: “and then I will profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from Me, you evil doers.” (Matthew 7:23)

The most important objective of the Polish National Catholic Church, as the Catholic Church of Christ, is to maintain, enrich and develop the life of God in the soul of man. To help man know God and His holy Being so that from this knowledge and understanding may flow blessing, light, love,

by the Budget and Finance Commission and approved by the General Synod. (Presently: a - \$100.00; b - \$3.00; and c - \$97.00) (2014)

SECTION 6. The Mission Fund is a fund established for domestic and foreign missionary purposes. The sources of income for this Fund are as follows: the apportionment of the General Fund dues; one-half of the monthly first Sunday Mission Fund contributions; and contributions and bequests to the Fund. (1986)

SECTION 7. The Seminary Fund is a fund established for the support and maintenance of this Church's Theological Seminary. The sources of income for this Fund are as follows: the apportionment of the General Fund dues; the special collection made on the Sunday of the Feast of the Poor Shepherds; and voluntary contributions and bequests to the Fund.

SECTION 8. The Youth Fund is a fund established for the support, promotion and aid of youth activities on a General Church level. The sources of income for this Fund are as follows: the apportionment of the General Fund dues, and voluntary contributions and bequests made to the Fund.

SECTION 9. The School of Christian Living Fund is a fund established for the publication of material to be used for the School of Christian Living. The sources of income for this Fund are as follows: the six (6%) percent levy, and voluntary contributions and bequests made to the Fund. (2006)

SECTION 10. The Publications Fund is a fund established for the publication of this Church's literature books, pamphlets, papers and other writings authorized by the Church for this Church's uses and purposes. The sources of income for this Fund are as follows: the six (6%) percent levy; and voluntary contributions and bequests made to the Fund. (2006)

SECTION 11. The Parish Loans Fund is a fund established for loans to Parishes for capital expenditures. The sources of income for this Fund are as follows: the six (6%) percent levy, and voluntary contributions and bequests to the Fund. (2006)

SECTION 12. The Clergy Aid Fund is a fund established for the purpose of aiding the clergy in such cases as the Prime Bishop deems necessary. The sources of income for this Fund are as follows: the six (6%) percent levy; and voluntary contributions and bequests made to the Fund. (2006)

SECTION 13. The Clergy Pension Fund is a fund established for the purpose of payment of pensions to those of the clergy who shall qualify and comply with the provisions of the Clergy Pension Plan established for retired clergymen of this Church. The sources of income for this fund are as follows: Father's Day collection for this purpose; the

SECTION 2. The established funds of this Church are as follows:

- (a) General Fund; See section 4-5
- (b) Mission Fund; See section 6 (1986)
- (c) Seminary Fund; See section 7
- (d) Youth Fund; See section 8
- (e) School of Christian Living Fund; See section 9
- (f) Publications Fund; See section 10
- (g) Parish Loans Fund; See section 11
- (h) Clergy Aid Fund; See section 12
- (i) Clergy Pension Fund; See section 5 & 13
- (j) Clergy Hospitalization Plan See section 5 & 14
- (k) Administrative Fund See section 5 & 21

SECTION 3. The sources of income for Church Funds are:

- (a) General Fund Dues;
- (b) Monthly first Sunday Voluntary Mission Fund contributions of which one-half shall be retained by the Diocese;
- (c) Donations and bequests;
- (d) Six (6%) percent levy on Parish dues, regular Sunday and Holy Day collections. For the purpose of this Section 3(d), the six (6%) percent levy shall not apply to General Fund dues.
- (e) Such other moneys as shall be provided for by synodal enactments.

SECTION 4. The annual General Fund dues shall be *(\$) dollars per adult member. For the purpose of this section an adult member of the Church is defined as a husband, wife, widow, widower, or unmarried person age eighteen (18) and above. Full time students will be exempted until age twenty-three (23). The payment of the General Fund dues shall be the obligation of the Parish and shall be remitted quarterly to its Diocesan Bishop. (2002)

**The dollar amount set forth in Section 4 shall be that amount recommended by the Budget and Finance Commission and approved by the General Synod. (Presently \$100.00) (2014)*

SECTION 5. The annual General Fund dues of *(\$a) dollars shall be distributed by the Diocesan Bishop as follows: he shall retain *(\$b) dollars for his Diocesan administration and remit *(\$c) dollars to the Treasurer of this Church, the same to be apportioned among the Administrative Fund, Mission Fund, Seminary Fund, Youth Fund, Clergy Pension Fund, and Clergyman's Hospitalization Plan in accordance with a budget which shall be adopted annually by the Supreme Council.

**The dollar amount set forth herein shall be that amount recommended*

strength and inner satisfaction which no person or thing can give, save God – this is the most important goal of the Polish National Catholic Church.

As a nucleus of Christ's revelation, the above statements are to us worthy religious truths concerning God, the individual, state, nation, and all mankind. It is, therefore, necessary to know and fulfill them. These Christian truths recorded and expounded by the prophets and taught by the Apostles and other great disciples of the Divine Master of Nazareth were adhered to by saintly and noble people for nearly two thousand years. They are all embodied in the Confession of Faith of the Polish National Catholic Church. May they be a living rule and guide for our daily lives.

**THE CONSTITUTION AND LAWS
OF THE
POLISH NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH**

(As amended through the XXIV General Synod)

**ARTICLE I
NAME**

The name of the Church is **POLISH NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH** and its See is at Scranton, Pennsylvania.

**ARTICLE II
DEFINITION OF TERMS**

SECTION 1.

- (1) **This Church** means the Polish National Catholic Church.
- (2) **Supreme Council** means the Supreme Council of this Church, and is the highest executive authority of this Church between Synods.
- (3) **Bishop:** It is of Catholic faith that the episcopacy is of Divine institution – Bishops are overseers of the Church. In the hierarchy of order they exercise authority over the priests and deacons of their diocese; in the hierarchy of jurisdiction, by God’s will, they are appointed for the government of one portion of the faithful of the Church. Bishops, with the Prime Bishop as the head, are also responsible for faith, morals and discipline of the entire Church.

a. Prime Bishop – By the will of the Church, the highest authority among the bishops of the Polish National Catholic Church resides in the Prime Bishop who is vested with the care, administration and destiny of this Church. He is called to this position from the ranks of the Bishops of the Polish National Catholic Church and is elected to this position as set forth in Article XII-A of this Constitution. His rights and duties are set forth in Article VIII-A of this Constitution.

Bishop candidates are chosen from the priests of the Polish National Catholic Church. After election by synod duly constituted and consecrated by sitting bishops of the Church they are then assigned by the Prime Bishop, with the concurrence of the Supreme Council, to fulfill one of the following positions in the Church.

SECTION 5. The Treasurer keeps an accurate record of all moneys received and disbursed by him. He pays all orders drawn on him, approved by the Parish Committee, for the payment of the salary of the Pastor, the salaries and wages of all other Parish employees, and all Parish obligations and signs all checks.

SECTION 6. The Directors together with the officers of the Parish Committee have charge of all the material matters of the Parish and perform such duties as are assigned to them by the Parish Committee.

SECTION 7. The Recording Secretary, Financial Secretary, Treasurer and every officer of the Parish Committee, upon the termination of their terms of office, shall surrender possession of all the books, records and property kept, maintained and in their possession and shall deliver them to their successors in office.

SECTION 8. All of the aforesaid books, records and property of the Parish in the custody or possession of the Recording Secretary, Financial Secretary, Treasurer and every other officer of the Parish Committee are the property of the Parish and shall be open at all times for examination by the Pastor and Parish Committee.

