

# Canon Law of the Old Catholic Apostolic Church

## 1. Promulgation

1.1 These Canons were promulgated by Mar Joannes III, the then Metropolitan Primate of the Liberal Catholic Apostolic Church, after consultation and prayer, on the thirtieth day of November in the year two thousand and eight. These canons are subject to revision from time to time by the College of Bishops. This present version is the sixth version.

1.2 These Canons may be referred to as "The Canons of the Old Catholic Apostolic Church". These canons were changed to reflect the name change from Liberal Catholic Apostolic Church to Old Catholic Apostolic Church which was adopted to better reflect our old catholic heritage.

1.3 Where the duties of clergy and other members of the Church are described below, they shall be understood as if the phrase "provided such an action is compliant with all relevant secular laws and regulations in the jurisdiction(s) where it is to be performed" were postpended in each case. It is recognised that in some cases, particularly in respect of marriage laws, the law may vary widely from one jurisdiction to another, and what is legal in one place may not be legal elsewhere.

1.4 No part of these Canons shall be understood, interpreted or relied on as offering guidance or advice on any aspect of secular law whatsoever. All persons affected by these provisions are recommended to seek independent legal advice before proceeding.

## 2. Concerning the Structure of the Church

2.1 The official and formal Name of the Church shall be The Old Catholic Apostolic Church (hereafter "the Church"). The name Liberal Catholic Apostolic Church is still used and valid but is not the official church name after the 6<sup>th</sup> of May, AD2012. The name is abbreviated to OCAC when appropriate. We do not agree to any other body using the name Liberal Catholic Apostolic Church nor the formulation LCAC as we do still use this, and have historic documents with both the name and formulations above; therefore use of which will cause confusion and mistaken identity of such other bodies and ourselves.

2.1.1 Any documentation, be that a certificate, faculty, licence, order, constitution or any descriptive instrument that mentions Liberal Catholic Apostolic Church, or LCAC dated prior to 6<sup>th</sup> May, AD2012, shall be deemed as if it reads Old Catholic Apostolic Church or OCAC after said 6<sup>th</sup> May, AD2012. Similarly, any document which reads Old Catholic Apostolic Church or OCAC shall likewise be treated as if in retrospect it read Liberal Catholic Apostolic Church or LCAC before the said 6<sup>th</sup> May, AD2012.

2.2 The Old Catholic Apostolic Church incorporates subsidiary societies, orders and ordinariates as listed under canon 2.4 below and as may be varied from time to time.

2.3 The character of the Church shall be that of a liberal, inclusive, progressive Christian church within the Catholic charism.

2.4 The current societies, orders and sodalities that are under the protection of the Church are as follows:

- The Order of St Mary Magdelene

- The Valiant Order of St Joseph
  - The Liberal Catholic Apostolic Church
  - The Religious Society of St Simon
  - The Franciscan Missionaries of the Cross
  - The Australian Old Catholic Church
  - The Franciscans in Exultation of the Holy Cross
  - The Cross Denominational Mission
  - The Independent Liberal Catholic Fellowship
- (- Any ordinariates or dioceses created within the church for administration of dioceses, parishes or clergy are also included and treated similarly).

2.4.1 No Order or Society of the Church may solicit or collect oblations from its members, except that in the case of Orders which provide for specific dress and regalia, a fee may be levied as is reasonable from time to time for the supply of said dress and regalia, but will not profit from such arrangements.

2.4.2 Orders, Societies, Ordinariates or dioceses of the Church shall be properly constituted within the church (or as independently constituted bodies, acting under the guidance of the church). They shall be at all times Godly and quietly governed, and exist for the Glory of God. All such bodies within the church will be as far as possible democratic, liberal and work for the common good of their members.

2.4.3 Within their defined constitutions, church Orders and Societies may exercise freedoms in respect of their specific beliefs and religious expression, as long as at all times God is glorified and the liberal ethos of Christian identity is maintained. The OCAC shall always be the 'parent' body of such groups, to whom they shall defer.

2.4.4 Orders or Societies of the church may have members who are not part of the church within the Orders or Societies membership, and where this happens, those persons are considered as members of the church by virtue of our understanding that all are in intercommunion whether stated or not and by their expressed continuation in membership of said Order or Society.

2.5 The corporate structure of the Old Catholic Apostolic Church shall be as a not-for-profit limited liability corporation, registered in the United Kingdom. Provinces and Ordinariates in other countries should be registered as not-for-profit bodies as national laws apply in the nation of operation, and will always be considered as subservient to the UK registered church.

2.6 The Church practices universal membership as a Catholic church. It welcomes adherents at its services without requirement that they hold specific beliefs on condition that they agree through their presence to respect the liberal Catholic ethos and practices of the Church. In these Canons, the term "member" is used to mean a person who is an active adherent to the Church.

2.7 All provinces, ordinariates, dioceses, congregations and parishes of the Church are independent and they shall own any properties in common. The clergy are to be held in common by all and for the benefit of all. The role of the Church is to serve its parishes and congregations, and to provide support and a governing structure for its clergy. The role of the clergy is to serve ministerially and to honour the example of Jesus Christ through their work. Any private property or liabilities (i.e. vestments etc.) held by individuals or groups but used for church purposes remains the property of said owners.

