



**RULES**  
**FOR PARISHES AND THEIR CHURCH COMMUNITIES**  
**OF THE**  
**METROPOLITANATE OF**  
**AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND OF**  
**THE SERBIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH**

**RULE 1 NAME**

The name of the Parish shall be

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and the name of its Church Community shall be

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**RULE 2 ORGANISATION (7)**

1. The organisation of the Parish and its Church Community is church-hierarchical and church-administrative.
2. Church-spiritual, church-disciplinary and church-judicial authority, according to the canons and structure of the Serbian Orthodox Church, belong exclusively to the Metropolitan. The Metropolitan exercises that authority through his church-hierarchical representatives and bodies.
3. The church-hierarchical governing authorities within the Metropolitanate of Australia and New Zealand of the Serbian Orthodox Church (hereinafter called the "Metropolitanate") are the:
  - a) Metropolitan;

- b) Metropolitanate Ecclesiastical Court;
- c) Dean; and
- d) Parish Priest.

4. Matters pertaining to the administration of real and personal property of the Parish and Church Community are under the supervision of the Metropolitan, clergy and laity of the respective church-administrative bodies of the Metropolitanate.

5. The church-administrative governing authorities are the:

- a) Metropolitanate Assembly;
- b) Metropolitanate Executive Board;
- c) Church Community Assembly; and
- d) Church Community Board.

### **RULE 3 JURISDICTION (2) (6)**

1. The Parish and its Church Community are an integral part of the Metropolitanate and as such must recognise its authority and jurisdiction.

2. The Parish and its Church Community must be governed in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, these Rules, the General Regulations, the Local Regulations, and the decisions of the proper ecclesiastical authorities

3. All governing documents of the Parish and its Church Community must be consistent with the Constitution. Any provisions inconsistent with the Constitution are of no force and effect.

### **RULE 4 PARISH (16)**

1. The Parish is an organised community of Orthodox persons within a designated geographical territory of the Metropolitanate headed by the Parish Priest.

2. There can be more than one Parish in one geographic territory and more than one geographic territory may be combined into one Parish.

3. Decisions concerning the chartering, naming, districting, abolishing and changing of Parishes are rendered by the Metropolitan in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.

4. Every communicant of the Metropolitanate belongs to the designated parish on the territory where he/she permanently resides. The Metropolitan may grant exceptions to this Paragraph.

5. The Parish has its parochial church. Several parishes may have one mutual church. If there is more than one church in a Parish, only one church is designated the Parish Church. The other churches are subordinate or affiliated.
6. The Parish shall have an office where are kept its seal, stamp, metrical books, church protocols, and other parish archives. If there are more parishes attached to one church, there is only one Parish Office with one joint set of metrical and other official books and one seal.
7. The Parish Office must possess: a seal, dry seal, daily protocol, metrical books: births and baptisms, marriages, deaths, reception of converts, home registry and archives.
8. The Parish Priest is the keeper of the parish seal and all official records, correspondence and documents must be issued with that seal affixed.
9. New parishes shall be organised in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.
10. When transferring from one Parish to another, a parishioner shall present to the Parish Priest of the new Parish a certificate of transfer signed by his/her former Parish Priest, which shall include all the pertinent information about the transferring parishioner.

**RULE 5                    PARISH PRIEST (17)**

1. The Parish Priest is that person canonically ordained and appointed by the Metropolitan to a particular Parish.
2. As head of the Parish he represents the Parish in all matters and is responsible directly to the Metropolitan.
3. Every Parish Priest performs his parochial duties and conducts his Parish affairs independently of any board or council, and stands under the immediate control of the Dean, and under the supreme control and direction of the Metropolitan and the Ecclesiastical Court.
4. The Church Community is neither authorised to discharge its Priest, nor to bring another in his place.
5. The Parish Priest can be transferred or removed from the Parish only by direction of the Metropolitan.
6. The Parish Priest:
  - a) As the head of the Parish is required to reside in the Parish's designated territory, unless exempted by the Metropolitan according to local circumstances;

- b) Is assigned or transferred within the Metropolitanate according to the needs of the Metropolitanate by the Metropolitan, *ex officio*, and on the basis of the Holy Canons and ecclesiastical jurisprudence; and
- c) May retire at any time with approval of the Metropolitan A Parish Priest must retire at the age gazetted for entitlement to an aged pension by the laws of the country in which he resides. The Metropolitan may utilise the priest's service beyond the prescribed age, with his agreement.

7. Where there is more than one priest attached to one church, the Metropolitan appoints one of them to be the Rector of the church and, simultaneously, to be in charge of the Parish Office. The Rector is responsible for order in the church and Parish Office.

8. If a formal complaint is submitted against a Parish Priest, the Metropolitan may suspend the Priest until the Ecclesiastical Court renders its judgment. The Ecclesiastical Court must consider such a matter to be urgent and is obliged to decide the matter within one (1) year.

9. A Parish Priest under temporary suspension shall receive one half (1/2) of his regular remuneration and the remainder shall be paid to his substitute.

10. A Parish Priest cannot leave his Parish vacant without the consent and release of the Metropolitan. The Church Community shall be informed of the release in a timely fashion.

11. Before leaving the Parish the Parish Priest must surrender in good and correct order to his successor or to whomever the Metropolitan may designate the metrical books and all other ecclesiastical books, as well as the church and all property, which was administered by him.

