**Statutes of Our Church**

**UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA**
Slava Isusu Khrystu! All Praise Be to Jesus Christ!

**STATUTES**



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Preamble

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Ukrainian Orthodox Church in America, Inc., formerly incorporated and known in the United States and Ukraine as the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church - Canonical and later as the Autonomous Ukrainian Orthodox Church in America, Inc., was originally established in 1924 with a Tomos issued by His All-Holiness Gregorios VII, Ecumenical Patriarch, re-establishing the historic Kyivan-Rus (Ukrainian) Metropolitinate as an Autocephalous Church, placing the responsibility of establishing a new Synod of Bishops upon His Beatitude, the Metropolitan Archbishop of Warsaw, Dionisij Waledynskyj. Through the years, because of the War and its resulting partitions, the Bishops of the Ukarinain Autocephalous Orthodox Church were forced into exile. In 2002, the Church was re-established in Ukraine. But in 2005, the Church returned to the United States, was granted Autonomy and changed its name to the Autonomous Ukrainian Orthodox Church in America. In May, 2007, when granted autocephalous status, the name was changed to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in America.

**Article I**

**Ukrainian Orthodox Church in America, Inc.**

The Ukrainian Orthodox Church in America, Inc. (UOCA) is a canonical entity with territorial Jurisdiction in the United States of America and its territories and possessions, Ukraine, Canada, North America, Central America, South America, Europe and other areas as the Church develops and grows. Its doctrine, discipline, and worship are those of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church as taught by the Holy Scriptures, Holy Tradition, the Ecumenical and Provincial Sobors, and the Holy Fathers. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church in America is referred to in this Constitution as "the Church."

**Article II**

**The Holy Synod**

Section 1. Definition and Authority

The Holy Synod is the supreme canonical authority in the Church.

Section 2. Membership

The Holy Synod includes, as voting members, the Prime Bishop, all Major Archbishops and all Diocesan Bishops of the Church who have been permanently incardinated. A Chairman shall be elected from the bishops present.

Section 3. Regular Sessions

The Holy Synod shall meet at least once annually. Proceedings may be conducted by teleconferencing, speaker phone, Internet or by certified mail if necessary.

Section 4. Special Sessions

Special sessions may be called by the Prime Bishop on his own initiative, or at the request of at least three diocesan bishops.

Section 5. Quorum

The quorum required for a regular or special session of the Holy Synod is two-thirds of the membership of all Bishops of the Church.

Section 6. Competence

The following matters are within the jurisdiction and competence of the Holy Synod:

a. All matters involving doctrine, canonical order, morals, and liturgical practice;

b. All canonical matters pertaining to the election and consecration of bishops as provided by Article VI;

c. The establishment of new dioceses, establish missions in foreign countries, defining diocesan boundaries, the acceptance of dioceses into the jurisdiction of the Church, applications for intercommunion and fraternal relationships between Churches;

d. Transfer of bishops and their retirement in accordance with Article VII, Section 7;

e. The acceptance of bishops from other jurisdictions;

f. Bishops' leaves of absence;

g. Bestowing honors upon bishops;

h. Examination of annual reports by the Prime Bishop and the Bishops on the fulfillment of their pastoral duties;

i. Solution of problems arising in the administration of individual dioceses and requiring the judgment of the entire episcopate;

j. Determination in all complaints involving bishops;

k. Acting as Supreme Church Court of Appeals for all matters involving bishops, clergy, and laity in accordance with Article XI, Section 6;

l. Establishment of general policies in relation to other Orthodox Churches and non-Orthodox religious bodies;

m. Appointment, upon recommendation by the Prime Bishop’s Council, of the Chancellor, Secretary, Treasurer, and other officials whose competence or service extend beyond the boundaries of a single diocese;

n. Pastoral supervision over all Church organizations whose activity extends beyond the boundaries of a single diocese;

o. Appointment of committees on matters belonging to the competence of the Holy Synod;

p. General supervision over Armed Forces Chaplaincies, with the Archbishops of each country being particularly and immediately responsible in this field;

q. Decisions in cases involving non-Orthodox clergymen applying for admission into the Orthodox Church;

r. Supervision over theological schools;

s. Establishment of standards required for ordination;

t. Overseeing the missionary, educational, and social programs of the Church;

u. Supervision of ecclesiastical arts: architecture, iconography, choral music, and other applied arts.

**Article III**

**The General All-Church Sobor**

Section 1. Authority

The highest legislative and administrative authority within the Church is the General Sobor. (Cf. Article III, Section 12)

Section 2. Composition

a. The Prime Bishop and all Major Archbishops and Bishops of the Church;

b. The priests of each parish and an equal number of lay delegates;

c. Priests not having parishes if accredited by the Prime Bishop’s Council;

d. One lay delegate from each parish not having a priest;

e. The members and the alternate members of the Prime Bishop’s Council, and the members of the Auditing Committee of the Church;

f. Two delegates from each theological seminary;

g. Members of the Pre-Sobor Commission;

h. One representative of each Church organization officially accredited by the Holy Synod;

i. Additional persons may be invited as observers by the Pre-Sobor Commission with the approval of a Major Archbishop to attend one or more sessions of the General Sobor, without the right to vote. Members of preparatory committees may be invited to attend and participate in the discussions of the subject upon which their committees report to the General Sobor;

j. All lay members of the General Sobor shall have the same qualifications for membership as the parish delegates (Cf. Article III, Section 6).

Section 3. Periodicity

The General Sobor shall be convened periodically at intervals of three years. Each General Sobor shall decide the time and place of the next regular or extraordinary session. The time and place of the meeting may, for urgent reasons, be changed by action of the Prime Bishop’s Council with the approval of the Prime Bishop and the Holy Synod. Proceedings may be conducted by teleconferencing, speakerphone, Internet or by certified mail if necessary.

Section 4. Requirements for Representation at the All-Church Sobor

Every parish which has remitted all established assessments determined by previous General Sobors for the support of the Church is entitled to elect delegates. The assessment must be paid in full by July 1st of the year in which a General Sobor occurs in order to have lay representation.

Section 5. The Pre-Sobor Commission

At least one year prior to the next General Sobor, upon nomination by the Primate’s Council and approval by the Prime Bishop, the Holy Synod shall appoint a Pre-Sobor Commission which shall be entrusted with the following responsibilities:

a. To publish and distribute the agenda, notices, and arrangements for the General Sobor at least 60 days prior to the established date;

b. To publish and distribute the proper credentials and certification forms at least 30 days prior to the General Sobor;

c. To collect and certify the credentials of all delegates and observers;

d. To fix and collect the registration fees from each parish;

e. To prepare the agenda and submit it to the Prime Bishop, the Holy Synod and Prime Bishop’s Council for approval (the agenda may be changed by vote at the General Sobor);

f. To ascertain that all reports to the General Sobor be in written form and that they be distributed to every delegate at least 30 days prior to the established date. The Pre-Sobor Commission shall establish those committees which may be necessary for the proper operation of the Sobor, such as a local functioning committee, a resolutions committee, credentials committee, translations committee, etc.

