

**The Order
of the Conference of North American Old Catholic Bishops**

Art. 1

The Conference of North American Old Catholic Bishops includes those bishops who:

- a) together with their churches adhere to the Unity Statement of November 7, 2006;
- b) maintain the catholicity of ministry, doctrine, and worship in apostolic succession;
- c) together with their churches are in full communion with each other; having been elected lawfully and ordained canonically and exercise the catholic episcopacy in their church;
- d) have no links or obligations to other churches contradicting the Unity Statement of 2006 and the present Order;
- e) exercise their function as ordinary bishops, i.e. govern a church (diocese).

Art. 2

The Conference of Bishops does not infringe upon the jurisdiction of its members in their local churches.

Art. 3.

The Conference of Bishops has the following tasks:

- a) it takes the necessary decisions in all organizational or disciplinary matters concerning the maintenance of communion and regarding joint projects;
- b) it responds to controversial matters of faith and the ensuing ethical behavior as well as to matters of order;
- c) it decides about the admission of bishops and their churches to the Conference.

Art. 4.

Each member of the Conference is bound

- a) to take part in the meetings of the Conference of Bishops;
- b) to bring problems, insights, and developments of their churches to the attention of the of the other bishops of the Conference.

c) to initiate in his or her church a discussion of matters concerning Art. 3, which will be dealt with in the Conference, so that he or she can express his or her views in the Conference in knowledge of the conviction in his or her church;

d) to make known in his or her church as doctrinal statements of the bishops united in the Conference any declarations and statements in matters of faith and the ensuing ethical behavior as well as order, thereby including the given justification;

e) to have implemented the decisions of the Conference on discipline, organization, and common endeavors in his or her church according to its internal order;

Art. 5

a) A member of the Conference according to Art. 1 is in principle bound to cast a vote at Conference meetings concerning Art. 3;

b) All members must disclose any conflicts of interest.

c) A bishop who does not take part in the meeting must authorize another member of his or her own church to speak on his or her behalf and to vote. All actions are binding.

d) Abstentions are not taken into consideration in the voting results.

Art. 6

a) Decisions on the admission of a bishop and his or her church to the Conference (Art. 3 e) are taken in accordance with Art. 6 b.

b) In all matters, a decision has been taken if and when the absolute majority of the members of the Conference present agree to it.

Art. 7

The election of a bishop is carried out by the respective church according to its order; the consecration is performed by the bishops of the Conference.

Art. 8

a) The respective church carries out the election being aware of the following impediments to consecration as determined by the Conference: -- the lack of theological formation and pastoral experience required for the episcopal ministry; -- a conduct of life incompatible with the dignity of the episcopal office;

b) The responsible church authority notifies all the member churches of the Conference, through the moderator, of the election and supplies the respective certification.

c) The consent process, after the election notification, shall last 30 days;

d) If consent is given within 30 days after the notification to the moderator of the Conference, the moderator will send a copy of the “Unity Statement” and of the “Order of the Conference of North American Old Catholic Bishops” to the elect requesting assent to them by signing them.

f) After having received the copies of the “Unity Statement” and of the “Order of the Conference of North American Old Catholic Bishops” carrying the signature of the elect, the moderator of the Conference notifies to the members of the Conference that the consecration may be performed; also communicating this fact in a letter to the responsible authority of the respective church.

Art. 9

a) All the bishops of the Conference are to be invited to the consecration by the respective church.

b) If possible, the three principal consecrators are to be taken from ordinary bishops of various traditions of the Conference. Whenever possible, the predecessor is not to be among the three principal consecrators.

Art. 10

a) The bishops do not enter into any obligations concerning the ministry, doctrine, or worship to other bishops or churches, nor do they terminate them, without prior joint discussion and approval of the Conference.

b) In particular, the bishops commit themselves not to consecrate any bishop for other churches or to take part in the laying-on of hands without the approval of the Conference.

Art. 11

The bishops distribute among themselves the constitutions, their canonical provisions, pastoral letters, official prayer books and hymnals, rituals, pontificals, catechisms, manuals, the annual lists of clergy, the minutes of their synod, the study and examination regulations, particularly important decisions, and the like.

Art. 12

Deacons and priests going from one Old Catholic diocese to another and living there for a longer or shorter period are as a rule licensed to function if provided with letters of recommendation by their bishop; a formal reception into the clergy of another diocese can be made only after the canonical dismissal by the competent bishop. This does not apply to a member of the clergy being elected bishop of another diocese.

Art. 13

- a) Each bishop is bound to ordain or receive only such candidates to the diaconate and presbyterate who are duly qualified and can prove the required training, theological studies and examinations according to the order of the bishop's church.

- b) Candidates for the diaconate and presbyterate from other dioceses are ordained to the respective order only at the request or with the consent of the competent bishop or their church.