12. The Parish Priest, as head of the Parish church with respect to his work, is under the direct control of the Metropolitan who performs this control personally or through his Deans. The Parish Priest exclusively answers to and is responsible to the Metropolitan and the Ecclesiastical Court.

13. All grievances from a Parish and its Church Community or of an individual against the Parish Priest must be submitted in writing to the Metropolitan through the Episcopal Dean and a copy of the letter must be sent to the Parish Priest. The Episcopal Dean is required within 8 days of receiving the complaint(s), to submit them in the prescribed written manner by mail, to the Metropolitan for review and determination. The Metropolitan may submit it to the Ecclesiastical Court for further action.

14. All grievances of the Parish Priest against his Parish or its Church Community or an individual must be submitted by the Parish Priest in writing to the Metropolitan and a copy of the letter must be sent to the subject individual or organisation. The Metropolitan either decides the matter himself or submits it to the Ecclesiastical Court for further action.

15. The Parish Priest must not perform any rites in a Parish not his own without the consent of the Priest of the other Parish. In exceptional circumstances, the Metropolitan may direct a priest to perform a church rite in a Parish not his own.

16. No parishioner or Church Community Board is permitted to bring in a priest from outside the Parish to perform church rites. In the event that this regulation is violated, the Metropolitan, the Ecclesiastical Court and/or the Metropolitanate Executive Board are obligated to act accordingly.

17. Among the duties of the Parish Priest are the following:

- a) To serve the Divine Liturgy and other church services according to Church rules;
- b) To regularly preach the Word of God and teach his parishioners in the church and in any other suitable place;
- c) To serve as an example to his parishioners in both his personal and family life;
- d) To regularly visit sick parishioners in their homes and hospitals, to extend to them pastoral care and consolation and to administer the Holy Mysteries (Sacraments);
- e) To keep and tend to the church metrical books, the official church register of families and the annual church chronicle, to care for the church inventory, to ensure the beauty of the church services and to supervise the order within and cleanliness of the church itself;
- f) To issue official excerpts from the church metrical books, which are notarised by the Parish Priest's signature and the Parish or seal;
- g) To participate with full rights and responsibilities in the work of the Church Community Board, the Church Community Assembly and Church Community Auxiliary Organisations, and to provide them with the necessary instructions for their work;
- h) To appoint and release, in concert with the Church Community Board, the personnel which maintains the church building, church cantors and wardens, and to instruct, supervise and administer them in their service;
- i) To instruct and direct all cantors, choir singers, church building maintenance personnel, sacristans and church wardens in order to ensure the dignity of and respect for both the consecrated church site and the divine church services. These persons must all strictly adhere to the directives of the Parish Priest;
- j) To submit an annual report of his work to the Metropolitan and the Church Community Assembly;
- k) To personally encourage and to become actively involved in supporting the activities of his parishioners with respect to the acquisition or construction of a parish church, parish house, and other church buildings;
- l) To work toward and be concerned with the advancement of the Parish and the Church Community; and
- m) To be in charge of the entire Parish Educational Program, as prescribed by the "Regulations on Christian Education" as issued by the Metropolitan. The Parish Priest is assisted by church school staff, which is appointed by the Metropolitan upon the recommendation of the Parish Priest.

18. The Parish Priest is entitled to the following remuneration and benefits:

- a) Minimum annual remuneration and benefits are determined by the Metropolitanate Assembly. The minimum remuneration and benefits shall apply equally to all Parish Priests and shall not differ due to the country in which they serve. The remuneration is adjusted at the beginning of each fiscal year in accordance with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) of the country in which he serves. The basis for this adjustment shall be the Parish Priest's remuneration from the previous year;
- b) An appropriately functional residence, including heating/cooling, electricity, water and appropriate access to telecommunication utilities, or a corresponding monetary allowance;
- c) Superannuation as determined by relevant legislation in Australia and New Zealand as the case may be;
- d) Workers Compensation Insurance as required by relevant legislation in Australia and New Zealand as the case may be;
- e) A proportional payment for private health insurance for himself, his spouse and his dependent children as determined by the Local Regulations, if he is not entitled to be covered by the government health system;
- f) Reasonable allowance for vehicle expenses and official travel; and
- g) Annual and long-service leave as determined by relevant legislation in Australia and New Zealand as the case may be. The Church Community or Mission Parish shall pay the expenses related to any substitute. If a Priest does not use his annual leave and during that period performs his Parish duties, the Priest shall receive his regular salary and his unused annual leave may be paid to him. Unpaid annual leave cannot accrue for more than three years.

19. The Church Community cannot decrease the remuneration and benefits of the Parish Priest without the consent of the Metropolitan and Metropolitanate Executive Board.

20. During a period of prolonged illness the Parish Priest shall receive all his regular remuneration and benefits in the period prescribed by the laws of the country in which he resides, but not to exceed three (3) months. The substitute priest during the Parish Priest's illness is appointed by the Metropolitan and is compensated by the Church Community or Mission Parish.

21. In the event of the death of the Parish Priest, the Clergy Fund of the Metropolitanate will pay his family his regular remuneration for at least three (3) months and family cannot be removed from the parish home for at least three (3) months from the date of his death. The Parish Administrator is appointed by the Metropolitan and is compensated by the Church Community or Mission Parish.

