

# Side by Side Comparison of the Existing OCA Statute and the Revised OCA Statute

Existing OCA Statute	Revised OCA Statute
<b>Preamble</b>	
<p>In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.</p> <p>The <i>Orthodox Church in America</i> was originally founded as a mission and later became a diocese in the Orthodox Church of Russia, uniting in its fold Orthodox Christians of various national backgrounds and traditions. It subsequently developed into a self-governing Metropolitanate, the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of America. Confirmation as an Autocephalous Church was accomplished by the action of the Patriarch and Holy Synod of Russia on April 10, 1970. The <i>Orthodox Church in America</i> was proclaimed an Autocephalous Church on October 20, 1970, at the sessions of the All-American Council held at St Tikhon’s Monastery in South Canaan, Pennsylvania.</p>	<p>In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.</p> <p>The Orthodox Church in America, as a local autocephalous Orthodox Church, belongs to the world-wide communion of Orthodox Churches. It unites in its fold Orthodox Christians of various national backgrounds and traditions. It grew from the Alaskan mission established in 1794 by the Church of Russia. Expanding across the United States and Canada, it became a diocese of that Church. In 1924 this diocese was reorganized as an autonomous Metropolitanate under the title “the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of North America”. On April 10, 1970, the Patriarch and the Holy Synod of the Church of Russia granted autocephaly to the Metropolitanate. The Metropolitanate accepted and affirmed its new status and reorganized under the title “The Orthodox Church in America” at sessions of the All-American Council held in October, 1970, at Saint Tikhon’s Monastery in South Canaan, Pennsylvania.</p> <p>The Orthodox Church in America is governed by Holy Tradition, that is, the whole body of teaching and practice of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. That Tradition is expressed first of all in Holy Scripture; in the dogmatic decisions and canons of the seven Ecumenical Councils, the canons of the local councils, the canons and writings of</p>

	<p>the Holy Fathers; in the liturgical life of the Church; and in this Statute of The Orthodox Church in America (hereafter, “the Statute”). The purpose of this Statute is to apply Holy Tradition to the organization and daily life of The Orthodox Church in America.</p> <p>The Statute consists of this Preamble and the Eighteen (18) Articles that follow.</p> <p>Upon its adoption by the All-American Council this Statute replaces and supplants all previous versions.</p>
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**ARTICLE I**

**The Orthodox Church in America**

<p>The Orthodox Church in America is an autocephalous Church with territorial Jurisdiction in the United States of America and the Commonwealth of Canada. 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 Councils, and the Holy Fathers. The Orthodox Church in America is referred to in this Statute as “the Church.”</p>	<p>The Orthodox Church in America is an autocephalous Church with territorial jurisdiction in the United States of America and in Canada. The Orthodox Church in America also exercises jurisdiction over those faithful who freely associate themselves with it within the United Mexican States.</p> <p>This Statute of The Orthodox Church in America conforms with Holy Scripture, Holy Tradition, the Sacred Canons of the Ecumenical and Local councils, those of the Holy Fathers, and the canonical tradition of the Orthodox Church. In this Statute, The Orthodox Church in America is referred to as “the Church” unless otherwise noted.</p>
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**ARTICLE II**

**The Holy Synod**

<p><b>Section 1</b>     <i>Definition and Authority</i></p> <p>The Holy Synod is the supreme canonical</p>	<p><b>Section 1</b> <i>Definition</i></p> <p>The Holy Synod is the supreme canonical</p>
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<p>authority in the Church.</p> <p><b>Section 2      <i>Membership</i></b></p> <p>The Holy Synod includes, as voting members, all the diocesan bishops of the Church. The Metropolitan is ex officio Chairman of the Synod. In case of his absence, a Chairman shall be elected by the diocesan bishops present.</p> <p><b>Section 3      <i>Regular Sessions</i></b></p> <p>The Holy Synod shall meet twice annually, in the autumn and in the spring.</p> <p><b>Section 4      <i>Special Sessions</i></b></p> <p>Special sessions may be called by the Metropolitan on his own initiative, or at the request of at least three diocesan bishops.</p> <p><b>Section 5      <i>Quorum</i></b></p> <p>The quorum required for a regular or special session of the Holy Synod is two-thirds of the membership.</p> <p><b>Section 6      <i>Permanent Lesser Synod</i></b></p> <p>A Permanent Lesser Synod of at least three diocesan bishops, presided over by the Metropolitan, may receive from the Holy Synod a delegation of power to make necessary and provisional decisions on all matters, except those covered by points a,b,c,d,e,f,i,j,k, and I of Section 7. (Cf. Art. V, Sec. 1.)</p> <p><b>Section 7      <i>Competence</i></b></p> <p>The following matters are within the jurisdiction and competence of the Holy Synod:</p> <p>a. All matters involving doctrine,</p>	<p>authority in the Church. The full Holy Synod consists of all the Diocesan Bishops of the Church under the ex officio presidency of the Primate (hereinafter, “the Metropolitan”). The Metropolitan shall preside at all regular and special sessions of the Holy Synod.</p> <p><b>Section 2 <i>Regular Sessions</i></b></p> <p>The Metropolitan shall convene regular sessions of the Holy Synod twice annually, in the autumn and in the spring.</p> <p><b>Section 3 <i>Special Sessions</i></b></p> <p>Special sessions may be called by the Metropolitan on his own initiative or at the written request of at least three Diocesan Bishops.</p> <p><b>Section 4 <i>Quorum</i></b></p> <p>The quorum required for a regular or special session of the Holy Synod is two-thirds of its membership.</p> <p><b>Section 5 <i>Competence</i></b></p> <p>The following matters are included within the jurisdiction and competence of the Holy Synod:</p> <p>a. All matters involving doctrine, canonical order, morals, and liturgical practice;</p> <p>b. All canonical matters pertaining to the declaration of a vacancy in the office of a Diocesan Bishop, and to the election and ordination of a bishop as provided by Article VIII, Sections 5-7;</p> <p>c. The transfer of a bishop;</p> <p>d. The acceptance of a bishop from</p>
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<p>canonical order, morals, and liturgical practice;</p> <p>b. All canonical matters pertaining to the election and consecration of bishops as provided by Article VI;</p> <p>c. The establishment of new dioceses, the definition of diocesan boundaries, and the acceptance of dioceses into the jurisdiction of the Orthodox Church in America;</p> <p>d. Transfer of bishops and their retirement in accordance with Article VI, Section 7;</p> <p>e. The acceptance of bishops from other jurisdictions;</p> <p>f. Bishops' leaves of absence; Bestowing honors upon bishops;</p> <p>g. Examination of annual reports by the Metropolitan and the bishops on the fulfillment of their pastoral duties;</p> <p>h. Solution of problems arising in the administration of individual dioceses and requiring the judgment of the entire episcopate;</p> <p>i. Determination in all complaints involving bishops;</p> <p>j. Acting as Supreme Church Court of Appeals for all matters involving bishops, clergy, and laity in accordance with Article XI, Section 6;</p> <p>k. Establishment of general policies in relation to other Orthodox Churches and non-Orthodox religious bodies;</p> <p>l. Appointment, upon recommendation by the Metropolitan Council, of the Chancellor, Secretary, Treasurer, and other officials whose competence or service</p>	<p>another Orthodox Church or the release of a bishop to another Orthodox Church;</p> <p>e. The reconciliation of a schismatic bishop;</p> <p>f. The grant of any leave of absence to a bishop;</p> <p>g. The bestowal of honors upon bishops and of Synodal Awards upon priests and deacons;</p> <p>h. The procedures and normative standards for retirement of the Metropolitan, Diocesan Bishops, and Auxiliary Bishops;</p> <p>i. Canonical matters pertaining to the discipline of a bishop;</p> <p>j. Initial consideration of any complaint or accusation involving a bishop;</p> <p>k. Acting as court of first instance in all cases involving an accusation against a bishop in accordance with Article XV, Section 8, and as regular court of final instance in matters involving bishops, clergy, and laity in accordance with Article XV, Sections 7-8;</p> <p>l. The deposition of clergy;</p> <p>m. The establishment of new dioceses, the definition of diocesan boundaries, and the acceptance of dioceses into the jurisdiction of The Orthodox Church in America;</p> <p>n. Upon referral of the Metropolitan, resolution of problems arising within a diocese that require the judgment of the Holy Synod;</p> <p>o. The examination of annual reports</p>
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<p>extend beyond the boundaries of a single diocese;</p> <p>m. Pastoral supervision over all Church organizations whose activity extends beyond the boundaries of a single diocese; Appointment of committees on matters belonging to the competence of the Holy Synod;</p> <p>n. General supervision over Armed Forces Chaplaincies, with the Metropolitan being particularly and immediately responsible in this field;</p> <p>o. Decisions in cases involving non-Orthodox clergymen applying for admission into the Orthodox Church;</p> <p>p. Supervision over theological schools;</p> <p>q. Establishment of standards required for ordination;</p> <p>r. Overseeing the missionary, educational, and social programs of the Church;</p> <p>s. Supervision of ecclesiastical arts: architecture, iconography, choral music, and other applied arts.</p>	<p>from the Metropolitan and the bishops on the fulfillment of their pastoral duties;</p> <p>p. The examination of regular reports from the Church Officers, stavropegial institutions, departments, commissions, committees, and boards of the Church;</p> <p>q. Establishment of standards for ordination;</p> <p>r. Establishment of general policies regarding relations with other Orthodox Churches, non-Orthodox religious bodies, civil authorities, and secular entities;</p> <p>s. General oversight and guidance of:</p> <p>i. Stavropegial institutions;</p> <p>ii. Monasteries and monastic life;</p> <p>iii. Theological schools and programs of theological education;</p> <p>iv. Military and institutional chaplaincies;</p> <p>v. Organizations of the Church;</p> <p>vi. Missionary, educational, and social programs of the Church;</p> <p>vii. Ecclesiastical arts, such as iconography, liturgical music, architecture, and other applied arts;</p> <p>t. Appointment and supervision of departments, commissions, committees, and boards of the Church;</p> <p>u. Confirmation, upon recommendation by the Metropolitan Council, of the Metropolitan's selection of the Chancellor, Secretary, Treasurer, and other officers of the Church whose competence or service extend beyond the</p>
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	<p>boundaries of a single diocese;</p> <p>v. Determination in consultation with the Metropolitan Council of the dates, location, and theme of the All-American Council;</p> <p>w. Appointment of a Preconciliar Commission upon nomination by the Metropolitan Council;</p> <p>x. Approval or rejection of legislation, resolutions, and initiatives of the All-American Council as provided for in Article III, Section 15;</p> <p>y. The glorification of saints of the local autocephalous Church;</p> <p>z. Establishment of rules and procedures as appropriate for the conduct of the operation of the Holy Synod. The Holy Synod shall have authority necessary and proper to conduct matters within its competence.</p> <p><b>Section 6 <i>Standing Synod</i></b></p> <p>The Holy Synod shall establish a Standing Synod, which the Metropolitan convenes between sessions of the Holy Synod and over which he presides, composed of at least three additional Diocesan Bishops. The Holy Synod shall delegate authority to the Standing Synod to make necessary decisions on specific matters that do not require the judgment of the full Holy Synod. The Holy Synod may also delegate authority to the Standing Synod to make provisional decisions on other matters subject to subsequent ratification by the Holy Synod. The Standing Synod may formulate proposals for consideration by the Holy Synod. All measures adopted by the Standing Synod shall be reported in writing by the Secretary of the Holy Synod</p>
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to the members within thirty days, but in no event later than the next session of the Holy Synod.

**Section 7 *Extraordinary Sessions***

In the absence of the Metropolitan, the Holy Synod may meet in Extraordinary Session in the following circumstances:

a. If the absence of the Metropolitan arises from death, retirement or resignation accepted by the Holy Synod, medically certified incapacity, or deposition by canonical process, the member of the Holy Synod senior by rank and date of episcopal ordination shall convene the Holy Synod, which shall proceed in accordance with the provisions of Article IV, Sections 3-4.

b. If the Metropolitan is impeded from attending a Regular or Special Session of the Holy Synod because of temporary circumstances, such as a medical emergency or travel difficulties, and if he is able to communicate, he may authorize the Holy Synod to proceed in Extraordinary Session, under the presidency of a member of the Holy Synod whom he shall designate. In such circumstances, the Extraordinary Session of the Holy Synod has the power to make necessary and provisional decisions on matters that do not require the judgment of the full Holy Synod, subject to subsequent approval by the Metropolitan.

c. If the Metropolitan is impeded from attending a Regular or Special Session of the Holy Synod because of grave circumstances that make it impossible for him to communicate, such as unconsciousness following a medical emergency, the Holy Synod shall meet in Extraordinary Session, under the presidency of the member of the Holy

	<p>Synod senior by rank and date of episcopal ordination. In such circumstances, the Extraordinary Session of the Holy Synod has the power to make necessary and provisional decisions on matters that do not require the judgment of the full Holy Synod, subject to subsequent approval by the Metropolitan if he is able to consider them.</p> <p>d. If the Metropolitan is unable to fulfill his primatial and episcopal responsibilities, whether because of medically certified illness, injury, infirmity, or disabling condition, or because of some other grave circumstance, and if the prognosis for his recovery, recuperation, or return to active service is uncertain in outcome or indeterminate in duration, rather than declare the office of Metropolitan vacant, the Holy Synod meeting in Extraordinary Session may appoint a Temporary Administrator from among the bishops of the Church to assume the affected responsibilities. During a Temporary Administration there shall be no innovations in matters affecting the basic structures and administration of the Church. During a Temporary Administration the Holy Synod shall continue to monitor the condition and circumstances of the Metropolitan, so that appropriate measures may be taken to assure his personal well-being as well as the good estate of the Church.</p>
<p><b>Article III</b></p> <p><b>The All-American Council</b></p>	
<p><b>Section 1 Authority</b></p> <p>The highest legislative and administrative authority within the Church is the All-American Council. (Cf. Article III, Section 12)</p>	<p><b>Section 1 Definition</b></p> <p>The All-American Council is the highest legislative and administrative authority within the Church. The Council brings together the various elements of the Church</p>