Section 6. Election, Qualification, and Accreditation of Lay Delegates

The lay delegates and alternates to the General Sobor must meet the following requirements to be validly elected, qualified, and accredited:

a. Be elected by a parish meeting;

b. Be a voting member of the parish in good standing (Cf. Article XI, Section 5), at least eighteen years of age, having received the Sacraments of Confession and Communion at least annually for the past three years at his home parish. (Like holders of all offices in the Church, he may not be a person under ecclesiastical interdict, who is in violation of moral standards, who is married outside the Church, who is a member of anti-Church and/or secret societies.)

c. The lay delegate or delegates will personally receive from their parish a uniform document supplied by The Chancery. The parish rector shall forward to the Pre-Sobor Commission the name and the address of the elected lay delegate or delegates and alternates two months prior to the General Sobor. The document of accreditation must be signed by the parish rector, or Dean in case of a vacancy in the parish, and the parish secretary, and sealed with the parish seal. In case of a vacant parish, the parish is entitled to one lay delegate. The delegates from a theological seminary, if laymen, shall be accredited by a similar letter to the Pre-Sobor Commission by the dean of the theological seminary, immediately after their appointment.

Section 7. Languages

The official languages of the General Sobor shall be English and Ukrainian.

Section 8. Presiding Officers

a. The presiding officer of the General Sobor shall be the Prime Bishop of the Church;

b. Two vice-chairmen, one from the clergy and one from the laity, shall be elected by the General Sobor.

Section 9. Secretary

The Sobor shall elect a secretary sufficient for its needs and which will perform its task under a chairman, also elected by the Sobor.

Section 10. Minutes

The minutes of the General Sobor shall be prepared by the secretary, signed by the chairman, and submitted to the presiding officer. This should be done within 24 hours after the completion of the particular session. Any disagreements or disputes shall be submitted to the next session of the Sobor. If the Sobor has adjourned, the disagreement shall be referred to the newly-elected Prime Bishop’s Council, which meets the following day. Within a period of not more than 60 days after the final adjournment of the Sobor, the official text of the minutes shall be certified mailed or certified mailed to each delegate. The official text of the minutes shall be posted on the official website of the Jurisdiction.

Section 11. Liturgical Services

The order of liturgical services at the Sobor shall be determined in advance by the Holy Synod. Eastern and Western Rites will concelebrate together in order to promote the solidarity of the One, Holy, Undivided Orthodox Church of Christ.

Section 12. Approval by the Hierarchy

All resolutions adopted by the Sobor shall be examined by the bishops at the end of each session (morning, afternoon, or evening). No resolutions shall be valid unless approved by a vote of at least a majority of the bishops attending the Sobor. The approval of any particular resolution by the bishops shall be evidenced by a vote of the Holy Synod, reported to the presiding officer of the Sobor and transmitted to the Sobor at the beginning of the session that immediately follows. At the final session of the Sobor, a recess shall be taken for an appropriate period prior to the final adjournment in order that the bishops have an opportunity to act on the resolutions adopted at that session. In case of a tie in the vote of the Holy Synod, the Chairman shall cast an additional vote in order to break the tie. In case the Holy Synod shall disapprove any resolution adopted by the Sobor, it shall submit to the Sobor the reasons for such disapproval.

Section 13. Quorum

At least a majority of the Sobor members who have been accredited and are present at a given session shall constitute a quorum at any session.

Section 14. Voting

A majority vote shall determine the decisions of the General Sobor. The Pre-Sobor Commission, or the Sobor itself, may determine that voting in certain matters shall be by secret ballot.

Section 15. Auditing Committee

An auditing committee (consisting of three members of the General Sobor) shall be elected at the General Sobor. Its duties shall be to audit the accounts of the Treasurer and the funds of all Church-related institutions on a quarterly basis and to report to the Prime Bishop and to the Prime Bishop’s Council. Members of the auditing committee attend sessions of the Prime Bishop’s Council only to make their reports. Vacancies in the auditing committee are filled by the Major Archbishops.

**Article IV**

**The Major Archbishops**

Section 1. The Major Archbishops

Among the bishops of the Church, the Major Archbishops of each country enjoy shared primacy, being equals among equals. They are the Chief Shepherds of the Church, and are diocesan bishops of dioceses of the Church. They, together with the Prime Bishop and the Bishops, supervise the internal and external welfare of the Church and represent it in its relations with other Orthodox Churches, religious organizations, and secular authorities. The Prime Bishop’s name, along with the territorial Major Archbishop’s names are mentioned during liturgical services by the other bishops of the Church. The Major Archbishops, Bishops,  mention the name of the Prime Bishop of the Church at the Divine Liturgy and all Liturgical Services.

Section 2. Duties

The Major Archbishops:

a. Consecrate and distribute the Holy Chrism;

b. Provide the diocesan bishops with the Holy Relics necessary for the consecration of Church altars and Holy Antimensia;

c. Convene the Sobor in their own jurisdictions, preside over it, and promulgate its decisions;

d. Convene and preside over the meetings of the Holy Synod and of the Major Archbishop’s Council;

e. Issue pastoral letters addressed to the bishops, clergy, and laity of their particular Church;

f. Report to the General and local Sobors concerning the life of the Church;

g. Initiate action to fill vacancies in the office of diocesan bishops;

h. Give advice to his brother bishops, and in cases of necessity, submit their cases to the Holy Synod;

i. Have the right of pastoral initiative and guidance, and when necessary the right of pastoral intervention, in all matters concerning the life of the Church within the framework of the holy canons;

j. Receive petitions for admission of clergy from other Orthodox Churches;

k. Maintains an inventory of all properties of the Church under his jurisdiction and reports this information to the Prime Bishop’s Council and to the Holy Synod;

l. Provides for the establishment and maintenance of institutions of charity and education, as well as for publications for the propagation of the Orthodox Faith.

Section 3. Vacancy in Office

The office of a Major Archbishop shall be declared vacant by a vote of the Holy Synod in the event of death, voluntary retirement, medically certified incapacity, or deposition by due canonical process due to either proven and sub- stantiated heretical teaching, proven immorality, proven financial impropriety and/or certified mental incapacitation.

