

THE ARCHDIOCESAN CONSTITUTION

as amended by the
SPECIAL ARCHDIOCESAN CONVENTION
Convened in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
July 16 – 18, 2004

ARTICLE I

Section 1 The Name

The name of this self-ruled religious corporation shall be “Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America.”

Section 2 Authority

A. Legal

This organization derives its legal authority to function as a religious corporation by virtue of a charter issued pursuant to the provisions of Article 2, Section 15, of the “Religious Corporation Laws” of the State of New York.

A. Ecclesiastical

This Archdiocese was granted its ecclesiastical authority to function as a self-ruling Archdiocese from the Holy Synod of the Apostolic Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and all the East (“Holy Synod”). Its Primate is a member of said Holy Synod and is the duly elected Metropolitan Archbishop (“Primate”, “Metropolitan” or “Archbishop”), serving under a canonical Praxis issued by His Beatitude, the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch and all the East (“Patriarch”).

Section 3 Headquarters

The headquarters of this Archdiocese shall be located in the Greater Metropolitan New York City area, including northern New Jersey.

Section 4 Qualifications for Metropolitan Archbishop and *Diocesan* Bishop

Candidates for the office of Metropolitan Archbishop of this

Archdiocese and/or candidates for the office of *Diocesan* Bishop must be celibates and meet the following qualifications.

A. Metropolitan Archbishop

- (1) He must be one of the canonical clergy who is qualified in all respects, including the possession of an earned degree in Orthodox *theology and be a man of piety* and good character.
- (2) He must be fluent in the English language and have a working knowledge of the Arabic language.
- (3) He must be at least thirty-three (33) years of age.
- (4) He must be physically and mentally sound.
- (5) He must have served, at *some time*, as a clergyman in the Archdiocese

B. Diocesan Bishop

- (1) He must be one of the canonical clergy who is qualified in all respects, including the possession of an earned degree in Orthodox *theology and be a man of piety* and good character.
- (2) He must be fluent in the English language and have a knowledge of the Arabic language.
- (3) He must be at least thirty-three (33) years of age.
- (4) He must be physically and mentally sound.
- (5) He must have served, *at some time*, as a clergyman in the Archdiocese.

Section 5 Nomination and Election Procedures Upon Vacancy of Metropolitan See

- A. Immediately upon the vacancy of the Metropolitan See, either by death, disability or retirement, the Archdiocese Board of Trustees and the Senior *Diocesan* Bishop, or, if none, the Vicar General, shall inform officially in writing the Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and all the East and appropriate civil and ecclesiastical authorities. Upon any such happening, the Senior Bishop present, *or* if none present, the Vicar General, together with the Vice Chairman of the Board of Trustees and/or the Treasurer and/or the Chancellor shall seal important rooms and files at the Archdiocese Headquarters, and make a record of same, signed by all present. (Thereafter, all properties or

investments registered in the name of the Metropolitan Archbishop as the head of the Metropolitan See shall become the property of the Archdiocese.)

The Senior *Diocesan* Bishop will, with the members of the Archdiocesan Board of Trustees, assume responsibility for the administration of the Metropolitan See.

B. Within a period of sixty (60) days after the vacancy of the Metropolitan See, the *Senior Diocesan Bishop* together with the Archdiocese Board of Trustees, shall call a Special Convention, which must be held on or before the expiration of thirty (30) days of the date of call, for the nomination and election of official candidates for the position of Metropolitan by secret ballot.

C. (1) *The Senior Diocesan Bishop*, in agreement with the Archdiocese Board of Trustees, shall prepare a list containing all the names of worthy clergymen from this Archdiocese who are qualified for nomination as described in Section 4, of this Article, and a copy of this list shall be included in the call for the Convention. (The Archdiocese may also, if necessary, include in the list names from the list of nominees kept in the records of the Patriarchate and the Holy Synod.)

(2) The delegates attending such Convention shall select, by secret ballot, three candidates from such list. Each delegate shall be entitled to one vote. The three clergymen with the highest number of votes of the Special Convention shall *thereupon be designated* as the official candidates.

(3) Immediately, thereafter, the names of the official candidates for the office of Metropolitan Archbishop, together with the preferential recommendation of the Archdiocese Board of Trustees reflecting the percentage vote of the Special Convention for each candidate, shall be submitted to the Local Synod of the Archdiocese (“Local Synod”) which will certify the results of the nomination and submit the official candidates to the Holy Synod, who will, within forty days of submittal, elect one of the nominees to be the Metropolitan Archbishop of the Archdiocese.