<p><b>Section 2 Composition</b></p> <p>a. The Metropolitan and all bishops of the Church;</p> <p>b. The priests of each parish and an equal number of lay delegates;</p> <p>c. Priests not having parishes if accredited by the Metropolitan Council;</p> <p>d. One lay delegate from each parish not having a priest;</p> <p>e. The members and the alternate members of the Metropolitan Council, and the members of the Auditing Committee of the Church;</p> <p>f. Two delegates from each theological seminary;</p> <p>g. Members of the Pre-Conciliar Commission;</p> <p>h. One representative of each Church organization officially accredited by the Holy Synod;</p> <p>i. Additional persons may be invited by the Pre-Conciliar Commission with the approval of the Metropolitan to attend one or more sessions of the All-American Council, 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 All-American Council;</p> <p>j. All lay members of the All-American Council shall have the same qualifications for membership as the parish delegates (Cf. Article III, Section 6).</p>	<p>to bear witness to her identity, unity, and mission.</p> <p><b>Section 2 Composition</b></p> <p>Accredited members of the All-American Council shall include:</p> <p>a. The Metropolitan and the others members of the Holy Synod;</p> <p>b. Auxiliary bishops;</p> <p>c. The parish priest and associate priests, if any, of each parish and an equal number of lay delegates from that parish;</p> <p>d. Military chaplains;</p> <p>e. One assigned deacon from parishes having one;</p> <p>f. One lay delegate from each parish not having an assigned priest;</p> <p>g. The members and alternates of the Metropolitan Council;</p> <p>h. The members of the Auditing Committee of the Church;</p> <p>i. Two delegates, one priest or deacon and one layperson, from each theological institution;</p> <p>j. The superiors of monasteries, if accredited by their Bishop;</p> <p>k. Members of the Preconciliar Commission.</p> <p>An attached or retired priest or deacon, if accredited by his bishop, may be seated with accredited members of the All-American Council, with voice but without the right to vote. Observers may be admitted to the Council following the</p>
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<p><b>Section 3 Periodicity</b></p> <p>The All-American Council shall be convened periodically at intervals of three years. Each All-American Council 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 Metropolitan Council with the approval of the Holy Synod.</p> <p><b>Section 4 Requirements for Representation at the All-American Council</b></p> <p>Every parish which has remitted all established assessments determined by previous All- American Councils 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 an All-American Council occurs in order to have lay representation.</p> <p><b>Section 5 The Pre-Conciliar Commission</b></p> <p>At least one year prior to the next All-American Council, upon nomination by the Metropolitan Council, the Holy Synod shall appoint a Pre-Conciliar Commission which shall be entrusted with the following responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. To publish and distribute the agenda, notices, and arrangements for the All-American Council at least 60 days prior to the established date;</li> <li>b. To publish and distribute the proper credentials and certification forms at least 30 days prior to the All-American Council;</li> <li>c. To collect and certify the credentials of all delegates; To fix and collect the registration fees from each parish;</li> </ul>	<p>registration procedures established by the Preconciliar Commission, without voice or the right to vote.</p> <p>Additional persons may be invited by the Preconciliar Commission with the approval of the Metropolitan to attend one or more sessions of the All-American Council as guests, and, if requested, to address the Council, but without the right to vote.</p> <p><b>Section 3 Periodicity</b></p> <p>The All-American Council shall be convened periodically, normally at intervals of three years. In extraordinary circumstances, such as the unexpected vacancy in the office of the Metropolitan, for which provisions are made in Article IV, Section 3, an extraordinary All-American Council shall be summoned. The place and precise time of the next meeting of the All-American Council shall be determined by action of the Metropolitan Council with the approval of the Holy Synod.</p> <p><b>Section 4 Competence</b></p> <p>The following matters are within the competence of the All-American Council. The All-American Council shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Adopt and amend the Statute;</li> <li>b. Nominate candidates for the Office of Metropolitan as outlined in the Statute (cf. Article IV, Section 4);</li> <li>c. Approve and implement Church-wide initiatives with regard to the missionary, educational, financial, and philanthropic activities of the Church;</li> <li>d. Provide for financial support of the Church;</li> </ul>
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<p>d. To prepare the agenda and submit it to the Holy Synod and Metropolitan Council for approval (the agenda may be changed by vote at the All-American Council);</p> <p>e. To ascertain that all reports to the All-American Council be in written form and that they be distributed to every delegate at least 30 days prior to the established date.</p> <p>f. The Pre-Conciliar Commission shall establish those committees which may be necessary for the proper operation of the Council, such as a local functioning committee, a resolutions committee, credentials committee, translations committee, etc.</p> <p><b>Section 6 Election, Qualification, and Accreditation of Lay Delegates</b></p> <p>The lay delegates and alternates to the All-American Council must meet the following requirements to, be validly elected, qualified, and accredited:</p> <p>a. Be elected by a parish meeting;</p> <p>b. Be a voting member of the parish in good standing (Cf. Article X, 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.)</p> <p>c. The lay delegate or delegates will personally receive from their parish a uniform document supplied by the Central Church Administration. The parish rector</p>	<p>e. Consider and act upon resolutions properly before the All-American Council;</p> <p>f. Receive reports from the Metropolitan, Church Officers, stavropegial institutions, departments, commissions, committees, and boards of the Church;</p> <p>g. Elect six (6) At-large members of the Metropolitan Council and two alternates;</p> <p>h. Elect members of the Pension Board and alternates.</p> <p><b>Section 5 The Preconciliar Commission</b></p> <p>The Holy Synod shall appoint a Preconciliar Commission, nominated by the Metropolitan Council. The Preconciliar Commission shall:</p> <p>a. Recommend to the Metropolitan Council and Holy Synod, for their approval and confirmation, the dates, location, and theme of the All-American Council;</p> <p>b. Establish such committees as may be necessary for the proper operation of the All-American Council, such as a local functioning committee, a resolutions committee, a credentials committee, and a translations committee;</p> <p>c. Propose an agenda for the All-American Council and submit it to the Holy Synod and Metropolitan Council for approval, it being understood that the agenda may be changed by vote of the All-American Council;</p> <p>d. Establish and oversee procedures for registration and certification of members and observers at the All-</p>
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<p>shall forward to the Pre-Conciliar Commission the name and the address of the elected lay delegate or delegates and alternates two months prior to the All-American Council. 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-Conciliar Commission by the dean of the theological seminary, immediately after their appointment.</p>	<p>American Council;</p> <p>e. Establish All-American Council assessments and fees;</p> <p>f. Disseminate the agenda, notices, and arrangements for the All-American Council at least sixty (60) days prior to the date set for the convening of the All-American Council;</p> <p>g. Ensure that proposed amendments to the Statute, together with recommendations of the Commission on Canons and Statutes, are disseminated at least sixty (60) days prior to the date set for the convening of the All-American Council;</p> <p>h. Notify members and observers of their certification at least thirty (30) days prior to date set for the convening of the All-American Council;</p> <p>i. Assure that all reports to the All-American Council are in written form and that they are disseminated at least thirty (30) days prior to the date set for the convening of the council.</p>
<p><b>Section 7 Language</b></p>	
<p>The official language of the All-American Council shall be English.</p>	
<p><b>Section 8 Presiding Officers</b></p>	
<p>The presiding officer of the All-American Council shall be the Metropolitan or, in the case of his absence or vacancy in office, a bishop appointed by the Holy Synod; Two vice-chairmen, one from the clergy and one from the laity, shall be elected by the All-American Council.</p>	
<p><b>Section 9 Secretariat</b></p>	<p><b>Section 6 Requirement for Parish Representation at the All-American Council</b></p>
<p>The Council shall elect a secretariat sufficient for its needs and which will perform its task under a chairman, also elected by the Council.</p>	<p>Each parish which has fulfilled its financial obligations to the Church as established by All-American Councils and by its diocese is entitled to representation at the All-American Council.</p>
<p><b>Section 10 Minutes</b></p>	<p><b>Section 7 Qualification, Election, and Accreditation of Lay Delegates</b></p>
<p>The minutes of the Council shall be prepared by the secretariat, signed by the chairman, and submitted to the presiding officer. This should be done within 24 hours after the completion of the particular</p>	<p>a. Each parish shall elect at a Parish Assembly lay delegates equal to the number of priests as defined in Article III,</p>

<p>session. Any disagreements or disputes shall be submitted to the next session of the Council. If the Council has adjourned, the disagreement shall be referred to the newly-elected Metropolitan Council, which meets the following day. Within a period of not more than 60 days after the final adjournment of the Council, the official text of the minutes shall be mailed to each delegate.</p> <p><b>Section 11 <i>Services</i></b></p> <p>The order of liturgical services at the Council shall be determined in advance by the Holy Synod.</p> <p><b>Section 12 <i>Approval by the Hierarchy</i></b></p> <p>All resolutions adopted by the Council 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 Council. 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 Council and transmitted to the Council at the beginning of the session that immediately follows.</p> <p>At the final session of the Council, 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 Metropolitan or other presiding bishop shall cast an additional vote in order to break the tie.</p> <p>In case the Holy Synod shall disapprove any resolution adopted by the Council, it shall submit to the Council the reasons for</p>	<p>Section 2.c, and one alternate. In order to be validly elected and accredited, the lay delegates and alternates to the All-American Council from parishes must be voting members of the parish as defined in Article XII, Section 5.d of this Statute.</p> <p>b. The parish priest shall attest to the qualification and election of the delegates and alternate in the manner determined by the Preconciliar Commission. In case the office of the parish priest is vacant or the parish priest is incapacitated or otherwise prevented from making such an attestation, this responsibility shall be assumed by the District Dean or Diocesan Bishop.</p> <p>c. Observers may be admitted to the Council following the registration procedures established by the Preconciliar Commission,</p> <p>d. Provisions for the qualification and accreditation of lay delegates from stavropegial institutions and other Church-recognized institutions shall be substantially similar to those in Section VII, 2 and 3 as determined by the institution in consultation with the bishop with canonical oversight. They shall be appropriately accredited by the abbot, rector or comparable superior of the stavropegial institution they represent.</p> <p><b>Section 8 <i>Divine Services</i></b></p> <p>The order of liturgical services at the All-American Council shall be determined in advance by the Holy Synod.</p> <p><b>Section 9 <i>Language</i></b></p> <p>The official texts and communications of the All-American Council shall be published in the English language. Proceedings and texts shall be translated to</p>
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such disapproval.

**Section 13 Quorum**

At least a majority of the council 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 All-American Council. The Pre-Conciliar Commission, or the Council itself, may determine that voting in certain matters shall be by secret ballot.

**Section 15 Auditing Committee**

An auditing committee consisting of three members shall be nominated and appointed by the Metropolitan Council at its first meeting following the election of Metropolitan Council members at the All-American Council. The term of service shall be from appointment to the end of the next All-American Council. Its duties shall be to audit all accounts of The Orthodox Church in America on a semiannual basis and review the audited accounts of all stavropegial institutions on an annual basis and to report same to the Metropolitan Council. The Chairman of the auditing committee shall attend sessions of the Metropolitan Council only to make the committee's reports. All auditors shall have relevant professional experience. An auditor shall succeed himself for only one additional term, and may only be removed for cause by a two thirds vote of the Metropolitan Council. Vacancies in the auditing committee are filled by the Metropolitan Council.

and from English as necessary.

**Section 10 Presiding Officers**

a. The presiding officer of the All-American Council shall be the Metropolitan. If the Metropolitan is unable to attend a session of the All-American Council because of temporary circumstances, he may delegate a member of the Holy Synod to preside in his absence. If the Metropolitan is impeded from presiding at a regular session of the All-American Council for a serious reason such as a medical emergency of an indeterminate nature or duration, the member of the Holy Synod senior by rank and date of episcopal ordination shall preside. In the case of a vacancy in the Office of Metropolitan, the Locum Tenens shall preside, in accordance with the provisions of Article IV, Section 3 of this Statute.

b. Two vice-chairpersons, one priest or deacon and one layperson, shall be elected by the All-American Council.

**Section 11 Secretariat**

The Council shall elect a secretariat sufficient for its needs. It shall also elect the chairperson of the secretariat.

**Section 12 Minutes**

The official minutes of each session of the All-American Council shall be prepared by the secretariat, signed by its chairperson, and submitted to the presiding officer of the Council for review and approval by the Holy Synod. This review shall take place within twenty-four (24) hours of the adjournment of the session. Upon approval by the Holy Synod the minutes shall be distributed to the Council at its next

session. Any disagreements or disputes relating to the minutes shall be raised at that time. If the final session of the Council has adjourned, disagreements or disputes concerning that session's minutes shall be referred to the newly-elected Metropolitan Council for consideration at its first meeting. Within a period of not more than sixty (60) days after the conclusion of the All-American Council, the official text of the minutes shall be transmitted to each member of the Council.

**Section 13 *Quorum***

A majority of the All-American Council members who have been accredited and registered shall constitute a quorum.

**Section 14 *Procedures and Voting***

As its first order of business, the Council shall adopt rules and procedures for the conduct of its business.

Resolutions and decisions made in plenary sessions of the All-American Council shall require a majority vote, except for the election of the Metropolitan, which is governed by special provisions (cf. Article IV, Section 4).

**Section 15 *Approval by the Holy Synod***

Every resolution or decision made in a plenary session of the Council shall be reviewed by the Holy Synod within twenty-four (24) hours of the adjournment of that session. The Holy Synod's approval or rejection of a resolution or decision shall be reported to the presiding officer of the Council and transmitted to the Council at the beginning of the following session. In case the Holy Synod does not accept a resolution or decision adopted by a plenary session of the Council, it shall explain its

reasons for not accepting the resolution or decision. At the final session of the Council, a recess shall be taken for an appropriate period prior to final adjournment in order that the Holy Synod have an opportunity to act on any resolutions or decisions made at that session.