2.8 The church understands the word “congregation”, “diocese” or “parish” to be geographical, but without preventing those with an established or historical connection from participating from a distance. The congregation or parish embraces all people who come into contact with a particular meeting, society, order or clergyperson in the context of their ministry. The church shall use all technologies available to conduct its business and all who come into contact with a particular meeting, society order or clergyperson online or otherwise via the internet shall likewise be considered part of that body.

2.9 Although charitable in its intent and operation, the Church shall not seek registration as a charity in England and Wales until such time as it has been established with certainty that the removal of the presumption in the law of England and Wales that the advancement of religion does not automatically meet the public benefit requirement for registered charities (cf. UK Charities Act 2006, part 1) will not disadvantage or impair the Church's mission, specifically through the present or future imposition of politically-motivated or other external requirements that are injurious to the practice of religion as understood by the Church. Individual parishes, missions, provinces or ordinariates may be charitable bodies in their own right.

### **3. Governance**

3.1 Although hierarchical in structure, the day-to-day administration of the Church is largely congregational in practice. There are two parallel and related systems of governance. The first system is at Church level and consists of the College of Bishops. The second system is at ministerial level and consists of a priest or pastor together with their congregation or parish if any. These systems are directly connected on all issues involving Church accountability, for example in respect of the discipline of the clergy, while being financially independent, so that individual clergy and their parishes are autonomous from the Church in financial terms.

3.1a The ‘Mother’ church is the Old Catholic Apostolic Church, OCAC (formerly Liberal Catholic Apostolic Church, or LCAC) as constituted in the United Kingdom (England & Wales) as a successor of the Liberal Rite and Ancient Catholic Church. All provinces, ordinariates, dioceses, missions, orders or societies using any formulation of the name Old Catholic Apostolic Church or OCAC, which derives succession or heritage from the former Liberal Catholic Apostolic Church, or LCAC in any church connection, using the same or significantly similar logos, emblems or crests, or claiming any credence by association, shall be subject to these canons, and to the governance of OCAC. This applies to whichever or wherever country or nation, or national jurisdiction the said subject province, ordinariate, diocese, mission, order or society is constituted or based. The law of England & Wales applies as does adherence to this canon law.

3.2 The system of governance of the Church as a whole is through the College of Bishops. The College of Bishops shall consist of the Presiding Bishop, Emeritus Presiding Bishops, and serving bishops and Vicars-General who have been admitted to the College of Bishops in the Liberal Catholic Apostolic Church. A bishop or Vicar-General may resign membership of the College in order to retire from the exercise of their office within the Church (and will be called Supernumerary), although a bishop will retain the privileges of the Episcopal Order. Retired bishops and Vicars-General may be members of the College of Bishops.

3.3 Although a bishop is usually appointed to a titular See, appointment to the Episcopal Order is conferred *ad personam* (to the person concerned) and does not automatically carry with it the implication of territorial diocesan governance or hierarchical responsibility for clergy and communities. To a large extent, clergy and their communities function independently and

autonomously provided that they remain within the ethos and requirements of these Canons.

3.4 Appointment of a bishop or priest to an office which has specific responsibilities for Church governance is recognised through an additional appointment to a position as Administrator of a Province or Ordinariate, Head of a Religious Order, Mission or similar.

3.4a Members and clergy are free to express their personal views on all matters, but have a responsibility to preserve the reputation and integrity of the church. Care must be taken to avoid misunderstanding or conflicts arising out of the use of Facebook, or blogs, news pages etc. Where such discussions or dialogs occur, the following statement should be prominent: 'Opinions expressed are those of the writer and not necessarily the official view of the church', or a similar statement.

3.5 Due to geographical distance, the College of Bishops meets mainly through electronic communications for the conduct of routine business, although it may also meet in person. The College of Bishops undertakes all routine administration of matters affecting the overall church as a whole as well as specific duties and commissions that arise from time to time.

3.6 All matters for decision by the College of Bishops will be resolved by means of unanimous decision where possible. Simple majority shall not, except in unusual circumstances, by itself be considered sufficient means of resolving an issue since the College of Bishops shall be charged with the responsibility to reflect all aspects of opinion within the Church. Where possible, the College of Bishops shall seek compromise and act not only from personal conviction but with the overall good of the Church in mind.

3.7 All candidates for ordination or incardination shall have received the approval of the College of Bishops, and all candidates for consecration to the Episcopal Order, shall have received the unanimous support of the College of Bishops (or Provincial Council if appropriate) before being admitted.

3.8 The Patriarch is the overall Head of the Old Catholic Apostolic Church, but in practice devolves this to the College of Bishops. Each of the bishops within the College of Bishops is equal but the presiding bishop shall have a casting vote where consensus has not been reached. In using a casting vote, the presiding bishop shall have regard to the overall good of the church rather than any individual.

3.9 In proceedings of the College of Bishops, silence shall normally be construed as assent. A member of the College who dissents or wishes to ask for time to reflect on or discuss an issue further must make these feelings known to fellow members of the College at the earliest opportunity, and bears the responsibility for doing so him or herself. For practical purposes, and because the business before the College can at times be considerable in volume, it is assumed that members of the College will respond to proposals before the College within twenty-four hours of their receipt.