Section 4. Election

When a vacancy has occurred in the office of the Prime Bishop or of a Major Archbishop, the bishop senior by rank and date of consecration shall convene the Holy Synod of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in America. After the formal vote declaring the vacancy, the Holy Synod will proceed with the election of a locum tenens. In the case of the election for the office of Prime Bishop, no one may be nominated who has not been incardinated within the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in America for at least a minimum of six years prior to the date of said nomination to the office of Prime Bishop. Within a period not exceeding three months (unless some unavoidable necessity forces a prolongation of this period), the locum tenens will convene a local Sobor at which a successor shall be elected. Proceedings may be conducted by teleconferencing, speakerphone, Internet or by certified mail if necessary. If not already a bishop, a candidate for the office of a Major Archbishop must fulfill the canonical, moral, and educational requirements stated in Article VII, Section 9. The election shall take place according to the following order:

a. The Sobor nominates candidates by secret ballot without previous discussion of names. A blank paper ballot shall be distributed to each member of the Sobor before the vote.

b. On the first vote, one single name may be written on each ballot. If the name of a candidate is written on a number of ballots equal to at least two-thirds of the total number of members in attendance at the Sobor, his name shall be submitted to the Holy Synod for approval by majority vote; in case of rejection, the Holy Synod shall formally state the reasons which motivated the rejection.

c. If no candidate receives a number of ballots equal to at least two-thirds of the total membership in attendance, or if the person receiving that number of ballots fails to receive the approval of the Holy Synod, a second vote shall be taken.

d. In the second vote, two names shall be written on each ballot; the tellers shall not count any ballot on which fewer or more than two names are written. The names of the two candidates who receive the highest number of ballots on the second vote shall be submitted to the Holy Synod for their choice by a two-thirds majority vote.

e. The Prime Bishop will be consulted and give his approval of the candidate receiving the two-thirds majority of ballots and approve the election. If the election is for the office of Prime Bishop, the Synod, by their two-thirds majority vote will be deemed to have approved the election of the Prime Bishop.

f. The term of office for the Prime Bishop shall be for life, unless, of course, the Prime Bishop retires or resigns or as provided for in Article IV, Section 3.

1. Upon his election, and before the dismissal of the local Sobor, a new Archbishop will be enthroned according to the established ritual.

h. In cases where an Archdiocese/Diocese becomes vacant due to the ill health or mental incapacitation of a

  Bishop, the Prime Bishop shall be empowered to place the ailing Hierarch on a medical leave of absence

and to appoint a Locum Tenens who will assume the complete governance of the vacant Diocese until such time as the Holy Synod shall either deem the Diocese permanently vacant or restore the ailing Hierarch to

active governance. During the period of medical leave, the ailing Bishop ceases to exercise any admini-

strative governance in said Diocese and is also restricted from active and/or passive voice on the Holy

Synod.

**Article V**

**The Prime Bishop’s Council**

Section 1. Organization

The Prime Bishop’s Council is the permanent executive body of the Church Administration which exists for the purpose of implementing the decisions of the General Sobor and continuing its work between sessions. It shall consist of the Prime Bishop, all the Major Archbishops, four Bishops-at-large chosen by the Prime Bishop and the Archdeacon of the Prime Bishop. The Prime Bishop will be Chair.

Section 2. Quorum and Voting

A majority of the members of the Prime Bishop’s Council will constitute the quorum. All matters of the Prime Bishop’s Council are decided by a majority of votes of those present; in case of a tie, the deciding vote shall be cast by the Chairman. The decisions of the Prime Bishop’s Council shall become effective upon approval of the Holy Synod, depending on the nature of the decision.

Section 3. Periodicity

The Prime Bishop’s Council shall meet at least twice a year. Proceedings may be conducted by teleconferencing, speakerphone, Internet or by certified mail if necessary.

Section 4. Competence

The Prime Bishop’s Council:

a. Implements the decisions of the General Sobor and of the Holy Synod in the areas of its competence;

b. Assists the Holy Synod in Implementing decisions within the areas of its competence;

c. Establishes the budget for the operations of the Church and examines all financial reports of the Church;

d. Supervises the collection of the assessments and fees established by the General Sobor and determines the allocation of such funds;

e. Organizes plans for obtaining voluntary contributions for the satisfaction of the needs of the Church;

f. Provides for the maintenance of the central administrative bodies of the Church and for the allocation of the general Church funds;

g. Decides on the purchase, sale, or mortgaging of property of the Church, except in cases covered in Article XI, Section 8;

h. Maintains an inventory of all properties of the Church;

i. Provides for the establishment and maintenance of institutions of charity and education, as well as for publications for the propagation of the Orthodox Faith;

j. Determines the forms and books necessary for the keeping of records and statistical data by the dioceses, requiring all statistics necessary for reports;

k. Appoints officers and committees on matters within its competence;

l. Initiates, prosecutes, and defends all legal matters affecting the interest of the Church;

m. May receive reports from any department in areas within the competence of the Prime Bishop’s Council.

**Article VI**

**The Archdiocese**

Section 1. The Archdiocese

a. The Archdiocese is the principle Church of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in America in a particular nation, comprising all the dioceses and parishes of a particular nation and which and is presided over by the Major Archbishop of each such national Church in accordance with Article IV of the Statutes of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in America.

b. The Major Archbishop, in the Archdiocese entrusted to him, has the same rights and obligations as a Diocesan Bishop.

c. In the Archdiocesan Church over which he presides, beyond those things which are attributed to him by common law or particular law established by the Holy Synod, the Major Archbishop is competent: to establish charitable organizations and brotherhoods, to purchase property and/or buildings for ecclesiastical use and to establish Churches within his Archdiocese. He is also empowered to establish and erect monasteries for religious men and women and to establish and erect a major seminary for the formation of future priests and deacons for service to the Church of his national Church.

Section 2. Boundaries

a. The establishment and geographical boundaries of the Archdiocese of each nation shall be determined by the Holy Synod of Bishops, and these boundaries shall, at all times, be national.

b. The Archdiocese may establish Dioceses and titular Archdioceses in conformity with Article VII, Section 3 of these Statutes. After the establishment of such Dioceses and titular Archdioceses, they themselves shall remain subordinate to the Archdiocese and to the authority of the Major Archbishop of that particular national Church.

**Article VII**

**The Diocese**

Section 1. The Diocese

The Diocese is the basic church body which comprises all the parishes of a determined geographical area. It is governed by the Diocesan Bishop with the assistance of a Diocesan Assembly and a Diocesan Council.

Section 2. Boundaries

a. The geographical boundaries of the diocese shall be determined by the Holy Synod of Bishops;

b. The diocese may be divided geographically into deaneries, each headed by a dean elected according to the provisions of Article X, Section 4.

Section 3. Establishment of Dioceses

a. Dioceses shall be established by the Holy Synod whenever the growth of the Church demands it or wherever the boundaries of the existing dioceses need to be modified, and they may be granted Stavropighial status either temporarily or on a permanent basis.

b. All jurisdictions petitioning for incardination and/or for full unity with the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in America will be investigated completely by the Chancery of the Prime Bishop who himself will bring the matter to a vote of the Synod of Bishops immediately after the investigation has been completed. If the Synod of Bishops unanimously agrees to accept the new jurisdiction, the new jurisdiction must, without exception, pass through a period of full inter-communion with the Church during which time, if any irregularities exist in regard to the petitioning jurisdiction, the Synod of Bishops may, by two-thirds vote, ask the jurisdiction to leave the Church on a voluntary basis or be excluded. If the jurisdiction remains in inter-communion with the Church for the full three-year probationary period, the Synod of Bishops will vote on the petitioning jurisdiction, and if a full positive vote of the Synod of Bishops is reached, the new jurisdiction may be admitted to full unity with the Church and a Decree of Unity will be issued by the Prime Bishop.