**ARTICLE XIX
AUDITORS**

Each Parish shall elect at its annual meeting an Auditing Committee consisting of three (3) members of the Parish, who shall audit, at least quarterly, the books and records of the Financial Secretary and Treasurer.

**ARTICLE XX
CHURCH ORGAN**

SECTION 1. The official Church Organ of this Church is the publication – “ROLA BOŻA” (God's Field).

SECTION 2. Every Parish of this Church should subscribe for its members the official Church publication – “ROLA BOŻA” (God's Field).

**ARTICLE XXI
CHURCH FUNDS**

SECTION 1. This Church’s financial needs are provided for in accordance with synodal enactments.

- (j) to render once every four (4) years to the Diocesan Bishop an accurate and complete list with addresses of its members in good standing;
- (k) to keep all of the Parish documents establishing title to the Parish property, Parish charter, and other important Parish documents in a bank safe deposit box.

SECTION 6. Payment of all bills shall be by a written order, drawn upon the Treasurer signed by the Financial Secretary of the Parish Committee. All checks shall be signed by not less than two officers of the Parish Committee, one of whom shall be the Treasurer.

SECTION 7.

- (a) No Parish shall remodel, renovate, refurbish or construct any Church building without first obtaining approval for the same from its Diocesan Bishop.
- (b) Each Parish has the right to set the maximum amount of money which the Parish Committee can spend without the express authorization of the Parish. However, no expenditure in excess of ten thousand (\$10,000.00) dollars may be made by a Parish Committee without the express authorization of its Parish.

SECTION 8. No Parish shall create an indebtedness in excess of ten thousand (\$10,000.00) dollars for which the Parish does not have sufficient funds to meet the payment thereof when due, except upon the express written approval of its Diocesan Bishop.

ARTICLE XVIII

DUTIES OF PARISH COMMITTEE MEMBERS

SECTION 1. The Chairman of the Parish Committee calls and the Pastor announces all Committee and Parish Meetings and the Chairman presides over them. He signs all legal documents pertaining to the Parish property and its administration.

SECTION 2. The Vice-chairman of the Parish Committee performs the duties of the Chairman in his absence.

SECTION 3. The Recording Secretary keeps the minutes of the Parish and Committee meetings and keeps an accurate inventory of the Parish property.

SECTION 4. The Financial Secretary keeps an accurate record of all Parish financial transactions and signs all orders drawn on the Treasurer, and keeps an accurate list of the Parish members.

b. Diocesan Bishop (Bishop Ordinary) – By the will of God, the highest authority in a diocese resides in the Diocesan Bishop (Bishop Ordinary) who is vested with the care and administration of his diocese. His rights and duties are set forth in Article IX of this Constitution.

c. Coadjutor Bishop – The Coadjutor Bishop functions within a diocese and assists the Diocesan Bishop in the administration of the diocese. The coadjutor succeeds the Diocesan Bishop upon the latter’s retirement, death or removal. His rights and duties are set forth in Article XI of this Constitution.

d. Auxiliary Bishop – The Auxiliary Bishop functions within a diocese only as delegated by the Diocesan Bishop; and as further set forth in this Constitution. The Auxiliary Bishop may be elevated to the office of Diocesan Bishop, not strictly of the diocese within which he resides should the need arise due to retirement, death, or removal of a Diocesan Bishop. His rights and duties are set forth in Article XI of this Constitution. (2014)

(4) **Priest (Presbyter)** – The priest is the minister of divine worship, and especially of the highest act of worship, the Eucharist. By his priestly ordination he receives the power to offer sacrifice (i.e. to celebrate the Eucharist), to forgive sins, to bless, to preach, to sanctify, and in a word to fulfill the liturgical duties and sacramental and priestly functions not reserved to the bishop. In the exercise of these functions, however, he is subject to the authority of the bishop to whom he has promised obedience in matters of faith, morals and discipline. Candidates to the priesthood complete a course of divine study, as prescribed by the Bishops of the Church and are then ordained to the office of priesthood through the laying on of hands of a Catholic Bishop in Apostolic Succession. After ordination and assignment to a diocese, and with the concurrence of the Prime Bishop, the Priest is assigned to fulfill one of the following positions in the Church. (2014)

A Priest of this Church is one who is duly ordained by this Church, or whose Orders are acknowledged by this Church.

a. Administrator Senior Priest – An administrative position of a priest (pastor) appointed by the Diocesan Bishop conferring authority within the jurisdiction of a seniorate as set forth in Article XIII of this Constitution.

b. Senior Priest – An honorific title given to a priest by the Diocesan Bishop.

- c. **Pastor** – This term denotes a priest of this Church who has the care of souls within a specified body of the Church known as a parish. In this role he is bound by virtue of his office to promote the spiritual welfare of the faithful by preaching, administering the sacraments and exercising oversight. The rights and duties of a pastor are set forth in Article XIV-A of this Constitution.
 - d. **Assistant Priest** – This term denotes a priest of the Church who is assigned to aid a pastor in the fulfillment of his spiritual and administrative duties. The rights and responsibilities of an assistant priest are set forth in Article XIV-C of this Constitution.
 - e. **Administrator** – The term denotes a priest of the Church who may be assigned the spiritual and administrative responsibilities of a parish, or may be fulfilling these spiritual and administrative responsibilities, while at the same time serving as Pastor of another parish. The title of Administrator connotes no individual pastoral responsibility. This responsibility remains with the Diocesan Bishop under whom the Administrator functions until he is either made the pastor of the parish or is assigned another responsibility by the Diocesan Bishop.
 - f. **Reserve Priest** – A Reserve Priest is one who is a priest of the diocese but without a specified role. A Reserve Priest serves at the behest of the Diocesan Bishop who may assign him to fulfill sacramental and parochial duties when a pastor is temporarily away from his parish. He does not receive a salary, but he may accept stipends in fulfilling sacramental and parochial functions at the direction of the Diocesan Bishop. (2014)
- (5) **Deacon** – The office of deacon was established in the Apostolic period of the Church (see Acts 6:1-6). The qualities of a deacon are outlined in the First Letter of Paul to Timothy (1 Tim. 3:8-13) The deacon serves and is directly responsible to the Bishop of the diocese. He performs only those sacramental responsibilities as set forth in Sacred Tradition and only at the direction of the Bishop. The position of deacon is not a salaried position, but he may accept stipends in fulfilling sacramental and parochial functions at the direction of the Diocesan Bishop. (2014)
- (6) **Legal Documents** means all legal or official writings except a check, which is a written order directing a bank or other financial institution to pay money.