**Section 16 Pension Board**

a. Definition

The Pension Board is an autonomous executive body, established by the All-American Council, that supervises administration of The Orthodox Church in America Pension Plan, which is a retirement plan established and mandated by the Church for all eligible clergy and lay employees. The assets of the Pension Plan constitute property held in trust for beneficiaries of the Pension Plan and are not assets of The Orthodox Church in America.

b. Composition

i. The Board consists of seven (7) members. The Holy Synod appoints one bishop to membership on the Pension Board; the All-American Council elects the remaining members;

ii. The Pension Board appoints one or more trustees from its membership;

c. Terms of Office

The bishop appointed to the Pension Board shall serve at the pleasure of the Holy Synod. The other members of the Pension Board are priests or deacons and laypersons in equal number elected as follows:

i. At each All-American Council, if



	<p>there are vacancies on the membership of the Pension Board to be filled by election by the All-American Council, the priest or deacon and the layperson who receive the highest number of votes are elected for a term from one All-American Council through the next two All-American Councils excluding any extraordinary All-American Council.</p> <p>ii. The priest or deacon and the layperson who receive the next highest number of votes are elected for a term from one All-American Council through the next All-American Council excluding any extraordinary All-American Council.</p> <p>iii. The All-American Council also elects two alternates, one priest or deacon and one layperson. The priest or deacon and the layperson who receive the next highest number of votes are elected as alternates for a term from one All-American Council through the next All-American Council excluding any extraordinary All-American Council.</p> <p>iv. An alternate shall fill a permanent vacancy on the Pension Board, complete the balance of the vacated term of the person whom he or she replaces, and assume all member duties and privileges relating to re-election.</p> <p>Members of the Pension Board are eligible for re-election for one additional term, regardless of the length of term.</p> <p>d. Periodicity The Pension Board shall meet quarterly, or as often as it is professionally necessary to accomplish effective administration.</p> <p>e. Competence The following matters are within the competence of the Pension Board. The</p>
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	<p>Pension Board shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Submit the Pension Plan and any proposed amendments to the Pension Plan to the Metropolitan Council for adoption;</li> <li>ii. Uphold the provisions of the Pension Plan as defined by the Plan Document and comply with United States Internal Revenue Service regulations that qualify it for favorable tax exempt status as a qualified pension plan and any other applicable regulations;</li> <li>iii. Consult on a regular basis with professional investment, legal, actuarial, accounting and auditing providers, as it deems appropriate in order to evaluate plan provisions and capabilities, while securing the stability, financial security and viability of the Pension Plan, with a goal of providing optimum benefits for plan participants;</li> <li>iv. Report to the All-American Council on the activities and status of the plan and each year to the Metropolitan Council.</li> </ul>
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**Article IV**

**The Metropolitan**

<p><b>Section 1 <i>The Metropolitan</i></b></p> <p>Among the bishops of the Church, the Metropolitan enjoys primacy, being the first among equals. He is the Primate of the Orthodox Church in America, and is the diocesan bishop of one of the dioceses of the Church and bears the title, "Metropolitan of All-America and Canada." He supervises the internal and external welfare of the Church and represents it in its relations with other Orthodox Churches, religious organizations, and</p>	<p><b>Section 1 <i>The Metropolitan</i></b></p> <p>The Metropolitan enjoys primacy of honor among the bishops of The Orthodox Church in America. As Primate, he shows concern for the internal and external welfare of the entire Church. He is the president of the Holy Synod. He is the ruling archbishop of the Diocese of Washington and bears the title "Metropolitan of the United States and Canada." The Metropolitan is commemorated by all bishops during</p>
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<p>secular authorities. The Metropolitan's name is mentioned during liturgical services by the other bishops of the Church. The Metropolitan mentions the names of the other heads of autocephalous Orthodox Churches.</p> <p><b>Section 2 Duties</b></p> <p>The Metropolitan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Consecrates and distributes the Holy Chrism;</li> <li>b. Provides the diocesan bishops with the Holy Relics necessary for the consecration of Church altars and Holy Antimensia;</li> <li>c. Convenes the All-American Council, presides over it, and promulgates its decisions;</li> <li>d. Convenes and presides over the meetings of the Holy Synod and of the Metropolitan Council;</li> <li>e. Issues pastoral letters addressed to the bishops, clergy, and laity of the Church;</li> <li>f. Reports to the Council concerning the life of the Church;</li> <li>g. Initiates action to fill vacancies in the office of diocesan bishop;</li> <li>h. Gives advice to his brother bishops, and in cases of necessity, submits their cases to the Holy Synod;</li> <li>i. Has 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;</li> <li>j. Receives petitions for admission of clergy from other Orthodox Churches.</li> </ul>	<p>liturgical services.</p> <p><b>Section 2 Competence</b></p> <p>The following matters are included within the competence of the Metropolitan. The Metropolitan shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Uphold the unity of the bishops of the Church;</li> <li>b. Convene and preside over all regular and special sessions of the Holy Synod and all sessions of the Standing Synod;</li> <li>c. Supervise implementation of decisions of the Holy Synod;</li> <li>d. Appoint a Locum Tenens in the event of a vacancy in the office of a Diocesan Bishop;</li> <li>e. Initiate action to fill a vacancy in the office of Diocesan Bishop, confirm his election by the Holy Synod, and preside, or delegate another bishop to preside, at his enthronement;</li> <li>f. Preside, or delegate another bishop to preside, at the ordination of all bishops;</li> <li>g. Confirm the election by the Holy Synod of an auxiliary bishop;</li> <li>h. Give fraternal counsel to a brother bishop as necessary regarding his personal life or the exercise of his archpastoral ministry, and if the bishop disregards this counsel, the Metropolitan may submit the matter to the Holy Synod;</li> <li>i. Receive and, in consultation with the other members of the Holy Synod, act upon petitions of priests and deacons from other Orthodox Churches seeking acceptance into the ranks of the clergy of</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Section 3 <i>Vacancy in Office</i></b></p> <p>The office of Metropolitan 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.</p> <p><b>Section 4 <i>Election</i></b></p> <p>When a vacancy has occurred in the office of Metropolitan, the bishop senior by rank and date of consecration shall convene the Holy Synod. After the formal vote declaring the vacancy, the Holy Synod will proceed with the election of a locum tenens. Within a period not exceeding three months (unless some unavoidable necessity forces a prolongment of this period), the locum tenens will convene an All-American Council at which a successor shall be elected.</p> <p>If not already a bishop, a candidate for the office of Metropolitan must fulfill the canonical, moral, and educational requirements stated in Article VI, Section 9.</p> <p>The election shall take place according to the following order:</p> <p>a. The Council nominates candidates by secret ballot without previous discussion of names. A blank paper ballot shall be distributed to each member of the Council before the vote.</p> <p>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 Council, his name shall be submitted to the Holy Synod for approval by majority vote;</p>	<p>The Orthodox Church in America;</p> <p>j. Receive and, in consultation with the other members of the Holy Synod, act upon petitions of non-Orthodox clergy seeking reception into the ranks of the clergy of the Orthodox Church in America;</p> <p>k. Represent the Church in its relations with other Orthodox Churches, other religious bodies and organizations, and secular authorities;</p> <p>l. Commemorate the Primates of other autocephalous Churches in liturgical services;</p> <p>m. Convene and preside over the All-American Council, report to it on the life of the Church, and promulgate its decisions;</p> <p>n. Convene and preside over meetings of the Metropolitan Council;</p> <p>o. Serve as president of the Church as a civil corporation;</p> <p>p. Select the Chancellor, Secretary, Treasurer, and any other officers of the Church for recommendation to the Metropolitan Council and subsequent confirmation by the Holy Synod;</p> <p>q. Supervise Church Officers and receive regular reports from them;</p> <p>r. Supervise and have pastoral care of stavropegial institutions;</p> <p>s. Supervise the ministry of military and institutional chaplaincies and act as the Church's ecclesiastical endorser of chaplains;</p> <p>t. Consecrate and distribute Holy Chrism;</p>
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<p>in case of rejection, the Holy Synod shall formally state the reasons which motivated the rejection.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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 majority vote.</p> <p>e. Upon his election, and before the dismissal of the All-American Council, the new Metropolitan will be enthroned according to the established ritual.</p>	<p>u. Provide Diocesan Bishops with Holy Relics necessary for the consecration of Church altars and Holy Antimensia;</p> <p>v. Maintain in conjunction with the Holy Synod and appropriate Officers of the Church the patrimony of the Office of the Metropolitan;</p> <p>w. Issue pastoral letters addressed to bishops, clergy, monastics, and laity of the Church;</p> <p>x. Exercise pastoral care with the right of initiative and pastoral intervention in all matters concerning the life of the Church within the framework of the Sacred Canons.</p> <p>The Metropolitan possesses the authority necessary to exercise his primatial ministry within the Church in conformity with the Holy Canons.</p> <p><b>Section 3 <i>Vacancy in Office</i></b></p> <p>In the event of the Metropolitan's death, retirement or resignation accepted by the Holy Synod, medically certified incapacity, or deposition by canonical process, the member of the Holy Synod senior by rank and date of episcopal ordination shall convene the Holy Synod in extraordinary session to declare the office of the Metropolitan vacant and proceed with the selection of a Locum Tenens. Within a period of three months, unless some unavoidable necessity forces a prolongment of this period, but not to exceed six months, the Locum Tenens shall convene an extraordinary All-American Council at which a new Metropolitan shall be elected. During a vacancy there shall be no innovations in matters affecting the basic structures and administration of the Church. The Chancellor shall safeguard the</p>
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particular patrimony of the Office of the Metropolitan until a new Metropolitan is elected.

**Section 4 *Election***

A nominee for the Office of Metropolitan must have at least three years of episcopal ministry in The Orthodox Church in America.

The election shall take place according to the following order:

a. The All-American Council, without previous discussion of names, proposes nominees by secret ballot. An official paper ballot shall be distributed to each voting member of the Council present at that session.

b. On the first vote, a single name shall be written on each ballot. If a name of a person is written on a number of ballots equal to at least two-thirds of the total number of voting members in attendance at that session of the Council, this nominee shall be presented to the Holy Synod for canonical election. If the Holy Synod does not elect the nominee, a member of the Holy Synod shall formally state the reason for which the nominee was not elected.

c. If no canonical election results from the first vote, a second vote shall be taken by the All-American Council. An official paper ballot shall be distributed to each voting member of the Council present at that session.

d. On 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 nominees who receive the highest number of ballots on the second

	<p>vote shall be submitted to the Holy Synod for canonical election of one of these nominees.</p> <p>e. With his acceptance of the canonical election by the Holy Synod, the new Metropolitan has full authority and prerogatives as Archbishop of Washington and Metropolitan of the United States and Canada, and he is immediately invested with the insignia of his Office.</p>
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**Article V**

**The Metropolitan Council**

<p><b>Section 1 Organization</b></p> <p>The Metropolitan Council is the permanent executive body of the Church Administration which exists for the purpose of implementing the decisions of the All-American Council and continuing its work between sessions. It shall consist of the Metropolitan as Chairman, the Chancellor, the Secretary, the Treasurer, two representatives from each diocese, one priest and one layman, to be elected by the Diocesan Assemblies; three priests and three laymen elected by the All-American Council. Vacancies occurring among diocesan representatives are filled by the respective dioceses. Two alternates are to be elected by the All-American Council, one priest and one layman, to fill vacancies occurring among members elected by the All-American Council.</p> <p>Membership on the Metropolitan Council by election at All-American Councils shall be as follows: Two clergymen and two laymen shall be elected by the Fourth All-American Council for terms of six years and three years. The clergyman and layman receiving the highest number of</p>	<p><b>Section 1 Definition</b></p> <p>The Metropolitan Council is the permanent executive body of the Church Administration which exists for the purpose of implementing the decisions of the All-American Council and continues the work of the Council between its sessions. The Metropolitan serves as the chairman of the Council.</p> <p><b>Section 2 Composition</b></p> <p>The Metropolitan Council shall consist of:</p> <p>a. The Metropolitan;</p> <p>b. The Chancellor, the Secretary, and the Treasurer of The Orthodox Church in America, ex officio;</p> <p>c. Two representatives from each diocese, one priest or deacon and one layperson, elected by the Diocesan Assembly unless otherwise provided for by Diocesan By-laws; and</p> <p>d. Six (6) representatives elected at-large by the All-American Council, three</p>
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votes will be elected for six years and those receiving the second highest votes will be elected for three years. At each succeeding All-American Council one clergy and one lay member will be elected for a six-year term. Members will be eligible for re-election after three years of non-membership on the Council. At each All-American Council one clergyman and one layman will be elected as alternates for a term of three years.

The Diocesan clergy and lay representatives will be elected for three years. Each may be re-elected for a second term and become eligible again after a three-year rest. It is recommended that the Diocese elect the clergy and lay representatives on alternate years to avoid replacement of both at the same time.

The Metropolitan Council may, between meetings, delegate a committee consisting of the Chancellor, Secretary, Treasurer and two other members to meet in conjunction with the Lesser Synod of Bishops upon their invitation, to discuss normal church administrative procedures. This committee shall report back to the Metropolitan Council concerning all actions and decisions.

### **Section 2 *Quorum and Voting***

A majority of the members of the Metropolitan Council will constitute the quorum. All matters of the Metropolitan 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 Metropolitan Council shall become effective upon approval of the Metropolitan or Holy Synod, depending on the nature of the decision.

priests or deacons and three laypersons. An alternate becomes a member of the Metropolitan Council only when a permanent vacancy in an at-large membership occurs.

### **Section 3 *Periodicity***

The Metropolitan Council shall meet at least twice each year.

### **Section 4 *Terms of Office***

a. Ex officio members of the Metropolitan Council serve for the duration of their time in office.

b. Diocesan Representatives to the Metropolitan Council are elected for a term of three (3) years.

c. At-large representatives of the Metropolitan Council are elected for a term from one All-American Council through the next, excluding any extraordinary All-American Council.

d. All elected representatives, whether diocesan or at-large, may serve no more than two successive terms.

