

Constitution of The Community of the Holy Family



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Preamble

Being led by the Holy Spirit, and the guidance of the saints of the Holy Family and our Lord Jesus Christ the Righteous, we the sisters of The Community of the Holy Family do hereby establish this body of holy order law: The Constitution of The Community of the Holy Family.

Article I. Title, Bounds and Establish of Constitution

This Holy Order shall be known and distinguished as The Community of the Holy Family, also known as C.H.F., and its bounds shall be the communities for which the community is found. This Constitution supersedes all previous Constitutions of the Community of the Holy Family.

Article II. Accession to the Traditions Found in The Episcopal Church

This Holy Order and all of its Sisters and members accede to and are subject to the traditions and customs as found in The Episcopal Church, as well as the traditions of the areas of the Anglican Communion, a fellowship within the One, Holy Catholic, and Apostolic Church, in communion with the See of Canterbury, upholding and propagating the historic Faith and Order as set forth in The Book of Common Prayer, that each Chapter Community is located.

Article III. Authority in the Order

Section 1.

The authority of the Holy Order shall be the Mother Superior; or if there is no Mother Superior, the Assistant Superior. If there is no Assistant Superior, a majority vote by all professed members shall govern decisions until a new Mother Superior and Assistant Superior have been chosen.

Section 2.

All professed members of the Order are to follow *The Rule*. The Rule shall supersede personal belief and popular sentiments of the day.

Article IV. Convention

Section 1.

There shall be a yearly Convention/Weekend Retreat for all professed members of the order and any guest as approved by the Mother Superior, Assistant Superior, and all elected officers. This Convention is not to coincide with the Diocesan Convention of the Diocese that the Order operates in, with the General Convention, or with Lambeth Conferences. This Convention

shall be used to deliberate, vote on, and make necessary amendments to the Constitution and Rule of the Community of the Holy Family. The authority of the Order can convene a Special Convention in the event of an emergency as defined by Order Leadership.

Section 2.

The Mother Superior will present all motions to amend the Constitution and Rule. Amendments can only occur with a majority vote from all professed members. Committees shall be appointed by the Standing Committee, which shall consist of all elected officers and two elected professed non-officer sisters.

Section 3.

Novice Sisters shall have voice only at these proceedings. If Novice Sisters are the only members, a representative of the Community's choosing shall present all motions to the floor. The Novice Sisters, at this point, will be allowed to vote on constitutional amendments.

Section 4.

If a majority of the sisters at Convention are all Novices, Novice Sisters shall be allowed to vote. If the number of professed sisters in the Order is under the number of officer positions that are required, Novices shall be allowed to run for office.

Section 5.

Any proposed alterations or amendments shall be submitted in writing to the Authority of the Order at least (90) days before the meeting of the annual Convention. Such proposals shall be referred by the Authority of the Order to the Constitutions and Rule Committee (appointed by the Standing Committee), which will study such proposals and submit them in proper form to the Convention. This same committee from time to time may be asked to review the entire Constitution and Canon to determine if updates are needed.

Section 6.

Representatives of The Community of the Holy Family are encouraged to promote the organization at Diocesan Convention, General Convention, and Lambeth Conferences. Representation as elected officials is also encouraged.

Article V. Election of Mother Superior

Section 1

A Mother Superior can only come from the professed members of the Order. Candidates shall be chosen by a Nomination Committee composed of five non-officers, if possible, and who are voted onto the committee at Convention or a Special Convention. A Special Convention shall be convened with advance notice from Order Authority as to its date for the actual election after the Nominating Committee delivers its report. This date will be agreed on by the majority vote of the Standing Committee.

Section 2

The Special Convention cannot begin unless two-thirds of the Order is present. When the vote for Mother Superior takes place it shall be by orders and by ballot. When two-thirds of the vote is for one person, that person is elected. This position is for life or until the Mother Superior steps down at her discretion.

Article VI. Order Officers and Elected Positions

Section 1.

The Community of the Holy Family shall have the following elected officer positions with the following term limits:

- Mother Superior-For Life
- Assistant Superior-For Life
- Novice Mistress-Two Years
- Sacristan-One Year
- Librarian-One Year
- Treasurer-One Year

Section 2.