ARTICLE XVII PARISH COMMITTEE

- SECTION 1.** The Parish Committee is elected by the Parish members at its annual Parish Meeting (or at a meeting conducted prior to the annual meeting), and when approved by the Diocesan Bishop, enters upon its duties.
- SECTION 2.** Whenever, in the judgment of the Parish Pastor and Diocesan Bishop, it appears that the duties of the Parish Committee are not properly fulfilled, the Pastor, or the Parish members upon a petition signed by at least one-third (1/3) of the parishioners having a right to vote, may call a special meeting of the Parish with the concurrence of the Diocesan Bishop for the purpose of reorganizing the Committee or electing a new Committee.
- SECTION 3.** The Parish Committee is responsible to its Parish and Diocesan Bishop.
- SECTION 4.** The Parish Committee shall consist of the Pastor, Chairman, Vice-chairman, Recording Secretary, Financial Secretary, Treasurer, and not less than three (3) Directors.
- SECTION 5.** The duties of the Parish Committee are as follows:
- (a) to assist the Pastor in all matters pertaining to the development of the Parish's spiritual and material life;
 - (b) to fulfill all Parish resolutions adopted in accordance with the aims, objectives and spirit of this Church;
 - (c) to fulfill all of the synodal enactments and resolutions of this Church;
 - (d) to keep proper and accurate books and records of the Parish's business, income and expenditures;
 - (e) to present to the Parish at its annual meeting an estimated budget for its consideration and adoption;
 - (f) to render to the Parish at its annual meeting a summary report of the Parish Committee's official transactions;
 - (g) to cooperate with the Pastor to maintain and perfect a Polish day school and/or a part-time school;
 - (h) to pay the salary and benefits of the Pastor, Administrator, Assistant Priest, and the salaries and wages of all other Parish employees;
 - (i) to render to the Diocesan Bishop an annual account of its Parish's financial standing and pay him the Parish's financial obligations due this Church in compliance with the synodal enactments and resolutions in accordance with Article XXI;

**ARTICLE XV
PRIESTS AND BISHOPS
RETIRED OR ON LEAVE**

SECTION 1. A Priest retired by reason of age or physical disability remains in union with his Church by remaining in contact with his Diocesan Bishop by written word and is willing to perform such duties as he is able to perform when called upon by his Diocesan Bishop.

SECTION 2. He shall have the right to attend regular clergy conferences, Seniorate District and Diocesan meetings, and Church Synods in which he shall have only an advisory voice, and, unless appointed by the Diocesan Bishop to perform a specific function, shall attend such meetings at his own expense.

SECTION 3. A Priest granted a sick leave, a leave of absence, or a sabbatical leave for a specified period of time by his Diocesan Bishop remains in union with his Church. An extension of such leave may be granted by his Diocesan Bishop. A priest who fails to request an extension of his leave, shall not engage in the practice of his ministry in this Church until such time as he shall be reinstated by his Diocesan Bishop.

SECTION 4. A Priest or Bishop who is retired or on leave, if aggrieved, shall have the right of appeal as provided for in Article XXII.

**ARTICLE XVI
MANAGEMENT OF A PARISH**

SECTION 1. A Pastor is appointed to a Parish by the Diocesan Bishop with the concurrence of the Parish Committee. The Diocesan Bishop shall grant to the Priest his appointment as Pastor in writing, which instrument of appointment the Priest shall present to the Parish Committee.

SECTION 2. The guidance of a Parish in its spiritual and moral matters rests with the Pastor of the Parish in conformity with the teachings of this Church.

SECTION 3. A Pastor of a Parish of this Church is a Priest who is united with this Church and has authority to exercise the office of a Pastor from his Diocesan Bishop under whose jurisdiction the said Parish belongs.

SECTION 4. The management of the material matters of a Parish rests in the hands of the Parish, executed by the Parish Committee with the Pastor.

- (7) **A member** is one who complies with the provisions of Article III, Section 2, of this Constitution except as otherwise provided herein. COMMENT: (See Comment under Article XXI, Section 4).
- (8) **Newly organized Parish** means a Parish organized and established according to the provisions of Article V, Sections 1, and 2.
- (9) **See** means the seat or center of authority, office and jurisdiction of this Church.
- (10) **Tribunal** means a court of justice.
- (11) **Warrant** means a writing or document issued by a Diocesan Bishop to an organized Parish certifying as to its allegiance and membership in this Church and that it is organized according to the Rites, Constitution, Principles, Laws, Rules, Customs and Usages of this Church.
- (12) **Standard Church Societies and Organizations** means (1) Women's Society for the Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament; (2) Young Men's Society of the Resurrection; (3) Choir(s); (4) Youth Association.

**ARTICLE III
RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF MEMBERS OF THE
POLISH NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH**

SECTION 1. A believer of the Polish National Catholic Church is one who professes the principles of this Church and acknowledges them as the norms and rules of his life.

SECTION 2. A member to be a voting member must be not less than 18 years of age and a believer of this Church who enrolls and unites himself with others in a visible society called a Parish, and contributes his offerings, labor and life to fulfill the goals of his Parish and the entire Church, and believes and receives the holy Sacraments, believes in the ideals, principles and aims of this Church, complies with the Constitution and Laws thereof, and by personal charity and active cooperation with the Bishops, Pastor and lay members of his Parish help realize the aims and mission of this Church.

SECTION 3. A believer of the Polish National Catholic Church can be a voting member of only one parish at any particular time. (2014)

SECTION 4. Members of this Church have a twofold duty: spiritual and material.

A. Spiritual Duties are:

worship, love and obedience to God. A member of this Church expresses such acts of worship, love and obedience towards God by

- (1) private prayer;
- (2) active participation in the corporate worship of the Church;
- (3) active participation in the sacramental life of the Church, that is: the worthy hearing of the Word of God, receiving Baptism and Confirmation, the sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion as often as possible, but at least once a year, and the other Sacraments which Christ our Lord instituted for the sanctification and perfection of man;
- (4) the proper rearing of children and the good examples of parents and guardians, through pastoral preparation in school and in Church, and ends temporarily with the reception of the Sacrament of Holy Unction. In its essence religious life continues eternally.

B. Material Duties are as follows:

- (1) those enacted by the General Synods;
- (2) those enacted by the Special Synods;
- (3) those enacted by the Diocesan Synods;
- (4) those adopted by the Parish; and
- (5) in addition, every member endeavors to make free will offerings as the needs of the Church and the Parish require.

SECTION 5. A member of a Parish who fails to carry out his financial obligations for a period of one year and, after due notice in writing sent by certified mail to his last known address as directed by the Parish Committee fails to rectify or justify the same within sixty (60) days, shall lose his right of voice and vote in the Parish. (1986)

SECTION 6. A person who lost his right of voice and vote in the Parish may present to the Parish Committee or to the Pastor his request for restoration of his right of voice and vote in the Parish together with his unpaid financial obligations or justification for his failure to pay the same. Upon the Parish Committee's approval of his request, his right of voice and vote shall be restored.

SECTION 7. A member who harms, slanders, or libels this Church or any of its Parishes or members in a moral or material manner may be summoned by his Pastor or Bishop, or persons authorized by either of them, to repair the wrong committed by him. Should he refuse to do so, the matter shall be referred to the proper Church Tribunal under Article XXII for disposition.

SECTION 11. He, together with the Parish Committee, appoints and dismisses the organist, teachers, sexton and cemetery caretaker, each of whom are subject to his supervision and control. With the concurrence of the Parish Committee he regulates their salaries and wages which are confirmed by the Parish Meeting.

SECTION 12. With the concurrence of the Parish Committee he accepts new members into the Parish and subsequently presents a list of those accepted at the next Parish Meeting.

SECTION 13. He shall minister to and guide the Parish entrusted to him until such time as his appointment is recalled by his Diocesan Bishop, at which time he shall deliver up possession of all books, registry of vital statistics, and all other records and property of the Parish.

SECTION 14. The salary of a Pastor should be a reasonable salary according to economic conditions. In addition to his salary, he shall be provided with a furnished rectory, heat, light, water and telephone.

SECTION 15. Free will offerings for priestly services rendered by a Pastor according to accepted customs of this Church are the property of the Pastor and are not considered as part of his salary.

B. ADMINISTRATORS

SECTION 1. An Administrator is a priest of this Church appointed by the Diocesan Bishop to perform priestly functions under the guidance of the Diocesan Bishop or a Pastor designated by the Diocesan Bishop.

