
THE BY-LAWS OF THE EXARCHATE OF NEBRASKA

Article I: Name

The name of the corporation is *The Exarchate of Nebraska*.

Article II: Confession

The Exarchate of Nebraska, and every member of *The Exarchate of Nebraska*, believes and accepts without reservation:

Section 1: The teachings of Our Lord Jesus Christ, His Apostles, and the Seven Oecumenical Councils.

Section 2: The prophetic and apostolic Scriptures of The Old and of The New Testaments as the canon and standard according to which all dogma together with all teachers should be estimated and judged.

Section 3: The three Christian and Oecumenical Creeds as the unanimous, universal Christian Faith and confession of the Orthodox Christian Church, namely, The Apostles' Creed, The Nicene Creed, and The Athanasian Creed;

Article III: Purpose

The purpose for which *The Exarchate of Nebraska* is organized:

Section 1: To unite in a corporate body all Orthodox Christians, both within and without the Eastern tradition;

Section 2: To proclaim and propagate the Orthodox Christian Faith, especially through the means of Divine Grace;

Section 3: To assist, guide, direct, and promote the spiritual growth and development of all members;

Section 4: To promote the systematic study of Holy Scriptures (Bible) and constant growth in Christian knowledge through the establishment, construction, and maintenance of theological seminaries, schools, publishing houses, radio and television broadcasting systems, congregations, preaching media, religious communities, hospitals, monasteries, and confraternities;

Section 5: To unite those Orthodox Christians who seek a return to Orthodox Christian piety and;

Section 6: To assist the Orthodox Christian Church at large in training her members to grow in their understanding and appreciation of the principles, attitudes, tradition and doctrine of the Orthodox Christian faith;

Section 7: To foster mutual, supportive intercession (especially at the Holy Liturgy) for all members (living and dead);

Section 8: To promote, by all legitimate means, the celebration of the Holy Liturgy (Mass) as the chief act of Divine worship every day; and the pious observance of the Orthodox Christian practice of receiving Holy Communion on a daily basis;

Section 9: To foster the use of the Sacrament of Repentance (*private confession*), especially in preparation for receiving Holy Communion;

Section 10: To do charitable work within the meaning of *Section 501(c)(3)* of the Internal Revenue Code as now enacted or as may hereafter be amended;

Section 11: To print, publish, purchase, sell, and otherwise disseminate Bibles, books, periodicals, literature, music, and other supplies for The Church and her institutions and members;

Section 12: To establish and conduct all such enterprises and endeavors and to exercise such further powers as may be necessary or expedient to carry out the objects and purposes for which the corporation is organized.

Article IV: Membership

Section 1: Membership in *The Exarchate of Nebraska* is held and may be acquired by parishes or dependencies (e.g. religious communities, confraternities, and educational institutions), and those in holy Orders who believe, teach, confess and accept the teachings of the Orthodox Christian Church and the confession of *Article II* of these By-Laws.

Section 2:

Part a: Parishes seeking membership in this Diocese, as well as already established dependencies, shall submit their request for membership to the Metran or Bishop. He shall cause such request to be published throughout the Church. After ninety (90) days, no lawful objection having been registered by any members of the Church, the Metran shall admit said petitioner into full membership in *The Exarchate of Nebraska*, provided, said petitioners bring their Articles of Incorporation, By-Laws, Rules, and Canons into conformity with the same of *The Exarchate of Nebraska*.

Part b: When a lawful objection has been registered by a member of the Church to the admittance into membership of the petitioner, the *Diocesan Council* (Board of Directors) shall present their recommendation to the Metran within thirty (30) days for final disposition.

Section 3: Ordained clergy coming from other ecclesiastical jurisdictions wishing to affiliate with *The Exarchate of Nebraska* must submit to a colloquium before being received.

Section 4: Those members of the laity wishing to associate with *The Exarchate of Nebraska* are received into fellowship by the parish Pastors of the Church through:

Part a: Baptism in the Name of The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit (if not already validly baptized);

Part b: Chrismation (if not already validly confirmed), after regular attendance at a catechetical instruction class in which the doctrine of our holy faith is studied and discussed;

Part c: Transfer from another Orthodox Christian parish upon receipt of a letter of transfer from the former parish attesting that the prospective member is in a state of saving grace;

Part d: By renewal of faith: Lapsed Orthodox Christians may be admitted upon showing evidence of a renewal of faith meeting with the Pastor's acceptance.

Section 5: Every member of the Church shall, in accordance with his vocation, his ability, and the means at his command, diligently and earnestly promote the purposes of the Church by word, deed, and adequate financial support.

Article V: Administrative Power

Section 1: *The Exarchate of Nebraska* is an ecclesiastical government exercising legislative and judicial powers to govern its members.

Section 2: Bishops and clergy have the power of order and of jurisdiction, respectively, for they are the spiritual leaders who govern and guide their parish, diocese, order, and Church by the Word of God (*cf. Mt 18:18, Mt 28:18-20, Lk 10:16*).

Section 3: Only one bishop as the superior, heads and manages all business and the affairs of *The Exarchate of Nebraska*; he shall hold the title of Metran of *The Exarchate of Nebraska*.

Article VI: Legislative Power

Section 1: The legislative powers of *The Exarchate of Nebraska* are reserved to, in the order of precedence:

- a. The General Synod;
- b. Special Synods;
- c. Dependency Board Meetings.

Section 2: All matters resolved or adopted by the General Synod or Special Synods must receive the Metran's approval before they can be implemented or take effect.

Article VII: The Metran

Section 1: The Metran has direct supervision regarding the doctrine, faith, morals, discipline and administration of:

- Part a:** All officers of the diocese;
- Part b:** All such as are employed by the diocese;
- Part c:** All Bishops of the diocese;
- Part d:** All parishes, seminaries, monasteries, convents, religious communities and orders, universities, colleges, academies, schools, confraternities, and other dependencies of the diocese;
- Part e:** All clergy and religious of the diocese.

Section 2: The Metran has the authority and duty to see to it that all the aforementioned act in accordance with the diocesan *Articles of Incorporation*, faith, Apostolic Canons, and these *bylaws*; to admonish all who in any way depart from them, and, if such admonition is not heeded, to discipline such as departed therefrom.

Section 3: The Metran shall sign all official papers and documents in the name of the diocese.

Section 4: The Metran shall represent the diocese in official contacts with other churches, synods, communions, denominations and ecclesiastical jurisdictions.

Section 5: The Metran shall represent the diocese in official contacts with all sister dioceses by aiding, counseling, and advising them and strengthening the relations with and between them.

Section 6: The Metran shall have the right to authorize any bishop of the diocese to perform the duties of the Metran's office, and shall hold him responsible for the performance of such duties.

Section 7: The Metran shall consecrate all bishops for *The Exarchate of Nebraska*, and name Co-consecrators (who must possess legitimate Apostolic Orders).

Section 8: The Metran shall preside at all General and Special Synods, taking care that all things are done in a Christian manner and in accordance with *The Articles of Incorporation*, Apostolic Canons, Faith, and *bylaws* of the Church.

Section 9: The Metran is the superior of all bishops and clergy and the official head of all seminaries, monasteries, and religious communities.

Section 10: The Metran hears and decides all appeals regarding administrative and disciplinary matters.

Section 11: The Metran shall be the comptroller of the diocese, counter-signing all checks if so regulated.

Section 12: The Metran is to receive annual written reports from all bishops regarding their duties.

Section 13: The Metran is to confirm or reject as unsuitable those elected by the diocese to the office of Bishop; no one may serve as or be consecrated a bishop in the diocese without the Metran's prior written confirmation and decree.

Section 14: The Metran is to render a written report on the state of the diocese, at least once every year, to all dependencies.

Section 15: The Metran approves all salaries paid to all officers of the diocese and all such as are employed by the diocese.

Section 16: The Metran shall serve as a member of and chairman of *the Diocesan Council (Board of Directors)*.

Section 17: The Metran See shall be *in Lincoln, Nebraska*, or wherever the Metran may elect at a later time.

Section 18: The Metran shall serve as the general superior of *The Exarchate of Nebraska* from the time of his election until his death, resignation from office, or retirement; a successor must be elected by the General Synod from a list of candidates nominated by Diocesan Council within six (6) months after a vacancy occurs.

Article VIII: The General Synod

Section 1: The General Synod shall be the diocesan chief legislative assembly. It shall meet at such times as the Metran may direct.

Section 2: Delegates shall consist of all incardinated clergy (deacons, priests, bishops) and at least one lay delegate from each member parish.

Section 3: All dependencies (e.g. sodalities, confraternities, religious orders and religious communities) are entitled to send at least one voting delegate to the General Synod.

Section 4: The number of delegates which each member parish and ministerial organization is entitled to send to the General Synod shall be determined by guide-lines adopted by the Diocesan Council and approved by the Metran.

Section 5: The General Synod of *The Exarchate of Nebraska* is not recognized as having doctrinal authority. Doctrine and defined dogmas of the Orthodox Christian Church represent the teaching of Holy Scripture, our Lord and His Apostles, and the consensus of the entire Church in the Councils, as is correctly expounded by the Orthodox Christian Catechism. This diocese and its General Synods may not, by themselves, therefore, presume to change the recognized Orthodox Christian faith.

Section 6: The General Synod shall:

Part a: Interpret but not define the Apostolic Canons, and the Articles of Faith;

Part b: Remove bishops when necessary, with the Metran's approval;

Part c: Elect the Metran (*as Superior*) from a list of candidates nominated by the Diocesan Council;

Part d: Elect members to the Diocesan Council from a list of candidates nominated by the Metran;

Part e: Organize and implement programs which will further the purposes and objectives of the Diocese;

Part f: Listen to the needs and desires of all members, and respond when possible;

Part g: Promote an awareness and appreciation of the historic continuity of the Diocese, as well as of the affairs and workings of all the denominations, communions, ecclesiastical jurisdictions and sects within the Body of Christ, and to work for their eventual reunion.

Section 7: All the decisions and resolutions of the General Synod or a Special Synod approved by the Metran are binding upon all the members of *The Exarchate of Nebraska*.

Section 8: All matters resolved or adopted by the General Synod or a Special Synod must receive the Metran's approval before implementation; it is only the Metran, who can make a law binding upon the entire Diocese and its clergy.

Section 9: The Diocesan Synod shall:

Part a: Elect priests to the office of bishop for the diocese, submitting such election to the Metran and Diocesan Council (Board of Directors) of *The Exarchate of Nebraska* for confirmation or rejection;

Part b: Adopt and implement programs to promote and fulfill the purposes of the Diocese;

Part c: Adopt by-laws, resolutions, canons and regulations necessary or proper for its administration or for effectively carrying on the work of the Diocese. Such by-laws, resolutions, canons and regulations shall not conflict with *The Articles of Incorporation*, Canons, Faith, By-Laws, or decisions of *The Exarchate of Nebraska*, and must be submitted to *The Exarchate of Nebraska* Board of Directors (Diocesan Council) for approval before they can be implemented.

Section 10: All property and assets to which this diocese holds title or over which it has control is held in trust by the *The Exarchate of Nebraska*.

Section 11: All matters resolved or adopted by the Diocesan Synod must receive Metran's approval in order to be ratified and eligible for implementation.

Article IX: The Diocesan Council (Board of Directors)

Section 1: The Diocesan Council shall consist of: The Metran, the Treasurer, and the Secretary of *The Exarchate of Nebraska* by virtue of their offices. The Superior, whatever his title, of each incardinated dependency of the diocese shall be a member of the Diocesan Council (Board of Directors).

Section 2: The Diocesan Council shall number no less than three (3) but no more than fifteen (15) voting members. Should the number of dependencies in the diocese cause the membership of the Diocesan Council to exceed twelve (12) members, excluding the officers (Metran, Treasurer and Secretary) the following is determined:

Part a: Each further superior of a dependency shall be classified as an *Advisory Member* of the Diocesan Council and shall not be eligible to vote;

Part b: The Diocesan Bishops of the diocese, excluding the officers (Metran, Treasurer and Secretary), shall elect twelve of their number at each meeting of the General Synod to serve as voting members of Diocesan Council until the next meeting of the General Synod; each Bishop not elected to voting membership on the Diocesan Council shall be classified as an *Advisory Member* of the Diocesan Council and shall not be entitled to vote.

Part c: Each bishop, excluding the Metran, shall be classified as an *Advisory Member* of the Diocesan Council and shall not be eligible to vote;

Section 3: The Diocesan Council, acting only with the recommendation and approval of the Metran: (a) decides when and whether the diocese shall be divided into deaneries, realigned by territory, dissolved, or merged with another or other dioceses; and (b) determines the boundaries of the diocese and approves the name of the diocese.

Section 4: The Diocesan Council may suggest to the Metran the creation of subordinate boards, committees, departments, commissions and tribunals, together with a tentative definition of their duties and membership.

Section 5: The Diocesan Council shall:

Part a: Approve or reject, upon the recommendation of the Metran, the by-laws, canons, resolutions and regulations for the organization and management of this diocese and its dependencies before final adoption or implementation by this diocese and presentation to the proper civil authorities, should this be necessary. All subsequent changes to the by-laws, canons, resolutions and regulations governing this diocese must also be submitted to the Metran for the Diocesan Council's review and approval or rejection before implementation.

Part b: Present a list of candidates to the General Synod for the Office of Metran (*Superior*) when that office is vacant because of death, retirement, or resignation. This list of candidates shall be gathered in any manner deemed appropriate by the Diocesan Council. Only The Board has the right to nominate candidates to the office of Metran.

Part c: Meet as it agrees or at the Metran's call.

Part d: Simple majority of the Diocesan Council's voting members present shall constitute a quorum.

Part e: Require and receive quarterly and annual financial reports and statements from the Treasurer; arrange for the publication and distribution of financial reports according to guidelines established by the Metran.

Part f: See to it that independent audits are made of all financial activities of boards, commissions, committees and accessorial societies, sodalities, confraternities, religious orders and communities.

Part g: Advise the Metran in recognizing or chartering accessorial organizations and in accepting parishes and clergy into membership when a lawful objection has been registered to such admittance.

Part h: Confirm or reject the election of a candidate to the office of Bishop within *The Exarchate of Nebraska*.

Part i: The death, resignation or retirement of the Metran also constitutes the Call for a General Synod; the Diocesan Council shall elect from its membership a presiding bishop or priest to act as Metran in the interim between the Metran's death, resignation or retirement and the General Synod's election of a new Metran. The presiding bishop or priest is not eligible for nomination to the office of Metran.

Article X: Secretary

Section 1: The Secretary shall be elected by the General Synod from the slate of candidates nominated by the Metran.

Section 2: The Secretary shall serve in office from the time of election until: (1) death; (2) resignation from office; (3) retirement; or, (4) removal from office by the Metran.

Section 3: In the event of death, resignation, removal from office by the Metran, or permanent incapacity of The Secretary, the Diocesan Council shall elect an acting Secretary from nominations made by the

Metran; the acting Secretary will serve until the next regularly called General Synod elects a new Secretary.

Section 4: The Secretary shall:

Part a: Perform all customary duties as corporation secretary and as such, with the Metran, sign all duly authorized documents of the diocese.

Part b: Serve as a voting member and secretary of the Diocesan Council.

Part c: Record the proceedings during the General Synod.

Part d: Announce daily the time and place of committee meetings at the General Synod.

Part e: Officially notify every member of the diocese elected to office by the General Synod of his or her election.

Part f: Receive and present all applications for parish and clergy membership in *The Exarchate of Nebraska* to the Metran and, if necessary because of a lawful objection, to the Diocesan Council.

Part g: Keep an accurate, up-to-date file on all members, or cause such file to be kept and maintained.

Part h: Perform such other work as the General Synod or the Metran may assign.

Article XI: Treasurer

Section 1: The Treasurer shall be elected by the General Synod from the slate of candidates nominated by the Metran.

Section 2: The Treasurer shall serve in office from the time of election until: (1) death; (2) resignation from office; (3) retirement; or, (4) removal from office by the Metran.

Section 3: In the event of death, resignation, removal from office by the Metran, or permanent incapacity of the Treasurer, diocesan Council shall elect an acting Treasurer from nominations made by the Metran; the acting Treasurer will serve until the next regularly called General Synod elects a new Treasurer.

Section 4: The Treasurer shall:

Part a: Receive all contributions.

Part b: Keep an accurate record of all receipts and disbursements.

Part c: Serve as a voting member of the Diocesan Council.

Part d: Pay all bills approved by the Metran.

Part e: Submit all checks to the Metran for counter-signature, if so regulated.

Part f: Submit an accurate financial accounting annually to Diocesan Council.

Part g: Keep on file a correct list of all devises and bequests which directly or indirectly have been given to *The Exarchate of Nebraska*. In such list there shall be recorded the name of the testator, the amount of money or the real estate (including legal description) or legal papers devised or bequeathed, the stipulations of the will (if such have been made by the testator), and the name of the executor or executors.

Article XII: The Pastor/The Parish/Dependency

Section 1: The Pastor of every parish (or dependency) in *The Exarchate of Nebraska*, appointed by the Metran from a list of nominees submitted to him by the parish, is the official voice of the people under his

cure; he has the power of the order and of jurisdiction in his parish, for he is the spiritual father of his parish or dependency.

Section 2: The Pastor is responsible for the spiritual, physical, financial, and administrative welfare of his people; he establishes the character of life and goals of his parish; he may organize his parish in any manner he deems appropriate, with the permission of the Metran.

Section 3: The Pastor of each parish in *The Exarchate of Nebraska* shall:

Part a: Keep accurate records of all baptisms, marriages, communions, confirmations, funerals, *etc.*

Part b: Submit annual reports to the Metran (or more frequently if so directed) of:

- (1) All Eucharistic celebrations at which he presided or assisted, giving date, place, attendance, collection, *etc.*
- (2) Communions taken to the sick, infirm, shut-in, elderly.
- (3) All baptisms, giving pertinent data (*e.g.*, name of baptized, date and place of birth, full legal name of both parents, sponsors' names).
- (4) All marriages, giving pertinent data and submitting a copy of the marriage certificate.
- (5) All sacraments administered, giving all pertinent data.
- (6) All income received, excluding *honoraria*.
- (7) All disbursements on behalf of the parish.

Part c: Preside at all parish meetings.

Part d: Be responsible for hiring and firing all parish help (office workers, janitors, teachers, parish workers, directors of Christian education, *etc.*).

Part e: Receive all new members and transfer members in a state of saving grace who have moved outside his parish's boundaries.

Part f: Celebrate only a Liturgy approved by the Metran.

Part g: Permit only canonically ordained clergy to share his altar and pulpit, and then only clergy of denominations or jurisdictions with which *The Exarchate of Nebraska* is in communion.

Part h: Receive the approval of the Metran to carry on any ecumenical Services or relations.

Part i: Authorize his associate or assistant Pastor(s) to function as the Pastor of the parish whenever he deems it necessary; he may authorize his associate or assistant to represent either him or the parish at Diocesan Synods and meetings.

Article XIII: Holy Orders

Section 1: *D e a c o n s*

Part a: No one shall be ordained to the Diaconate without having first completed formal training (or its equivalent, as determined by the Metran) and having reached the age of twenty-one (21) years.

Part b: Deacons shall not preside at Holy Liturgy, hear confessions, perform marriage ceremonies, administer the sacrament of Holy Unction, or grant absolution.

Part c: Deacons shall assist the priests and bishops in their ministry, especially during the celebration of Holy Liturgy in the reading of the Holy Gospel and leading Intercessions, and in the supervision and conduct of the Diocese's benevolent and charitable work.

Part d: All candidates for ordination to the Diaconate, including their spouse, must, before ordination, make an unqualified subscription to the Confession of the Orthodox Christian Church (*Article II*).

Part e: Deacons may be married or single. Once ordained, an unmarried Deacon may not ordinarily marry; dispensations (oikonomia) may be granted by the Metran for just cause.

Section 2: *Presbyters*

Part a: Ordinarily no one shall be ordained a Presbyter (priest) who has not already been ordained a Deacon and served as a Deacon for at least one full year; presbyters shall not be younger than twenty-four (24) years of age.

Part b: All candidates for ordination to the Holy Priesthood, including their spouse, must freely give their unqualified subscription to the Confession of The Exarchate of Nebraska (*Article II*).

Part c: No one shall be ordained to the priesthood without having first earned a Baccalaureate degree and subsequently graduated from an academically accredited seminary (or its equivalent, as determined by the Metran).

Part d: Priests may be married or single. Once an unmarried man is ordained to the Diaconate, however, he may not ordinarily marry. Dispensations (oikonomia) may be granted by the Metran with just cause.

Part e: Monastic Priests may not marry or be married, either before or after their ordination.

Part f: Priests must be diligent in their prayer life and administration of the Holy Sacraments.

Section 3: *Bishops*

Part a: Only married priests or monastic clergy who are members in good standing of *The Exarchate of Nebraska* can be elected to the office of Bishop.

Part b: The Bishop who would fulfill his office must see to it that our Holy Faith is fully presented and truly received, the Holy Sacraments made available and freely supplied, and that the Sacred Ministry is rigorously maintained, defended, and extended within this Diocese or Jurisdiction.

Part c: The Bishop is the center of unity in the Church; he symbolizes and signifies the true nature of the Church as *The mystical body of Christ Jesus*.

Part d: The Bishop has the supervision regarding the doctrine, faith, morals, discipline and administration of all members within this Diocese or Jurisdiction.

Part e: The Bishop shall assume the duties, responsibilities and prerogatives of his office only after having been nominated and elected to office by his Diocesan Synod and receiving the confirmation of the Metran and Diocesan Council. He may serve, with the Metran's prior approval, as Diocesan or Jurisdictional *Vicar (Acting Bishop)* should there be an unduly long interval of time when the Metran should be unavailable due to prolonged illness, travel and the like. A *Vicar* may not preside or assist at any ordinations or confirmations unless specifically so directed by the Metran.

Part g: The Bishop shall serve from the time of his confirmation by the Metran and the Diocesan Council's approval and his Consecration until his death, resignation, retirement, or removal from Office by the Metran or the General Synod.

Part h: The minimum age for election and consecration of a bishop shall be 35 years for ordinary bishops and 30 years for Chorbishops. Both must have a minimum of 10 years experience as Presbyter.

Article XIV: Canons

Section 1: To carry out and implement the purposes and mission of The Church, to establish principles and

rules for Christian ministry, and to facilitate a God-pleasing administration of the church and all its members, the Metran and the Diocesan Council shall be responsible for promulgating the Apostolic Canons of the church.

Section 2: The Canons of this Diocese which are solely the Apostles Canons (Didache) may be not be amended, neither by the Diocesan Council nor by the Metran or any clergy person.

Article XV: Amendments to these By-Laws

Section 1: The General Synod may, at any regular session, formulate and adopt proposed amendments to these By-Laws, which must then be presented to the Metran for approval or rejection.

Section 2: Proposed amendments to these By-Laws, presented by a regular session of the General Synod to the Metran and receiving his approval, shall then be presented by the Metran to the next regular meeting of the General Synod for final adoption.

Section 3: There must elapse at least six (6) months between the meeting of the General Synod which proposes an amendment to these By-Laws and the meeting of the next General Synod to which the Metran presents the proposed amendment for final adoption.

Section 4: These By-laws shall replace any older version and be adopted at the Synod meeting in 1999 without the requirements for final adoption as set forth in Article XV, Section 3.

[Signatures & Seal]