3.10 Correspondence that is sent to the College of Bishops and will be available to all College members. Except in cases where pastoral confidentiality has been specifically requested and granted in advance, correspondents and clergy must not assume that their correspondence with the Church will not be shared with the College of Bishops. The College of Bishops undertakes, however, that any matters of sensitivity will not be discussed outside the College except with the express permission both of the College as a whole, and wherever possible that of the correspondent

concerned.

3.11 The Church has several codes of conduct (including codes of conduct adopted from outside groups or societies) covering various activities. Clergy must at all times exercise the highest moral and 'professional' integrity. The codes of conduct must be complied with at all times. Clergy are encouraged to strive for 'best practice' as they see it in their serving. Codes of conduct are reviewed by the college of Bishops from time to time.

3.12 Any clergy member may approach the College of Bishops and request a hearing of a matter of concern or seek advice and spiritual guidance. It is always best for a clergyperson to seek advice earlier rather than later in a situation that may have implications for present or future difficulty or conflict. Clergy should however, have consulted and discussed the matter with their bishop Ordinary or Provincial Council at a local or provincial level first. The College of Bishops will only engage when agreement could not be reached at the more local levels. The College will not overrule nor undermine decisions made in the parish, diocese, or province except where the overall common good of the whole church might be affected.

3.13 Proceedings of the College of Bishops regarding the discipline of the clergy shall normally be public. Any member of clergy who is the subject of proceedings before the College of Bishops shall have the right to be accompanied by a solicitor or other person trained in Canon Law, or a friend. The College of Bishops shall have the right to delegate any part of their representation during the proceedings to a solicitor advocate or other person trained in Canon Law. All legal representation shall be at the expense of the party who employs it.

3.14 In the event that the behaviour of any member of clergy gives rise to concern, any person, whether lay or ordained, shall have the right to report the matter to the College of Bishops using the contact information on the church website. It shall be the responsibility of the College of Bishops to provide pastoral care for those involved with the intention that the matters that have given rise to concern be investigated and dealt with as is necessary. If, despite this, the behaviour concerned continues, the College of Bishops may issue an official Notice dissociating itself from the behaviour concerned and suspending the faculties of the clergyperson in question.

3.15 In the event that a member of clergy is accused of misconduct, the complaint must be made to the College of Bishops with full details of the matters complained of, and this must be signed by the person or persons concerned. Anonymous accusations will not be accepted.

3.15a. A formal hearing before the College of Bishops shall be arranged in person and the clergyperson concerned shall be requested to attend the hearing together with his or her representatives. A notice period of twenty-eight days will normally be given. Clergy who are unable or unwilling to attend the hearing may submit evidence in writing for the consideration of the College.

3.15b. The College will appoint a Prosecutor to represent the complainant(s). The Prosecutor may be a solicitor or other person trained in advocacy. In order to ensure impartiality, he or she will not normally be a member of the Church.

3.15c. The College will consider the evidence and representations made to it and will find the allegation Proven or Not Proven. For an allegation that is Proven, the College may impose sanctions including the admonishment of the clergyperson concerned, and the suspension or removal of his or her faculties.

3.16 An appeal against a ruling of the College of Bishops may be made to the Presiding Bishop within twenty-eight days of the publication of the ruling, setting out the grounds for appeal including the substantive evidence under which the ruling may be deemed unsafe. The Presiding Bishop shall hear any appeal in person, giving a notice period of twenty-eight days for the hearing, and he or she may choose to be accompanied by any advisor not being a member of the College of Bishops. If the clergyperson is unable or unwilling to attend the hearing, he or she may submit evidence in writing for the consideration of the Presiding Bishop. The Presiding Bishop after due prayer and consideration has the right to endorse a decision of the College of Bishops, or request it is reconsidered by the College of Bishops.

3.17 A member of clergy of the Church who resigns his or her office shall not normally be eligible for readmission except in special circumstances. A member of clergy seeking such readmission shall make application to the College of Bishops, giving a full account of his or her actions. The College of Bishops shall consider the matter and issue a ruling within fourteen days of receiving the application for reinstatement. No member of clergy of the Church may be readmitted after resigning for a second time.

3.18 All members and clergy of the church are bound by these canons and applicable codes of conduct at all times they remain as members or clergy of this church. In accepting the role of clergyperson or as member, they accept both this obedience and the authority of the College of Bishops in administering the canons and, with the help of God in prayer, in rendering any form of judgement based upon them.

#### **4. The Sacraments**

4.1 We are a church in valid apostolic succession from Jesus Christ and the Apostles and practice the seven sacraments handed down to us through their tradition, that is to say: Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Orders, The Eucharist (Mass), Confession, Anointing of the Sick (Unction) and Holy Matrimony. We may vary the way in which these sacraments are performed, for example through the use of different liturgies, providing always that the catholicity of the sacrament in matter, form and intent is preserved. We understand the sacraments to be outward signs of an inward spiritual grace.

4.2 With the exception of the sacrament of Holy Orders, clergy of the Church may not deny the sacraments to those who ask for them, provided that the reasonable discretion of the minister shall apply with regard to the choice of the time and appropriate place for their administration.