SECTION 2. The appointment of an Administrator may be recalled at the discretion of the Diocesan Bishop.

C. ASSISTANT PRIESTS

SECTION 1. An Assistant Priest is a priest of this Church appointed by the Prime Bishop or a Diocesan Bishop to assist a Pastor in the performance of such priestly duties as shall be assigned to him by his Pastor to whom he is responsible.

SECTION 2. The appointment of an Assistant Priest may be recalled at the discretion of the Diocesan Bishop.

D. APPEALS OF PARISH CLERGY

A Senior, Pastor, Administrator or Assistant Priest, who has been suspended shall have the right of appeal as provided for in Article XXII of this Constitution. (1986)

- summon Parish meetings within their Seniorate Districts for the discussion of Parish problems;
- (6) together with the Parish Pastors they prepare the Parish for the official visitation of the Diocesan Bishop and the Prime Bishop;
 - (7) they assist in the collection of funds for the Church's purposes as instituted and enacted by the Synods;
 - (8) they install Parish Pastors;
 - (9) they carry out all other functions entrusted to them by their Diocesan Bishop.

**ARTICLE XIV
PARISH CLERGY RIGHTS AND DUTIES**

A. PASTORS

- SECTION 1.** Every Pastor assigned to a Parish is to guide his Parish in accordance and compliance with and to the spirit of the Constitution and Laws of this Church.
- SECTION 2.** He is to guide the life of the Parish in accordance with the aims, purposes, and mission of this Church.
- SECTION 3.** He guards, preserves and upholds the Faith, morals and discipline in the Parish entrusted to his care.
- SECTION 4.** He organizes and is responsible for the conduct of a School of Christian Living, the Standard Church Societies and, whenever and if possible, a Polish School. He shall particularly take care that the School of Christian Living and the Standard Church Societies established by the Synods shall exist and develop within his Parish. *(1986)*
- SECTION 5.** He participates in all conferences and joint activities sponsored in his Diocese and Seniorate District.
- SECTION 6.** He disseminates pamphlets and literature of this Church in his Parish area.
- SECTION 7.** He keeps accurate Parish vital statistic registers, issues certificates, attestations and other official documents of his office over his signature and the Parish seal, and keeps records thereof.
- SECTION 8.** He examines and approves all legal documents of the Parish by placing his signature on the same.
- SECTION 9.** He gives to his Diocesan Bishop and Administrative Senior a written annual report pertaining to the state of his Parish.
- SECTION 10.** He is a member of the Parish Committee.

- SECTION 8.** Members have the right, individually or collectively, to present their grievances and complaints to Church authorities as herein after provided for in Article XXII.
- SECTION 9.** Only those who are members of a Parish for not less than one year shall be elected to Parish offices. Only those who are members of this Church for not less than two years shall be elected as delegates to a Synod. This does not apply to newly organized Parishes.
- SECTION 10.** Only members of this Church for not less than two years shall be elected or appointed to offices of this Church and who are members for not less than five years shall be elected or appointed to membership on the Supreme Council of this Church.

**ARTICLE IV
THE CLERGY**

- SECTION 1.** The designations of the Clergy in the administration of this Church are: Prime Bishop, Diocesan Bishops, Coadjutor Bishops, Auxiliary Bishops, Seniors, Pastors and Administrator Priests.
- SECTION 2.** In addition to the aforementioned clergy, there are also Priests and Deacons who are licensed to function and are given duties and responsibilities only as authorized by the Diocesan Bishop or the Prime Bishop.

**ARTICLE V
THE PARISH**

- SECTION 1.** A Parish is an association, either incorporated or otherwise, within the realm of this Church, organized according to the Rite, Constitution, Principles, Laws, Rules, Regulations, Customs and Usages of this Church, possessing a Warrant from the Diocesan Bishop of the Diocese in whose territory the Parish is located, and confirmed by the Prime Bishop.
- SECTION 2.** When a group of Christians decide that the idea of this Church answers its convictions and desires to organize a Parish, representatives of said group shall communicate with the Bishop of the Diocese and make known its intention. The Bishop of the Diocese, after investigation and being satisfied of the group's intention and convictions, shall authorize the giving to the group all manner of assistance, furnish it suitable Church literature, legal requirements, a copy of the Constitution

and Laws of the Church and a model charter. This action shall be done in concurrence with the Prime Bishop.

SECTION 3. After a Parish is organized, the Parish Committee shall apply to the Diocesan Bishop for a Pastor.

SECTION 4. The name of every Parish shall include the words: POLISH NATIONAL CATHOLIC CHURCH.

SECTION 5. In the event of incorporation, the Articles of Incorporation shall be substantially in the following form and unless prohibited by local law, contain among other things, the following:

"ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION OF (name of Church) of _____ County of _____ State or Province of _____

1st. The name of this corporation is the (name of Parish which must contain in its name 'Polish National Catholic Church' _____ and is located in the city of _____, County of _____ and State or Province of _____.

2nd. The Corporation is founded for the purpose of maintaining and promoting religious worship according to the general usages of the Polish National Catholic Church; to worship God; to believe in, and to disseminate religious principles proclaimed by Jesus Christ, the Apostles, and their successors, and the realization of these truths in the life of the individual, family and community.

The source of these religious truths, is Holy Scripture, and foremost the New Testament, expounded authoritatively by the first Four Ecumenical Councils of the Christian Church (Nicea, Constantinople, Ephesus and Chalcedon), and furthermore by the General and Special Synods of the Polish National Catholic Church.

3rd. This Parish shall be under the jurisdiction of the Diocesan Bishop, the Right Reverend _____, of the _____ Diocese of the Polish National Catholic Church and his lawfully elected or appointed successors, who is/are in union with the Prime Bishop of the Polish National Catholic Church with its See at Scranton, Pennsylvania, and his lawful successors.

4th. In matters of a material, economic and social nature, the members of this Parish shall have the control and management thereof, subject to the provisions of the Constitution and Laws of the Polish National Catholic Church.

5th. The Parish Committee of this Parish shall consist of the Pastor, a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Recording Secretary, Financial Secretary, Treasurer, and not less than three (3) Directors, unless otherwise prescribed by law, all of whom shall be members, in good standing, of

SECTION 4. The Prime Bishop and the Supreme Council shall decide which candidate for Bishop or candidates for Bishop shall be consecrated. The remaining candidate for Bishop or candidates for Bishop shall remain candidates for Bishop until the next General Synod, and if not consecrated prior thereto, his or their candidacy for Bishop shall lapse. No candidate for Bishop shall be consecrated except in accordance with this Section.

SECTION 5. The retirement age of a Diocesan Bishop shall be seventy-five (75) years of age. He will be considered at retirement age on his seventy-fifth (75th) birthday and must retire on or before that date.

ARTICLE XIII SENIORS

Seniors are charged with such duties as are assigned to them by their Diocesan Bishops. They fulfill strictly all orders of their Diocesan Bishops and assist them in the following matters:

- (1) they oversee the Seniorate District entrusted to them;
- (2) they conduct conferences with the clergy and lay representatives of their Seniorate Districts and prepare and send accurate reports to their Diocesan Bishops;
- (3) they conduct retreats with the priests of their Seniorate Districts and Seniorate District meetings at least twice a year;

SENIORATE MEETINGS: There shall be at least one (1) meeting held every year encompassing representatives of all Parishes in a given Seniorate. All pastors, all priests and three (3) duly elected representatives of every Parish within the given Seniorate shall have the right to vote at the meetings of the Seniorate. The Administrative Senior shall preside at the meetings; a vice chairperson and a recording secretary shall be elected at the first meeting after the Diocesan Synod. Provisions shall be made at each meeting to devote some time to matters related to cooperation with pastors and parish committees, clarifying areas of authority of each administrative branch within the Seniorate.