### **Section 5 *Vacancies in Office***

a. Unless provided for by Diocesan By-laws, permanent vacancies occurring among Diocesan Representatives are filled by the next Diocesan Assembly, with permanent vacancies occurring in the interim being filled by appointment of the Diocesan Council.

b. In those cases in which a Diocesan Representative is temporarily unable to attend meetings of the Metropolitan Council, the Diocesan Authority may designate a substitute to attend as a guest of



<p><b>Section 3 Periodicity</b></p> <p>The Metropolitan Council shall meet at least twice a year.</p> <p><b>Section 4 Competence</b></p> <p>The Metropolitan Council:</p> <p>a. Implements the decisions of the All-American Council and of the Holy Synod in the areas of its competence;</p> <p>b. Assists the Metropolitan and the Holy Synod in implementing decisions within the areas of its competence;</p> <p>c. Establishes the budget for the operations of the Church and examines all financial reports of the Church;</p> <p>d. Supervises the collection of the assessments and fees established by the All-American Council and determines the allocation of such funds;</p> <p>e. Organizes plans for obtaining voluntary contributions for the satisfaction of the needs of the Church;</p> <p>f. Provides for the maintenance of the central administrative bodies of the Church and for the allocation of the general Church funds;</p> <p>g. Decides on the purchase, sale, or mortgaging of property of the Church, except in cases covered in Article X, Section 8;</p> <p>h. Maintains an inventory of all properties of the Church;</p> <p>i. Provides for the establishment and maintenance of institutions of charity and education, as well as for publications for</p>	<p>the Metropolitan Council, with right of voice but not the right to vote.</p> <p>c. Permanent vacancies occurring among at-large members are filled by alternates who have been elected by the All-American Council, one priest or deacon and one layperson.</p> <p><b>Section 6 Quorum and Voting</b></p> <p>A majority of the members of the Metropolitan Council will constitute a quorum. All decisions of the Metropolitan Council are made by a majority vote of those present; in case of a tie, the deciding vote shall be cast by the Chairperson. The decisions of the Metropolitan Council shall become effective upon approval by the Metropolitan or the Holy Synod, depending on the nature of the decision. Guests may be invited to attend sessions of the Metropolitan Council by any member, with the approval of the Metropolitan. Guests shall have no right to vote but may address the Council if requested.</p> <p><b>Section 7 Competence</b></p> <p>The following matters are within the competence of the Metropolitan Council. The Metropolitan Council shall:</p> <p>a. Implement the decisions of the All-American Council and continue the work of the All-American Council between sessions in the areas of its competence;</p> <p>b. Assist the Metropolitan and the Holy Synod in implementing decisions within the competence;</p> <p>c. Establish and implement the annual budget for the operations of the Church;</p> <p>d. Supervise and review the audit of</p>
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<p>the propagation of the Orthodox Faith;</p> <p>j. Determines the forms and books necessary for the keeping of records and statistical data by the dioceses, requiring all statistics necessary for reports;</p> <p>k. Appoints officers and committees on matters within its competence;</p> <p>l. Initiates, prosecutes, and defends all legal matters affecting the interest of the Church;</p> <p>m. May receive reports from any department in areas within the competence of the Metropolitan Council.</p>	<p>all financial reports and records of the Church and see to their prompt and transparent publication;</p> <p>e. Supervise the collection of revenues as authorized by the All-American Council;</p> <p>f. Develop and implement programs of planned giving for support of the Church, including gifts, grants, bequests, and other contributions;</p> <p>g. Oversee the management of Church properties and investments;</p> <p>h. Consider and authorize the purchase, rental, sale, mortgaging, or alienation of the real and personal property of the Church, except in cases covered in Article XII, Section 9;</p> <p>i. Conserve the spiritual and cultural patrimony of the Church including not only real property but also personal property, particularly items of religious, spiritual, liturgical, cultural, historic, and artistic significance;</p> <p>j. Maintain an inventory of all properties of the Church both real and personal;</p> <p>k. Initiate, prosecute, and defend all legal matters affecting the interests of the Church;</p> <p>l. Recommend for confirmation by the Holy Synod the Metropolitan's selection of the Chancellor, Secretary, Treasurer, and other officers of the Church whose competence or service extend beyond the boundaries of a single diocese;</p> <p>m. Provide for publication and dissemination of materials for promoting the Orthodox Faith;</p>
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	<p>n. Determine the data and means necessary for collecting and reporting on the state of the Church, and direct the appropriate Church Officers to collect, preserve, and report on the results;</p> <p>o. Receive and act upon reports from the Church Officers, Church institutions, departments, commissions, committees, and boards in areas within its competence;</p> <p>p. Appoint committees and officers in areas within its competence, determine the scope of their activities, and receive their reports in a timely fashion;</p> <p>q. Nominate a Preconciliar Commission for appointment by the Holy Synod;</p> <p>r. Assist the Holy Synod in determining the dates, location, and theme of the All-American Council;</p> <p>s. Nominate and appoint members of the Auditing Committee and receive written reports from it in accordance with Article V, Section 9;</p> <p>t. Adopt and amend the Pension Plan of The Orthodox Church in America upon recommendation of the Pension Board, in accordance with Article III, Section 16;</p> <p>u. Resolve disputes regarding the minutes of the All-American Council, as provided for in Article III, Section 12.</p> <p><b>Section 8 <i>Administrative Committee</i></b></p> <p>The Metropolitan Council may appoint a committee consisting of the Chancellor, Secretary, Treasurer, and two additional members of the Metropolitan Council to meet with the Standing Synod of Bishops</p>
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	<p>upon its invitation, for discussion of routine administrative matters. This committee shall present a written report to the Metropolitan Council concerning all discussions and actions.</p> <p><b>Section 9 Auditing Committee</b></p> <p>An Auditing Committee, consisting of three persons with relevant professional experience, shall be appointed by the Metropolitan Council at its first meeting following adjournment of a normally convened All-American Council. Members of the Auditing Committee shall serve for a term from one All-American Council through the next, excluding any extraordinary meetings of the All-American Council. The Committee's duties shall be to audit all accounts of The Orthodox Church in America on a semiannual basis, to review the audited accounts of all stavropegial institutions on an annual basis and to present written reports to the Metropolitan Council. The Chairman of the Auditing Committee shall attend sessions of the Metropolitan Council solely to make the Committee's reports. An Audit Committee member may succeed himself/herself for one additional term, and may be removed only for cause by a two-thirds vote of the Metropolitan Council. Any vacancy in the Auditing Committee shall be filled in a timely fashion by the Metropolitan Council.</p>
<p><b>Article VI</b></p> <p><b>Church Officers</b></p> <p><i>(Existing Statute Article VI was The Diocese which is now Article VII and a new Article on Church Officers is added here)</i></p>	
<p><b>Does Not Exist</b></p>	<p><b>Section 1 Definition</b></p> <p>The Church Officers shall be a Chancellor, a Treasurer, and a Secretary. Church</p>

	<p>Officers assist the Metropolitan and the Holy Synod in the administration of the Church and work with the Metropolitan Council in carrying out its particular competence. The Chancellor, Treasurer, and Secretary, together with the Metropolitan, also serve as corporate officers of the Church. Those holding additional positions may be designated as Church Officers by the Holy Synod and the Metropolitan Council, as needed.</p> <p>The Church Officers work under the direct supervision of the Metropolitan and report to the Holy Synod and to the Metropolitan Council of which they are ex officio members.</p> <p><b>Section 2: <i>Terms of Office</i></b></p> <p>The Church Officers are selected by the Metropolitan and confirmed in their positions by the Holy Synod, upon recommendation of the Metropolitan Council. The Metropolitan Council establishes the compensation and benefits for the Church Officers.</p> <p>Church Officers are at-will employees and can be dismissed by the Metropolitan with agreement of the Holy Synod and the Metropolitan Council.</p> <p>Upon the election of a new Metropolitan, Church Officers remain in their positions for no less than six (6) months after the election in order to assure a smooth transition in the administration of the Church.</p> <p><b>Section 3: <i>Competencies</i></b></p> <p>The following matters are within the competencies of the Church Officers. The Church Officers shall:</p>
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	<p>a. Assist the Metropolitan and the Holy Synod in the administration of the Church;</p> <p>b. Serve as official representatives of the Metropolitan when so designated;</p> <p>c. Serve as ex officio members of the Metropolitan Council;</p> <p>d. Report on all aspects of their duties to the Metropolitan, the Holy Synod, the All-American Council, and the Metropolitan Council at regular intervals and as directed;</p> <p>e. Discharge their fiduciary responsibilities in a clear and transparent manner;</p> <p>f. Manage the financial resources of the Church responsibly and with integrity and report on their activities in a clear and transparent manner;</p> <p>g. Assure the proper maintenance of both the active and archival records of the Church;</p> <p>h. Have direct oversight over departments, commissions, committees, and boards of the Church;</p> <p>i. Perform such duties as assigned to them by the Metropolitan, Holy Synod, and the Metropolitan Council.</p> <p>When the Office of the Metropolitan is vacant, the Chancellor shall safeguard the particular patrimony of the Office of the Metropolitan until a new Metropolitan is elected.</p>
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**Article VII**

**The Diocese**

*(Some sections specific to the Diocesan Bishop has been moved to the new Article VIII)*

<p><b>Section 1 <i>The Diocese</i></b></p> <p>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.</p> <p><b>Section 2 <i>Boundaries</i></b></p> <p>The geographical boundaries of the diocese shall be determined by the Holy Synod of Bishops; The diocese may be divided geographically into deaneries, each headed by a dean elected according to the provisions of Article IX, Section 4.</p> <p><b>Section 3 <i>Establishment of Dioceses</i></b></p> <p>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.</p> <p><b>Section 4 <i>The Diocesan Bishop</i></b></p> <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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;</li> <li>b. Has the right of initiative and authoritative guidance in all matters concerning the life of his diocese;</li> <li>c. Shall distribute the Holy Chrism</li> </ul>	<p><b>Section 1 <i>Definition</i></b></p> <p>The Diocese is the basic Church body which unites parishes and institutions, usually in a defined geographical area, under the authority of a Diocesan Bishop. He governs with the assistance of a Diocesan Assembly and a Diocesan Council. For purposes of this Statute, the Diocesan Bishop, the Diocesan Council and the Diocesan Assembly, each acting in its proper capacity, shall constitute the Diocesan Authority.</p> <p><b>Section 2 <i>Establishment of and Modification to a Diocese</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The Holy Synod may modify the boundaries of an existing diocese, erect new dioceses and determine their boundaries, and suppress or merge dioceses according to the needs of the Church.</li> <li>b. The Holy Synod may establish dioceses that are not defined by a specific geographical area, but rather are composed of parishes and institutions that are characterized by a particular identity, as recognized and defined by the Holy Synod. Parishes and institutions affiliated with such dioceses shall be governed by its own Diocesan Bishop, who shall exercise within his Diocese the same authority as the Diocesan Bishop of a geographical diocese.</li> </ul> <p><b>Section 3 <i>Diocesan Bylaws</i></b></p> <p>Each Diocese shall have Bylaws adopted by and subject to amendment by the Diocesan Authority.</p> <p>The Bylaws, among other provisions, shall provide for:</p>
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<p>consecrated by the Metropolitan, and the Holy Antimensia to all churches in his diocese;</p> <p>d. Shall ordain Orthodox seminary graduates to the Diaconate and Priesthood for his diocese. Candidates otherwise qualified must receive the approval of the Holy Synod; consideration ought to be given to the candidate's wishes as to time and place of ordination;</p> <p>e. Shall appoint and transfer parish priests and other parish clergy within the limits of his diocese;</p> <p>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;</p> <p>g. Shall make canonical visits to the parishes of his diocese;</p> <p>h. Shall erect parishes, missions, chapels in his diocese; Shall consecrate Antimensia and churches and erect permanent altars;</p> <p>i. Shall be a member of the Holy Synod of Bishops in accordance with the provisions of Article 11, Section 2;</p> <p>j. Shall convene and preside over the Diocesan Council and Diocesan Assembly;</p> <p>k. May appoint a diocesan chancellor and other diocesan officers from among the members of the Diocesan Council;</p> <p>l. Shall exercise the right of supervision over the monastic communities in his diocese and appoint their superiors;</p> <p>m. Shall approve the decisions of the Diocesan Assembly, Diocesan Council, deanery, and parish meetings; Shall have</p>	<p>a. The nomination of a Diocesan Bishop in accordance with Article VIII, Sections 5-7, below;</p> <p>b. The composition and election of the Diocesan Council;</p> <p>c. The appointment, dismissal, and duties of Diocesan Officers;</p> <p>d. The terms of office, method of election, and duties of the Diocesan Auditing Committee, and,</p> <p>e. The amendment of the Diocesan Bylaws.</p> <p><b>Section 4 Deaneries</b></p> <p>The Diocese may be divided into Deaneries, each headed by a District Dean, who is selected according to the provisions of Article XI, Section 2, unless otherwise provided for in the Diocesan Bylaws. The number, names, and delineation of the Deaneries shall be determined by the Diocesan Authority.</p>
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custody, in the name of the diocese, of the consecrated items;

n. Shall reside within the limits of his diocese.

**Section 5 *Auxiliary Bishop***

If the good of the Church so require, 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.

**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 Metropolitan, 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 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 Orthodox Theology and that he be conversant in the English language.

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

c. If at the moment of his nomination he is a layman or a celibate or widowed priest, he shall pronounce at least the first monastic vows (rasophoria).

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

#### **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. If the Assembly fails to nominate a candidate acceptable to the Holy Synod, the Synod shall elect the bishop of the diocese;

c. Upon the approval of a candidate by the Holy Synod, he shall be summoned to a session of the Holy Synod for the canonical election.

#### **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;

<p>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;</p> <p>c. The installation of the newly-consecrated Bishop shall take place in the diocese and shall be officiated by the Metropolitan or by a senior Hierarchy of the Holy Synod.</p> <p><b>Section 12 Missions</b></p> <p>a. 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: Take measures to ensure that his clergy make an Orthodox witness in their communities;</p> <p>b. Direct parish clergy to extend the limits of their pastoral activity in an approach to the unchurched;</p> <p>c. Establish missions for the purpose of propagating the Orthodox Faith;</p> <p>d. Take measures to provide the necessary funds for missionary activity within his diocese.</p>	
<p><b>Article VIII</b></p> <p><b>The Diocesan Bishop</b> <i>(This is a new Article on the Diocesan Bishop which was part of the existing Article VII the Diocesan is now Article VIII)</i></p>	
<p><b>Portions Moved from Previous Article</b></p>	<p><b>Section 1 Definition</b></p> <p>By virtue of his canonical election by the Holy Synod and episcopal ordination, the</p>

Diocesan Bishop possesses full canonical authority within his Diocese, and shall exercise it with the assistance of diocesan clergy and laity. He is the Chief Shepherd of his diocese.