22. It shall be mandatory for each Parish Priest to join and maintain membership in any Church-established benefits programs and the Clergy Superannuation Fund in accordance with the provisions of the said programs.

23. The Parish Priest may take a private leave-of-absence from his Parish only with the permission of the Metropolitan, if the Parish Priest finds a canonical substitute. The Parish Priest shall inform the Church Community Board or Mission Parish Council of the same in accordance with the Local Regulations of the Church Community or Mission Parish Council.

**RULE 6****DEACON (18)**

1. A Deacon is a canonically ordained person and appointed by the Metropolitan to a designated service in the Metropolitanate.
2. Cathedral churches shall have a Deacon. Other Parishes may have one or more deacons if they are able to support them financially, and as the Metropolitan deems necessary.
3. Deacons at the cathedral churches as well as those in Parishes enjoy the same rights and benefits as the Parish Priests.
4. The Metropolitan appoints Deacons to Parishes. They assist the Parish Priests or the Rector of a Parish in administrative matters and other duties assigned to them by the Rector of the Church.
5. Years in the Diaconate are recognised in the same manner as the years in priestly service.
6. Deacons with secular employment are under the supervision of the Metropolitan. They are attached to a specific Parish. They may serve in a Parish or Mission Parish and preach only with the blessing of the Metropolitan and with the knowledge of the Parish Priest. The Church Community has no financial obligation towards them.

**RULE 7****CHURCH COMMUNITY (19)**

1. A Church Community is an organised community of parishioners headed by a Parish Priest of a specified territory who have voluntarily obligated themselves as church community members to assist in the administration and maintenance of local church property for the benefit of the Church and for its religious life, pursuant to Regulation four (4) of the General Regulations.
2. One or more Parishes may have a common Church Community.
3. Decisions concerning the chartering, naming, districting, abolition and changes of Church Communities are rendered by the Metropolitan in concert with the Ecclesiastical Court and Metropolitanate Assembly.
4. Every baptised and chrismated Orthodox Christian is a parishioner of his/her local Parish and its Church Community where he/she resides. The religious, moral and social duties of a parishioner are to apply the tenets of the Orthodox faith to his/her life; to adhere to and live according to the tenets of the Orthodox faith; faithfully participate in the Divine Liturgy and other worship services; regularly receive the Holy Mysteries (Sacraments); respect all authority and all governing bodies of the Church; be obedient in matters of faith, practice and ecclesiastical order; contribute materially and financially to the support of the Church and its mission; and be an effective witness and example of the Orthodox faith and traditions to all people.

5. Only a church community member has the right to attend, participate and vote at Church Community Assemblies and be nominated for election to the Church Community Board or as a delegate to the Metropolitanate Assemblies.

6. In order to be considered as a church community member and to have the rights and privileges as set out in the Constitution and these Rules, that parishioner must, at minimum:

- a) Have been a parishioner for at least six (6) months
- b) Practice all the religious and moral duties as described in Rule seven (7) Paragraphs four (4) and five (5) above;
- c) Be at least 18 years old;
- d) Be current in his/her contributions or stewardship obligations;
- e) Abide by all of the provisions of the Constitution, these Rules, the General Regulations and the Local Regulations; and
- f) Cooperate in every way towards the welfare and well being of the Parish and its Church Community.

7. Each Church Community shall adopt procedures and maintain records as prescribed by the General Regulations to enable the Parish Priest and Church Community Board to determine whether a parishioner meets and continues to meet the criteria applicable to church community members. The Parish Priest, in tandem with the Church Community Board, shall oversee maintaining the Register of Church Community Members.

8. Where the Church Community has been dissolved, the same criteria set forth in Rule seven (7) Paragraph six (6) shall apply to determine whether a person is eligible to be a steward of a Mission Parish.

9. If the Parish Priest and the Church Community Board determine a person to be unfit as church community member and that by his/her work he/she harms the general well being of the Church Community, they will make a proposal to the Annual Assembly of the Church Community for his/her expulsion from the Register of Church Community Members.

10. A parishioner who is determined not to be or no longer a church community member, or one who is expelled, has the right to appeal to the Church Community Assembly through the Church Community Board within fourteen (14) days from the day he/she received the decision of the Church Community Board. The decision of the Church Community Assembly can be appealed to, to the Metropolitanate Executive Board. The decision of the Metropolitanate Executive Board on appeals is final and obligatory for both parties.

11. No one can be a member of more than one Church Community.

12. Upon fulfilling the criteria set forth in Rule seven (7) Paragraph six (6), new parishioners can attain the status of church community members after six (6)



months, at which time they attain the rights and privileges described in Rule seven (7) Paragraph five (5) and elsewhere in the Constitution and these Rules.

13. If a church community member moves from the territory of one Parish and its Church Community to another, he/she shall be considered a member in the new Parish and its Church Community.

## **RULE 8 CHURCH COMMUNITY ASSEMBLY (20)**

1. The Church Community Assembly (hereinafter called the "Assembly") is the legislative body of a Church Community in external matters of local administration. An Assembly is comprised of all the members of the Church Community. The Parish Priest, on behalf of the Metropolitan, is the Presiding Officer of the Assembly, unless an appointment is made pursuant to Paragraph eight (8) of this Rule.