If the Community has a physical house, the following elected positions must then be elected:

- Head Mistress-Three Years
- Housekeeper-One Year
- Infirmarian-One Year
- Workroom Sister-One Year
- Guest Mistress-One Year
- Doorkeeper-One Year
- Boarders' Mistress-One Year

Section 3.

The duties of these positions are defined in The Rule and the Installation Office. Added responsibilities may be added to any position as needs arise. The Nomination Committee will bring before the Chapter its recommendations for each position at Convention. The Majority vote by ballot will win the election. The Assistant Superior is elected the same way as a Mother Superior and has the same term limits. A candidate for each position has the opportunity to remove their name from the pool at any time. If a Sister decides to step down, she must give a four-week notice of her intent to step down. She shall not be punished for such action.

Section 4.

Two Standing Committee Representatives from the pool of professed members will be nominated and elected at Conventions. Their position on the Committee will last one year.

Section 5.

In the event of a vacancy, a special electing can be held following the same procedures as defined in Article VI, Sections 1-4.

Article VII. The Rule

Section 1.

The Rule is the Sister's way of life. Its modification should not be taken lightly. If a Chapter decides to amend The Rule, two-thirds majority vote of all sisters of the chapter must be reached. A majority of the Chapter must first vote to Modify the Rule before proceedings take place. A ballot voice vote of each member must be taken.

Section 2.

The original Rule from 1896 must always be kept in its original form and studied by the Sisters. The Order shall honor those, whom for centuries lived by it and treat the original Rule with the dignity it deserves. This Section can never be modified.

Article VIII. Professed Sisters

Section 1.

A Novice in our organization is a woman who has decided to devote her life to the Rule and Life Style of the Community of the Holy Family. This person is to take temporary Vows of Fidelity, Purity, and Obedience to the Gospels. These Vows last six months, After which, the Novice becomes a Professed Member of our Holy Order. Only the Mother Superior has the final say as to who can become a Novice. The Mother will make her decisions based on the recommendations of a Discernment Committee. This Committee is to be advised how to proceed by the Mother Superior. Mother Superior, in times of exceptional circumstance, has the ability to give the okay for a person to become a Novice. A woman discerning if she wants to be a Novice shall be called a Postulant.

Section 2.

These Vows must be made before God and to a priest or bishop who falls into the Apostolic Succession, of whom have been approved by the order to oversee such vows.

Section 3.

A Professed Sister will take year-long Vows, renewing them each year for a total of six years, after such time, the Professed Sister will make her Life Time Vow. These Vows will follow as defined by Article VIII, Section 1 of this document. The Vows require the sister to follow, uphold, and respect The Rule, This Document, and the Sisterhood we have found in Christ.

Article IX. Removal from Office

Section 1.

At times, it may come to pass when a Sister must be removed from office. This can only be done with the majority vote of the chapter. Counsel to the Chaplain of the Chapter must co-oversee the vote with the Mother Superior. The Mother Superior does not get to vote unless there is a tie. Deliberations both for and against the accused are to be held over two days. The accused must be given a chance to speak on her behalf. The vote will be held on the second day.

Section 2.

If the Mother Superior is the subject for removal, the priest over the community, the Chaplain, and the Assistant Superior of the Chapter are to co-oversee the vote. The Assistant Superior is the tie-breaker.

Section 3.

Grounds for removal include but are not limited to, fraudulent activity, abuse of power, and/or disregard of The Rule.

Section 4.

In the event of a removal, a special election will be held following the rules as defined by Article VI, Section 5.

Section 5.

Removal from office is not a removal from the Order.

Article X. Removal from the Order

Section 1.

Removal from The Community of the Holy Family is something that is only saved for the gravest of circumstances. It would take a truly "awful," in the ancient Greek sense of the word, event to gain grounds for such an action. Actions such as, but not limited to, abuse, murder, rape, and like offenses would be grounds for expulsion from the Community.

Section 2.

If it is proved in a court of law, and the courts are just, the Sister guilty of the action/actions can be brought up for a vote by the entire group. If two-thirds of the Community vote to expel the member, the Bishop in Charge of the Community will go and meet with the Sister. After an examination of the situation, many prayers, and conversations with the Sister, The Bishop and the Bishop alone can remove the woman from the Order.

Section 3.

It would do everyone who faces circumstances such as these, to remember that God loves us in all times, in all places, and especially when we don't deserve that love, let us go out into the world and love others as God loves us.