4.3 The Church recognises that Holy Baptism may in theory be performed by any adult provided the correct form, matter and intent is present. However, it is usually performed by the clergy. The use of the formula of the Holy Trinity (although in exceptional cases, the invocation of the name of Jesus is considered valid) and the use of water are considered obligatory. The usual means of baptism in the Church is by aspersion or effusion, although where the layperson concerned requests it, baptism by submersion is also permissible.

4.3a. Clergy of the Church may conduct naming ceremonies for those who wish them.

4.3b. Clergy of the Church may not refuse to conduct baptism or a naming ceremony on the grounds that the parents of the child concerned are not married.

4.4 A bishop is usually the minister responsible for Confirmation. However, in cases of necessity, a bishop may issue Confirmation Faculties to an experienced priest. Priests may in other situations administer Confirmation where a bishop is not available, specifically in the case of the baptism of adults, the admission of a baptised adult to full communion or the baptism of a person in danger of death.

4.5 The Mass may be celebrated in the vernacular or in Latin.

4.5a. Wine (i.e. the fermented juice of the grape) should be used during the Mass; the use of unfermented grape juice is not encouraged, except in cases where previous addictions require it. It is acceptable for Communion to be given either by intinction or into the hand. Sacrament may be 'reserved' for communion later where appropriate.

4.5b. There are no 'approved' Liturgies in the church and freedom is permitted for clergy to offer worship and sacraments as the Holy Spirit leads them as long as the liturgy used is dignified, Christian and balanced. There are however, recommended Liturgies in the Church, see the relevant Code of Practice. Principal 'official' services of the church, such as consecrations, synods etc shall be based around the Liberal Catholic Church rites and the Liberal Rite.

4.5c. All who are present may receive Holy Communion without prior requirement of specific beliefs, although it is encouraged that those who wish to do so should undergo appropriate preparation.

4.5d. OCAC does not excommunicate. In the case of a person who is excommunicated from another Church but who desires still to receive Holy Communion, they shall be admitted to the service in the same way as any other non-member. However, OCAC ministers have the right to exclude anyone who is disruptive, violent or disrespectful when their presence may be counter-productive to the sacrament and those attending.

4.6 Where it is desirable the Blessed Sacrament may be exposed for the purposes of prayer and adoration.

4.7 The Church does not require auricular confession of its members, but makes such available, along with pastoral counselling, to its members at their request. We recognise that the seal of the confessional is absolute.

4.8 The Sacrament of Holy Matrimony is understood by the Church to be a religious ceremony solely. While the registration of civil marriage or civil partnership may be necessary to give legal standing to the union of two persons, such a ceremony cannot by its nature constitute marriage as that sacrament is understood by the Church in religious terms. The policy of the Church is that two consenting persons may proceed to the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony provided that such a service is permitted by law in the jurisdiction concerned and all legal requirements have been complied with.

4.8a. Marriage/ Union is not to be undertaken lightly. The clergyperson should in each case satisfy him or herself that the couple are fully aware of the solemn and lifelong nature of the promises which they are to make, and of the duties of Christian family life, particularly with regard to the upbringing of children.

4.8b. Clergy must ensure that the parties concerned have registered correctly with the Registrar and

that all legal formalities in the country concerned have been followed.

4.9 The Church will bless ceremonies of civil marriage or civil partnership between members of the same or the opposite sex.

4.10 In respect of canons 4.8, 4.8a and 4.9 the Church will admit divorced and remarried persons and those whose previous civil partnerships have been dissolved to these ceremonies provided that the minister concerned is satisfied that the moral intentions of the couple concerned are in keeping with the nature of Christian matrimony or partnership.

4.11 Clergy at or above the order of pastor/priest may celebrate same-gender marriages and blessings of civil partnership if they wish and if permitted by law in the jurisdiction concerned, but they shall not be compelled to do so. In the event that they do not wish to accept an invitation they shall refer it to their Ordinary for redistribution to another clergy member if possible.

4.12 Sacramental Certificates must be issued for all baptisms, confirmations, blessings and Holy Orders. Clergy must issue their own sacramental certificates and maintain a record of these in a register. A copy of each certificate should also be available to the College of Bishops or the official church registrar acting on their behalf to be kept in the Church records.

4.13 Holy Oils are available from OCAC Bishops to clergy of the Church. In the case of the Oil of the Sick, a priest may bless oil when necessary, but shall do so during the same service in which the oil is to be administered.

4.14 Clergy must not attempt to conduct services of exorcism on human or animal subjects without first having sought and been granted the permission of the College of Bishops either in each case, or by licence as a presbyter-exorcist. There are serious legal implications that may follow from such services. Experienced clergy of the order of Exorcist or above may apply for a faculty to exorcise objects or places (only), which is a less problematic area.

4.15 Clergy who wish to undertake healing ministry that involves physical contact with subjects are strongly recommended to seek accredited training in their chosen method. They are also advised that they may require insurance cover to undertake such ministry. No healing ministry should take place without a second person being present to act as a witness.