Section 6 Nomination and Election of *Diocesan* Bishops

A *Diocesan* Bishop shall be nominated and elected in the following manner:

- A. The Metropolitan, in agreement with the Archdiocese Board of Trustees, shall prepare a list containing the names of the worthy clergymen from this Archdiocese who are qualified for nomination as described in Section 4 B of this Article, and a copy of this list shall be included in the call for the Convention. (The Archdiocese may also, if necessary, include in the list names from the list of nominees kept in the records of the Patriarchate and the Holy Synod.)

- B. A General Convention, or a Special Convention called for that purpose by the Metropolitan, shall, from a list provided for in accordance with Section 6 A above, nominate, by secret ballot, three (3) candidates for the office of bishop. Each delegate shall be entitled to one vote times the number of offices to be filled and each of such votes must be for a different candidate. The entire list of candidates shall be submitted to the Local Synod with the candidate's respective number of votes received.

- C. Where one bishop is to be elected, the Local Synod shall elect, by a majority vote, from the three candidates receiving the highest number of votes of the Convention. With respect to the election of additional bishops at the same time, the Local Synod may elect, by a majority vote, from the entire list of nominees. Such election(s) shall occur within 40 days thereafter. The Patriarch may delegate up to three Metropolitan Archbishops to participate, on behalf of the Holy Synod, in such election(s) by the Local Synod. The Metropolitan Archbishop of this Archdiocese shall set the time and place for the electoral assembly and shall preside over it.

Section 7 Consecration of Metropolitan and/or *Diocesan* Bishop

- A. The consecration and enthronement (installation) of the Metropolitan shall take place at the Cathedral of the Metropolitan's diocese by members of the Local Synod and the patriarchal delegate.

The consecration and enthronement of Diocesan Bishops shall take place at the Cathedral of the diocese of the Diocesan Bishop

(unless for good reason it is necessary to do otherwise) by members of the Local Synod and the Patriarchal Delegate, with the Metropolitan of this Archdiocese presiding.

ARTICLE II

MEMBERSHIP AND JURISDICTION

Section 1 This Archdiocese consists of all dioceses, churches, missions, parishes, monasteries, departments, agencies, orders, societies and committees in North America (“units”) heretofore or hereafter established by the Archdiocese of North America under the jurisdiction of the Apostolic Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and all East as exercised by its duly authorized Metropolitan Archbishop acting under.

Section 2 This Archdiocese shall remain one, indivisible Archdiocese and may not be divided into separate Archdioceses by vote, action, decree, mandate, or in any other way by any person, body, organization, church, or otherwise.

Section 3 Upon the dissolution or separation from the Archdiocese of any unit, the assets and property shall revert to the Archdiocese. No real property of any unit may be sold or mortgaged without the express written approval of the Metropolitan Archbishop and no assets in excess of \$100,000 (one hundred thousand dollars) of any unit may be sold or mortgaged without the express written approval of the Metropolitan Archbishop.

Section 4 Notwithstanding anything to the contrary, Sections 2 and 3 of this Article cannot be amended, altered, or changed. The sole exception to this section would be such amendments, alterations or changes that would be necessary to implement Orthodox unity in North America.

Section 5 This constitution, including Sections 2 and 3 of this Article, constitute a contract between the units of the Archdiocese and the Archdiocese. The Uniform Parish Constitution sent to the parishes by the Archdiocese, and the constitution of any unit of the Archdiocese approved by the Metropolitan, to the extent not inconsistent with this Constitution, constitute a contract between such unit and the Archdiocese. Any provision of any unit constitution that is in any way

inconsistent with, or in conflict with any provision of this Constitution shall cause said provision of the unit constitution to be deemed void and of no effect.

ARTICLE III

PURPOSES

Section 1 To maintain spiritual unity, coordinate religious work or activity, and promote collaboration and closer relations with the governing and advisory bodies of other Orthodox *Christian* Jurisdictions in the territory hereinbefore mentioned, with the intent of propagating, practicing and forever perpetuating religious worship, services, ministrations, sacraments, and teachings in full accord and unity with the doctrine, rules, ritual, canon law, faith, practice, discipline, traditions and usages of the Orthodox *Christian* Church .

Section 2 In fulfilling the purpose set forth in Section 1, of this article, to exercise governing and advisory authority over all the component divisions of this Archdiocese hereinbefore mentioned.

ARTICLE IV

GOVERNMENT

Section 1 Holy Scripture, Sacred Tradition, Holy Canons, the Constitution, By-laws and the Constitution of the Church of Antioch (to the extent not inconsistent herewith) shall be the governing code for this Archdiocese.