- (4) they verify the Parish record books, vital statistic registers, incorporation papers, and in general all official documents, including but not limited to bank accounts, checks and orders of the Parish, upon the express order of their Diocesan Bishop;
- (5) upon the express order of their Diocesan Bishops they summon Parish Committee meetings and together with the Parish Pastors they

SECTION 3. The newly elected Prime Bishop shall take office and assume responsibility of presiding over the General Synod at the beginning of the new business portion of the agenda at that Synod.

SECTION 4. Within six (6) months of the election of a Diocesan Bishop as Prime Bishop, he shall relinquish his office of Diocesan Bishop.

SECTION 5. The term of office of the Prime Bishop shall be eight (8) years. He may not serve in the office of Prime Bishop more than two (2) consecutive eight (8) year terms. No candidate shall be elected or re-elected for an eight (8) year term as Prime Bishop if he is sixty-seven (67) years of age or older at the time of said election or re-election.

SECTION 6. The retirement age of a Prime Bishop shall be seventy-five (75) years of age. He will be considered at retirement age on his seventy-fifth (75th) birthday and must retire on or before that date.

SECTION 7. In case the Prime Bishop, upon fulfilling his term or terms of office, has not yet attained retirement age, he may continue the functions of Bishop with his duties determined by the Supreme Council.

B. ELECTION OF CANDIDATES FOR BISHOP

SECTION 1. The Synods of this Church, General and Special, elect candidates for Bishop, except as provided in Article VII, C, Section 4.

SECTION 2. In case there is a necessity for the election of candidates for Bishop, the Supreme Council shall determine the number of candidates for Bishop to be elected.

SECTION 3. A Nomination Commission, which shall examine the fitness of a candidate for Bishop, shall be appointed by the Prime Bishop. It shall consist of the Diocesan Bishops, one clergyman and one lay delegate from each Diocese, and shall be presided over by the Prime Bishop. Names for nominations for candidates for Bishop shall be presented to the Nomination Commission not later than two (2) months prior to the opening of the Synod. After the organization of the Synod, the first order of business in the business session of the Synod shall be the report of the Nomination Commission, after which additional names for nomination for candidates for Bishop may be made from the floor and submitted to the Nomination Commission for its examination as the nominee's fitness for the office of Bishop. Election of nominees for candidates for Bishop shall be by secret ballot. Nominees receiving not less than two-thirds (2/3) of the votes cast shall be elected candidates for Bishop. (2006)

this Parish.

6th. The Officers and Directors of this Parish shall be elected at the annual Parish Meeting to hold office for the ensuing year and until others are chosen and qualified in their stead. Vacancies in any of such offices shall be filled by the Parish Committee for the unexpired term.

7th. This Parish shall not be liquidated, and title to Parish property shall not be transferred without the written consent of the Prime Bishop and the Supreme Council of the Polish National Catholic Church.

8th. Upon liquidation of this Parish, or its expulsion, or its cessation, or its Warrant lawfully revoked, or title to this Parish property unlawfully transferred, then all of its legally acquired or accumulated funds, moneys and property, whether real or personal, shall revert and become the property of the Polish National Catholic Church in accordance with the provisions and statutes of this Church; provided however that as to the Canadian Diocese this section shall be governed by the laws of Canada pertaining to the same.

SECTION 6. Every Parish of this Church shall have a Parish seal impressed with the Symbol of the Polish National Catholic Church and the legal name of the Parish thereon. The Parish seal shall be kept in the Parish office.

SECTION 7. The objectives of a Parish are:

- (a) to cultivate a religious, patriotic, social and cultural life;
- (b) to rear its youth in a Christian spirit and in the spirit of those ideals which gave rise to the Polish National Catholic Church;
- (c) to organize a School of Christian Living and the Standard Church Societies and Organizations; and
- (d) to unite its members in the service of God, nation and society.

SECTION 8. All of the funds, moneys and property, whether real or personal, belong to those members of the Parish who conform to the Rites, Constitution, Principles, Laws, Rules, Regulations, Customs and Usages of this Church, and subject to the provisions of this Constitution and Laws.

SECTION 9. The status of a parish cannot be changed without the written permission of the Diocesan Bishop. (2014)

SECTION 10. No Parish shall be liquidated without the written consent of the Prime Bishop and the Supreme Council, unless prevented by the law of the State or Province of incorporation, this provision shall be clearly stated in the charter of every Parish of this Church.

SECTION 11. When a Parish is liquidated, expelled, ceases to exist, its Warrant lawfully revoked, or title to its Parish property is unlawfully

transferred, then all of its legally acquired or accumulated funds, moneys and property, whether real or personal, shall revert to the Diocese in which any of the aforesaid events take place, and shall be held in trust by such Diocese for a period of not more than five (5) years for the purpose of reestablishing said Parish or establishing a new Parish or stimulating the growth of an existing Parish (as seems appropriate by the Diocesan Council) within the Diocese; failure to reestablish such Parish or to establish a new Parish within said period of time, the property, whether real or personal, held in trust shall become the property of and be turned over to the General Church. The Diocese may request to retain said funds beyond the five (5) years for use for a designated purpose by submitting a written request for approval by the Prime Bishop and the Supreme Council. The retention of funds should be in connection with a plan for the growth of the Church and shall clearly identify the specific purpose for which the funds shall be designated and the estimated time frame for the use of the funds. (Effective as of the date of its adoption.) (2014)

SECTION 12. Any Parish which does not fulfill its financial obligations to the Diocese and to the General Church will come under the direct management of the Diocesan Bishop. (1978)

SECTION 13. The right to voice and vote in Diocesan and General Synods shall exclude those delegates from Parishes or Missions which in previous years have not paid their full apportionment. (1978)

SECTION 14. The right to expel a Parish from this Church rests with the Prime Bishop and the concurrence of the Supreme Council.

SECTION 15. A parish expelled from this Church has the right to appeal to the Supreme Tribunal having jurisdiction thereof as provided under the provisions contained in Article XXII of this Constitution.

ARTICLE VI CHURCH AUTHORITY

SECTION 1. The authority of this Church is vested in three branches, namely: legislative, executive and judicial.

SECTION 2. In matters of Faith, morals and discipline the authority of this Church lies in the hands of the Prime Bishop, Diocesan Bishops and Clergy united with them. This authority is derived directly from God through Jesus Christ, as revealed in Sacred Scripture and handed down through the apostles and their successors in the Sacred Tradition of the Undivided Church. This has its foundation based on the words of our

- possible, and assist, when requested, in the conduct of same;
- (4) assist in actions instituted for the propagation of the Faith of this Church, and engage in efforts to increase Church membership and the establishment of new Parishes and Institutions of this Church;
 - (5) Assist in raising funds for the use of the Diocese and this Church.

ARTICLE XI COADJUTOR AND AUXILIARY BISHOPS RIGHTS AND DUTIES

SECTION 1. Coadjutor and Auxiliary Bishops have such rights and duties applicable to the Church position assigned to them by the Prime Bishop and Supreme Council.

SECTION 2. In the case of the death, resignation or removal of a Diocesan Bishop, the Coadjutor Bishop of said Diocese succeeds to the office of Diocesan Bishop.

SECTION 3. In case of death, resignation or removal of a Diocesan Bishop, the Auxiliary Bishop of said Diocese becomes the Administrator of the Diocese until the next General or Special Synod summoned by the Prime Bishop. Such Synod may elevate the Auxiliary Bishop to the office of Diocesan Bishop or elect a new Diocesan Bishop.