Section 4. The Diocesan Bishop

By virtue of his episcopal consecration and canonical appointment to his Diocese, the Diocesan Bishop possesses full hierarchical authority within his diocese. The Diocesan Bishop:

a. Shall expound Orthodox Faith and morals and guide his flock in accordance with the teachings of the Church, and will issue pastoral letters to the clergy and laity;

b. Has the right of initiative and authoritative guidance in all matters concerning the life of his diocese;

c. Shall distribute the Holy Chrism consecrated by his Major Archbishop, and the Holy Antimensia blessed by his Major Archbishop to all churches in his diocese;

d. Shall have authority to ordain Orthodox seminary graduates to Minor Orders and to the Diaconate and Priesthood for his diocese;

e. Shall appoint and transfer parish priests and other parish clergy within the limits of his diocese;

f. Shall exercise the right of pastoral action and discipline in reference to the diocesan clergy and laity in all cases not requiring the action of a Church Court;

g. Shall make canonical visits to the parishes of his diocese;

h. Shall erect parishes, missions, chapels in his diocese;

i. Shall consecrate Antimensia and churches and erect permanent altars;

j. Shall be a member of the Holy Synod of Bishops in accordance with the provisions of Article 11, Section 2;

k. Shall convene and preside over the Diocesan Council and Diocesan Assembly;

l. May appoint a diocesan chancellor and other diocesan officers from among the members of the Diocesan Council;

m. Shall exercise the right of supervision over the erection and life of monastic communities in his diocese and appoint their superiors;

n. Shall approve the decisions of the Diocesan Assembly, Diocesan Council, deanery, and parish meetings;

o. Shall have custody, in the name of the diocese, of the consecrated items;

p. Shall reside within the limits of his diocese.

q. The purchase of land, property and buildings for the purpose of erecting churches, monasteries and seminaries within their territorial boundaries.

r. The establishment of charitable organizations and brotherhoods for the purpose of soliciting financial assistance for the physical and spiritual needs of the Diocese.

s. The establishment of missions and outposts to serve the needs of people in outlying areas.

Section 5. Auxiliary Bishop

If the good of the Church requires it, auxiliary bishops may be appointed in order to assist diocesan bishops in the fulfillment of their functions. Candidates for the dignity of auxiliary bishop are nominated by the bishop of the diocese in which they are to serve, with the agreement of the Diocesan Council, and are canonically elected by the Holy Synod.

Section 6. The Episcopal Benefice

The Diocesan Bishop shall be entitled to adequate financial support from the diocese and an official residence and household if this lies within the financial means of the diocese. Otherwise, the Diocesan Bishop shall be non-stipendiary.

Section 7. Vacancy in Office

The office of Diocesan Bishop shall be declared vacant by the Holy Synod in the event of death, voluntary retirement, medically certified incapacity, transfer, or deposition by due canonical process.

Section 8. The Vacant See

In the event of a vacancy in the office of diocesan bishop, a locum tenens, appointed by the Prime Bishop’s Council, shall convoke and preside over the Diocesan Assembly whose sole purpose at this time shall be the election of a new diocesan bishop.

Section 9. Qualifications

a. The candidate for the office of diocesan bishop [as well as any bishop seeking incardination into the Church] must satisfy all the requirements of the Holy Canons pertaining to this highest of all ecclesiastical offices. In addition, it is preferable that he have completed a course of study in a Graduate School of Theology. He must, at a minimum, have completed a full seminary curriculum. Also, he must be conversant in the English language.

b. If he is not already a bishop, he can be nominated from among the monastic or celibate clergy or be laymen;

c. If at the moment of his nomination he is a layman or a celibate priest, he shall pronounce the Profession of Faith.

d. Diocesan bishops of the Church shall not be candidates for nomination by the Diocesan Assembly of another diocese.

e. Each candidate, without exception, must have completed at least the thirty-fifth year of age.

f. All who petition for incardination must have previously met personally with the Prime Bishop and with the Major Archbishop of their county of residence and have passed a criminal background investigation, the costs for which the Petitioner must pay.

g. Each previously ordained bishop petitioning for incardination and who has been approved for incardination must consent to being on a trial basis for a period of three years prior to the unanimous vote of the Synod of Bishops which would then grant the petitioning individual incardination into the Autonomous Ukrainian Orthodox Church in America. During this period of probation, the probationary hierarch will have only consultative voice and will not be admitted to the Synod nor exercise either active nor passive voice.

Section 10. Election

The election of the diocesan bishop shall proceed as follows:

a. The Diocesan Assembly shall nominate a candidate and submit his name to the Holy Synod;

b. Proceedings may be conducted by teleconferencing, speakerphone, Internet or by certified mail if necessary.

c. If the Assembly falls to nominate a candidate acceptable to the Holy Synod, the Synod shall elect the bishop of the diocese;

d. Upon the approval of a candidate by a two-thirds majority vote of the Holy Synod, the candidate shall be summoned to a session of the Holy Synod for the canonical election, and a letter of election must be issued by the Prime Bishop giving Synodal permission for the ordination of the bishop-elect. The letter of election shall be sent by the Prime Bishop to the Major Archbishop of the country in which the bishop-elect resides and in which the bishop-elect will rule after his ordination.

Section 11. Consecration and Installation

a. If the Bishop-Elect of the diocese is not yet in the episcopal rank, the date of his consecration shall be set within the period of the 30 days following the date of his acceptance by the Holy Synod;

b. After the consecration, or if the Bishop-Elect is already in the episcopal rank, the date of installation shall be set within two weeks following the consecration or, in the latter case, the election to the Diocese;

c. The installation of the newly-consecrated Bishop shall take place in the diocese and shall be officiated by a Major Archbishop or by a senior Hierarch of the Holy Synod, if the Prime Bishop cannot himself preside over the installation.

Section 12. Missions

The diocesan bishop, by virtue of his episcopal office, is bound to propagate and expound Orthodox Faith and morals among all people within the diocesan boundaries. In order to accomplish this, he shall:

a. Take measures to ensure that his clergy make an Orthodox witness in their communities;

b. Direct parish clergy to extend the limits of their pastoral activity in an approach to the unchurched;

c. Establish missions for the purpose of propagating the Orthodox Faith;

d. Take measures to provide the necessary funds for missionary activity within his diocese.