Section 2 The Local Synod, comprised of the Metropolitan and the Diocesan Bishops shall be governing ecclesiastical authority of the Archdiocese. The Metropolitan shall preside over the Local Synod. The Local Synod shall determine the number of dioceses, their boundaries, and the respective diocese(s) and/or area of responsibility of each bishop. It shall also determine all matters of hierarchical discipline of bishops of the Archdiocese. Such a bishop shall have the right to appeal any decision of the Local Synod involving a matter of hierarchical discipline against him, to the Patriarch and Holy Synod of Antioch.

Section 3 All administrative authority is vested in the Metropolitan Archbishop and the Archdiocese Board of Trustees as hereinafter provided

Section 4 All legislative authority is vested in the general convention of the Archdiocese as approved by the Metropolitan Archbishop.

ARTICLE V

MEETINGS

Section 1 The General Convention shall be held biennially within the last twelve days in July at a location set by the General Convention at its meeting four years preceding its determination. In the event of an emergency or circumstances which in the discretion of the Metropolitan Archbishop and the Board of Trustees justify the postponement or a change in the time, place or bidding for a future convention, such postponement and/or change in the time, place or bid therefore shall be valid.

Section 2 Special Convention

- A. The Metropolitan Archbishop may call a Special Convention at any time he deems it necessary and advisable.
- B. Upon a petition by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the parishes of the Archdiocese in good standing to the Metropolitan Archbishop and the Board of Trustees for a special convention, the Metropolitan Archbishop and the Board of Trustees shall call a special convention.
- C. The time and place of such convention shall be fixed by those responsible for calling such convention.

. Section 3 Notices for Convention

A. Notices for regular conventions shall be sent to all parishes and communities of the Archdiocese and to all those who are entitled to be represented at the convention no less than sixty (60) days prior to the date of the convention.

B. All notices for special convention shall state the purpose for which

the convention is being called and shall be sent by mail that will positively certify receipt by signature no less than thirty (30) days in advance of the date of such convention to all parishes and communities of the Archdiocese and to all those who are entitled to be represented at a convention

Section 4 Delegates

A. All pastors, full-time assistant pastors, retired pastors, and Diocesan Bishops of this Archdiocese and all full-time clergy directly employed by the Archdiocese shall be delegates to any convention and shall each be entitled to one (1) vote in person or by written proxy.

B. Each one hundred (100) persons or any fraction of one hundred (100) which exceeds fifty (50) persons in every parish or community, in good standing in the Archdiocese, shall be represented by one lay delegate at a convention. Each delegate may vote on behalf of one hundred (100) persons in his parish or community or on behalf of any fraction of one hundred (100) exceeding fifty (50) in number. A parish or community may send as many delegates or written proxies as it wishes without affecting its right to have cast in its behalf the votes to which it is entitled. These delegates shall be elected in accordance with the provisions of the local parish constitution and by-laws and be faithful Orthodox in good standing under the rules of their parish or community and the Archdiocese.

C. (1) All regular members of the Board of Trustees of the Archdiocese shall be delegates at large and shall be entitled to one vote.

(2) Each Diocesan Fellowship of St. John the Divine shall be represented by as many delegates as it wishes to send and each Diocesan Fellowship of St. John the Divine shall be entitled to one (1) vote.

(3) Each Diocesan SOYO shall be represented by as many delegates as it wishes to send and each Diocesan SOYO shall be entitled to one (1) vote and the NAC president shall be a delegate and shall be entitled to one (1) vote.

(4) Each Diocesan AOCWNA (Antiochian Orthodox Christian Women of North America) shall be represented by as many delegates as it wishes to send and each Diocesan AOCWNA shall be entitled to one (1) vote.

(5) Each Diocesan Order of St. John Ignatius of Antioch shall be represented by as many delegates as it wishes to send and each Diocesan Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch shall be entitled to one (1) vote.

D. A delegate's proxy shall be recognized if it bears the signature of the pastor and/or chairman of the Parish Council. The proxy of a priest

shall be recognized with the approval of the Metropolitan Archbishop or the presiding officer of the Convention or his duly appointed representative. A proxy by telegram will be accepted in an emergency if it is approved by the Metropolitan Archbishop or the presiding officer of the convention or his duly appointed representative.

Section 5 Convention Officers

- A. The Metropolitan Archbishop or his duly appointed representative shall preside over all conventions.
- B. The Metropolitan Archbishop or his duly appointed representative shall appoint the following officers of the convention: A lay vice-chairman, a secretary or secretaries, sergeants at arms and one or more parliamentarians
- C. The secretaries shall be responsible for recording the minutes of the convention
- D. In the event of prolonged absence, disability or death of the Metropolitan Archbishop, his duly appointed representative or upon the failure to so appoint, the Senior Diocesan Bishop, or if none, the Vicar General shall preside at a convention.

Section 6 Quorum

A majority of the established churches and organizations which are under the jurisdiction of the Archdiocese represented by delegates (either in person or by written proxies), together with a majority of active clergy of the Archdiocese, (either in person or by written proxies) shall constitute a Quorum for the transaction of business at all conventions.

ARTICLE VI

ADMINISTRATION

Section 1 Officers

- A. Metropolitan Archbishop. The Metropolitan Archbishop is the chief shepherd of, and shall guide the entire unified, self-ruled Archdiocese. He shall bear the title “Archbishop of New York and Metropolitan of All North America.” The Metropolitan is the presiding officer of the Local Synod, the Board of Trustees, Regular and Special General Assemblies, the Department of Finance, and the administration of the Archdiocese. In addition, the Metropolitan shall be a member of the Holy Synod of Antioch. Upon request of the Metropolitan and nomination by the General Assembly, one Auxiliary Bishop who will assist the Metropolitan with the

administration of the Archdiocese shall be elected by the Local Synod. This Auxiliary Bishop shall be a voting member of the Local Synod. A candidate for Auxiliary Bishop shall satisfy the same requirements as, and be nominated and elected by the same procedure as that of a candidate for Diocesan Bishop. An Auxiliary Bishop will perform his duties under the jurisdiction and direction of the Metropolitan.

- B. Diocesan Bishops. The Diocesan Bishop exercises his rights and responsibilities in accordance with the Canons of the Holy Orthodox Church, this Constitution, the decisions of the Local Synod of the Archdiocese and in accordance with the duties and responsibilities specified by the Local Synod in “The Manual of Hierarchical Duties and Responsibilities.” The Diocesan Bishop shall bear the title of “Bishop of (city and area)”. The Diocesan Bishop, after consultation with the Metropolitan, shall attend gatherings or synaxis of the Antiochian Bishops that may be called by the Patriarch of Antioch.
- C. Vicar General. The Vicar General, who shall be selected from among the married clergy, shall perform his duties under the jurisdiction and direction of the Metropolitan Archbishop and shall be appointed by him.
- D. Protosyngelos. The Protosyngelos shall perform his duties under the jurisdiction and direction of the Metropolitan Archbishop and shall be appointed by him
- E. Executive Secretary. The Executive Secretary shall keep the Archdiocese records, issue regular statistical reports, and perform the duties of the Secretary of the Archdiocesan Corporation. The Executive Secretary shall be appointed by the Metropolitan Archbishop.
- F. Chancellor or Chancellors. The Archdiocesan Chancellor or Chancellors shall be qualified attorneys-at-law, and shall act as legal advisor(s) to the Archdiocese. They shall be appointed by the Metropolitan Archbishop with the advice of the Board of Trustees.
- G. Financial Advisor-Comptroller. The Financial Advisor-Comptroller shall act as advisor in the management of the finances of the Archdiocese and shall perform the duties usually performed by a comptroller. He shall be appointed by the Metropolitan Archbishop

with the advice of the Board of Trustees.

- H. Treasurer. The Archdiocesan Treasurer shall be a layman and a member of the Board of Trustees. He shall be properly bonded in a suitable sum, and shall fulfill the ordinary duties of the office of Treasurer. He shall be elected by the Board of Trustees of the Archdiocese.
- I. Assistant Treasurer. The Archdiocesan Assistant Treasurer shall be a layman and a member of the Board of Trustees. He shall be properly bonded in a suitable sum and shall fulfill the ordinary duties of the office of Assistant Treasurer. He shall be elected by the Board of Trustees.

Section 2 Board of Trustees

- A. Function. This Board shall accumulate and administer all funds and properties belonging to the Archdiocese and such properties shall include but not be limited to all funds, properties, insurance policies, trusts, foundations and any other properties, regardless of the nature of same including those of the dioceses.
- B. The Metropolitan Archbishop will, with the assistance of the Archdiocesan and Board Officers, and the various committees and orders later described in Section 3 of this Article, actually supervise the various activities of the Archdiocese. He shall present to the Board of Trustees an annual budget which will be sufficient to carry out the necessary functions. The Board of Trustees may, however, after consideration and consultation, revise, modify, increase or decrease any appropriation requested in the proposed budget.
- C. Membership. The Archdiocese Board of Trustees shall consist of the Metropolitan Archbishop, the Diocesan Bishops, the Vicar General, the Protosyngelos (the Dean of the Clergy), the Executive Secretary, the Chancellor or Chancellors, the Financial Advisor-Comptroller, the President of the North American Council of the *Fellowship of St. John the Divine*, the President of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Women of North America, the Chairman of the Order of St. Ignatius of Antioch and thirty (30) additional members to be selected as follows: ten (10) members shall be appointed by the Metropolitan Archbishop; five (5) members shall be appointed for a term of two years; and five (5) members shall be appointed for a term of four

years. The General Conventions shall elect the remaining twenty (20) members of the Board: ten (10) members for a term of two years; and ten (10) members for a term of four years. Upon the expiration of the appointed or elected terms as set forth hereinabove, such Board members thereafter shall be appointed or elected for full terms of four years.

In the event of a vacancy in the Board of Trustees, the Metropolitan Archbishop shall appoint a person to complete the unexpired term.

The Metropolitan Archbishop and the Board of Trustees may appoint honorary members to the Board of Trustees who shall have all rights of membership, except they shall not have the right to vote. Unless otherwise expressly provided, all appointments, or reappointments to honorary membership shall be limited to a term of two years or until the next succeeding biennial convention, whichever shall first occur.

This Board shall elect from among its members a vice-chairman, who shall preside at the request of the Metropolitan Archbishop, or in his absence at the request of the Senior Diocesan Bishop, and also a Secretary from among its members who shall keep proper records of the deliberations of the Board.

- C. Meetings. The Board of Trustees shall hold regular meetings during the Spring and Fall of each year at such time and place as may be determined by the Metropolitan Archbishop with the advice of the Board of Trustees. In addition, the Board of Trustees shall meet biennially during the General Convention of the Archdiocese.

Additional Meetings of this Board may be called at any time when the Metropolitan Archbishop deems it advisable, or upon the request of a majority of the members of the Local Synod or the Board who shall request the Executive Secretary of the Archdiocese to notify the members in writing of the time and place of the meeting. Any action required or permitted to be taken by the Board of Trustees may be taken without a meeting if all members of the Board consent in writing to the adoption of a resolution authorizing the action. The resolution and the written consents thereto shall be filed with the minutes of the proceedings of the Board. The members of the Board of Trustees may participate in a meeting of such Board by means of a conference telephone or similar communications equipment by means of which all persons participating in the meeting can hear

each other at the same time. Participation by such means shall constitute presence in person at the meeting.

Twelve (12) voting members of the Board of Trustees at any meeting duly called shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. The Chairman shall vote only in the event of a tie

Section 3 Archdiocesan Committees and Orders

The Metropolitan Archbishop shall create and appoint all Committees, Commissions and Orders necessary to accomplish the purposes of the Archdiocese, after consultation with the Board of Trustees as he deems it necessary.

Section 4 Finance

A. Authority to Assess. Each parish shall contribute to the Archdiocese a sum of money annually. Pursuant to resolutions duly made, the formula and the amount to be assessed, shall be adopted by the Board of Trustees and a majority vote of the General Assembly at the Archdiocese Convention *and approved by the Metropolitan Archbishop.*

A. General Fund. The contributions of the parishes as hereinbefore mentioned, together with any other general contributions, shall be deposited in the name of the Archdiocese and shall constitute the General Fund of the Archdiocese.

B. Special Funds. The Board of Trustees may create other funds titled under specific or separate names for the purposes of receiving and accumulating pledges, gifts, and inheritances, which may be designated for the fulfillment of any specific purpose or purposes contained in the constitution. Funds, property, pledges, gifts and inheritances received by any diocese of this Archdiocese shall be held and administered by the Archdiocese for the benefit of the diocese.

ARTICLE VII

Subject to the requirements of Article II, Section 4, the Constitution of the Archdiocese may be revised or amended in either of the following manners:

Section 1 A resolution duly passed by a majority vote of a General or Special Convention shall be submitted to the Department of Legal Affairs for the purpose of studying and determining the legality of any change. The Department of Legal Affairs, at a date no later than the

Spring Meeting of the Board of Trustees, shall report its recommendations to the Board of Trustees and the Metropolitan Archbishop. The Metropolitan Archbishop thereafter shall include in the notice of the next succeeding convention the recommendations of the Board of Trustees for or against adoption together with the description in substance of the contemplated change.

The contemplated amendment shall be put on the agenda of the next succeeding convention and shall be adopted after an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the total vote cast thereon subject to the approval of the Metropolitan Archbishop.