The Diocesan Bishop is a member of the Holy Synod in accordance with Article II, Section 1. He shall participate in its sessions and provide a regular report to the Holy Synod on the state of his Diocese.

The Diocesan Bishop shall have the title of a principal city within his Diocese, his title being determined by the Holy Synod. He shall reside within the limits of his Diocese. In all matters, the decisions and pronouncements of the Diocesan Bishop are final, except insofar as they are subject to appeal as provided in the Sacred Canons and this Statute.

**Section 2: Competence**

The following are within the competence of the Diocesan Bishop. The Diocesan Bishop shall:

- a. Expound the Faith and moral teaching of the Orthodox Church and guide his flock in accordance with Church doctrine;
- b. Have the right of initiative and authoritative guidance in all matters concerning the life of his Diocese, and may issue pastoral letters, instructions and regulations for the guidance of clergy and laity;
- c. Establish parishes, missions, provisional missions, mission stations, chapels, and monasteries in his Diocese;
- d. Consecrate churches and chapels, erect permanent altars, and consecrate and provide Holy Antimensia within his

	<p>Diocese;</p> <p>e. Distribute Holy Chrism consecrated by the Metropolitan;</p> <p>f. Maintain custody, with the appropriate Officers of the Diocese, of the patrimony of the Diocese;</p> <p>g. Assume possession, with the appropriate Officers of the Diocese, of the sacred and untouchable items, as well as all official records and archives, in all cases of the dissolution of a parish or monastery;</p> <p>h. Assure that his Diocese and its parishes and institutions are properly organized in accord with local civil law and that they have clear and unambiguous title to their real property;</p> <p>i. Convene and preside over the Diocesan Assembly and Diocesan Council;</p> <p>j. Approve or disallow the decisions of the Diocesan Assembly, Diocesan Council, and Deanery and parish meetings;</p> <p>k. Appoint Diocesan Officers, as provided in the Diocesan Bylaws, and maintain general oversight of and bear general responsibility for the efficient administration of his Diocese;</p> <p>l. Ordain qualified graduates of Orthodox seminaries to the priesthood and diaconate as well as lower clergy for his Diocese;</p> <p>m. Ordain candidates to the priesthood and diaconate for his Diocese otherwise qualified, with the approval of the Holy Synod;</p> <p>n. Appoint, transfer, remove, and grant retirement to parish clergy of his</p>
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	<p>Diocese;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>o. Accept clergy at his discretion from another Diocese of The Orthodox Church in America, receiving their personal dossier and a canonical release;</li><li>p. Release clergy at his discretion to another Diocese of The Orthodox Church in America, at the request of its Diocesan Bishop, issuing a canonical release and conveying their personal dossier and other appropriate documentation;</li><li>q. Exercise discipline over diocesan clergy and laity in all cases not requiring the action of a Church court;</li><li>r. Appoint the members of diocesan courts and exercise final authority regarding acceptance of their decisions and action upon their findings; in matters in which final judgment has been reserved to the Holy Synod by this Statute or by resolution of the Holy Synod, convey to the Synod the finding of a diocesan court and all relevant documentation relating to the case and the court's finding;</li><li>s. Honor worthy clergy and laity of his Diocese with diocesan awards, or request the Holy Synod to confer synodal awards in the prescribed manner;</li><li>t. Make canonical visits to the parishes, monasteries, and institutions of his Diocese on his own initiative;</li><li>u. Grant charters and exercise general oversight over diocesan monastic communities and, in consultation with the particular community, confirm its superior;</li><li>v. Establish diocesan educational or philanthropic institutions according to the needs of his Diocese, issue their charters,</li></ul>
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	<p>and appoint officers as provided in their charters.</p> <p>The Diocesan Bishop possesses the authority necessary to exercise his episcopal ministry within the Church in conformity with the Sacred Canons.</p> <p><b>Section 3 Compensation</b></p> <p>The Diocesan Bishop shall receive appropriate compensation commensurate with his position and responsibilities, a suitable retirement plan, and a residence or a housing allowance, as determined by norms and practices of the Diocese.</p> <p><b>Section 4 Auxiliary Bishop</b></p> <p>An Auxiliary Bishop may be appointed to the Diocese, with a city in the Diocese as his titular see, upon nomination by the Diocesan Bishop in consultation with the Diocesan Council, and canonical election by the Holy Synod, confirmed by the Metropolitan.</p> <p>An Auxiliary Bishop shall have his duties, responsibilities, and rights defined by the Diocesan Bishop and the Diocesan By-laws. He shall be an ex officio member of the Diocesan Council and the Diocesan Assembly.</p> <p>He shall receive adequate and proper compensation to be determined by norms and practices of the Diocese.</p> <p><b>Section 5 Vacancy in Office</b></p> <p>The office of Diocesan Bishop shall be declared vacant by the Holy Synod in the event of the incumbent's death, voluntary retirement or resignation accepted by the Holy Synod, medically certified incapacity, transfer, or deposition by canonical process.</p>
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**Section 6 *Qualifications***

- a. If he is not already a bishop, the candidate for the office of bishop shall be nominated from among the clergy or laity, monastic, celibate, or widowed.
- b. To receive episcopal ordination, the nominee must satisfy all the requirements of the Sacred Canons pertaining to this highest of all ecclesiastical offices.
- c. It is preferable that the candidate have completed a course of study in a graduate school of Orthodox theology.
- d. He should be conversant in the English language and, as appropriate, in another language commonly spoken among the faithful of the Diocese.
- e. If at the time of his nomination he is a layman or a celibate or widowed priest, he shall pronounce at least the first monastic vows (rasophore), if he has not already pronounced such vows.
- f. Diocesan bishops shall not be eligible for nomination for another diocese.

**Section 7 *The Vacant See***

- a. In the event of a vacancy in the office of Diocesan Bishop, a Locum Tenens, appointed by the Metropolitan, shall convoke and preside over a special Diocesan Assembly for the sole purpose of nominating a candidate as Diocesan Bishop.
- b. Should the election of a new Diocesan Bishop be delayed for an extraordinary length of time, the Holy Synod may authorize the Locum Tenens to assume additional authority proper to a



	<p>Diocesan Bishop, as required by the best interest and continuing welfare of the Diocese.</p> <p>c. The special Diocesan Assembly shall conduct the nomination in accord with the provisions of the Diocesan Bylaws, and the Locum Tenens shall submit the nominee to the Holy Synod according to procedures established by the Holy Synod.</p> <p>d. Upon the acceptance of the nomination by the Holy Synod, the candidate shall be summoned to a session of the Holy Synod for canonical election.</p> <p>e. If the special Diocesan Assembly fails to nominate a candidate acceptable to the Holy Synod, the Synod may elect another qualified candidate as Diocesan Bishop, or they may authorize another Diocesan Assembly to nominate.</p> <p>f. With his acceptance of the canonical election by the Holy Synod, the new Diocesan Bishop, if already of episcopal rank, has full authority and prerogatives as Diocesan Bishop of the Diocese to which he has been elected.</p> <p>g. If the Bishop-Elect is not yet of episcopal rank, his ordination should occur within thirty (30) days after his canonical election by the Holy Synod. The Metropolitan, or a senior hierarch of the Holy Synod whom he may delegate, shall preside.</p> <p>h. The new Diocesan Bishop's enthronement in his Diocese shall occur within two (2) weeks following his ordination or, if he is already of episcopal rank, his canonical election to the Diocese. The enthronement shall take place in the Diocese, preferably in the Diocesan</p>
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	<p>cathedral. The Metropolitan, or a senior hierarch of the Holy Synod whom he may delegate, shall preside.</p> <p><b>Section 8 <i>Mission Activity</i></b></p> <p>The Diocesan Bishop shall propagate and expound the Faith and moral teaching of the Orthodox Church among all people within the boundaries of his Diocese, both Orthodox Christians and those not members of the Orthodox Church.</p> <p>The Diocesan Bishop shall:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Ensure that his clergy witness to the Orthodox faith in their communities;</li> <li>b. Direct parish clergy also to extend their pastoral activity to the unchurched;</li> <li>c. Establish missions for the purpose of propagating the Orthodox Faith;</li> <li>d. Assure that necessary funds are provided for missionary activity within his diocese.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Article IX</b></p> <p><b>The Diocesan Assembly</b>  <i>(Moved from Existing Article VII)</i></p>	
<p><b>Section 1 <i>Divine Liturgy</i></b></p> <p>The Diocesan Assembly shall be opened with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and 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.</p> <p><b>Section 2 <i>Composition</i></b></p>	<p><b>Section 1 <i>Definition</i></b></p> <p>The Diocesan Assembly is the highest legislative and administrative authority within the Diocese, and assists the Diocesan Bishop in its governance. The Assembly brings together the various elements of the Diocese to bear witness to her identity, unity, and mission.</p> <p><b>Section 2 <i>Composition</i></b></p> <p>The Diocesan Assembly shall be composed</p>

<p>The Diocesan Assembly shall be composed of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The Diocesan Bishop;</li> <li>b. The senior priest of the Cathedral and the Abbots of monasteries;</li> <li>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;</li> <li>d. Priests not having parishes if accredited by the Diocesan Council;</li> <li>e. One lay delegate from each parish not having a priest;</li> <li>f. The members of the Diocesan Council and the members of its auditing committee;</li> <li>g. Two delegates from each theological seminary in the diocese;</li> <li>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;</li> <li>i. Additional persons 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).</li> </ol> <p><b>Section 3 Competence of the Diocesan Assembly</b></p>	<p>of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The Diocesan Bishop;</li> <li>b. The Auxiliary Bishop(s);</li> <li>c. The superiors of Diocesan monasteries;</li> <li>d. The priests and deacons of each parish, ex officio, and an equal number of lay delegates from each parish, elected as provided in Section 7 of this Article;</li> <li>e. One lay delegate from each parish not having a priest;</li> <li>f. The members of the Diocesan Council and the members of its Auditing Committee, if not otherwise qualified to attend;</li> <li>g. Two delegates, one priest or deacon and one layman, from the faculty and senior staff of each diocesan theological institution, appointed by the appropriate authority of the institutions;</li> <li>h. Attached clergy, if accredited by the Diocesan Council, with the permission of the Diocesan Bishop, with the right to attend and to speak from the floor of the Assembly, but without the right to vote;</li> <li>i. Retired bishops and other clergy resident in the diocese, if accredited by the Diocesan Council, with the permission of the Diocesan Bishop, with the right to attend and to speak from the floor of the Assembly, but without the right to vote;</li> <li>j. Members of special committees invited by the Diocesan Council to attend and participate in the discussions of the subject of their work;</li> </ol>
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<p>The Diocesan Assembly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Elects the members of the Diocesan Council and elects the Auditing Committee of the Diocesan Council;</li> <li>b. Nominates candidates for Diocesan Bishop according to Article VI, Sections 9 and 10;</li> <li>c. Approves measures to strengthen the Orthodox Faith and piety, religious education, and charities of the Diocese;</li> <li>d. Discusses financial means to fulfill these aims and approves the budget and other related financial questions;</li> <li>e. Authorizes the Diocesan Council to acquire, encumber, or otherwise dispose of diocesan properties;</li> <li>f. Participates in the implementation of the All-American Council decisions on the diocesan and parochial levels.</li> </ul> <p><b>Section 4 Periodicity</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p>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 VI, Sections 8 and 10.</p> <p><b>Section 5 Reports</b></p> <p>The Diocesan Council, acting with the approval of the Diocesan Bishop, shall determine the reports which are to be</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>k. Additional persons invited by the Diocesan Council with the permission of the Diocesan Bishop, to attend sessions of the Diocesan Assembly with or without the right to participate in the discussions, but without the right to vote.</li> </ul> <p>Members of a parish of the Diocese, having been accredited in a manner to be determined by the Diocesan Council, may attend the Diocesan Assembly as Observers and, with the agreement of the majority of the delegates, may be permitted to address the Assembly, but not to vote.</p> <p><b>Section 3 Periodicity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The Diocesan Assembly shall be convened at least once each calendar year, as determined by the Diocesan Council with the approval of the Diocesan Bishop. The place of the meeting is to be determined by the previous Diocesan Assembly; however, in case of necessity, the Diocesan Council may change the place of meeting.</li> <li>b. Special Diocesan Assemblies are convoked by the Diocesan Bishop in consultation with the Diocesan Council, or by the Locum Tenens for the election of a Diocesan Bishop as specified in Article VIII, Section 7.</li> </ul> <p><b>Section 4 Competence of the Diocesan Assembly</b></p> <p>The following are within the competence of the Diocesan Assembly. The Diocesan Assembly shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Consider and approve measures to strengthen the life of the Diocese and encourage the growth of her parishes and faithful people in Orthodox Faith and piety through the establishment and maintenance</li> </ul>
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<p>presented at the Diocesan Assembly and, if necessary, shall appoint the person or committee to make reports.</p>	<p>of educational, philanthropic and other necessary institutions, organizations and programs;</p>
<p><b>Section 6 Requirements for Representation at the Diocesan Assembly</b></p>	<p>b. Establish means for securing revenue necessary to fulfill these aims, to fund the diocesan administration, and to fulfill the diocesan financial obligations to the Church as determined by the All-American Council;</p>
<p>Every parish in the Diocese which has remitted all established assessments determined by previous All-American Councils 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.</p>	<p>c. Receive reports on the operation and activities of the Diocesan Administration and diocesan institutions, the Deaneries, the Auditing Committee, and organizations and programs;</p>
<p><b>Section 7 Election, Qualification, and Accreditation of Delegates</b></p>	<p>d. Authorize the Diocesan Council to acquire, encumber, or dispose of diocesan properties;</p>
<p>The lay delegates of the Diocesan Assembly must meet the following requirements to be validly elected, qualified, and accredited:</p>	<p>e. Approve the diocesan budget and otherwise allocate and encumber diocesan resources;</p>
<p>a. Be elected by a parish meeting or parish council;</p>	<p>f. Propose matters for consideration by the Metropolitan and Church Officers, the All-American Council, or the Metropolitan Council, as appropriate;</p>
<p>b. Be a voting member of the parish in good standing (Cf. Article X, 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 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.)</p>	<p>g. In the event of a vacancy in the office of Diocesan Bishop, and constituted as a special Assembly, nominate a candidate for that office to the Holy Synod, in accordance with Article VIII, Section 7.</p>
	<p>h. Elect the members of the Diocesan Council and Auditing Committee as provided in the Diocesan Bylaws;</p>
	<p>i. Elect Diocesan Representatives and alternates to the Metropolitan Council as provided in Article V, Section 2;</p>
	<p>j. Cooperate in the implementation the decisions of the Holy Synod, the All-</p>