## **5. Clergy**

5.1 Clergy members of The Old Catholic Apostolic Church are those ordained to any of the following Orders: Lay Cleric (lay minister); Lay Reader; Cleric; Doorkeeper; Lector; Exorcist; Acolyte; Subdeacon; Deacon; Pastor; Priest; Bishop, as well as any who shall belong to named religious orders designated under the Church's protection. The College of Bishops may appoint to offices including those of Vicar-General, Abbot/Abbess, Chancellor, Registrar and Treasurer, the latter three of which may also be held by a layperson, and shall in each case define the responsibilities of the office concerned. The College of Bishops may create additional offices within the Church as they think fit.

5.2 No member of clergy or person in minor orders or person holding a lay office of the Old Catholic Apostolic Church shall be considered an employee of the Church under any circumstances whatsoever. All who serve the church are voluntary and non-stipendary. All appointments within the Church are made conditionally upon this understanding.



5.2a No member or clergy shall act as spokesman for the church unless specifically authorised to do so (see canon 3.4a).

5.3 Each clergyperson, if fit for work and younger than the usual retirement age, is expected to support him or herself through secular work, although it is also recognised that some may be able to support themselves as full-time funeral ministers, ecumenical youth workers etc. The Church makes no distinction between those who undertake secular work and those who undertake full-time ministry. It is the duty of the clergyperson concerned to check that their work with the church, although unpaid and voluntary, does not contravene any regulations or rules towards government or social benefits if appropriate.

5.4 Those ordained to the Minor Orders of Doorkeeper, Lector, Exorcist, Acolyte and Subdeacon may be men or women and may discharge the responsibilities particular to those offices. It is usually necessary to receive the minor orders before ordination as a deacon, as it is generally considered useful. All persons in Minor Orders are responsible to the College of Bishops who may delegate this authority to their diocesan bishop or provincial council. They may in turn, delegate this to a priest.

5.5 A suitably qualified layperson may be admitted as Lay Cleric in the Church, with their responsibilities defined specifically in each case. There is also provision for the admission of Lay Readers where deemed necessary. Persons in these offices are responsible to the College of Bishops who may delegate this authority to their diocesan bishop or provincial council. They may in turn, delegate this to a priest.

5.6 Deacons are men or women ordained to the Diaconate. They may perform funeral services (but not celebrate a Funeral Mass) and baptisms. At Mass, they may read the Gospel, preach the homily, and assist the priests and bishops present. They may perform marriages and blessings of civil marriage and partnership. All Deacons are responsible to the College of Bishops who may delegate this authority to their diocesan bishop or provincial council. They may in turn, delegate this to a priest. A Deacon is addressed as The Reverend Deacon X, or in speech by Deacon [Christian name].

5.6a The church does in certain circumstances ordain to the Perpetual Diaconate for those who specifically request this. Those choosing this have exactly the same duties and responsibilities as other Deacons. Perpetual Deacons no longer have to continue their training, with the exception of continuous training and development. Should a Perpetual Deacon wish to change their mind and continue to Priesthood, a period of 3 months notice will be required before training continues.

5.7 Pastors are men or women ordained either to the Priesthood or Non Apostolic Pastorate whose ministry does not involve regular celebration of the Eucharist but expresses itself in other forms. All Pastors are encouraged to work towards the ministry of Priest in the Church. They may perform marriages, blessings of civil marriage and partnership and baptisms, anoint the sick, hear confessions and perform funeral services. They may administer Holy Communion as a distinct celebration of the Last Supper, but not in the form of the Mass. They may administer Confirmation in conformity with canon 4.4. All pastors are responsible to the College of Bishops and will be assigned to an ordinary. A pastor is addressed as The Reverend Pastor X, or in speech by Pastor [Christian name].

5.8 Priests are men or women ordained to the Priesthood whose ministry involves regular celebration of the Eucharist. They may celebrate Mass, perform marriages, blessings of civil

marriage and partnership and baptisms, anoint the sick, hear confessions and perform funeral services including a Funeral Mass. They may administer Confirmation in conformity with canon 4.4. All Priests are responsible to the College of Bishops and will be assigned to an Ordinary. A priest is addressed as The Reverend Father X or The Reverend Mother X.

5.9 A priest who is appointed as a Vicar-General or a priest appointed to this role with a limited jurisdiction such as within a diocese is an Episcopal Vicar. Both are addressed as The Very Reverend Monsignor/Monsignora X, or in speech as Monsignor/Monsignora [Christian name]. Vicars General and Episcopal Vicars act with devolved responsibility on behalf of a bishop.

5.10 Bishops are men or women consecrated to the Episcopate. They can perform all ecclesiastical duties and confer all Holy Orders; they may also administer Confirmation. They do so under an oath of obedience to these canons, the College of Bishops and OCAC as a whole. A bishop is addressed as The Right Reverend X, or in speech as Bishop [Christian name] or as Mar [religious name].

5.11 Archbishop is a term not used at present in the Old Catholic Apostolic Church. The Presiding Bishop is a bishop who is also the Primate of the Church and is addressed as The Most Reverend X, or in speech as Bishop [Christian name] or as Mar [religious name]. The Patriarch is termed likewise.

5.11a Past Presiding Bishops remain as Primate of the church in an Emeritus role. Whilst the 'executive' functions remain with the current Presiding Bishop, symbolic and historic leadership is continued by the Emeritus Primate. Current Presiding Bishops will consult with and seek guidance from Emeritus Primates who shall assist the Presiding Bishop and College of Bishops in their work. Emeritus Primates may lead the church under the guidance of the Presiding Bishop.