2. The Board of the Church Community decides the agenda, date and place of an Assembly provided that an Annual Assembly must be held within four (4) months of the end of the financial year of the Church Community. A written notice with the agenda is sent to all church community members at least fourteen (14) days before the Assembly. The Parish Priest will announce in church the time and place of the Assembly. Questions and proposals which arise outside of the agenda must be submitted in writing by any church community member at least one week in advance of the Assembly and shall be incorporated at the discretion of the Church Community Board.

3. The Parish Priest opens an Assembly with prayer and opens nominations for the election of the remainder of the Presidium of the Assembly: the Vice-Chairman and Secretary.

4. The Annual Assembly performs the following duties:

- a) Elects the Presidium of the Assembly, except for the Presiding Officer;
- b) Elects delegates to the Metropolitanate Assembly;
- c) Elects the Church Community Board, the Nominating Committee for the following year and other necessary committees;
- d) Elects, appoints or removes any Trustee or member of a Property Trust if applicable;
- e) In accordance with the Constitution, the Rules and the decisions of the Metropolitanate Assembly and in line with the proposed budget, decides on the remuneration and benefits of the Parish Priest, as well as the salaries of other personnel of the Church Community;
- f) Incorporates in the Local Regulations any changes to fees for parochial rituals referred to in the General Regulations, according to circumstances in the Parish, and as approved by the Metropolitanate Executive Board;
- g) Renders decisions related to the building and repairing of any church building, school, parish home and other buildings, maintaining church structures and making improvements to Church Community property, and submits its decisions, along with

plans, building estimates and other documents to the Metropolitanate Executive Board for approval;

- h) Deliberates on all other matters and proposals which are related to the Church Community;
- i) Proposes Operating Rules for the Assembly, which must be approved by the Metropolitanate Executive Board;
- j) Adopts, amends and removes any Local Regulations and adopts, amends or removes Bye-Laws of the Auxiliary Organisations of the Church Community provided that any such addition amendment or removal has prior written approval from the Metropolitanate Executive Board;
- k) Adopts a Parish Educational Program as approved by the Metropolitan and in accordance with the Regulations on Christian Education and allocates an amount in its budget for the implementation and maintenance of the Program; and
- l) Adopts budget(s) and the annual financial report of the Church Community and submits them to the Metropolitanate Executive Board for approval.

5. In the event that some important questions should arise during the course of the year which the Community Board is not authorised to decide and it is evident that its decision cannot be postponed until the Annual Assembly, the Board of the Church Community with the written approval of the Metropolitan may call a Special Assembly which can decide only upon the matters for which it was summoned.

6. Upon the written request of one-half (1/2) of the members of the Church Community, or if demanded by the Metropolitanate Executive Board the Community Board is obliged to call a Special Assembly.

7. For a Special Assembly which is to determine the sale, purchase, mortgage or lease for a term of more than ten (10) years including options or otherwise encumbering of church property, the erection of new buildings and major renovations or extensions to existing buildings, blessings must be sought in writing from the Metropolitan and permission given on behalf of the Metropolitanate Executive Board.

8. The Metropolitan may appoint his representative(s) to preside over or observe any Assembly or meeting of the Church Community.

9. The quorum for an Assembly, Annual or Special, is a simple majority (i.e. fifty percent plus one) of church community members. If a quorum is not present, another Assembly shall be called within fourteen (14) days. At such time the church community members present may make valid decisions.

10. With respect to matters pertaining to the sale or encumbering (i.e. mortgaging or long leasing) of Church Community property, the quorum for an Assembly shall be two thirds (2/3) of the church community members. In the event a quorum is not present, the Metropolitan shall have authority to reduce the two-thirds (2/3) quorum at a subsequent assembly.

11. All decisions at Annual or Special Assemblies are rendered by a simple majority vote of the church community members present, unless a greater majority is

required by the Constitution, these Rules or the Local Regulations of the Church Community. In case of a tie, the Presiding Officer of the Assembly shall have a casting vote.

12. The Parish Priest as Presiding Officer of the Assembly may expel from the Assembly any church community member who abuses his privileges, creates disorder or obstructs the proceedings of the Assembly.

13. Should an Assembly exceed its jurisdiction and/or prevent the execution of the directives of the Metropolitan, the Metropolitanate Ecclesiastical Court or the Metropolitanate Executive Board, the Metropolitanate Executive Board is empowered to annul such decisions. Until a new Assembly is summoned, the Metropolitanate Executive Board may entrust the governing of the Church Community to the former Board or appoint an Interim Board. The Metropolitanate Executive Board will grant permission to call a new Assembly only when there is sufficient evidence that the Assembly will be conducted in accordance with the Constitution, these Rules, the General Regulations and the Local Regulations.

14. When two or more parishes with their Church Communities desire to merge, the Church Community Boards must obtain the initial agreement of the Metropolitan and the Metropolitanate Executive Board. The merger must be approved by two-thirds (2/3) of the church community members who are present at an Assembly of each Church Community. The decisions of these Assemblies must be submitted to the Metropolitan and the Metropolitanate Executive Board for final approval.

15. Decisions concerning the chartering, naming, districting, abolishing and changing of Church Communities are rendered by the Metropolitan in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and in concert with the Ecclesiastical Court and Metropolitanate Assembly.

## **RULE 9                      CHURCH COMMUNITY BOARD    (21)**

1. The Church Community Board (hereinafter called the "Board") is the executive body of the Church Community Assembly which administers the affairs of the Church Community pursuant to its given authority.