ARTICLE XII ELECTION OF PRIME BISHOP ELECTION OF CANDIDATES FOR BISHOP

A. ELECTION OF PRIME BISHOP

SECTION 1. The Prime Bishop of this Church shall be elected by the General Synod, except as otherwise provided in Article VIII.A(13).

SECTION 2. The Prime Bishop shall be elected by a secret ballot. A candidate for the office of Prime Bishop shall be a Bishop of this Church. The candidate receiving not less than two-thirds (2/3) of the vote cast shall be elected Prime Bishop. If more than two (2) candidates are nominated for the office and no one candidate receives the required two-third (2/3) vote for election after five (5) ballots are taken, then the two (2) candidates receiving the highest vote shall remain as candidates and be voted on by ballot until one of them shall receive the required two-thirds (2/3) vote.

ARTICLE X DIOCESAN COUNCIL

SECTION 1. Every Diocese shall create a Diocesan Council.

SECTION 2. The Diocesan Council shall be comprised of the following:
(1986)

- (1) the Diocesan Bishop, who presides over it;
- (2) Coadjutor Bishops and Auxiliary Bishops assigned to the Diocese;
- (3) Seniors with jurisdiction;
- (4) one clergyman elected by the clergy from each Seniorate District;
- (5) two laymen from each Seniorate District elected by the lay delegates at a meeting of the Seniorate District;
- (6) one representative from each of the sub-central committees of the Standard Church Organizations within the Diocese; and
- (7) not more than five (5) additional members appointed by the Diocesan Bishop.

SECTION 3. The Diocesan Council shall meet not less than once a year and at such other times as shall be summoned by the Diocesan Bishop.

SECTION 4. Each Diocesan Council shall elect at its annual meeting an auditing committee consisting of three (3) members of the Diocesan Council, who shall annually examine and audit the Diocesan financial books and records and render a summary of the Diocesan funds and mail a copy thereof to each of its Diocesan Parishes.

SECTION 5. The Diocesan Bishop together with the Diocesan Council shall have care over the funds of the Diocese.

SECTION 6. The Diocesan Council regulates the salary and benefits of the Diocesan Bishop; and the expenses of the administration of the Office of the Diocesan Bishop.

SECTION 7. A summary of the official meeting minutes of the Diocesan Council shall be published and disseminated to the priests, the parishes and the diocesan bodies of the Standard Church Societies and Organizations within sixty (60) days after holding its meeting.

SECTION 8. It shall be the duty of every member of the Diocesan Council to:

- (1) participate in regular and special meetings of the Diocesan Council and all Commissions to which appointed unless prevented by sickness or some other unavoidable occurrence;
- (2) accept membership on any Commission when appointed thereto by the Diocesan Bishop for the general welfare of the Diocese;
- (3) attend principal diocesan activities within the Diocese, whenever

Savior: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age." (Mat. 28:18-20).

"Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Mat. 18:18)

SECTION 3. In administrative, managerial and social matters, this Church derives its authority from the people who build, constitute, believe in, support and care for it. It is a fundamental principle of this Church that all Parish property, whether the same be real, personal, or mixed, is the property of those united with the Parish who build and support this Church and conform to the Rite, Constitution, Principles, Laws, Rules, Regulations, Customs and Usages of this Church.

SECTION 4. The administration, management and control over all the property of the Parish is vested in the Parish Committee elected by the Parish and confirmed by the Diocesan Bishop, and strictly dependent upon and answerable to the lawful authorities of this Church.

ARTICLE VII LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The legislative authority of this Church is vested in:

- A. the General Synod;
- B. the Special Synod;
- C. the Diocesan Synod; and
- D. the Parish Meeting.

A. THE GENERAL SYNOD

SECTION 1. Composition.

The General Synod shall consist of the following:

- (1) the active Bishops
- (2) the members of the Supreme Council
- (3) the vice-rector of the Seminary
- (4) the Pastor or Administrator of each Parish
- (5) the lay delegates of the Parish
- (6) a delegate to be elected from the central body and each Diocesan sub-central body, if any, from each of the following United Societies and

Organizations:

- a) the United Women's Societies for the Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament;
 - b) the United Young Men's Societies of Resurrection;
 - c) the National United Choirs of the Polish National Catholic Church;
 - d) the National United Youth Association.
- (7) One delegate from the Board of Directors of the Polish National Union of America and one delegate from each Diocese of this Church located in the U.S.A. who shall be selected by the Board of Directors of the Polish National Union of America. (1978)
- (8) a delegate from the Education and Youth Commission; and
- (9) a delegate from the Spojnia, Inc. Board of Directors. (2006)

SECTION 2. Lay Delegates

Qualifications - Election.

- (1) Every lay delegate of a Parish shall be a member in good standing in his Parish and a member of this Church for not less than two (2) years as set forth in Article III and elected at an annual meeting or at a Parish Meeting duly called for this purpose.
- (2) Each Parish shall have the right to elect at least one delegate and no Parish shall elect more than one delegate for every fifty (50) members, or a major fraction thereof, in good standing on its Parish roll. A husband and wife for this purpose shall be considered as two separate members.

SECTION 3. The delegates representing central bodies and the sub-central bodies from each Diocese, if any, and the delegates representing the several Societies and Organizations mentioned in Section 1, of this Article shall be elected by their respective bodies, Societies and Organizations and shall be members in good standing of their Parishes and members of this Church for not less than two (2) years.

SECTION 4. The delegates representing the Polish National Union of America at the General or Diocesan Synods of this Church must be members in good standing in their Parishes and members of this Church for not less than two (2) years. Representatives of the Polish National Union of America on the Supreme Council must be members in good standing in their Parishes and members of this Church for not less than five (5) years. (2006)

SECTION 5.

- (1) The General and Special Synods are summoned by the Prime Bishop with the concurrence of the Supreme Council and he presides over

admonishes the faithful to the conscientious fulfillment of their duties to God, country and family.

SECTION 8. He receives clergymen from other communions with the approval of the Prime Bishop. (1978)

SECTION 9. He prepares a list of active clergy in his Diocese and submits it to the General, Special and Diocesan Synods.

SECTION 10. He reports the financial status of his diocese to the Prime Bishop, Supreme Council and General Synod. (2014)

SECTION 11. He receives and reviews annual reports from Parish Pastors, Administrators, Seniors, Parish Committees and the Diocesan Bodies of the Standard Church Societies and Organizations.

SECTION 12. He receives moneys from his Diocesan Parishes and provides for the deposit of the same in a Diocesan bank account.

SECTION 13. He confirms or rejects the election of Parish Committees and Auditing Committees.

SECTION 14. He may accept a Priest or Deacon from another Diocese upon the written consent of that Diocesan Bishop.

SECTION 15. With the approval of the Prime Bishop he appoints Seniors for his Diocese.

SECTION 16. He grants permission to Priests under his jurisdiction to enter into the state of holy Matrimony as in his discretion is consistent with the spirit of the enactments of the Synods.

SECTION 17. He accepts new parishes into his Diocese with the concurrence of the Prime Bishop.

SECTION 18. With the consent of the Prime Bishop and the Supreme Council, he may use funds of this Church to purchase real estate for the following purposes:

- (1) when necessary for the purpose of organizing a new Parish in his Diocese. Upon the organization and establishment of a new Parish, title of said real estate shall be conveyed to it upon such terms and conditions as shall be deemed satisfactory to the Prime Bishop and the Supreme Council;
- (2) for such other purposes as will be deemed necessary for the benefit and general welfare of his Diocese.
- (3) Title to real estate purchased for the aforesaid purposes shall be taken as provided in Article VIII, B, Section 6.

and

(5) assist in raising funds for the use of this Church.

