

THE UNITED AMERICAN CATHOLIC CHURCH
CONSTITUTION AND CANONS

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ARTICLE 1 THE CHURCH

Chapter 1 Name and Jurisdiction

Canon I-1 Official Name

§ 1 The official name of this Church shall be THE UNITED AMERICAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, hereinafter referred to as UACC, or simply, the Church.

§ 2 Wherever herein the United American Catholic Church is referenced by the form UACC, the American Catholic Church, or simply the Church; such reference shall be as if made to The United American Catholic Church by its full name.

§ 3 UACC was established July 1, 2002 by praxis of the Most Reverend Bishop Anthony Francis Wayne Hash, then Diocesan Bishop of the American Catholic Diocese of the South, American Catholic Church International.

§ 4 Formal inter-communion arrangements with other ecclesiastical bodies notwithstanding, UACC is a completely independent and autocephalous Catholic Church, subordinate to no other jurisdiction or prelate outside UACC.

Canon I-1.1 Jurisdiction

§ 1 As a member of the universal Church established by Jesus Christ, UACC has jurisdiction wherever individuals or communities of faith are established which are affiliated with UACC.

§ 2 The UACC's jurisdiction may be coincident with jurisdictions of other Churches and/or communities of faith. Where such coincidence of jurisdiction exists, UACC claims right of jurisdiction solely over those persons and/or communities of faith affiliated with UACC.

Chapter 2 Purpose

Canon I-2 Purpose of the UACC

§ 1 UACC is a voluntary association of Christians which exists for the sole purpose of making known the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ to all people and to provide the Sacraments of the Church and/or other pastoral care to all people who shall reverently request them.

Chapter 3 Membership

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Canon I-3 Membership Defined

§ 1 Anyone who has validly received the Sacraments of Christian Initiation from the UACC is a member of the UACC unless they give up such membership, join another Church or are expelled from the Church.

§ 2 Anyone who has validly received the Sacraments of Christian Initiation from another ecclesiastical communion in Rites acceptable to the UACC who requests membership in the UACC is a member of the UACC. Anyone meeting these criteria who formally affiliates with any parish or mission of the UACC by registering as a member of that parish or mission shall be considered to have requested membership in the UACC. Such membership continues without interruption unless they give up such membership, join another Church or are expelled from the Church.

Canon I-3.1 Limitations on Members' Rights

§ 1 The Rights of Membership for the various categories of members are set forth solely in this Constitution.

§ 2 Membership in the UACC carries only those rights within and for the UACC that are herein defined for each category of membership and no other rights whatsoever. Except as may be specifically provided herein, membership in the UACC does not convey the right to vote within any civil corporate structure of the UACC nor that of any sub-entity of the UACC; nor does it convey financial equity in the Church nor in any property, real or personal, owned by the UACC nor that of any Diocese, Parish, or Mission or other sub-entity of the UACC, unless such equity is expressly granted in documents of civil incorporation or Trust of the respective jurisdiction; nor does membership necessarily convey the right to vote in any council of the Church, except as may be provided herein.

Canon I-3.2 Categories of Membership

§ 1 There shall be three categories of membership in the UACC: Lay, Religious, and Clergy. These categories exist as organizational conveniences reflecting the diversity of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and do not indicate a hierarchy of rank or privilege.

§ 2 The Lay membership category shall consist of all members of the UACC who are neither members of the Religious Category nor the Clergy category.

§ 3 The Religious membership category shall consist of all members of the UACC who are members of Religious Orders, as defined by this Constitution and their respective Order's Rule and/or Constitution.

§ 4 The Clergy membership category shall consist of all members of the UACC who have received the Sacrament of Holy Orders in the Order of Deacon, Presbyter (Priest), and/or

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Bishop according to the norms established in this Constitution and who have been incardinated into the UACC in one of the UACC's diocese or Religious Orders.

§ 5 Members of Religious Orders who are also Bishops, Presbyters, or Deacons are members of both the Religious and Clergy categories.

Chapter 4 The Law of the Church

Canon I-4 The Law of the Church established

§ 1 The Supreme Law of the Church is the Law of God, revealed in the Person and Teachings of Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God, through the Holy Scriptures; and in the Traditions of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.

§ 2 Exercising the teaching authority granted to it by Christ through the agency of the College of Bishops, the Church establishes and maintains a Statement of Beliefs which expresses the Revealed Truth entrusted to the Church by Christ and which is binding on all members of the Church.