<p>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.</p> <p><b>Section 8 Agenda</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p><b>Section 9 Presiding Officer</b></p> <p>The presiding officer of the Diocesan Assembly shall be the Diocesan Bishop, an Auxiliary Bishop; or a priest specifically appointed by him.</p> <p><b>Section 10 Vice-Chairmen</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p><b>Section 11 Secretariat</b></p>	<p>American Council, the Metropolitan Council, and other Church authorities on the diocesan and parochial levels.</p> <p><b>Section 5 Requirements for Representation at the Diocesan Assembly</b></p> <p>Every parish in the Diocese which has remitted all financial obligations determined by previous All-American Councils and all financial obligations determined by previous Diocesan Assemblies is entitled to representation as outlined in Section 2.d-e of this Article. The parish shall cover the expenses incurred by its delegates in attending the Assembly.</p> <p><b>Section 6 Reports</b></p> <p>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 persons or committees to make such reports.</p> <p><b>Section 7 Election and Accreditation of Delegates</b></p> <p>The lay delegates of the Diocesan Assembly must meet the following</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Be elected by a parish meeting or by the parish council in accordance with the requirements and procedures established for such an election in Diocesan or Parish By-laws;</li> <li>b. Be a parishioner in accordance with Article XII, Section 5;</li> <li>c. The elected delegates shall be accredited to the Assembly in accord with procedures and documentation established by the Diocesan Authority. The Parish Priest shall submit the proper</li> </ol>
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<p>The Diocesan Assembly shall elect as many secretaries as needed.</p> <p><b>Section 12 <i>Committee on Credentials</i></b></p> <p>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.</p> <p><b>Section 13 <i>Committees</i></b></p> <p>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.</p> <p><b>Section 14 <i>Sessions</i></b></p> <p>The number of sessions shall be determined by the Diocesan Council with the approval of the Diocesan Bishop.</p> <p><b>Section 15 <i>Approval by the Diocesan Bishop</i></b></p> <p>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.</p> <p><b>Section 16 <i>Minutes</i></b></p> <p>The minutes of the Assembly shall be prepared by the secretariat, 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,</p>	<p>documentation to the Diocesan Authority. If the parish or mission has no Parish Priest the District Dean shall oversee the election and submit the documentation. The delegates from a theological institution, if laymen, shall be accredited by the appropriate authority of the institution.</p> <p><b>Section 8 <i>Credentials Committee</i></b></p> <p>A Credentials Committee, appointed by the Diocesan Council with the approval of the Diocesan Bishop, or the Locum Tenens in the case of a Special Diocesan Assembly, shall verify the credentials of all members of the Diocesan Assembly and of additional persons invited by the Diocesan Council.</p> <p><b>Section 9 <i>Divine Services</i></b></p> <p>The order of liturgical services at the Diocesan Assembly shall be determined in advance by the Diocesan Bishop in consultation with the Diocesan Council.</p> <p><b>Section 10 <i>Agenda</i></b></p> <p>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 provided to all delegates at least three (3) weeks prior to the date set for the convening of the Assembly. The agenda may be changed by vote of the Assembly.</p> <p><b>Section 11 <i>Presiding Officers</i></b></p> <p>a. The presiding officer of the Diocesan Assembly shall be the Diocesan Bishop, or an Auxiliary Bishop or priest specifically appointed by the Diocesan Bishop.</p> <p>b. Two Vice-Chairpersons, one priest or deacon and one layperson, shall be</p>
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<p>approved by the presiding officer, shall be officially promulgated and mailed to each delegate.</p> <p><b>Section 17 <i>Quorum</i></b></p> <p>The quorum shall be constituted by a majority of accredited delegates.</p> <p>Section 18 <i>Voting</i></p> <p>The Diocesan Council, or the Assembly itself, may determine all voting procedures.</p> <p><b>Section 19 <i>Election of the Diocesan Bishop</i></b></p> <p>The candidates for the office of diocesan bishop shall be elected in the manner prescribed in Article VI, Section 10.</p> <p><b>Section 20 <i>Election of the Auditing Committee of the Diocesan Council</i></b></p> <p>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 VIII, Section 7.</p>	<p>elected by the Diocesan Assembly and shall perform such functions as may be assigned to them by the presiding officer.</p> <p>Section 12 Secretariat</p> <p>The Diocesan Assembly shall elect a secretariat according to its needs.</p> <p><b>Section 13 <i>Minutes</i></b></p> <p>The minutes of the Assembly shall be prepared and signed by the secretariat and submitted to the presiding officer for his written acceptance as to form and accuracy. Within a period of not more than sixty (60) days after the final adjournment of the Assembly, the text of the minutes, approved by the presiding officer, shall be disseminated to each delegate and to the Diocese at-large. The minutes shall be approved by the Diocesan Authority no later than the convening of the next Diocesan Assembly.</p> <p><b>Section 14 <i>Committees</i></b></p> <p>The Diocesan Council shall establish such committees as may be necessary for the proper operation of the Assembly, and shall define their membership and responsibilities.</p> <p><b>Section 15 <i>Quorum</i></b></p> <p>A majority of the members Diocesan Assembly who have been accredited and registered shall constitute a quorum.</p> <p>Section 16 Voting</p> <p>a. As its first order of business, the Assembly shall adopt rules and procedures for the conduct of its business, unless otherwise provided for in the Diocesan Bylaws.</p> <p>b. All resolutions and other decisions</p>
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	<p>of the Diocesan Assembly shall be approved by majority vote, unless otherwise required by the Diocesan Bylaws.</p> <p><b>Section 17 Approval by the Diocesan Bishop</b></p> <p>No resolution or other action of the Diocesan Assembly shall be effective until it is approved by the Diocesan Bishop, or the Locum Tenens in the case of a Special Diocesan Assembly. Approval or disapproval shall in the normal course be announced before the adjournment of the Diocesan Assembly.</p> <p><b>Section 18 Auditing Committee</b></p> <p>The Auditing Committee, consisting of no fewer than three (3) members, shall be elected by the Diocesan Assembly. The members of the Diocesan Auditing Committee shall not be members of the Diocesan Council or be Diocesan Officers. Members of the Auditing Committee shall be members ex officio of the Diocesan Assembly. The relevant professional experience, the terms of office, the method of their election, and their duties shall be as defined in Article X, Section 8, and in the Diocesan Bylaws.</p>
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**Article X**

**The Diocesan Council**

*(Was Article VIII in Existing Statute)*

<p><b>Section 1 Composition</b></p> <p>The Diocesan Council is the permanent body of diocesan administration: The composition of the Diocesan Council is determined by the Diocesan Assembly and shall include as ex officio members the</p>	<p><b>Section 1 Definition</b></p> <p>The Diocesan Council, normally meeting under the presidency of the Diocesan Bishop, is the permanent executive body of the Diocesan Administration which exists for the purpose of implementing the</p>
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<p>two representatives, one priest, and one layman, elected by the Diocesan Assembly to the Metropolitan Council;</p> <p>a. The Bishop, or in his absence, the Auxiliary Bishop or a priest appointed by the Bishop, shall be the chairman of the Diocesan Council;</p> <p>b. The Council elects such officers as may be needed to carry on its functions.</p> <p><b>Section 2 Periodicity</b></p> <p>a. The Diocesan Council convenes no less than twice annually;</p> <p>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.</p> <p><b>Section 3 Quorum and Voting</b></p> <p>a. Together with the Diocesan Bishop or other presiding officer, one-half of the members of the Diocesan Council shall constitute the quorum.</p> <p>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.</p> <p><b>Section 4 Decisions</b></p> <p>All decisions of the Diocesan Council shall become effective upon approval by the Diocesan Bishop.</p> <p><b>Section 5 Competence</b></p> <p>The Diocesan Council shall be competent:</p> <p>a. To implement the decisions of the Diocesan Assembly;</p>	<p>decisions of the Diocesan Assembly and continues the work of the Assembly between its sessions.</p> <p><b>Section 2 Composition</b></p> <p>The Diocesan Council shall consist of:</p> <p>a. The Diocesan Bishop, or Locum Tenens, ex officio;</p> <p>b. Auxiliary Bishop(s);</p> <p>c. The Diocesan Officers, ex officio;</p> <p>d. The Diocesan Representatives to the Metropolitan Council, ex officio;</p> <p>e. Additional members as determined by the Diocesan By-laws.</p> <p>The Diocesan Bylaws may provide for the appointment of non-voting members to the Council.</p> <p>The Diocesan Bishop, or Locum Tenens, shall be the chairman of the Diocesan Council, but in his absence, an Auxiliary Bishop or a priest designated by the Diocesan Bishop, or Locum Tenens, may preside at a particular meeting of the Council.</p> <p>The Diocesan Council shall elect such other officers as may be needed to carry out its functions, as provided in the Diocesan Bylaws.</p> <p><b>Section 3 Periodicity</b></p> <p>a. The Diocesan Council convenes at least twice annually.</p> <p>b. Extraordinary sessions of the Diocesan Council may be convened by the Diocesan Bishop, the Locum Tenens, or at</p>
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<p>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;</p> <p>c. To consider and act on other matters submitted by the Diocesan Bishop;</p> <p>d. To attend to legal matters affecting only the interest of the diocese;</p> <p>e. To forward diocesan legal matters to the Central Office of the Church Administration;</p> <p>f. To examine the financial reports of the diocese;</p> <p>g. To determine the allocations, when necessary, of general diocesan funds to parishes, monasteries, convents, missions, or other diocesan institutions;</p> <p>h. To supervise the collection of assessments fixed by the Diocesan Assembly;</p> <p>i. To render a final decision regarding the authenticity of the minutes of the Diocesan Assembly when a discrepancy arises;</p> <p>j. To delineate the boundaries of parishes and deaneries;</p> <p>k. To take the initiative in diocesan fund-raising projects;</p> <p>l. To provide for the establishment and maintenance of institutions of charity and education within the diocese;</p> <p>m. To provide for the maintenance of diocesan administrative bodies and the allocation of general diocesan funds;</p>	<p>the written request of at least one-half of the voting membership of the Council.</p> <p><b>Section 4 Terms of Office and Vacancies in Office</b></p> <p>Terms of office and the means of filling vacancies on the Diocesan Council shall be as provided in the Diocesan Bylaws.</p> <p><b>Section 5 Quorum and Voting</b></p> <p>a. The Diocesan Bishop, or Locum Tenens, or another presiding officer designated by him, plus one-half of the voting members of the Diocesan Council shall constitute a quorum for the conduct of business.</p> <p>b. Decisions of the Diocesan Council shall be by majority vote of the members present and voting unless otherwise provided in the Diocesan Bylaws.</p> <p>c. All decisions of the Diocesan Council shall become effective upon approval by the Diocesan Bishop, or Locum Tenens.</p> <p><b>Section 6 Competence</b></p> <p>The following matters are within the competence of the Diocesan Council. The Diocesan Council shall:</p> <p>a. Consider and act on matters affecting the parishes and institutions of the Diocese in accordance with the directives of the Diocesan Bishop and the decisions of the Diocesan Assembly;</p> <p>b. Consider matters submitted by the Diocesan Bishop and make recommendations regarding his further action;</p>
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<p>n. To make preparations for the Diocesan Assembly.</p> <p><b>Section 6 <i>The Diocesan Chancery</i></b></p> <p>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.</p> <p><b>Section 7 <i>Auditing Committee</i></b></p> <p>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. Vacancies in the Auditing Committee are filled by the Diocesan Bishop.</p>	<p>c. Implement the decisions of the Diocesan Assembly;</p> <p>d. Cooperate in implementation on the diocesan and parochial levels of the decisions of the Holy Synod, the All-American Council, the Metropolitan Council, and other Church authorities;</p> <p>e. Oversee Diocesan Officers and administrative bodies as provided in the Diocesan Bylaws, and provide for the employment of such personnel as necessary for the efficient functioning of the Diocesan Administration;</p> <p>f. Allocate diocesan funds for the general benefit of the Diocese, including, as necessary, the allocation of diocesan funds to parishes or institutions of the Diocese;</p> <p>g. Supervise the collection of regular financial obligations fixed by the Diocesan Assembly, and initiate and oversee special fund-raising projects;</p> <p>h. Examine and verify the financial records and reports, including the reports of the Auditing Committee;</p> <p>i. Oversee the management of all diocesan investments and property, real and personal; and supervise and approve the acquisition, encumbrance and disposition of the same;</p> <p>j. Attend to legal matters affecting the interests and welfare of the Diocese;</p> <p>k. Advise the Diocesan Bishop on the establishment of parishes and deaneries;</p> <p>l. Supervise the collection of regular financial obligations fixed by the Diocesan Assembly, and initiate and oversee special</p>
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	<p>fund-raising projects;</p> <p>m. Render a final decision regarding the authenticity of the minutes of the Diocesan Assembly should a question arise concerning their accuracy;</p> <p>n. Provide for the establishment and maintenance of institutions or organizations of philanthropy and education within the Diocese;</p> <p>o. Oversee preparation for the Diocesan Assembly;</p> <p>p. Maintain the religious, cultural, and historical patrimony of the diocese, its parishes, and institutions.</p> <p><b>Section 7 <i>The Diocesan Officers</i></b></p> <p>The Diocesan Bishop shall appoint a Chancellor and a Treasurer, who shall perform such duties as assigned to them by the Diocesan Bishop, the Diocesan Assembly, and the Diocesan Council. The Diocesan Bishop shall appoint such other officers as may be provided for in the Diocesan Bylaws to ensure the efficient operation of the Diocesan Administration. The Diocesan Officers work under the direct supervision of the Bishop and report to the Diocesan Council of which they are ex officio members.</p> <p>The Diocesan Officers shall implement the decisions of the Diocesan Council under the supervision of the Diocesan Bishop. The Diocesan Officers shall assure the proper maintenance of both the active and archival records of the Diocese and assist parishes and institutions of the Diocese in the proper maintenance of their own active and archival records.</p> <p>When the office of the Diocesan Bishop is</p>
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	<p>vacant, the Chancellor shall safeguard the particular patrimony of the Diocese until a new Diocesan Bishop is elected.</p> <p><b>Section 8 Auditing Committee</b></p> <p>The Auditing Committee, consisting of three persons with relevant professional experience, shall be elected by the Diocesan Assembly. The Auditing Committee shall audit annually the accounts of the Diocesan Administration with respect to all diocesan funds and the funds of all diocesan institutions. The Auditing Committee shall report its findings to the Diocesan Council and the Diocesan Assembly. Members of the Auditing Committee may attend sessions of the Diocesan Council to make its report. Vacancies in the Auditing Committee shall be filled by the Diocesan Bishop in consultation with the Diocesan Council, pending the convening of the next Diocesan Assembly. Matters relating to terms of office, method of election, and further duties shall be as defined in the Diocesan Bylaws.</p>
<p><b>Article XI</b></p> <p><b>The Deanery</b></p> <p><i>(Was Article IX in Existing Statute)</i></p>	
<p><b>Article 1 Deaneries</b></p> <p>Deaneries are specified districts within the boundaries of a diocese which are established by the Diocesan Council (Cf. Article VIII, Section 5), with the exception of the Dean of Orthodox Military Chaplains, who is appointed by, and directly responsible to, the Metropolitan (Cf. Article II, Section 7b).</p> <p><b>Article 2 The District Dean</b></p>	<p><b>Section 1 Definition</b></p> <p>A Deanery is a specified administrative district, within the boundaries of a Diocese, usually encompassing parishes in a defined geographical area, and established by the Diocesan Bishop in consultation with the Diocesan Council.</p> <p><b>Section 2 The District Dean</b></p> <p>The District Dean is a priest who heads a</p>