SECTION 6. Title to real estate purchased with funds of this Church shall be held in the names of three (3) trustees appointed by the Supreme Council in trust for the purpose for which the real estate is purchased, and subject to the terms, conditions and directions of the Supreme Council. In the event of the death, resignation or removal of a trustee or trustees so appointed, such vacancy shall be promptly filled by the Supreme Council.

ARTICLE IX DIOCESAN BISHOPS RIGHTS AND DUTIES

SECTION 1. A Diocesan Bishop administers his Diocese in accordance with the Constitution and Laws of this Church.

SECTION 2. He appoints, transfers and removes Parish Pastors, Parish Administrators and Assistant Priests in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and Laws of this Church. In the case of such transfer or removal, such Pastor, Parish Administrator, or Assistant Priest shall vacate the Parish rectory or such other living quarters as provided by the Parish, within thirty (30) days from the date of the notice by the Diocesan Bishop, unless the time is extended by the said Bishop.

SECTION 3.

(1) He has the right to suspend any clergy assigned to his Diocese, and in the case of Parish Committee members, Parish members, or a Parish of his Diocese, to suspend any of them for reasons or causes as to him may, in his judgment be deemed sufficient and expedient for the best interest and welfare of the local Parish in particular or this Church in general; and with the concurrence of the Prime Bishop to depose any clergy of his Diocese.

(2) He may without notice visit any Parish in his Diocese at any time for any purpose which he deems necessary.

SECTION 4. He convenes and presides over the Diocesan Synod, appoints vice-chairmen, secretaries, marshals and Diocesan synodal commissions.

SECTION 5. He presides over the Diocesan Council.

SECTION 6. He summons and presides over the Diocesan clergy retreats.

SECTION 7. He makes canonical visitations to the Parishes in his Diocese; confers the holy Sacraments, examines the spiritual and material state of the Parishes and organizations; and by the Living Word encourages and

them as chairman. The vice-chairmen shall be Diocesan Bishops, clerical and lay delegates appointed by the Prime Bishop. The clerical and lay vice-chairmen, secretaries, synodal commissions and marshals shall be appointed by the Prime Bishop and approved by the Synod. The Synod shall have the right to add members to the synodal commissions appointed by the Prime Bishop. The Prime Bishop shall appoint a parliamentarian to advise the presiding chairman on the rules of parliamentary procedure according to Robert's Rules of Order.

(2) The manner of conducting a Synod, its agenda and the rights and duties of the delegates shall be defined by synodal rules prepared by a committee on rules and agenda which shall be appointed by the Prime Bishop at least three (3) months prior to the meeting of the Synod. The synodal rules and agenda shall be submitted to the Synod for approval.

SECTION 6. The General Synod in addition to its general powers, ratifies religious teachings for this Church in accordance with Article VI, Section 2 of the Constitution; selects candidates for Bishops; removes Bishops; enacts and repeals laws pertaining to discipline and administration; reviews complaints, grievances and appeals referred to the Synod and pronounces judgment thereon; and oversees all Church matters, both spiritual and material. (2014)

SECTION 7. The enactments of the General Synod bind this Church.

SECTION 8. Synodal sessions shall be open to members of this Church and invited guests of the Prime Bishop. Upon the order of the chairman, if the need arises, closed sessions may be held. Only delegates may be present in closed sessions.

SECTION 9. Delegates to a Synod shall have the right to request interpellation in a manner prescribed by the synodal rules.

SECTION 10. The need for convening a Special Synod is determined by the Prime Bishop with the concurrence of the Supreme Council.

SECTION 11. At each General Synod the Prime Bishop with the consent of the Synod shall appoint the following Standing Commissions and any other Commissions as he deems necessary to function under the supervision of the Prime Bishop until the next General Synod, namely:

1. Constitution
2. Mission and Evangelism
3. Budget and Finance
4. School of Christian Living
5. Liturgy

6. Church Doctrine
7. Clergy Salary and Benefits
8. History and Archives
9. Sacred Vocations

All such Commissions shall be financed by Church funds.

SECTION 12. The Prime Bishop adjourns the Synod on motion duly made and adopted.

SECTION 13. The minutes of the Synod shall be presented to the Prime Bishop within six (6) months from the date of the adjournment of the Synod. A summary of the actions taken by the Synod shall be published in the Church organ within ninety (90) days from the date of the Synod. As soon as possible after the minutes are prepared, a copy thereof shall be forwarded to each Parish and synodal delegate.

SECTION 14. The General Synod shall be called every four (4) years without postponement.

B. THE SPECIAL SYNOD

SECTION 1. The Special Synod is summoned by the Prime Bishop with the concurrence of the Supreme Council and he presides over it as chairman.

SECTION 2. The business of a Special Synod shall be confined to such matters as are set forth in the summons of the Prime Bishop.

SECTION 3. Delegates to a Special Synod shall be elected in the same manner as provided herein for General Synods.

C. THE DIOCESAN SYNOD

SECTION 1. The Diocesan Synod must be summoned within two (2) years after the General Synod by the Diocesan Bishop with the concurrence of the Prime Bishop and the Diocesan Council. The Diocesan Bishop presides over it. The vice-chairmen, both clerical and lay, secretaries, synodal commissions and marshals are appointed by the Diocesan Bishop and approved by the Diocesan Synod. The Synod shall have the right to add members to the synodal commissions appointed by the Diocesan Bishop. The Diocesan Bishop shall appoint a parliamentarian to advise the presiding chairman on the rules of parliamentary procedure according to Robert's Rules of Order.

at Supreme Council meetings shall be paid by the delegates' Diocese

(5) two laymen from each Diocese who shall be elected in the following manner; by a caucus of the Diocesan lay delegates to the General Synod held at the time of the General Synod from candidates of not more than one nominated by each Seniorate District within the Diocese. The expense of such delegates for attendance at Supreme Council meetings shall be paid by the delegates' Dioceses

(6) the secretary of the Supreme Council and the treasurer of this Church

(7) two (2) representatives from the Board of Directors of the Polish National Union of America selected by its Board of Directors.

(1978)

(8) two (2) laymen-at-large appointed by the Prime Bishop.

All of said elected and appointed members shall be confirmed by the General Synod and shall serve until the next General Synod. In case of death, resignation, or removal of an appointed member of the Supreme Council for cause the Prime Bishop shall appoint a qualified member who shall be confirmed by the Supreme Council, to fill such vacancy for the unexpired term. In case of a vacancy of an elected member, in which case the Diocesan Bishop with the concurrence of the Prime Bishop and Supreme Council shall fill the vacancy occurred.

SECTION 2. The Supreme Council shall meet annually on the last Tuesday of April, and in case of necessity, at such other time or times and place or places as shall be designated by the Prime Bishop.

SECTION 3. The Prime Bishop together with the Supreme Council shall have care over the funds of this Church.

SECTION 4. A summary of the official proceedings of the Supreme Council shall be published in the official organ of this Church within sixty (60) days after holding its meeting. (1986)

SECTION 5. It shall be the duty of every member of the Supreme Council to:

- (1) attend regular and special meetings of the Supreme Council and all Standing Commissions to which appointed unless prevented by sickness or some other unavoidable occurrence;
- (2) accept membership on any Committee when appointed thereto by the Prime Bishop for the general welfare of this Church;
- (3) attend principal Diocesan activities within his Diocese, whenever possible, and assist, when requested, in the conduct of the same;
- (4) assist in actions instituted for the propagation of the Faith of this Church, and engage in efforts to increase Church membership, and the establishment of new Parishes and institutions of this Church,

and the Supreme Council confirms the same. The Secretary and Treasurer, by virtue of their office, shall be members of the Supreme Council.