**Article VIII**

**The Diocesan Assembly**

Section 1. Holy Confession and Liturgy

The Diocesan Assembly shall be opened with Holy Confession the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and/or Prayer Service. The delegates are encouraged to receive the Holy Mysteries of the Church, manifesting their membership in the One Body of Christ and their commitment to live and act accordingly.

Section 2. Composition

The Diocesan Assembly shall be composed of:

a. The Diocesan Bishop;

b. The senior priest of the Cathedral and the Archimandrites and/or Abbots/Abbesses of monasteries;

c. The priests and deacons of each parish, *ex officio*, and an equal number of lay delegates elected as provided for in Sections 6 and 7 of this Article;

d. Priests not having parishes if accredited by the Diocesan Council;

e. One lay delegate from each parish not having a priest;

f. The members of the Diocesan Council and the members of its auditing committee;

g. Two delegates from each theological seminary in the diocese;

h. Retired bishops and priests residing in the diocese with the right to attend and the right of consultative voice, but without the right to vote;

i. Additional persons, observers, invited by the Diocesan Council with the approval of the Diocesan Bishop to attend the session or sessions of the Diocesan Assembly with or without the right to participate in the discussions but without the right to vote (members of the preparatory committees shall have the right to attend and participate in the discussions of the subject upon which their committees report to the Diocesan Assembly; appropriate credentials shall be issued to such persons by the Diocesan Council).

Section 3. Competence of the Diocesan Assembly

The Diocesan Assembly:

a. Elects the members of the Diocesan Council and elects the Auditing Committee of the Diocesan Council;

b. Nominates candidates for Diocesan Bishop according to Article VII, Sections 9 and 10;

c. Approves measures to strengthen the Orthodox Faith and piety, religious education, and charities of the Diocese;

d. Discusses financial means to fulfill these aims and approves the budget and other related financial questions;

e. Authorizes the Diocesan Council to acquire, encumber, or otherwise dispose of diocesan properties;

f. Participates in the implementation of the General Sobor decisions on the diocesan and parochial levels.

Section 4. Periodicity

The Diocesan Assembly shall be convened as determined by the Diocese. The place of the meeting is to be determined by the previous Diocesan Assembly. Extraordinary Diocesan Assemblies are convoked by the Diocesan Bishop or by decision of the Diocesan Council, or for the election of a diocesan bishop, by the locum tenens, as specified in Article VII, Sections 8 and 10. Proceedings may be conducted by teleconferencing, speakerphone, Internet or by certified mail if necessary.

Section 5. Reports

The Diocesan Council, acting with the approval of the Diocesan Bishop, shall determine the reports which are to be presented at the Diocesan Assembly and, if necessary, shall appoint the person or committee to make reports.

Section 6. Requirements for Representation at the Diocesan Assembly

Every parish in the Diocese which has remitted all established assessments determined by previous General Sobors for the support of the Church's central organization and all assessments determined by previous Diocesan Assemblies is entitled to elect lay delegates equal in number to the priests and deacons maintained by the parish. Parishes not having a priest are entitled to one lay delegate. The parish will cover the expenses connected with the participation of its priests and elected lay delegates in the Assembly.

Section 7. Election, Qualification, and Accreditation of Delegates

The lay delegates of the Diocesan Assembly must meet the following requirements to be validly elected, qualified, and accredited:

a. Be elected by a parish meeting or parish council;  b. Be a voting member of the parish in good standing (Cf. Article XI, Section 5), at least eighteen years of age, having received the Sacraments of Confession and at least annually for the past three years at his home parish. (Like all holders of all offices in the Church, he may not be a person under ecclesiastical interdict, who is in violation of moral standards, who is married outside the Church, who is a member of anti-Church and/or secret societies.)

c. The elected lay delegate or delegates will personally receive from their parish a uniform document supplied by the Diocesan Administration. The parish rector shall forward to the secretary of the Diocesan Council the name and address of the elected lay delegate or delegates two months prior to the date of the Diocesan Assembly. The document of accreditation must be signed by the parish rector, or dean in case of parish vacancy, and the parish secretary, and sealed with the parish seal. In case of a vacancy in the parish, it will be entitled to one lay delegate. The delegates from a theological seminary, if laymen, shall be accredited by a similar letter to the secretary of the Diocesan Council by the dean of the theological seminary immediately after their appointment.

Section 8. Agenda

The agenda for the Diocesan Assembly shall be fixed in advance by the Diocesan Council with the approval of the Diocesan Bishop, and shall be sent to all delegates at least three weeks prior to the date of the Assembly. The agenda may be changed by vote of the Diocesan Assembly.

Section 9. Presiding Officer

The presiding officer of the Diocesan Assembly shall be the Diocesan Bishop, an Auxiliary Bishop, a Vicar General or a priest specifically appointed by him.

Section 10. Vice-Chairmen

Two Vice-Chairmen, one from the clergy and one from the laity, shall be elected by the Diocesan Assembly and shall perform such functions as may be assigned to them, respectively, by the presiding officer.

Section 11. Secretary

The Diocesan Assembly shall elect as many secretaries as needed.

Section 12. Committee on Credentials

A Committee on Credentials, appointed by the Diocesan Council with the approval of the Diocesan Bishop, shall pass on the qualifications of all members of the Diocesan Assembly and additional persons invited by the Diocesan Council.

Section 13. Committees

The Diocesan Council shall establish those committees which may be necessary for the proper operation of the Assembly, such as local functioning committee, resolutions committee, credentials committee, translations committee, etc.

Section 14. Sessions

The number of sessions shall be determined by the Diocesan Council with the approval of the Diocesan Bishop.

Section 15. Approval by the Diocesan Bishop

No resolution of the Diocesan Assembly shall be valid unless it is approved by the Diocesan Bishop. Approval or disapproval is to be expressed before the closing of the Assembly.

Section 16. Minutes

The minutes of the Assembly shall be prepared by the secretary, signed by the Chairman, and submitted to the presiding officer for his written approval as to form and accuracy. Within a period of not more than 60 days after the final adjournment of the Assembly, the text of the minutes, approved by the presiding officer, shall be officially promulgated and certified mailed to each delegate.

Section 17. Quorum

The quorum shall be constituted by a majority of accredited delegates.

Section 18. Voting

The Diocesan Council, or the Assembly itself, may determine all voting procedures.

Section 19. Election of the Diocesan Bishop

The candidates for the office of diocesan bishop shall be elected in the manner prescribed in Article VII, Section 10.

Section 20. Election of the Auditing Committee of the Diocesan Council

The Auditing Committee of the Diocesan Council, consisting of three members, shall be elected by the Diocesan Assembly for three years. The duties of the Auditing Committee are defined in Article IX, Section 7.