§ 3 Christ, in committing the power to Bind and Loose to His Church (cf. Matt 18:18), empowered the Church to govern itself. Exercising that power, laws and regulations are enacted and/or modified by and for the temporal governance of the Church by the National Synod. By enacting such laws, the Church binds all its members to a common body of normative regulations by which the temporal affairs of the Church are ordered and organized.

§ 4 This Constitution comprises the national temporal Law of the Church. As such it is the normative temporal law and standard regulatory document for the UACC. All local, regional, and Diocesan regulations and all documents of civil incorporation or trust are subordinate to the provisions of this Constitution.

§ 5 Whenever there is a conflict between local or Diocesan regulations and any provision of this Constitution for any reason, the provisions of this Constitution prevail.

§ 6 In situations not covered by this Constitution or other legislation, national or Diocesan or local, enacted according to the norms established herein; the competent Church authority having jurisdiction may act for their area of responsibility in their sole discretion.

§ 7 The College of Bishops may make or impose policy or define official positions for the Church on items within their jurisdiction as defined in this constitution.

§ 8 The College of Bishops may make public statements which represent official positions of the Church on items within their jurisdiction as defined in this constitution.

§ 9 The National Synod may make or impose policy or define official positions for the Church on items within their jurisdiction as defined in this constitution.

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§ 10 The National Synod may make public statements which represent official positions of the Church on items within their jurisdiction as defined in this constitution.

Canon I-4.1 Governing Bodies of the Church

§ 1 The College of Bishops, acting together, legislates for the Church nationally according to the norms defined herein and in inter-diocesan matters.

§ 2 The College of Bishops governs the Church nationally, adjudicates all matters pertaining to those in the Holy Order of Bishop, and is the court of appeal for all matters according to norms defined herein.

§ 3 The National Synod, legislates for the Church nationally according to the norms defined herein and in inter-diocesan matters.

§ 4 The Executive Committee is the executive agency of the National Synod, exercising governance functions on a day-to-day basis according to norms defined herein.

§ 5 The Diocesan Bishop governs, legislates, and adjudicates in all matters pertaining to his/her own diocese, provided that his/her actions in exercising this role may not conflict with the Law of God or this Constitution, nor may his/her actions conflict with legislation lawfully enacted by the College of Bishops and/or the National Synod for inter-diocesan and national issues, nor with judicial rulings of the Chancellor of the UACC, or the appellate judicial rulings of the College of Bishops.

§ 6 The Chancellor of the UACC acts as arbiter of this Constitution, issuing judgments on the applicability of these Canons to the actions of the Church. The Chancellor acts as the point of initial appeal in all disputes and disciplinary actions. The decisions of the Chancellor may always be appealed to the National Synod or the College of Bishops.

§ 7 Appeals of all matters regarding the governance of the Church, except the discipline of bishops, shall first be made to the Chancellor of the UACC, then, if desired, to the National Synod, then if desired to the College of Bishops.

Chapter 5 Changing this Constitution

Canon I-5 Amending or Changing this Constitution

§ 1 This Constitution may be changed, amended, or replaced upon majority vote of the National Synod, when assembled in Synod.

Chapter 6 Relations with other Churches

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Canon I-6.1 Relations with other Churches

§ 1 The UACC desires to fulfill its mission and purpose, as herein defined, in peaceful charity toward all communities of worship as Christ has taught us (cf. John 13:34-35, Mark 9:40). Such extension of fraternal charity does not imply that formal inter-communion relationships exist between the UACC and any other ecclesiastical body whatsoever.

Canon I-6.2 Establishing Formal Inter-Communion Relationships with other Churches and Mergers of the UACC with other Churches

§ 1 It pertains solely to the College of Bishops, in its sole discretion, acting corporately, to establish formal Inter-Communion relationships between the UACC and other ecclesial bodies.

§ 2 It is the duty of each bishop to seek the counsel of the Clergy and People of God whom they shepherd prior to rendering a decision in matters pertaining to intercommunion agreements.

§ 3 It pertains to the College of Bishops to enter into negotiations with other Churches for the purpose of merger of the respective Churches into a single body. These negotiations may be conducted by the entire Synod, the Executive Committee, the local Diocesan Bishop, or others delegated this responsibility.

§ 4 Merger with any other Church shall only occur by subsuming that Church into the UACC, subjecting its membership to this Constitution. In all mergers, the UACC shall be the surviving entity.

§ 5 It is the duty of each bishop to seek the counsel of the Clergy and People of God whom they shepherd prior to rendering a decision in matters pertaining to mergers of the UACC with other Churches.

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