5.12 All bishops of the Church shall use the Syriac designation Mar followed by their name in religion as their primary designation within the Church, respecting both our heritage from the Syrian church and from those churches who descend from it.

5.13 The consecration of a bishop is valid when performed by at least one bishop and witnessed. A photographic record of the key stages in the ceremony should also be kept. All Bishops must be in valid Apostolic Succession.

5.14 All clergy below the rank of bishop shall be assigned to an Ordinary who will be responsible for their pastoral advice and guidance as required.

5.15 Clergy may belong to Masonic, Martinist, Rosicrucian, Gnostic or other fraternal and sororal societies as they wish, providing such societies are compatible with liberal Christian belief. Such societies are valued by the Church as offering significant opportunities for spiritual progress and instruction.

5.16 Clergy who wish to accept any lay or ordained office in another church concurrently with their position in this Church must first seek the permission of the College of Bishops.

5.17 All clergy shall keep a criminal record background check on file with the Church at all times. They are responsible for informing the College of Bishops at the first available opportunity if they have been arrested or convicted of a criminal offence. Failure to inform the College of Bishops of such an event shall be treated as a disciplinary matter.

5.18 The College of Bishops may confer emeritus or honorary titles on clergy who have performed signal service to the Church. The Valiant Order of St Joseph is the Church's main means of such recognition. Clergy shall be appointed Companion in the Order after a time of, or an act of exemplary service to the Church, and further promotion in this Order shall be available as a means of recognition by the Church of service of particular distinction.

## **6. Ordination and Incardination**

6.1 All candidates for ordination or incardination must receive the approval of the Provincial Council of the province or ordinariate in which they are applying. The College of Bishops will endorse this approval except in circumstances where the overall good of the church might be affected. In such circumstances the application shall be postponed until or if the matter has been resolved so that ordination or incardination may resume.

6.2 A candidate for ordination shall have supplied the prescribed information (usually by completing the application form) and shall have provided evidence of his or her religious and secular qualifications along with details of suitability for ordination and a criminal background check. He or she must provide evidence or otherwise affirm that he or she has been baptised and confirmed.

6.3 The Church does not usually ordain persons with serious criminal convictions, even in the event that the person concerned can show that he or she has taken sincere steps to reform his or her life in times since. In the case of minor or spent criminal convictions the discretion of the College of Bishops will apply as to whether the candidate can be approved.

6.4 The Church ordains both men and women to all Holy Orders and does not discriminate in admission to Holy Orders on the grounds of sexuality or marital status; nor does it discriminate on grounds of race, ethnicity, disability or financial means. Further information on the qualities looked for in this process are available on the ordination page of the church website.

6.5 All candidates for Holy Orders must complete appropriate educational prerequisites. These are defined by the Church as a standard of theological education that is the Associate in Theology (ATh) diploma or its equivalent. Candidates may meet the prerequisites by working in The Sacred Heart of Jesus seminary or by transferring in credit from prior theological studies at other legitimate institutions without limit as to the amount of credit that may be transferred. In certain circumstances, candidates with clearly demonstrable experience may, at the discretion of the College of Bishops, be allowed as candidates without having completed formalised theological study.

6.5a. All candidates are encouraged to continue their theological education after receiving Holy Orders, and evidence of such commitment to personal development shall normally be looked for in any candidate for the Episcopate. As a guideline, a candidate for the Episcopate must demonstrate through proven accomplishment that his or her professional standing in ministry is equivalent to the doctoral level.

6.5b. Candidates for Holy Orders will not be debarred from the completion of educational prerequisites for financial reasons. OCAC's internal seminary, The Sacred Heart of Jesus is free for internal candidates.

6.6 Candidates who wish to incardinate from other churches must produce Letters of Excardination from their current and any previous denomination. They will be required to explain fully their reasons for wishing to incardinate, and may be required to complete additional educational prerequisites. They may be required to be re-ordained subconditionally. Candidates will not be incardinated where it is not possible to offer effective episcopal oversight in the country concerned.

6.6a. Bishops are not usually permitted to incardinate except under special circumstances to which particular conditions may be attached.

6.7 Holy Orders are bestowed in public services at which the Mass is celebrated. The Church does not recognise or practice any form of ordination that is not conducted physically by the laying on of hands. The church does not recognise postal or web-based ordinations, or ordinations which may be 'purchased' no matter how sincere the candidate may be. New clergy are usually granted temporary faculties for the first year, which is probationary, and permanent faculties upon satisfactory completion of that year.

6.7a Referring to canon 6.7 above: Lay Clerics, Lay Readers and the first minor order of Cleric may be **appointed** by interview via electronic media, every ordination must have tactile contact in the laying on of hands. Where appointment (rather than ordination) is performed, the interviewer and interviewee must be able to see and hear each other in real time such as by Skype or other video communication.

6.8 Once Holy Orders are bestowed, they are permanent and cannot be resigned. However, clergy wishing to return to lay life may execute an Instrument of Resignation from Active Ministry if they wish, which will enable them to remain within The Old Catholic Apostolic Church as retired or inactive clergy. Such clergy shall be called 'supernumerary'.