<p>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.</p> <p><b>Article 3 Competence and Duties</b></p> <p>Subject to the instructions of the Diocesan Bishop, the District Dean has competence in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Directing the affairs of the deanery;</li> <li>b. Supervising the activities of the clergy of the deanery;</li> <li>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 when ever their personal conduct or manner of discharging duties indicates the need of such action;</li> <li>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;</li> <li>e. Convoking deanery meetings;</li> <li>f. Filling temporary vacancies in parish clergy with the consent of the Diocesan Bishop;</li> <li>g. Receiving the minutes of parish meetings held within his deanery, with the right to make recommendations to the Diocesan Bishop;</li> </ul>	<p>deanery. He assists the Diocesan Bishop in the administration of the Deanery.</p> <p>The District Dean shall be appointed by the Diocesan Bishop from among the Parish Priests of the Deanery in consultation with Deanery clergy or as provided for in the Diocesan By-laws.</p> <p><b>Section 3 Competence of the District Dean</b></p> <p>The following are within the competence of the District Dean. The District Dean shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Oversee Deanery matters and the activities of its clergy;</li> <li>b. Give direction and fraternal counsel in areas of pastoral concern, with the right to direct, counsel, and admonish clergy, in a private and circumspect manner, whenever their personal conduct or manner of discharging their duties indicates the need of such counsel or action;</li> <li>c. Receive and investigate complaints against clergy and laity and against the decisions of parish bodies and submit his report and recommendations to the Diocesan Bishop;</li> <li>d. Participate in parish meetings at the direction of the Diocesan Authority or at the request of the Parish Priest or the Parish Council;</li> <li>e. Provide for services during temporary absence of parish clergy with the consent of the Diocesan Bishop;</li> <li>f. Assist the Diocesan Bishop in the planning and organization of new parishes within the Deanery;</li> <li>g. Convene periodic meetings of</li> </ul>
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<p>h. Taking part in parish meetings upon commission of the diocesan authority or the request of the rector or the parish council;</p> <p>i. Aiding and planning the organization of new parishes within his deanery;</p> <p>j. Acting on all other matters submitted to him by the Diocesan Bishop;</p> <p>k. Submitting the minutes of every meeting of the clergy of the deanery to the Diocesan Bishop;</p> <p>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;</p> <p>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;</p> <p>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.</p> <p><b>Article 4 Election</b></p> <p>The District Dean is elected from among the rectors of the deanery and confirmed by the Diocesan Bishop for a term of three years.</p>	<p>Deanery clergy and submit the minutes of the meetings to the Diocesan Bishop;</p> <p>h. Submit an annual report on the Deanery to the Diocesan Bishop and the Diocesan Assembly.</p> <p>The District Dean shall fulfill other duties entrusted to him by the Diocesan Bishop.</p> <p><b>Section 4 The Dean of Military Chaplains</b></p> <p>a. The Dean of Military Chaplains is appointed by and directly responsible to the Metropolitan.</p> <p>b. The competence and duties of the Dean of Military Chaplains shall be the same as those of the District Deans as described above insofar as they are applicable to military structure.</p>
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**Article XII**

**The Parish**

*(Was Article X in Existing Statute)*



**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 Statute***

The organization and administration of a parish are subject to this Statute as adopted at the Second All-American Council of October 19th-21st, 1971, or as amended at any subsequent Council.

**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 Statute of the Church. Every parish charter or set of by-laws must provide the mechanics for implementing all decisions of the All-American Council. 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 1 *Definition***

a. The parish is a local Orthodox Eucharistic community canonically established by and subject to the authority of the Diocesan Bishop. For purposes of this Statute, unless otherwise specified, the term parish refers to parishes, missions, provisional missions, and mission stations.

b. The organization and administration of a parish are subject to this Statute, the statute or bylaws of the Diocese, and the parish by-laws approved by the Diocesan Authority. The Orthodox Church in general and The Orthodox Church in America in particular are hierarchical in structure.

**Section 2 *The Diocesan Bishop and the Parish***

a. The Bishop is the spiritual leader of all parishes within his Diocese. In consultation with the Diocesan Council, he shall establish, territorially define, consolidate with another parish, or suppress a parish. He appoints parish clergy, maintaining a relationship with them that is at once hierarchical and conciliar, marked by obedience and collaboration. He has the obligation and right of visitation to the parish and receives and approves regular reports on parish life. In case of conflict and disorder within the parish, he takes all necessary measures to resolve them consistent with this Statute and the Sacred Canons.

b. For the establishment of a parish, a local group of faithful must demonstrate that it is stable and has the potential to become self-supporting and self-sustaining, and that it agrees that its charter and by-laws will be consistent with canonical requirements and this Statute. No charter or by-laws of a parish shall be effective unless

<p><b>Section 4 Rector</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p><b>Section 5 Parishioners</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p>b. A "voting member" of the parish is a</p>	<p>approved by the Diocesan Authority.</p> <p>c. When the Bishop deems it appropriate, in consultation with the local group of faithful, he dedicates the new parish to a feast day or places it under the protection of a patron saint.</p> <p>d. Additional signs of the canonical status of the parish and the sacramental communion that exists between it and the Bishop are the antimension given by the Bishop and the commemoration of the Bishop during liturgical services.</p> <p><b>Section 3 The Parish Priest</b></p> <p>a. The Parish Priest, also referred to as rector or priest-in-charge, by virtue of his ordination and canonical appointment, serves as the spiritual father and teacher of that portion of the flock of Christ entrusted to him, the first among the parish clergy, and presides over liturgical worship in accordance with the tradition and the norms of the Church.</p> <p>b. By virtue of the authority delegated to him at his appointment by the Diocesan Bishop, the Parish Priest fulfills the following duties. He</p> <p>i. Teaches, sanctifies, and edifies the faithful entrusted to his spiritual care with no partiality;</p> <p>ii. Provides for the administration of the sacraments and the celebration of all liturgical services;</p> <p>iii. Ensures that all philanthropic, social, educational, and cultural activities within the parish or of the parish are consistent with the mission of the Church;</p> <p>iv. Heads and administers the parish</p>
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<p>member [as defined in Article X, Section 5(a)] at least eighteen years of age, who receives the Sacrament of Confession at least once a year in his home parish or, with the permission of the parish priest, elsewhere; who receives Holy Communion at least once a year in his home parish; 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 All-American Councils, Diocesan Assemblies, and parish.</p>	<p>consistent with the provisions of this Statute, the governing documents of the diocese and parish, and the directives of the Diocesan Authority in cooperation with the Parish Council. 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 the appropriate parish bodies, so that always and everywhere there may be mutual trust, cooperation, unity, and love;</p>
<p><b>Section 6 <i>Financial Obligation</i></b></p>	<p>v. Normally presides over the Parish Assembly and Parish Council, except in cases when the Bishop is present or when the Bishop's delegate is present for this purpose;</p>
<p>Each year the parish shall remit to the Diocesan Treasurer its minimum financial support to the Diocese and to the Orthodox Church in America. This minimum financial support shall be determined by the number of parishioners of the parish [as defined in Article X, 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.</p>	<p>vi. Heads the parish office and therefore is entrusted with the care, custody, and maintenance of parish sacramental and administrative records, inventories, and the official parish seal;</p>
<p><b>Section 7 <i>The Parish Meeting</i></b></p>	<p>vii. Represents the parish before local civil and judicial authorities and other third parties, either personally or through his delegate.</p>
<p>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</p>	<p>c. The parish shall compensate the parish priest. His compensation shall be determined according to established diocesan procedures and norms. His compensation is to be clearly agreed upon prior to his appointment.</p>
<p></p>	<p>d. The Parish Priest possesses the rights and exercises the responsibilities stipulated by the Sacred Canons, the Statute, and the directives of the Holy Synod and the Diocesan Authority.</p>
<p></p>	<p>e. The parish priest cannot vacate his parish, change his status, or seek to transfer to another parish or diocese without the</p>

<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p><b>Section 8 <i>The Parish Council</i></b></p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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</p>	<p>permission of the Bishop.</p> <p><b>Section 4 <i>Other Parish Clergy</i></b></p> <p>a. An associate priest is a priest who has been appointed to a parish by the Bishop, receives compensation from the parish, and carries out ministries within the parish as directed by the parish priest in consultation with the parish council. His role in the governance of the parish is determined by the established diocesan procedures and norms.</p> <p>b. An assigned deacon is a deacon who has been appointed by the Bishop to service within a parish, receives compensation from the parish, and carries out ministries within the parish as directed by the parish priest in consultation with the parish council. His role in the governance of the parish is determined by the established diocesan procedures and norms.</p> <p>c. Attached clergy are priests or deacons who are canonically attached to a parish by the Bishop without necessary compensation from the parish and without involvement in parish governance.</p> <p>d. Like the parish priest, all parish clergy, including those in minor orders, possess the rights and exercise the responsibilities stipulated for their order by the Sacred Canons, the Statute, and the directives of the Holy Synod and the Diocesan Authority.</p> <p>e. Parish clergy cannot vacate the parish to which they are assigned or attached, change their status, or seek to transfer to another parish or diocese without the permission of the Bishop.</p> <p><b>Section 5 <i>Parishioner</i></b></p>
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<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p><b>Section 9 <i>The Parish Property</i></b></p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>a. A parishioner is one who, by virtue of Baptism and Chrismation, is a member of the Body of Christ and incorporated into a local parish community as a parish member.</p> <p>b. A parishioner has a reasonable expectation for pastoral care in accordance with the Orthodox tradition. He or she enjoys full benefits of participation in parish life. He or she has the duty to sustain, strengthen and witness to the Orthodox faith; to live according to the teaching of the Church; to participate in the religious services; to partake of the Holy Sacraments; to fulfill acts of Christian mercy; to support and to help the Church.</p> <p>c. Parish membership may be suspended or revoked by the parish priest or the Diocesan Bishop for due cause, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Open rejection of the Orthodox Faith;</li> <li>ii. Public defamation or defiance of ecclesiastical authority;</li> <li>iii. Grave moral transgression;</li> <li>iv. Formal association with a non-Orthodox religious body.</li> </ul> <p>d. A voting member of the parish is a parishioner at least eighteen years of age, who receives the Sacrament of Confession at least once a year in the parish or, with the permission of the parish priest, elsewhere; who receives Holy Communion at least once a year in the parish; who has been a parishioner for a period of time as fixed by the Diocesan Authority; and who fulfills financial obligations as established by the All-American Councils, Diocesan Assemblies, and the parish. Voting</p>
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	<p>membership shall be denied if these criteria are not met.</p> <p>e. A voting member has the right to vote in Parish Assemblies and to be considered for election to office in appropriate parish bodies. A voting member is eligible for election as a delegate to the Diocesan Assembly and the All-American Council.</p> <p><b>Section 6 <i>Financial Obligation</i></b></p> <p>Each year, the parish shall remit to the Diocesan Treasurer its minimum financial support to the Diocese and through it to The Orthodox Church in America as determined by the All-American Council.</p> <p><b>Section 7 <i>The Parish Assembly</i></b></p> <p>a. The Parish Assembly meets annually to consider matters pertaining to the life of the parish and to conduct necessary elections relating to the parish as a whole. The Parish Assembly is comprised of the voting members of the parish, and such additional persons as shall be provided for by Diocesan and Parish By-laws, established procedures and norms, normally meeting under the presidency of the parish priest, or the Bishop or the Bishop's delegate. The parish priest together with the parish council may invite additional persons with or without the right to speak but without the right to vote.</p> <p>b. The parish priest together with the parish council, or the bishop, may call a special Parish Assembly to consider matters of specific concern.</p> <p>c. Procedures for the call, conduct, and recording of the annual and any special Parish Assemblies shall be provided by the Diocesan and Parish By-laws.</p>
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	<p>d. The following matters are within the competence of the Parish Assembly. The Parish Assembly shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. Hear and approve annual or special reports by committees and parish organizations;</li><li>ii. Consider and decide on matters concerning the purchase, improvement, or sale of real property; investment of parish funds (other than in savings accounts); and the transfer of any interest in or change of ownership and the incurring of indebtedness or otherwise encumbering parish funds or property;</li><li>iii. Approve of the annual operating budget submitted by the Parish Council;</li><li>iv. Provide for the adoption and amendment of by-laws, if this is not otherwise provided for;</li><li>v. Elect members of the Parish Council, the auditing committee, and the lay delegates to the Diocesan Assembly and to the All-American Council, if the latter is to meet in that current year.</li></ul> <p>e. In case the parish priest disagrees with one or more decisions of the Parish Assembly, his motivated opinion shall be recorded in the minutes and the matter submitted to the Bishop. So also, if an officer of the Parish Council disagrees with one or more decisions of the Parish Assembly, his or her motivated opinion shall be recorded in the minutes and the matter submitted to the Bishop. The manner in which further dissent is recorded and possibly transmitted to the Bishop shall be dealt with by Diocesan and Parish By-laws and established procedures and norms.</p>
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f. No Parish Assembly, either annual or special, shall take any action which is contrary to or not in accord with the Statute. Should there be any such conflict, the Statute shall prevail. Should there be a question whether an action of a Parish Assembly is valid or lawful under this Statute, the issue shall be submitted to the Diocesan Authority for determination.