**Article IX**

**The Diocesan Council**

Section 1. Composition

The Diocesan Council is the permanent body of diocesan administration:

a. The composition of the Diocesan Council is determined by the Diocesan Assembly and shall include as ex officio members the two representatives, one priest and one layman, elected by the Diocesan Assembly to the Prime Bishop’s Council;

b. The Bishop, or in his absence, the Auxiliary Bishop, the Vicar General or a priest appointed by the Bishop, shall be the chairman of the Diocesan Council;

c. The Council elects such officers as may be needed to carry on its functions.

Section 2. Periodicity

a. The Diocesan Council convenes no less than twice annually;

b. Extraordinary sessions of the Diocesan Council are convened by decision of the Diocesan Bishop or at the request of at least one-half of the membership. Proceedings may be conducted by teleconferencing, speakerphone, Internet or by certified mail if necessary.

Section 3. Quorum and Voting

a. Together with the Diocesan Bishop or other presiding officer, one-half of the members of the Diocesan Council shall constitute the quorum.

b. Majority vote shall determine the decisions of the Diocesan Council. In the event of a tie, the Diocesan Bishop or other presiding officer shall cast the deciding vote.

Section 4. Decisions

All decisions of the Diocesan Council shall become effective upon approval by the Diocesan Bishop.

Section 5. Competence

The Diocesan Council shall be competent:

a. To implement the decisions of the Diocesan Assembly;

b. To consider and act on matters affecting parishes and all diocesan institutions in accordance with the directives of the Diocesan Bishop and the decisions of the Diocesan Assembly;

c. To consider and act on other matters submitted by the Diocesan Bishop;

d. To attend to legal matters affecting only the interest of the diocese;

e. To forward diocesan legal matters to the Central Office of the Church Administration;

f. To examine the financial reports of the diocese;

g. To determine the allocations, when necessary, of general diocesan funds to parishes, monasteries, convents, missions, or other diocesan institutions;

h. To supervise the collection of assessments fixed by the Diocesan Assembly;

i. To render a final decision regarding the authenticity of the minutes of the Diocesan Assembly when a discrepancy arises;

j. To delineate the boundaries of parishes and deaneries;

k. To take the initiative in diocesan fund-raising projects;

l. To provide for the establishment and maintenance of institutions of charity and education within the diocese;

m. To provide for the maintenance of diocesan administrative bodies and the allocation of general diocesan funds;

n. To make preparations for the Diocesan Assembly.

Section 6. The Diocesan Chancery

The Diocesan Chancery shall function in order to implement the decisions of the Diocesan Council under the management of the Diocesan Bishop. The Bishop may, if he desires, appoint a Diocesan Chancellor to assist him.

Section 7. Auditing Committee

The Auditing Committee shall audit semi-annually the accounts of the Treasurer or of the diocesan administration with respect to all diocesan funds of all Church-related institutions within the Diocese and report to the Diocesan Council. Members of the Auditing Committee attend sessions of the Diocesan Council only to make their reports. A certified copy of each Diocesan Financial Report is to be submitted by the Auditing Committee to the Offices of the Prime Bishop before February 1 of each calendar year. Vacancies in the Auditing Committee are filled by the Diocesan Bishop.

**Article X**

**The Deanery**

**Article 1. Deaneries**

Deaneries are specified districts within the boundaries of a diocese which are established by the Diocesan Council (Cf. Article X, Section 5), with the exception of the Dean of Orthodox Military Chaplains, who is appointed by, and directly responsible to, the Holy Synod.

**Article 2. The District Dean**

The District Dean is the priest who is the head of a deanery. While subordinated to the Diocesan Bishop, he has the responsibility of leading the life of the deanery and is the first instance of appeal when disputes arise.

**Article 3. Competence and Duties**

Subject to the instructions of the Diocesan Bishop, the District Dean has competence in:

a. Directing the affairs of the deanery;

b. Supervising the activities of the clergy of the deanery;

c. Giving directives and explanations in matters of pastoral services, with the right to direct, counsel, and admonish, in a strictly private and circumspect manner, rectors and clergymen within his deanery whenever their personal conduct or manner of discharging duties indicates the need of such action;

d. Receiving and investigating complaints against rectors or other clergymen, as well as protests against the decisions of the parish bodies, which complaints or protests he submits with his report to the Diocesan Bishop;

e. Convoking deanery meetings;

f. Filling temporary vacancies in parish clergy with the consent of the Diocesan Bishop;

g. Receiving the minutes of parish meetings held within his deanery, with the right to make recommendations to the Diocesan Bishop;

h. Taking part in parish meetings upon commission of the diocesan authority or the request of the rector or the parish council;

i. Aiding and planning the organization of new parishes within his deanery;

j. Acting on all other matters submitted to him by the Diocesan Bishop;

k. Submitting the minutes of every meeting of the clergy of the deanery to the Diocesan Bishop;

l. Submitting an annual report on the status of his deanery to the Diocesan Bishop and Diocesan Assembly, stating not only the achievements, but also instances of serious negligence;

m. Negotiating with the parish and the assigned priest the salary and fringe benefits needed by the priest in agreement with the ability of the parish to meet these requests;

n. The competence and duties of the Dean of Orthodox Military Chaplains will be the same as above insofar as this is applicable to the military structure.

**Article 4. Election**

The District Dean is elected from among the rectors of the deanery and confirmed by the Diocesan Bishop for a term of three years.

**Article XI**

**The Parish**

Section 1. The Parish

The parish is a local community of the Church having at its head a duly appointed priest and consisting of Orthodox Christians who live in accordance with the teachings of the Orthodox Church, comply with the discipline and rules of the Church, and regularly support their parish. Being subordinate to the Diocesan Authority, it is a component part of the Diocese.

Section 2. Governing Constitution

The organization and administration of a parish are subject to this Constitution or as amended at any subsequent Sobor.

Section 3. Parish and Diocese

The parish is established by decision of the Diocesan Bishop within whose diocese it is constituted and after the local group petitioning him has satisfied the Bishop that it is self-supporting and stable and that its charter and by-laws are consistent with canonical requirements and the Constitution of the Jurisdiction. Every parish charter or set of by-laws must provide the mechanics for implementing all decisions of the All-Church Sobor. No charter or by-laws of a parish shall be effective unless approved by the Diocesan Authority. According to the teaching of the Orthodox Church, the Bishop is the head of all parishes which constitute his diocese. He appoints parish clergy, has the obligation and right of regular and special visitations to the parish, approves received reports on parish life, and in case of conflicts and disorders within the parish, takes all necessary measures consistent with the Holy Canons.

Section 4. Rector

At the head of the parish is its Rector. According to the teachings of the Church, he is the spiritual father and teacher of his flock and the celebrant of the liturgical worship established by the Church. He teaches and edifies the People of God entrusted to his spiritual care "with no partiality" (James 2:1) and sees to it that all activities within the parish serve the religious goals of the Church. He is appointed by the Diocesan Bishop and cannot leave his parish without the permission of the Bishop. No activities in the parish can be initiated without his knowledge, approval, and blessing; neither should he do anything pertaining to the parish without the knowledge of his parishioners and parish organs elected by them, so that always and everywhere there may be unity, mutual trust, cooperation, and love. In conformity with his teaching office, the Rector shall have final authority over the church school. To be free from material preoccupations and wholly committed to his sacred ministry, the priest must be compensated by the parish, the amount of his compensation being clearly agreed upon at the time of his appointment.