2. The Board is comprised of:

- a) Parish Priest;
- b) President;
- c) Vice-President;
- d) Secretary;
- e) Treasurer;
- f) Church Wardens;
- g) A member from each Church Community Auxiliary Organisation, which shall be its president; and

h) Such other members-at-large as determined by the Local Regulations.

3. The term of office for members of the Board is for the period between Annual Assemblies. The office of President cannot be held for more than three consecutive terms unless otherwise determined by the Local Regulations.

4. To serve on the Board is a ministry and all Board members are called to worthily represent Christ and the Orthodox faith before all whom they meet and in all aspects of life. The service of members of the Board is honorary.

5. Candidates for the Board must have been a church community member for at least two (2) years and fulfil all of the requirements described in Rule seven (7) Paragraphs one (1), four (4) and six (6).

6. Candidates for the Board shall be nominated by the Nominating Committee elected at the previous Annual Assembly, unless otherwise determined by the Local Regulations:

- a) The Nominating Committee is comprised of the Parish Priest and not less than three (3) or more than five (5) church community members;
- b) The Nominating Committee should begin its work at least three (3) months before the Annual Assembly. Any church community member desiring to serve on the Board should notify the Nominating Committee;
- c) The Parish Priest shall announce in the church publication and in church the names of the members of the Nominating Committee; and
- d) At least two (2) weeks before the Annual Assembly, the Nominating Committee, subject to the approval of the Parish Priest, shall announce their nominations to the parishioners.

7. All candidates expressing an interest in serving on the Board shall meet with the Parish Priest, at which meeting the Parish Priest shall explain and discuss the Constitution and these Rules and the significance of the affirmation of office. At the conclusion of the meeting, the candidates must sign a statement acknowledging that they understand the Constitution and these Rules and will abide by them and the affirmation of office.

8. If there is more than one (1) candidate for an office, election is to be by secret ballot.

9. After the election of the Board, a list of new board members is to be sent immediately to the Metropolitanate Executive Board, together with the verified minutes, for approval. This list is to be signed by the Parish Priest as Presiding Officer, and the Secretary of the Assembly. The outgoing Board is not released from duty until the new Board is approved and sworn in.

10. Complaints against the election of the Board or against individual members thereof are submitted, through the Parish Priest, within eight (8) days of the date of their election to the Metropolitanate Executive Board. If the Metropolitan finds that the complaint is well justified and documented, he may withhold the approval of the

election. Until final determination is made the affairs of the Church Community will be conducted by the former Board, or an appointed Interim Board.

11. The Metropolitan may approve the members of the Board who meet election qualifications and postpone only the approval of those members against whom a complaint is filed.

12. Newly-elected members of the Board take an oath of office in the parish church before the Parish Priest and in the presence of the Church Community and from that moment shall be considered members of the body to which they were elected. A person who refuses to take the oath cannot assume the duties of a member of the Board.

13. Whenever a vacancy occurs in Board positions, the vacancy shall be filled through direct appointment by the Metropolitan, upon the recommendation of the Board and Parish Priest, provided however, that the Metropolitan shall also have the authority to have the position filled at a Special Assembly.

14. In the event the Metropolitanate Executive Board determines that a Board has failed to perform its duties in accordance with the teachings and the regulations of the Church, the Metropolitanate Executive Board may dissolve the Board and appoint an Interim Board to perform the daily duties of the Church Community until the Metropolitanate Executive Board determines that conditions have normalised for the election of a new Board.

15. The President summons the Board at least once a month. Should the Metropolitanate Executive Board or the majority of the Board members so require the President is obliged to call a meeting of the Board.

16. The Board may render valid decisions if the meeting is attended by a majority of its members, on the condition that the Parish Priest and President of the Board are present or that they have reviewed the agenda and given written permission for the meeting to take place in their absence. Decisions are rendered by a majority of the members present. Should the vote end in a tie, the presiding officer has a casting vote.

17. The Metropolitanate Executive Board may, if requested by the Board, or by official duty, suspend any member of the Board who neglects his/her duty or without justification, does not attend three (3) consecutive meetings, or who does not obey the decisions and directives of higher Church authorities and prevents the execution of their decisions and directives.

18. The Board performs the following:

- a) Announces the date of the Annual or a Special Assembly and decides the time and the place where it is to be held;
- b) Keeps in good order the Register of Church Community Members;
- c) Represents the interests of the Church Community whenever the need arises;

- d) Executes the decisions of the Assembly and directives from the Metropolitan, the Ecclesiastical Court and/or the Metropolitanate Executive Board;
- e) Proposes to the Assembly budgetary allocations for the Priest's full remuneration and benefits;
- f) Appoints and releases employed personnel and proposes in its budget to the Assembly the means of payment of said personnel and sees to it that the salaries are paid on time and in the prescribed manner;
- g) Seeks approval from the Metropolitan to issue official invitations to persons from outside the jurisdiction of the Metropolitanate.
- h) Keeps an inventory of personal and real properties of the Church Community in its archives;
- i) Proposes the means for acquiring funds for the building and repair of the church, school, parish home and other buildings; submits plans and building estimates to the Assembly for their initial approval and, thereafter, submits the same to the Metropolitanate authorities for final approval;
- j) Administers the property of the Church Community and provides for the needs of the Church Community;
- k) Prepares the agenda for the Assembly and takes care of all matters needed for the work of the Assembly;
- l) Prepares and submits budgets and annual financial statements to the Assembly for its review and approval and forwards the same to the Metropolitanate Executive Board for final approval;
- m) Submits reports of its work to the Assembly;
- n) Sees that the budget of the Church Community is realised;
- o) Cares for the Church Library;
- p) Regularly inspects the condition, maintenance, order and cleanliness of all buildings of the Church Community; and
- q) Regularly pays its prescribed assessments and financial obligations to the Metropolitanate, in accordance with the decisions of the Metropolitanate Assembly and the directives of the Metropolitanate Executive Board.