**Section 8 *The Parish Council***

a. The Parish Council is the executive body that assists the Parish Priest in administration of the parish and normally meets under his presidency. The Parish Council is comprised of members elected by the Parish Assembly and any ex officio and appointed members as may be provided for by Diocesan or Parish By-laws. The Parish Council seeks to foster the spiritual and material welfare of the parish.

b. The number of members of the Parish Council and their terms of office shall be determined by Diocesan and Parish By-laws. The mode of election, terms of office, titles, and duties of Parish Council officers shall also be determined by Diocesan and Parish By-laws. All members of the Parish Council shall be installed by the parish priest according to diocesan procedures and norms.

c. Periodicity of meetings and procedures for the normal conduct of business for the regular and special Parish Council meetings shall be provided by the Diocesan and Parish By-laws.

d. The following matters are within the competence of the Parish Council. The Parish Council shall:

i. Exercise fiduciary responsibility for



	<p>the parish;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ii. Implement within its competence the decisions of the Parish Assembly, the Diocesan Authority, and the All-American Council;</li> <li>iii. Formulate, implement, and direct stewardship programs;</li> <li>iv. Oversee implementation of the budget adopted by the Parish Assembly;</li> <li>v. Authorize any fundraising activity within the parish;</li> <li>vi. Manage, inventory, and maintain parish properties, both real and movable;</li> <li>vii. Regulate use of parish facilities;</li> <li>viii. Maintain and verify the official roster of the parish's general and voting membership;</li> <li>ix. Oversee and regularly receive reports from parish ministries and organizations;</li> <li>x. Prepare reports on aspects of parish life within its competence for the annual Parish Assembly;</li> <li>xii. Propose an annual budget for consideration at the annual Parish Assembly;</li> <li>xiii. Set a date and propose an agenda for Parish Assemblies.</li> </ul> <p>e. No regular or special meeting of the Parish Council shall be held without the knowledge and blessing of the parish priest. If the parish priest is unable to preside over a meeting of the Parish Council, the senior elected officer of the</p>
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Parish Council shall preside with the blessing of the parish priest or the Bishop. In case the office of parish priest is vacant, until the appointment of the new parish priest, the senior elected officer of the Parish Council shall preside, unless the Bishop or his delegate is present.

f. The official minutes of all meetings of the Parish Council, signed or otherwise attested by the parish priest and the senior elected officer of the parish, shall be properly maintained and made available as appropriate.

g. In case the parish priest disagrees with one or more decisions of the Parish Council, his motivated opinion shall be recorded in the minutes and the matter referred to the Diocesan Authority.

**Section 9 Parish Property**

a. The parish corporation holds legal title to all parish property, assets, and funds. In administering them, the parishioners and the officers elected by them must always remember the religious nature, purposes, and goal of the parish and act as trustees of such property dedicated to the service of God and the use of the Church.

b. All parish property, assets and funds are and shall be owned and held by the parish or parish corporation in trust for the use, purpose, and benefit of the Diocese of The Orthodox Church in America of which it is a part. This provision shall not limit the authority of the parish or parish corporation in its administration of such property, assets, and funds in accord with the faith, governance, and discipline of The Orthodox Church in America.

c. In the event the Diocese shall be

	<p>dissolved or attempt to disaffiliate from The Orthodox Church in America in a disorderly manner, all parish property, assets and funds of such Diocese shall remain subject to the use, purpose, and benefit of The Orthodox Church in America.</p> <p>d. If the parish is canonically suppressed or otherwise ceases to exist, its real and personal property is disposed of in accord with Section 9, b, above. In all cases, the sacred and untouchable items, viz. the Holy Antimension, the Tabernacle, and the Sacred Vessels, as well as all parish records, shall be surrendered to the Diocesan Bishop or his designee.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Article XIII</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Monasticism</b> <i>(New Article to be Drafted)</i></p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Article XIV</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Stavropegial Institutions</b> <i>(Did not exist in Existing Statute and New Article Added Here)</i></p>	
<p><b>Does not exist</b></p>	<p><b>Section 1 Definition</b></p> <p>The term stavropegial refers to certain monasteries, theological schools, institutes, chapels and organizations that are under the immediate canonical supervision and pastoral care of the Metropolitan in his capacity as primate of the Church, inasmuch as the purpose, mission and activities of these institutions typically extend beyond the limits of a single diocese to the entire Church.</p> <p>The purpose, mission and activities of a stavropegial institution, including any auxiliary or affiliated operations, shall be</p>

consonant with the teachings, canonical tradition and moral principles of the Orthodox Church.

**Section 2 Regulation**

Establishment, suppression, or significant change in purpose of a stavropegial institution requires approval by the Holy Synod, acting at the request of the Metropolitan, after consultation with the Metropolitan Council concerning any matters within its competence.

Stavropegial institutions are regulated by the present Statute, by such regulations as may be established by the Holy Synod, and by their own charters and governing documents. Every stavropegial institution shall incorporate as a religious, non-profit corporation in accordance with applicable civil law, and shall submit copies of the relevant documentation to the Metropolitan, who deposits them in the Church archives and fully and accurately reports on the matter to the Holy Synod and the Metropolitan Council.

**Section 3 Accountability**

Every stavropegial institutions shall submit an annual written report to the Metropolitan, and through him to the Holy Synod and the Metropolitan Council, concerning institutional life and activities. Every stavropegial institution shall submit on an annual basis audited financial accounts, including those of any auxiliary and affiliated operations, for review by the Church’s Auditing Committee.

**Article XV**

**Ecclesiastical Courts**

*(Was Article XI - Church Courts and Canonical Procedure in Existing Statute and renamed in Revised Statute)*

**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, 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

**Section 1 The Right to Canonical Process**

Every member of the Church, whether cleric, monastic, or lay, is entitled to canonical process in the courts of the Church and can defend and vindicate their legitimate rights in the competent ecclesiastical forum according to the norm of law.

**Section 2 Standards, Norms and Procedures**

The Holy Synod, as the highest canonical authority within the Church, shall establish standards, norms, and procedures to be observed in all matters involving cases presented before the courts of the Church at all levels. The norms, standards, and procedures approved and promulgated by the Holy Synod shall remain in effect until they are amended or abrogated by the approval and promulgation of subsequent texts by the Holy Synod.

**Section 3 The Diocesan Court**

The Diocesan Court shall be established by the Diocesan Bishop and shall be the court of first instance in all matters concerning clergy and laity of the diocese or otherwise under the authority of the Diocesan Bishop.

**Section 4 Competence of the Diocesan Court**

The Diocesan Court shall be competent to adjudicate cases involving allegations of unorthodox belief or teaching, breaches of canonical or moral discipline, issues relating to marriage, disputes between individuals, administration of parish and

<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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</p>	<p>other Diocesan institutions, and other matters involving good Church order.</p> <p><b>Section 5 <i>The Stavropegial Court</i></b></p> <p>The Stavropegial Court shall be established by the Metropolitan and shall be the court of first instance in all matters within its competence concerning the clergy and laity canonically assigned or attached to, or who freely associate themselves with, stavropegial institutions.</p> <p><b>Section 6 <i>Competence of the Stavropegial Court</i></b></p> <p>The Stavropegial Court shall be competent to adjudicate cases involving allegations of unorthodox belief or teaching, breaches of canonical or moral discipline, issues relating to marriage, disputes between individuals, administration of stavropegial institutions, and other matters involving good Church order.</p> <p><b>Section 7 <i>The Synodal Court</i></b></p> <p>The Synodal Court, comprised of the members of the Holy Synod and presided over by the Metropolitan, shall be convened at regular sessions of the Holy Synod and at other times, as necessary, to address judicial matters that are within its competence. If judgment requires the augmentation of the number of bishops, Diocesan Bishops from other Orthodox Churches shall be invited to participate.</p> <p><b>Section 8 <i>Competence of the Synodal Court</i></b></p> <p>The Holy Synod shall act as the court of first instance in all matters involving a bishop and as the regular court of final instance in all matters involving a bishop, a member of the clergy, or a member of the</p>
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<p>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).</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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. Judgments requiring the final deposition (defrocking) of clerics are effective only upon their confirmation by the Holy Synod.</p> <p>i. 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.</p> <p>j. 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.</p> <p>k. Trials are held subject to any other procedural rules as established by the Holy Synod.</p> <p>l. No one shall be brought to trial more than once for the same alleged offense.</p>	<p>laity. The Synodal Court shall never act as court of first instance in cases within the competence of Diocesan or Stavropegial Courts. The judgments of the Holy Synod are not subject to appeal, except those cases which involve the deposition of a bishop or those cases which the Sacred Canons reserve to the judgment of the Universal Church.</p> <p><b>Section 9 <i>Standing Committee for Canonical Procedure</i></b></p> <p>The Holy Synod may in its discretion establish a Standing Committee for Canonical Procedure to which it may appoint experts in canon law, civil law, and other relevant disciplines in order to provide assistance and advice to Ecclesiastical Courts, including Diocesan, Stavropegial, and Synodal Courts. Any Standing Committee for Canonical Procedure may be charged by the Holy Synod to recommend to it for its approval and adoption of general rules for canonical procedure for use and application in all or several Courts of the Church. The Holy Synod may also charge any Standing Committee for Canonical Procedure to recommend to it for its approval and adoption special rules of canonical procedure as may be warranted by particular circumstances, provided however that no such special rules may be promulgated for use in application in any specific, individual case then pending.</p>
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**Section 5 *Special Procedure for Marital Problems***

a. Whenever 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. 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 / ies. 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 the Metropolitan or to the Secretary of the Holy Synod through the Chancery of the Church.

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 Metropolitan 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

<p>three bishops.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.)</p> <p>f. The judgments of the Holy Synod are final, except for those instances which the canons reserve to the judgment of the universal Church.</p>	
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**Article XVI**

**National Groups**

*(Was Article XII in Existing Statute)*

<p>When the good of the Church requires that particular national groups receive an assurance of identity, the Holy Synod may establish dioceses and/ or deaneries and set standards for their participation in the life of the 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 Statute shall constitute the fundamental law for the existence of all</p>	<p>When the good of the Church requires that particular national groups receive an assurance of identity, the Holy Synod may establish dioceses and/or deaneries and set standards for their participation in the life of The 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 Statute shall constitute the fundamental law for the existence of all</p>
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such groups within the Orthodox Church in America.	such groups within The Orthodox Church in America.
<p><b>Article XVII</b></p> <p><b>Amendments</b></p> <p><i>(Was Article XIII in Existing Statute)</i></p>	
<p><b>Section 1</b></p> <p>This Statute may be amended by an All-American Church Council. Proposed amendments must be submitted to the Church 90 days prior to an All-American Council. The parishes must have all proposed amendments to be acted upon by the All-American Church Council in their possession 60 days prior to the Council.</p> <p><b>Section 2</b></p> <p>A final draft of all proposed amendments from the parishes shall be mailed, together with recommendations of the parishes and the Statute Commission, 60 days prior to the All- American Council.</p>	<p><b>Section 1</b></p> <p>This Statute may be amended by a regular All-American Council or an extraordinary All-American Council called for that purpose. An amendment can be proposed by the Holy Synod, the Metropolitan Council, Diocesan Assemblies, Diocesan councils, Deaneries, Parish Assemblies, Parish Councils, Monasteries, and Seminaries.</p> <p><b>Section 2</b></p> <p>A proposed amendment must be submitted to the Commission on Canons and Statutes at least ninety (90) days prior to the date set for the convening of an All-American Council. The Commission on Canons and Statutes shall consider proposed amendments and may either approve, consolidate, or return proposed amendments.</p> <p><b>Section 3</b></p> <p>Final drafts of proposed amendments, together with recommendations of the Commission on Canons and Statutes, shall be disseminated at least sixty (60) days prior to the date set for the convening of the All-American Council.</p> <p><b>Section 4</b></p> <p>An amendment of the Statute requires a two-thirds majority of the members present and voting.</p>

	<p><b>Section 5</b></p> <p>Upon adoption, amendments take effect immediately upon final adjournment of the All-American Council unless otherwise indicated in the amendment itself.</p>
<p align="center"><b>Article XVIII</b></p> <p align="center"><b>Effective Date</b> <i>(Was Article XIV in Existing Statute)</i></p>	
<p>This Statute shall be in effect immediately upon its adoption by the Second All-American Council of October 19th-21st, 1971.</p> <p>NOTE All amendments through the Sixteenth All-American Council (2011) are included in this text. Appropriate editorial changes have been made where needed.</p>	<p><b>To Be Determined</b></p>