Section 5. Parishioners

a. Parishioners are those who, by virtue of their Baptism and Chrismation, are members of the Body of Christ and strive to live in accordance with their high calling (Eph. 4:1)as Orthodox Christians. No one can be a member of the parish if he openly betrays the teaching of the Orthodox Church, or if he leads a life or acts in a manner condemned by the Holy Canons as incompatible with the name of Orthodox Christian.

b. A "voting member" of the parish is a member [as defined in Article XI, Section 5(a)] at least eighteen years of age, who partakes of the Sacraments of Confession and Holy Communion in his home parish at least once a year; has belonged to the parish for a period as may be fixed by the parish; and regularly fulfills such financial obligations as may be established by the General Sobors, Diocesan Assemblies, and parish.

Section 6. Financial Obligation

Each year the parish shall remit to the Diocesan Treasurer its minimum financial support to the Diocese and to the Chancery of the Prime Bishop of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in America. This minimum financial support shall be determined by the number of parishioners of the parish [as defined in Article XI, Section 5(a)] who are eighteen years of age and over. The parish is also responsible for submitting annually, by January 31st, a census containing the names (first and last) and addresses of such parishioners to the Diocesan Bishop. Additions and/or deletions shall be reported as they occur.

Section 7. The Parish Meeting

a. Since, according to the universal teaching of the Church, all members of the Body of Christ are responsible for the preservation of the Faith and the edification of the Church, the by-laws of each parish shall provide for regular or special meetings of voting parishioners in good standing. At these meetings all matters pertaining to the life of the parish may be discussed and acted upon, all necessary measures for the spiritual and material welfare of the parish initiated and approved, and officers and members of the Parish Council and other parish bodies provided for in the parish by-laws nominated and elected. All regular and special parish meetings must be announced by the parish priest from the Ambo on three consecutive Sundays and published in the church bulletin. The parish Rector presides at the parish meeting.

b. The Rector is the intermediary between the parish and the Diocesan Authority, and, in case of his disagreement with one or several decisions of the parish meeting, his motivated opinion must be recorded in the minutes and the whole matter submitted to the Diocesan Bishop. Parish officers may state their motivated opinion, first to the District Dean, then to the Diocesan Bishop.

Section 8. The Parish Council

a. The parish meeting shall elect a Parish Council to assist the Rector in the administration of the parish and to execute the decisions of the parish meeting. The Parish Council shall consist of as many officers and members as provided for in the parish by-laws. Their mode of election and their terms of office shall also be determined by the by-laws regularly adopted.

b. All officers and members of the Parish Council shall, after their election at the parish meeting and approval of the Diocesan Authority, be duly installed by the Rector, making a solemn commitment to uphold their office.

c. The Orthodox Church teaches that there should be an active cooperation between clergy and laity on all levels of Church life. And since the Parish Council is the main parish organ of such cooperation, none of its meetings may be held without the knowledge and blessing of the Rector who, as the head of the parish, must take part in the discussion and solution of all parish affairs. While the priest is the head of the parish, he does not have to be Chairman of meetings. Laymen may be Chairmen. The minutes of all meetings of the Parish Council shall be signed by the Rector and the senior elected officer of the parish. In the case of the Rector's disagreement with one or several decisions of the Parish Council, his motivated opinion shall be recorded in the minutes and the matter referred to the parish meeting.

d. The Parish Council shall be responsible not only for the spiritual and material needs of the parish, but also for the parish's unity and connection with the Diocese and the Church, for each parish is called to be a living cell and a member of the Body of Christ, and each carries responsibility for the whole Church.

Section 9. The Parish Property

a. The parish or parish corporation is the sole owner of all parish property, assets, and funds. In administering them, however, the parishioners and the officers elected by them must always remember the religious nature, purposes, and goals of the parish and act as trustees of God's, not man's, property. The parish, as the whole Church, serves God and cares for God's work in the world, and all decisions concerning parish property must be inspired by that care and by the spiritual needs of the Church.

b. If the parish is abolished, its property is disposed of following the provisions of the parish bylaws. If no such provisions exist, the property is at the disposition of the Diocesan Authority. In all cases, the sacred and untouchable items: the Holy Antimension, the Tabernacle, and the Sacred Vessels, must be surrendered to the Diocesan Bishop.

**Article XII**

**Church Courts and Canonical Procedure**

Section 1. Church Courts

Every member of the Church is entitled to due canonical procedure in the courts of the Church.

Section 2. The Diocesan Court

The Diocesan Court is composed of four voting members: two members of the clergy and two members of the laity, appointed by the bishop from among the members of the Diocesan Council. The Diocesan Bishop himself, or a member of the clergy appointed by him, shall preside over the court as a non-voting member. In cases involving accusations against members of the clergy, the court shall be restricted in its membership to members of the clergy.

Section 3. Competence of the Diocesan Court

The Diocesan Court shall act as a court of first instance in cases where the accused is a priest, a deacon, a deaconess or a member of the laity. It shall be competent to judge cases involving allegations of unorthodox belief, breaches of canonical or moral discipline, marital problems, disputes involving clergy and parish officers, disputes over parish institutions, and any other matter involving the good order of the Church.

Section 4. General Procedure

a. Accusers shall present their accusations in writing to the Bishop of the Diocese of the accused.

b. Before examining the case, the court shall establish the accuser's good and irreproachable character. The accuser shall agree in advance in writing that the decision of these courts is final and non-appealable to the civil courts. If the court is not satisfied in these matters, or considers that the accuser, by lodging his accusation, pursues personal advantage or acts out of personal animosity, the case shall be dismissed.

c. If the court determines that there is probable cause to come to trial, the accused shall be summoned in writing by the court. The summons shall specify the nature of the accusation and the name(s) of the accuser(s), and the accused shall be given appropriate time to prepare his defense. If he does not answer two successive summonses, the court shall try the case in absentia.

d. The accused is entitled to request that a third party act as his defense. Both the accuser and the accused may request the testimony of experts and witnesses acceptable to the court.

e. The Diocesan Bishop, by his own judgment, is empowered to impose temporary suspension upon clerics, and temporary excommunication upon members of the laity. The accused has the right to trial in court within 30 days of the day when the penalty is pronounced by the bishop.

f. The decision of the court shall be made by unanimous vote, approved by the Diocesan Bishop, and communicated to the accused in writing within 30 days. If the decision is not unanimous, upon the request of either party the Diocesan Bishop shall appoint a court of four new members, according to the procedure specified in Section 2. The new court shall make a decision by a majority vote, approved by the bishop. If the bishop rejects the decision of the court, upon the request of either party the case shall be referred to the Holy Synod, in accordance with the provisions of Section 6 (c).