6.9 Clergy wishing to resign from The Old Catholic Apostolic Church in order to exercise their ministry in another denomination must apply to the College of Bishops for an Instrument of Excardination. They are reminded that any form of re-ordination to the Holy Orders they have previously received that is not specifically conducted sub-conditione is inherently blasphemous.

## **7. Finance**

7.1 The church shall have an overall ethos of being a Christian voluntary organisation with specific emphasis on non-stipendary ministry. The church shall strive to exist and work without monetary commitment. This rule may change in the future, but stands for the time being.

7.2 The College of Bishops may appoint a member or non-member of the Church to act as Treasurer (or company secretary) who shall be responsible to the College of Bishops. He or she shall maintain accounts for the Church and shall present these at regular intervals. Such accounts are most likely to be 'nil return' accounts. He or she will not be responsible for the accounts of individual communities, parishes or clergy.

7.3 No member of the Church's clergy shall be entitled to receive any form of stipend or emolument whatsoever from The Old Catholic Apostolic Church in recompense for their membership or service within the Church, and nor will the Church be responsible for the expenses of clergy. All clergy are to be fully self-supporting and shall offer their service to the Church voluntarily and without expectation of financial reward. They shall be responsible for their own tax affairs and in respect of any activities, such as community, parish, wedding or funeral ministry, for

which they may receive donations, are considered by the Church to be self-employed.

7.4 Clergy are not obliged to pay dues to The Old Catholic Apostolic Church, nor are they obliged to tithe.

7.5 Clergy may solicit financial contributions from their community or parish in order to support their ministry, and some communities or parishes may be in a position to pay their clergy a stipend. Clergy shall not make their ministry conditional on receiving financial contributions, providing that they shall not be required to offer ministry if it is not possible to cover their normal expenses in doing so. Such financial contributions shall be accepted by the relevant authorities of the parish or community on behalf of the clergyperson, community or parish concerned and not on behalf of the Old Catholic Apostolic Church.

7.6 It is strongly recommended that all communities and parishes that wish to solicit financial contributions should appoint their own treasurer (or Finance Officer), and that their treasurer should be responsible to the organising committee or council of the community or parish concerned. All such accounts are wholly independent of the Old Catholic Apostolic Church and are the responsibility of the community or parish concerned solely. Whether or not a treasurer is appointed, all clergy must keep proper records of offerings received in the course of ministry and of the expenditure of those offerings. Such records shall be made available for inspection on request by the College of Bishops or their deputed officers.

7.7 Clergy may also solicit a donation for the performance of the following services: funerals; blessings; healing ministry such as exorcism (but see canon 4.14); baptisms/naming ceremonies and weddings etc. They shall reduce their suggested donation in the event of proven financial need, though they will not be obliged to perform a service without their expenses such as travel and materials having been covered. For the funerals of babies and very young children, clergy will seek to cover expenses only.

7.8 Where an offering is given to a clergyperson for a specific purpose, it shall be used for that purpose(s) provided said purpose is not contrary to law.

7.9 All clergy shall exercise integrity in their handling of money and specifically in the handling of donated money in the context of their ministry.

7.10 Clergy may discuss donations to specific works of the Old Catholic Apostolic Church outside of the immediate concerns of their community or parish when potential donors wish to initiate such a discussion. A report of this discussion must be sent to the clergyperson's Ordinary who will determine whether the donation should be accepted and what conditions, if any, should attach to its acceptance.

7.11 The College of Bishops shall have discretion to hear any proceedings relating to finance as those proceedings relate to the conduct of individual members of clergy or the Church as a whole, but shall not have responsibility for the financial affairs of autonomous communities or parishes.

## **8. Relations with other churches**

8.1 The Church considers itself to be in full communion with all Christians.

8.1a The church is willing to enter into intercommunion arrangements with other churches where

such arrangements prove fruitful. However, the church still regards itself in full communion even where no such arrangements exist.

8.2 The Church recognises non-sacramental churches and communities outside the Apostolic Succession as fellow-travellers in the Christian faith and way of life. However, in order for the Church to recognise a sacrament as valid within its own boundaries, that sacrament must have been celebrated with the proper form and intent by a sacramental minister who has been ordained in the Apostolic Succession.

8.3 Clergy of the Church are encouraged to accept invitations to preach or minister in other churches. They are encouraged to concelebrate the Eucharist with ministers of other churches who are ordained in the Apostolic Succession.

8.4 Clergy of the Church may choose to accept invitations to preach or minister in churches not holding the Apostolic Succession. They may concelebrate the Eucharist with ministers who are not Apostolically ordained. Where such mixed concelebration takes place, its validity is assured when at least one of the concelebrating ministers is ordained in the Apostolic Succession and ensures the proper sacramental form and intent.

8.5 Clergy of the Church are encouraged to accept invitations to participate in ecumenical, interchurch and interfaith projects with other Christian churches and communities, as well as with clergy and laity of other faiths.

8.6 Having first obtained the consent of the College of Bishops, one or more bishops of the Church may participate in the ordination of a deacon or priest, or the consecration of a bishop, in and for another church.

8.7 In accepting any invitation from another church or community, clergy of the Church shall have regard to the principle of mutual respect in interdenominational relations. This principle requires that there should be a mutual understanding and respect for the theology and polity of each church or community involved, such that although significant differences may exist, there is an agreement that such differences should be put aside during the given occasion, in as far as is possible, in the interests of ecumenical relations and fellowship. However, clergy should avoid placing themselves in situations where they are deemed to have consented or to have given implied consent to teachings which are against their conscience or against the fundamental principles of these Canons.

8.7a Clergy should remember that when speaking or preaching at another church, their views and opinions are theirs and not necessarily those of OCAC. See canon 5.2a.

8.8 The church does not seek to proselytise or convert others to its beliefs in its relations with other communities and no member of clergy should seek to use such opportunities for these purposes.

## **9. Clergy Dress and Vestments.**

9.1 Clergy are required to wear clerical dress when administering the Sacraments, and should dress appropriately when taking funerals, visiting the sick and appearing at any other function where they are to offer ministry. It is the free choice of the clergyperson concerned as to whether they wish to wear clerical dress when not exercising such functions.

9.2 The clergy shirt for both men and women shall consist of a shirt with contrasting white collar,

or a white shirt with white collar. The clerical shirt may be in any colour (except rose-purple unless a bishop), although dark ("Anglican") purple is usual. Black is by tradition not used in Liberal Catholic churches but in this church is used if it is the usual colour of the habit or clothing of members of a religious order. The "tunnel collar" or "Roman collar" or alternative collar style is acceptable providing the collar is white and contrasts with any other colour used for the body of the shirt. Any member of the clergy may wear a pectoral cross, although for those below the order of bishop this should be discreet and not overly demonstrative. Devotional medals may be worn if wished.

9.2a Vestment colours should be chosen according to the season, but there are variances across the church. Clergy are free to vest in colours appropriate to the circumstances, but general rules are black for funerals, white for ordinations and marriages and gold for major events.

9.3 Cassocks may be worn as part of the dress of the clergy in the church. For Liberal Catholics, a dark purple cassock is usual, but a black cassock is otherwise acceptable, with cincture and cape in matching colour. Vicars-General and bishops may wear a black cassock piped with red, with a purple cincture. Bishops may wear a choir cassock of rose-purple piped with red. The Roman style or Sarum style of cassock is acceptable.

9.4 Instructions for proper clerical dress and the use of vestments at the celebration of Mass, along with details of liturgical colours and much other relevant information are provided in Bishop Irving Cooper's Ceremonies of the Liberal Catholic Rite (available from St Alban Press).

9.5 Clergy should wear vestments as appropriate to the service, season and situation (i.e. denominational setting). Due reverence and respect will be shown by all clergy to vestments which are used to convey further depth and meaning when serving Christ. Clergy do have the freedom to vary vestments used as they think fit, but always holding the historic and theological traditions highly in any such decision.

## **10. Seminary**

10.1 The Church runs its own Seminary, The Sacred Heart of Jesus. This is an internal college and has no connection with any other college or learning institute of similar name. The Sacred Heart of Jesus is for internal training and learning advancement of our candidates only and makes no claim to accreditation or validity except for our own purposes of ordination and ministerial progress. The Sacred Heart of Jesus is an online distance learning portal which is free of charge to OCAC candidates.

10.2 Whilst the Church runs its own seminary, it sometimes instead places candidates with seminaries of associated and other respected churches. Candidates ordinarily study by distance education. Candidates may choose a seminary of their own, but need to seek approval from the College of Bishops before enrolment. The church retains responsibility and control of curricula and the appointment of mentors or spiritual counsellors. Candidates are responsible to meet their own costs in respect of seminary or other study, if the student chooses a college other than Sacred Heart.

## **11. Document History**

Each version amends and 'adds to' the previous versions. Previous versions are 'valid' as stated until the date of the next version, when the new version supersedes it. The canons are 'dynamic' and

'organic', growing and changing to suit the changing world in which we work.

Version 1. 30/11/2008. +Mar Joannes III. Bishop John Kersey.

Version 2. 01/03/2010. + Mar Trimlett. Bishop Adrian Glover. Modified to reflect changes to church structure: on adopting not-for-profit status.

Version 3. 01/11/2010. + Mar Trimlett. Bishop Adrian Glover. Modified to reflect the church's liberal status after more conservative elements left to join another church.

Version 4. 13/02/2011. + Mar Trimlett. Bishop Adrian Glover. Modified to allow for other complete churches to join in ordinariates. Changes also to introduce diocesan structure.

Version 5. 18/01/2012. +Mar Trimlett. Bishop Adrian Glover. Modified to embrace the international nature of LCAC. Provinces/Ordinariates in other countries, their constitution. Charitable status of dioceses and parishes and constitution. Roles of Episcopal Vicar added. Spokespersons and expressing opinions added. The Sacred Heart of Jesus seminary included and learning provisions. ILCF removed and included under its own constitution. Provision to exclude violent or disruptive persons.

Version 6. 07/05/2012. +Mar Trimlett. Bishop Adrian Glover. Modified to reflect the desire of the church membership to change the church name from Liberal Catholic Apostolic Church to the Old Catholic Apostolic Church to better reflect our old catholic (including through Utrecht) heritage.