19. The Board is obliged in its entire work and decisions to strictly adhere to the provisions of the Constitution, these Rules, the General Regulations and the Local Regulations, as well as all the directives of the Metropolitan, the Ecclesiastical Court and/or the Metropolitanate Executive Board.

20. The grievances of individual church community members against the decisions of the Board of the Church Community must be submitted in writing to the Board, which as part of its official duties, must forward the grievance to the Metropolitanate Executive Board within eight (8) days.

21. In addition to the Parish Priest, the President of the Board is its lawful representative before both the civil and ecclesiastical authorities.

22. The President summons, opens and closes Board meetings, proposes matters for discussion, brings them to a vote and announces its findings and decisions. He/she ensures that peace and order is maintained at the meetings and that all members present strictly adhere to the agenda. He/she is the lawful custodian of the Church Community's seal, which is kept in the Church Community Office.

23. When the President of the Board is unable to perform his duties, the Vice-President is his/her substitute.

24. The President of the Board is the *ex-officio* delegate of his Church Community to the Metropolitanate Assembly. If the President is not able to attend meetings of that body, then the Vice-President shall be his/her substitute. In the event that the President or Vice-President, the elected member and elected alternate cannot attend the Metropolitanate Assembly, the Board may designate their substitutes.

25. The President and the other members of the Board are obliged to protect the dignity and honour of their priest and must not demand anything from him that would lessen his dignity.

26. The Secretary keeps the minutes of Board meetings; conducts all correspondence of the Church Community which he/she signs, together with the President; maintains the register of official Church Community acts; maintains the Register of Church Community Members in agreement with the Parish Priest; and maintains the archives of the Church Community, all exclusively in the Church Office.

27. The Treasurer keeps a record of all the income and expenditures of the Church Community throughout the entire year; keeps the Register of Church Community Members, with regard to their contributions or stewardship obligations; receives monies and deposits them in the bank, pays the remuneration of the Parish Priest and the salaries of other personnel, and pays all bills. The Treasurer submits his/her financial report to the Board and to the Annual Assembly. He/she is responsible for paying out all assessments to the Metropolitanate. The Board may appoint a bookkeeper to assist the Treasurer.

28. The Wardens are to be present regularly in church at all church services and ceremonies; to receive money from the sale of candles, offering collections and other income, to submit the money so received to the Treasurer, and to care for all other matters connected with the church and church services.

#### **RULE 10                      CHURCH COMMUNITY AUDIT BOARD (22)**

1. The Church Community Audit Board (hereinafter called the "Audit Board") is comprised of a president and two (2) or more members, elected by the Annual Assembly. The Church Community Assembly may in lieu of an Audit Board engage a Certified Public Accountant firm with the experience and necessary accreditation to perform an audit of the financial records of the Church Community.

2. Candidates for the Audit Board must have been church community members for at least two (2) years and fulfil all of the requirements described in Rule seven (7) Paragraphs one (1) four (4) and six (6), and who have experience in financial auditing and accounting matters.

3. After the election of the Audit Board, a list of its newly-elected members is to be sent with the list of new Board Members immediately to the Metropolitanate Executive Board for approval. This list is to be signed by the Parish Priest as Presiding Officer, and the Secretary of the Assembly.

4. Complaints against the election of the Audit Board or against individual members thereof are submitted, through the Parish Priest, within eight (8) days of the date of their election to the Metropolitanate Executive Board. If the Metropolitan finds that the complaint is well justified and documented, he may withhold the approval of the election. Until final determination is made the affairs of the Audit Board will be conducted by the former Audit Board, or an appointed Interim Audit Board.

5. The Metropolitan may approve the members of the Audit Board who meet election qualifications and postpone only the approval of those members against whom a complaint is filed.

6. Newly-elected and approved members of the Audit Board take an oath of office in the parish church before the Parish Priest and in the presence of the Church Community and from that moment shall be considered members of the body to which they were elected. A person who refuses to take the oath cannot assume the duties of a member of the Audit Board.

7. The Audit Board meets at least once during the fiscal year and reviews the handling of financial funds of the Church Community and submits its report to the Annual Assembly.

8. The Audit Board may perform the review of the financial records of the Church Community more than once a year, should the need be justified, or if the Metropolitanate Executive Board demands it.

## **RULE 11                    AUXILIARY ORGANISATIONS (25)**

1. An Auxiliary Organisation such as a Circle of Serbian Sisters, a Serbian Orthodox Youth Association (hereinafter known as "SOYA"), a choir, folkloric group, catechetical, language and other schools, sports groups and senior citizens and other such organisations, may be formed in a Church Community to help the Church Community achieve its aims and purposes.

2. Decisions concerning the chartering, naming, districting, abolishing and changing of Auxiliary Organisations are rendered by the Church Community Board in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, these Rules, the General Regulations and the Local Regulations.