g. Penalties imposed by the court (against persons judged guilty after trial as well as against false accusers) are prescribed by the canons of the ecumenical and local councils and the holy fathers. Their application is subject to approval by the Diocesan Bishop who must use the pastoral discretion which belongs to his office in applying penalties.

h. If one of the parties is not satisfied with the judgment of the Diocesan Court, he may appeal to the Holy Synod, as the Supreme Court of Appeals of the Church, within 30 days of receipt of said judgment.

i. Judgments requiring the final deposition (defrocking) of clerics are effective only upon their confirmation by the Holy Synod.

j. Those protesting canonical penalties imposed by presbyters in the normal course of their pastoral responsibilities may appeal to the Diocesan Bishop within 30 days of the day when the penalty was pronounced. Those protesting canonical penalties imposed or confirmed by bishops in the normal course of their pastoral responsibilities may appeal to the Holy Synod of Bishops, as the Supreme Court of the Church, within 30 days of the day when the penalty was pronounced.

k. Trials are held subject to any other procedural rules as established by the Holy Synod.

l. No one shall be brought to trial more than once for the same alleged offense.

Section 5. Special Procedure for Marital Problems

a. In situations when the parish priest is unable, through pastoral counseling, to prevent the dissolution of a marriage and the conflict results in a civil divorce, and if the interested persons themselves seek from the Church a definition of their status as divorcees, a petition is filed with the Diocesan Court, which examines the documents and makes a new attempt at reconciling the parties.

b. Divorces and annulments are granted by the Diocesan Court. These include: Apostasy from Orthodoxy, Adultery and Unnatural Vices, Incapacity for Marital Cohabitation, Affliction by Leprosy or Syphilis, Unknown Absence, Jail Sentence with Deprivation of Rights, Infringement Upon the Life and Health of the Other Spouse and Children, Incest or Prostitution of Spouse, Entering into a New Marriage, Serious Incurable Mental Sickness and Intentional Desertion. If the couple was not married in the Orthodox Church, then a Church Divorce is not necessary and need not be requested. A Church Divorce will not be granted before a civil divorce has been obtained.

c. If the reconciliation fails, the court shall come to a final decision. In issuing its opinion, the court may recommend that penance be imposed by the bishop upon the guilty party/parties. On the basis of this court decision, the bishop issues the following statement:

*"Having heard the conclusion of the Diocesan Court of the \_\_\_\_\_ Diocese concerning the judgment of divorce rendered by the \_\_\_\_\_ Court of \_\_\_\_\_ dissolving the marriage between (Name) \_\_\_\_\_ and (Name) \_\_\_\_\_ celebrated at \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_, I,\_\_\_\_\_, Bishop of \_\_\_\_\_ hereby acknowledge the conclusion of the civil court as final. [Invoking God's mercy and compassion, I allow (Name) \_\_\_\_\_ to enter into a new marital union with (Name) \_\_\_\_\_ and receive the sacraments of the Church starting on \_\_\_\_\_."*

Section 6. The Holy Synod as Supreme Court of Appeals

a. The Holy Synod shall act as the Church's Supreme Court of Appeals.

b. If a person, clerical or lay, is dissatisfied with the judgment rendered in his case by a Diocesan Court, he may file an appeal addressed either to a Major Archbishop or to the Secretary of the Holy Synod through the Chancery of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in America.

c. The Holy Synod shall take up the case at its regular session, provided the appeal has been filed at least a month before the session.

d. The accused shall be entitled to the rights specified in Section 4 (d).

e. The Holy Synod shall never act as a court of first instance in cases which are within the competence of Diocesan Courts.

f. The rulings of the Holy Synod are final, except for those instances which the canons reserve to the judgment of the universal Church.

Section 7. The Holy Synod and the Judgment of Bishops

a. Accusations against bishops are referred directly to the Holy Synod, which is the court of first instance empowered to pass judgment in such cases.

b. If the accusations are considered to have substance either by the Major Archbishop of the Country or by at least three members of the Holy Synod, and after the accuser's good character, irreproachable standing in the Church, and motivation have been established, the accused shall be summoned and judged by the Holy Synod in closed session. In cases of grave accusations involving the possibility of canonical deposition, the accused shall be called through a formal summons presented to him in person by three bishops.

c. If the accused refuses to appear after receiving three summonses, the Holy Synod shall suspend him from his duties and judge him in absentia.

d. Penalties against bishops judged guilty after trial, as well as against false accusers, are prescribed by the canons of the ecumenical and local councils and the holy fathers.

e. A judgment of deposition or defrocking of a bishop has final validity only when signed by at least 12 bishops. (If such need arises, bishops may be invited from neighboring ecclesiastical provinces to complete the quorum.)

f. The judgments of the Holy Synod are final, except for those instances which the canons reserve to the judgment of the universal Church.

**Article XIII**

**National Groups**

When the good of the Church requires that particular national groups receive an assurance of identity, the Holy Synod may establish dioceses and/or missions and set standards for their participation in the life of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in America by mutual agreement with the group and until such time as the diocesan structure of the Church can be organized on an exclusively territorial basis. If a given group is organized as a diocese, the bishop of this diocese is a member of the Holy Synod and receives an episcopal title defined territorially. The Constitution shall constitute the fundamental law for the existence of all such groups within the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in America.

Missions shall be governed by the Statutes of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in America as well as the particular Statutes for Missions in a particular country as approved by the Holy Synod.

**Article XIV**

**Effective Date**

This Constitution shall be in effect immediately upon its adoption by the Synod of Bishops of the Church, this 27th day of July, 2015, at Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

**Article XV**

**Pension**

Being citizens of Ukraine and juridical persons, the bishops who work in canonical devisions of the Church are granted public pension in accordance with the established government procedure. Pension for the bishops from other counties is provided in accordance with legislation of the country of their stay.

The Church may have its own social security system if it so chooses.

**Article XVI**

**Seal and Stamps**

The Prime Bishop, the Major Archbishops and the Diocesan Bishops shall have the stamp and the official seal with the name and title they bear. The Holy Synod has the stamp and the official seal with the seal of the Holy Synod. The Prime Bishop’s Chancery, the Diocesan Councils, deaneries, parishes, monasteries, schools of Orthodox Theology and other canonical divisions that have the status of a legal entity have the stamp and the official seal.

**Article XVII**

**Changes to the Constitution**

The revised copy of the Constitution is valid for the whole Church, and the only official copy and translation of these Statutes is this copy, in English.

The General Sobor has the right to introduce amendments to this Constitution.

Approved and promulgated by the Holy Synod of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in America this 27th day of July, 2015 at Milwaukee, WI.

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FR. ARCHDEACON SERGIY LARIN

SECRETARY & NOTARY OF THE HOLY SYNOD

UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA