



## THE CONSTITUTION OF THE ENGLISH CATHOLIC COMMUNION

By Divine Providence the English Catholic Communion was established on Pentecost Sunday, May 19, 2024.

The purpose of the English Catholic Communion is to provide episcopal protection and oversight for Catholic believers and organizations – Churches, parishes, Religious Orders and other ecclesiastical organizations – who are not aligned with the Roman, Anglican or Orthodox Communions.

The standards for doctrine and practice of the English Catholic Communion are found in the English translations of the Sarum rites, which are both Pre-reformation and Pre-Tridentine. The Sarum Missal was used for celebrating Mass in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland for over 500 years prior to the reformation. However, the Communion also recognizes the liturgical traditions of its member jurisdictions, such as use of the Anglican Missal of 1921, the American Missal of 1952, the first Prayer Book of 1549, the Old Catholic rites, Eastern liturgies as well as the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite.

The Communion is traditional and conservative in doctrine and practice.

The first Primate of the Communion is the Most Reverend Doctor Scott McLaughlin. Archbishop McLaughlin authorized the founding of the Communion at the request of clergy and laity in the United States, Central and South America, Africa, and Europe.

### **Definitions:**

**Abbot:** the senior leader of a religious order, such as a superior general or other title. The abbot may or may not also be consecrated to the episcopacy.

**Archbishop:** a bishop consecrated to the episcopacy in valid apostolic orders who has bishops serving under his episcopal protection and oversight. The head of a church.

**Bishop:** is consecrated to the episcopacy in valid apostolic orders and holds ordinary jurisdiction over a group of parishes. The head of a diocese.

Church: usually a national church led by an archbishop.

Diocese: usually a group of parishes led by a bishop.

Prelate: any archbishop or bishop consecrated to the episcopacy in valid apostolic orders.

Priest: is ordained to the office of priesthood by a bishop consecrated to the episcopacy in valid apostolic orders. The priest may or may not have parish responsibility.

Member organization: any church, diocese, parish, religious order, etc. which holds membership in the Communion.

Individual member: laity or clergy not affiliated with an organization (defined above) holding membership in the Communion.

## **I. The Primate**

a. The Primate of the Communion shall serve until his death, retirement or resignation.

b. No ecclesiastical organization shall be recognized as a member of the Communion until the advice and consent of the Primate is obtained.

c. If the Primate should die, retire or resign, the Supreme Council of Bishops shall elect, by a vote of at least 2/3 (66%) of the members of the Communion, one of their own number to be installed as Primate.

d. The Primate shall appoint individuals to assist him with the work of his Office.

## **II. The Supreme Council of Bishops**

a. The Supreme Council of Bishops shall be instituted upon the founding of the Communion.

b. The Supreme Council of Bishops shall be composed of all the archbishops or other most senior bishops of each respective member jurisdiction, or vicars-general if a jurisdiction does not yet have its own episcopal leadership, abbots of religious orders, and other senior leaders of any ecclesiastical organization that is recognized by the Primate.

c. The Supreme Council of Bishops shall meet annually during the Octave of Pentecost for their regular session and may meet more often upon the call of the Primate or the majority of the Bishops on the Supreme Council. The Supreme Council of Bishops may convene in person or through electronic means.

d. The work of the Supreme Council of Bishops will be conducted through various Sacred Commissions or other committees as they deem fit, for example: The Sacred Commission on Evangelization, etc.

e. The Primate shall always be head of the Supreme Council of Bishops. No meeting of the Supreme Council, where official business is discussed, shall take place without the advice and consent of the Primate.

f. The Primate, or his designee, shall have ex-officio voice and vote on any committee established by the Supreme Council, whether ad hoc or standing, as well as each of the Sacred Commissions of the Communion.

### **III. Incardination**

a. A bishop, abbot, priest, or leader of another type of ecclesiastical organization, acting for their respective jurisdiction, diocese, religious order, parish or other type of ecclesiastical organization, may petition to become a member of the Communion.

b. The Primate will provide a form for use to apply officially for membership in the Communion, and direct that all documentation necessary be collected to determine the fitness of any organization to join the Communion.

c. Any bishop, abbot, priest or other leader of an ecclesiastical organization, having applied for membership but not supplying all documentation necessary to determine the fitness of that organization for membership, shall be denied membership in the Communion.

d. An organization, having applied for membership in the Communion, may be provisionally recognized by the Primate, pending final ratification by the Supreme Council of Bishops.

e. The Primate shall seek the advice and consent of the Supreme Council of Bishops before permanently recognizing any new member organization of the Communion, with at least 1/2 (50%) of the members concurring. Such concurrence may be voiced by the Council members by electronic poll.

### **IV. Ordinary jurisdiction**

a. All archbishops and bishops hold ordinary jurisdiction in their respective churches or dioceses. The Communion does not determine or interfere in the decisions of archbishops or bishops when they exercise their rights as the ordinary.

b. The Primate will hold ordinary jurisdiction over any individual members of the Communion where the Communion is not geographically represented by at least a bishop or a vicar-general.

c. The Primate will appoint all vicars-general.

## **V. Consecrations**

a. No consecrations of archbishops of churches who are members of the Communion will be conducted until the advice and consent of the Primate is obtained.

b. The Primate shall provide for the consecration to the episcopacy of vicars-general when appropriate and convenient. A sufficient number of prelates who are members of the communion will participate in such consecrations, at the discretion of the Primate.

## **VI. Discipline**

a. If a member of the Supreme Council of Bishops is found to espouse open heresy, or fall into grievous sin and remain unrepentant, the provisions of Matthew 18:15-18 are followed. At least two members of the Communion shall submit a signed document alleging the fault of the offending member at a regular session of the Supreme Council. The Council will discuss the case, with the offending member able to defend himself. If the Supreme Council of Bishops finds the allegation to be true, it will vote, with 2/3 (66%) concurring, to remove the offending member from the Supreme Council of Bishops and the Communion.

b. Member organizations may nominate a new representative to the Supreme Council of Bishops in case Article VI. a. is followed.

c. If the Primate is found to espouse open heresy, or fall into grievous sin and remain unrepentant, the provisions of Matthew 18:15-18 are followed. At least two members of the Communion shall submit a signed document alleging the fault of the Primate at a regular session of the Supreme Council. The Supreme Council of Bishops will discuss the case, with the Primate able to defend himself. If the Supreme Council of Bishops finds the allegation to be true, it will vote, with 2/3 (66%) concurring, to remove the Primate from the Supreme Council of Bishops and the Communion.

d. If the Primate should be removed from office, the Supreme Council of Bishops shall elect, by a vote of at least 2/3 (66%) of the members of the Communion, one of their own number to be installed as Primate.

## **VII. Support**

- a. To defray the costs of communication, travel expenses, and to assist other member organizations which may be suffering from natural disaster or other emergency, all member organizations pledge to pay, for the work of the Supreme Council and the Primate's Office, a minimum 1.5% of their annual income, according to their annual operating budget (capital budgets are not used to calculate this amount). Individual members are expected to support the work of the Communion with an amount commensurate to 1.5% of their own annual income.
- b. The Primate will provide for the administration of this pledge.
- c. The Primate shall provide an annual budget for review and approval of the Supreme Council of Bishops meeting in regular session. The budget will list the amounts contributed by the member organizations as well as other contributions from individual members.
- d. If a member organization wishes to be excused from this pledge, or pay a lower amount, it must submit a "Article VII Support Appeal" form to the Primate prior to the next regular session of the Supreme Council of Bishops. The Primate may lower the pledge or excuse the pledge for a period of one year.
- e. The fiscal year of the Communion is January 1st through December 31<sup>st</sup>.

### **VIII. Removal of Membership**

- a. A member organization, or an individual member, may request dismissal from the Communion. The Primate may recognize such request, pending approval by the Supreme Council of Bishops, approved with at least 1/2 (50%) of the members concurring. Such concurrence may be voiced by the Council members by electronic poll.
- b. A member organization, or individual member, may be dismissed from membership in the Communion, if the Primate approves of the dismissal, and such dismissal is approved with at least 1/2 (50%) of the members concurring. Such concurrence may be voiced by the Council members by electronic poll.

### **IX. Amendment**

This Constitution shall be in effect May 19, 2024. It may be amended from time to time, by a 3/4 (75%) vote at a regular session of the Supreme Council of Bishops. Notice of amendments to be presented must be circulated in writing to the member organizations and communicated to them at least sixty days before the regular session convenes.