3. A Church Community Auxiliary Organisation shall have its own Bye-Laws, which must be approved by the Church Community Assembly and ratified by the Metropolitan and the Metropolitanate Executive Board, and must comply with the Constitution, these Rules and the General Regulations.

4. The Parish Priest and the Board of the Church Community shall supervise the work of the local Auxiliary Organisations and shall give them the necessary instructions directives to ensure that the activities of these organisations are in accordance with the Constitution, these Rules and the teachings of the Church.

5. Each member of a Church Community Auxiliary Organisation must be a parishioner of the Parish in which he/she resides.

6. In the event that a Church Community Auxiliary Organisation has been disbanded by default and a Church Community Assembly cannot be summoned, the Metropolitan and the Metropolitanate Assembly shall have the power to declare the said entity dissolved or disbanded.

7. The properties of the dissolved entity shall devolve to the Metropolitanate to serve foremost for the renewal of church life in that territory, or as determined by the Metropolitanate Assembly.

## **RULE 12                    INCOME AND ASSETS<sup>1</sup> (26)**

1. All of the real and personal property which is owned by the Parishes, and Church Communities of the Metropolitanate and its integral constituent bodies, which is described in the Constitution, is held in trust for the use and benefit of all of the faithful of the Metropolitanate.

2. Income and Assets of Church Communities:<sup>2</sup>

- a) Each Church Community owns the real and personal property purchased by, donated to, or transferred to the Church Community on behalf of all the faithful, including but not limited to the churches, chapels, cemeteries, priest's homes (rectories), schools, cultural and social centres, picnic grounds, trusts, funds, institutions, foundations and any and all other real and personal property which serves the needs of the Church Community;
- b) The Church Community Assembly and the Church Community Board are the church-administrative authorities which manage, control and administer the real and personal property of the Church Community pursuant to the provisions of the Constitution and these Rules, the General Regulations, the Local Regulations and under the laws of the country or state where the property is located;
- c) The Metropolitanate Executive Board supervises the work of the Church Community Assembly and the Church Community Board with respect to the management, control and administration of real and personal property to the extent provided for in the Constitution, these Rules and the General Regulations;

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<sup>1</sup> Adopted by decision of the Metropolitanate Assembly of 05.09.2015 and ratified by decision of the Holy Assembly of Bishops No. 42/Min. 104 of 20.05.2016.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

- d) The real and personal property of a Church Community may only serve and be used for religious-ecclesiastical, educational and charitable-humanitarian purposes;
- e) For a Special Assembly which is to determine the sale, purchase, mortgage or lease for a term of more than ten (10) years including options or otherwise encumbering of church property, the erection of new buildings and major renovations or extensions to existing buildings, blessings must be sought in writing from the Metropolitan and permission given on behalf of the Metropolitanate Executive Board;
- f) The real and personal property of a Church Community may be held in a trust or legal entity as approved by the Metropolitanate Executive Board. The Church Community Assembly must adopt the governing documents of the trust or legal entity as provided by the Metropolitanate Executive Board in accordance with this Constitution. The provisions of existing governing documents of any association, corporation, trust or legal entity which are inconsistent with this Rule are of no force and effect;
- g) Any Trust and the election of every Trustee or member of a Trust undertaken by an Assembly of the Church Community must be approved by the Metropolitan on behalf of the Metropolitanate Executive Board. The Metropolitan by virtue of his office may remove any Trustee or members of a Trust who do not abide by the Constitution;
- h) In the event that a Church Community is merged with another Church Community pursuant to the Constitution, these Rules and the General Regulations, the real and personal property of the Church Community shall be conveyed to the surviving Church Community. In the event that a Church Community is dissolved pursuant to the Constitution, these Rules and the General Regulations, the real and personal property of the Church Community shall be conveyed to the Metropolitanate; and
- i) The Metropolitanate Executive Board shall provide a standardised Deed of Trust and governing documents for any legal entity for use by each Church Community.

3. All income and assets of the Parish and its Church Community shall be applied solely to further the objectives of the Parish, its Church Community and the Metropolitanate and no portion shall be distributed directly or indirectly to the members of the Church Community except as genuine compensation for services rendered or expenses incurred on behalf of the Church Community.<sup>3</sup>

#### **RULE 13                      SPECIAL BEQUESTS (27)**

Private persons may specifically designate as bequests real and personal property, including but not limited to land, buildings and funds, to be used by and dedicated in trust for the entire Metropolitanate or a specific Church Community. Prior to their dedication, the relevant church-administrative authorities for the entity for whose benefit the property is dedicated in trust must approve the governing document for the administration of the property and/or funds held in trust.

#### **RULE 14                      OTHER PROPERTY (28)**

The Metropolitanate Executive Board is the church-administrative authority, which manages, controls and administers any real and personal property which is owned

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

by the Metropolitanate or any of its integral constituent bodies but is not specifically identified in these Rules.

#### **RULE 15          DISSOLUTION (29)**

1. When it is determined by the Church Community Board or an Auxiliary Organisation Board that it is incapable of sustaining these church entities or desires to be dissolved, with the approval of the Metropolitan, the Church Community Board shall summon an Assembly. If two-thirds (2/3) of the church community members in good standing favour such dissolution, the Church Community Board submits a request to the Metropolitan and the Metropolitanate Assembly to dissolve the same.