- (13) In case the Prime Bishop is unable to perform the duties of his office, or the office of Prime Bishop is vacated by reason of his death, resignation, or other cause, the Vice-President Bishop of the Supreme Council shall assume said office and perform the duties thereof until his successor is elected. The said Vice-President, with the concurrence of the Supreme Council, shall summon a Special Synod within six (6) months from the happening of any such event for the purpose of electing a Prime Bishop to serve for the unexpired term, provided, however, that should any such event occur within one (1) year of the call of the next General Synod, then the said General Synod shall elect the Prime Bishop.
- (14) He receives and examines the annual reports of the Diocesan Bishops which deal with the state of the spiritual, financial and material matters of the Diocese.
- (15) He visits the Dioceses, Seniorate Districts, Clergy Conferences and Parishes of this Church whenever he believes it desirable.
- (16) He confirms or rejects the nominations of Seniors submitted to him by the Diocesan Bishops.
- (17) He, together with the Supreme Council, shall have care over the funds of this Church.
- (18) He shall make his report and is accountable for the activities of his office to the General and Special Synods.
- (19) His salary, expenses of his residence and of the administration of the office of Prime Bishop are regulated by the Supreme Council.
- (20) The residence of the Prime Bishop shall be in Scranton, Pennsylvania, or the vicinity thereof.

B. SUPREME COUNCIL

SECTION 1. The Supreme Council shall be comprised of the following:
(1986)

- (1) the Prime Bishop
- (2) the Diocesan Bishops, Coadjutor Bishops and Auxiliary Bishops
- (3) the vice-rector of the Seminary
- (4) one clergyman from each Diocese, who shall be elected by his Diocesan clergy by a caucus of the Diocesan clergy held at the time of the General Synod. The expense of such delegates for attendance

SECTION 2. Composition.

The Diocesan Synod shall consist of the following:

- (1) the Diocesan Bishop.
- (2) Coadjutor Bishops and Auxiliary Bishops assigned to the Diocese;
- (3) the members of the Diocesan Council;
- (4) the Pastor or Administrator of each Diocesan Parish;
- (5) the lay delegates of the Diocesan Parishes;
- (6) one delegate from each Diocesan Body of the Standard Church Societies and Organizations; and
- (7) one delegate of the Polish National Union of America from the Diocese selected by the Board of Directors of the Polish National Union of America.

SECTION 3. Lay Delegates

Qualifications - Election.

- (1) Every lay delegate at the Diocesan Synod shall be a member in good standing of a Parish in the Diocese and a member of this Church for not less than two (2) years as set forth in Article III.
- (2) Each Parish shall have the right to elect at least one delegate and no parish shall elect more than one delegate for every fifty (50) members, or a major fraction thereof, in good standing on its Parish roll. The election shall be held at an Annual Parish Meeting or at a Special Parish Meeting duly called for this purpose. A husband and wife for this purpose shall be considered as two separate members.

SECTION 4. The Diocesan Synod elects candidates for a Bishop only in extraordinary and urgent situations with the concurrence of the Prime Bishop and the Supreme Council; enacts and repeals laws, pertaining to the discipline of clergy and laity of its Diocese, and administration of Parishes and institutions existing within its Diocesan jurisdiction whenever the same are not in conflict with the enactments of the General Synod; accepts or rejects reports made by executive bodies of this Church within the Diocese; reviews complaints, grievances, and appeals referred to the Synod and pronounces judgments thereon.

SECTION 5. No enactments by a Diocesan Synod shall be in conflict with the enactments of the General Synod and the Constitution and Laws of this Church.

D. THE PARISH MEETING

SECTION 1. The meetings for a Parish are annual and special.

SECTION 2. The business of an annual meeting of the Parish shall be to receive reports of the Parish Committee, Committees and Pastor; regulate and confirm the salary of the Pastor and the salaries and wages of its employees, elect Parish Committee members and members of the Auditing Committee and Parish Tribunal (which election may be conducted prior to the annual meeting); adopt resolutions and make enactments necessary for the welfare and development of the Parish. No resolution or enactment shall be adopted or made which shall be in conflict with the Constitution and Laws of this Church and with any synodal resolutions and enactments.

SECTION 3. The business of special meetings shall be confined to such matters as are set forth in the notice for such meetings.

SECTION 4. Parish members shall be notified of parish meetings by an announcement by the Pastor or Administrator during the Sunday Masses at least one week in advance of the meeting. *(1986)*

SECTION 5. Special meetings shall be called:

- (a) by the Parish Committee chairman or the Pastor with the concurrence of the Parish Committee.
- (b) Should the Parish Committee chairman or Pastor or Administrator fail to call such meetings, then, in such event, said meeting may be called upon a petition of at least one-third (1/3) of the parishioners having a right to vote, copies of which shall be sent by certified mail or presented to the Pastor or Administrator and the Diocesan Bishop, and shall be called in accordance with the provisions of Section 4 of this Article. Should the Parish Committee chairman or the Pastor or Administrator fail to call and hold such meetings not later than the second (2nd) Sunday after receiving such petition, then the Diocesan Bishop shall call for such meeting to be held at a time designated by him and announced in the official church publication.

ARTICLE VIII EXECUTIVE AUTHORITY

The executive powers of this Church are vested in the Prime Bishop and the Supreme Council.

A. PRIME BISHOP RIGHTS AND DUTIES

The Prime Bishop is vested with the care, administration and destiny of this Church. Among the rights and duties of the Prime Bishop, are the following:

- (1) He consecrates Bishops or appoints a consecrator, provided the candidates meet the qualifications defined by this Church. These qualifications are decided upon by the Supreme Council with the Prime Bishop presiding over it. Therefore, the episcopal consecration is valid but illicit when performed against the provisions of this paragraph. *(1986)*
- (2) He may, with the concurrence of the Supreme Council, assign and/or translate Bishops.
- (3) He convenes the General and Special Synods; prepares a tentative agenda for the Synods and publishes it in the official organ of this Church at least six (6) months prior to the time of the Synods, and presides over them.
- (4) He, as president, convenes and presides over the Supreme Council sessions and directs its deliberations.
- (5) He has under his control the official organ of this Church and all other publications within this Church.
- (6) He, as rector, has charge of the Savonarola Theological Seminary of this Church and with the concurrence of the Seminary Executive Board appoints its faculty.
- (7) He approves candidates recommended by Diocesan Bishops or Pastors for admission to the Church Seminary.
- (8) He examines with the assistance of a special commission, at a time designated by him, the clergy of this Church.
- (9) He receives and reviews appeals from the Diocesan Bishops in matters of Church administration and discipline, and hands down decisions thereon.
- (10) He, with the concurrence of the Diocesan Bishops, has the authority to remove and/or depose a Bishop for causes detrimental to this Church. *(2014)*
- (11) He, together with the Diocesan Bishops of this Church, has the authority to depose a Priest for causes detrimental to this Church.
- (12) He appoints the Vice-President of the Supreme Council, who shall be a Diocesan Bishop, the Secretary of the Supreme Council, and the Treasurer of this Church, at the first meeting of the Supreme Council held after the General Synod, and at such other times as necessary