2. In the event that a Church Community or an Auxiliary Organisation has been disbanded by default and a Church Community Assembly cannot be summoned, the Metropolitan and the Metropolitanate Assembly shall have the power to declare the said entity dissolved or disbanded.

3. All income and assets, and including the properties of the dissolved entity shall devolve to the Metropolitanate to serve foremost for the renewal of church life in that territory, or as determined by the Metropolitanate Assembly.<sup>4</sup>

#### **RULE 16          HERESY, SCHISM OR DEFECTION (30)**

In the event of heresy, schism or defection from the Metropolitanate, title, management, administration and control of any affected property shall be entrusted by the Church to those who remain loyal to the Metropolitanate.

#### **RULE 17          CHURCH TAXES (32)**

1. The regulations for standard taxes, if any, to be appropriated by the Parish Priest for parochial rituals are determined by the Metropolitan in concert with the Ecclesiastical Court which shall be included in the General Regulations.

2. The regulations for applicable taxes for Church Community or Mission Parish facility usage are determined by the Church Community Board or Mission Parish Council, according to its circumstances, which are submitted for approval to the Metropolitan Executive Board and if approved shall be included in the amendments to its Local Regulations.

#### **RULE 18          CHURCH OATHS (33)**

1. All newly-elected members of a Church Community Board, upon the assumption of their duties, shall take an Oath of Office before their Parish Priest as prescribed in the General Regulations.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

2. All newly-accepted members of a Church Community prior to being enrolled in the Register of Church Community Members shall take an oath before the Parish Priest as prescribed in the General Regulations.

**RULE 19 SEALS (4)**

The Parish and its Church Community have their seals with the official Coat-of-Arms of the Serbian Orthodox Church in the centre and the corresponding inscription circumscribed.

**RULE 20 OFFICIAL LANGUAGES (5)**

The official languages of the Parish and its Church Community are Serbian written in Cyrillic and English.

**RULE 21 TEXT (34)**

For all purposes, the English text of these Rules shall be the official text.

**RULE 22 LOCAL REGULATIONS**

The Church Community Assembly may adopt, amend or remove Local Regulations as country, state specific and local needs require, provided the same are not inconsistent with the Constitution and the Rules and provided that any such Regulation has prior written approval from the Metropolitanate Executive Board.

**RULE 23 AMENDMENTS**

These Rules may be amended by a simple majority vote of all the members present at a regular or special Metropolitanate Assembly and by approval of the Metropolitan. Changes and amendments become effective immediately upon approval by the Metropolitan.

**RULE 24 INTERPRETATION**

In these Rules, unless the context or subject matter otherwise indicates or requires:

- a) "Serbian Orthodox Church" means the Autocephalous Serbian Orthodox Church with its See in Belgrade, Serbia (1);
- b) "Metropolitanate" means the Metropolitanate of Australia and New Zealand which is body of Orthodox Christians, canonically and hierarchically an integral part of the Autocephalous Serbian Orthodox Church (1);
- c) "Metropolitan" means the Spiritual Head of the Metropolitanate in all matters pertaining to teaching, liturgical-sacerdotal officiation and governance and who is

elected and appointed by the Holy Assembly of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church (9);

- d) "Metropolitanate Ecclesiastical Court" means the Metropolitan's tribunal for ecclesiastical adjudication and internal church matters as provided for in the Constitution (10);
- e) "Deanery" means a church territorial unit, which is comprised of a designated number of Parishes and their Church Communities and Mission Parishes (11);
- f) "Dean" means an active or retired cleric who is appointed and relieved by the Metropolitan and who is responsible for the supervision of an Deanery (12);
- g) "Metropolitanate Assembly" means the Metropolitanate legislative body in external matters of church administration as provided for in the Constitution (12);
- h) "Metropolitanate Executive Board" means The Metropolitanate Executive Board is the executive authority in matters of external church administration in the Metropolitanate and is the executive body of the Metropolitanate Assembly (14);
- i) "Constitution" means the Constitution of the Metropolitanate;
- j) "Rules" mean these Rules;
- k) "General Regulations" mean the General Regulations of the Metropolitanate;
- l) "Local Regulations" mean the Local Regulations of the Church Community;
- m) "Regulations on Christian Education" as issued by the Metropolitan (9.9.d); and
- n) "Rules and Procedures for Ecclesiastical Courts of the Serbian Orthodox Church" as issued by the Holy Assembly of Bishops (9.8.p,q).

## **RULE 25                    IMPLEMENTATION**

These Rules shall be implemented pursuant to the Implemental Regulations.

### **BE IT KNOWN THEREFORE**

The Constitution of the Metropolitanate of Australia and New Zealand of the Serbian Orthodox Church and its accompanying documents: these Rules for Parishes and Their Church Communities of the Metropolitanate of Australia and New Zealand, Rules for Mission Parishes of the Metropolitanate of Australia and New Zealand, General Regulations for the Metropolitanate of Australia and New Zealand, and Implemental Rules have been approved for implementation in the Metropolitanate of Australia and New Zealand E. No. 203/11 of 24 June 2011, as amended by the Metropolitanate Assembly on 05 September 2015.

**+IRINEJ**

Bishop of the Metropolitanate of Australia and New Zealand  
The Serbian Orthodox Church

Given at the Metropolitanate See in Sydney  
E. No. 290/15  
23 October 2015