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**CONSTITUTION
of the Parishes
of the Australian and New Zealand Diocese of the
Ukrainian Autocephalic Orthodox Church in Diaspora**

INTRODUCTION

The faithful united in the Parish for the glory of the Holy Consubstantial and Indivisible Trinity with the blessing of The Lord adopt this CONSTITUTION for the purpose of:

- a. studying the Holy Scriptures and the Commandments of Jesus Christ;
- b. studying and preservation of the traditions and customs of the Holy Ukrainian Orthodox Church;
- c. endeavouring to adopt the spiritual and moral guidance of the teachings of Jesus Christ and of Christian morals; and
- d. joint confession and dissemination of Faith

1. GENERAL REGULATIONS

1. This Parish shall be known to Church and civil authorities under the name of "The Parish _____ of the Australian and New Zealand Diocese of the Ukrainian Autocephalic Orthodox Church in Diaspora".
2. The Parish _____ of the Australian and New Zealand Diocese of the Ukrainian Autocephalic Orthodox Church (UAOC) in Diaspora shall function in the metropolitan area of _____ in the State of _____
3. The Parish in its activities is guided by the teachings of the Holy Gospel, the orthodox dogmas and canons, general church and diocesan resolutions and this constitution.
4. The Parish is a constituent part of the Australian and New Zealand Diocese of the UAOC in Diaspora and is in canonical subordination to its governing Bishop. This jurisdictional status may not be altered without a written blessing (the release deed) of the Governing Bishop.
5. The ecclesiastical guardian and counsellor of the Parish is a priest – the Parish Priest.
6. In all religious and ecclesiastical matters the Parish is subordinate to the Governing Bishop of the Diocese. In economic matters and matters of internal administration the Parish, whilst observing all requirements of the Diocesan Constitution, has the right of independent action subject to this Constitution.
7. The Parish has its own banking account, seal, stamp and a form inscribed with a religious symbol and the parish name.
8. For the purpose of direction of its activities the Parish elects at its General Meeting a Parish Council, which shall act in accordance with this Constitution and the directives of the Governing Authorities of the Diocese (Diocesan Council and Consistory).
9. The Parish maintains the parish church and ensures its proper arrangement in accordance with the ecclesiastical orthodox rite and Ukrainian traditions; maintain the parish Clergy (Priest and Deacon), the psalmodist, the precentor-conductor, and assists them in the performance of their assigned ecclesiastical duties; maintains (subject to available finances) a church choir, parish school; renders assistance to the needy - in the first instance its own members; arranges lectures and presentations on religious topics, and also concerts of ecclesiastical music.
10. The parish church shall be used for the purpose of joint prayers, performance of religious rites, and for the preaching of the Word of God in accordance with the rules of the Holy Apostolic Orthodox Church. It may not be used for any other non-ecclesiastical purpose.
11. The parish church must not be sold, transferred to another Church institution, closed down, or designated for demolition, except with the permission of not less than 75% of the total number of the financial members of the Parish and in concurrence with the Governing Bishop in office at that time.

2. MEMBERSHIP

12. Members of the parish may be all orthodox Ukrainians and other orthodox faithful 18 years of age or older, who declare in writing their wish to become parish members, to abide by the Parish Constitution, to accept the obligation to support the Parish materially, to fulfil Christian obligations (regularly attend Divine Services, go to confession and receive Holy Communion at least once a year), and to participate in the ecclesiastical parish life. Minors (without the right of vote) are sponsored by their parents or guardians.

13. The Parish Council, in concurrence with the Parish Priest, admits new members at its meeting and enters their names in the parish register of members.

14. Parish members shall pay annual membership fees and may vote at any Parish Meeting and stand for election to any parish office provided they are not in arrears with the parish membership fees. The amount of the membership fees and the due date are determined by the General Meeting of the Parish. Minors up to 18 years of age pay no membership fees and do not have the right of vote.

15. Every parish member has the right to leave the Parish by submitting to the Parish Council a written declaration to that effect.

16. A parish member who has been found guilty by the Parish Council of a violation of this Constitution, or of violation of ecclesiastic moral principles of Orthodoxy, or of causing by his actions harm to the Parish, the Church, the Governing Bishop, or the Governing Authorities of the Diocese may be expelled from parish membership by the resolution of the Parish Council.

17. A resolution to expel a parish member must be confirmed by the General Meeting of parish members. The expelled parish member has the right to take part in liturgical life of the Parish and the right of appeal to the Parish General Meeting. If the General Meeting endorses the decision of the Parish Council, that member has the right to appeal to the Governing Authorities of the Diocese and to the Governing Bishop whose decision is final.

18. Persons who have resigned their parish membership voluntarily or who were expelled from the Parish forfeit all rights and privileges of a parish member. They shall have no right of refund of any moneys paid by them as membership fees or donations.

19. Any parish member whose membership fees are in arrears for more than 12 months automatically forfeits membership rights. On payment of all outstanding membership fees the member's rights are restored by the resolution of the Parish Council.

3. GENERAL MEETING

20. The General Meeting of the financial parish members is the highest governing body of the Parish.

21. General Meeting may be:

- a. Annual General Meeting of the Parish; and
- b. Extraordinary General Meeting of the Parish.

22. The Annual General Meeting of the Parish shall be held once a year, not later than three months after the end of the financial year of the Parish. Not less than one half of all financial parish members shall constitute a quorum at any Parish Meeting. If there is no quorum at the appointed time, the Meeting shall be adjourned for one hour after which time those financial parish members who are present at the Meeting shall constitute a quorum.

23. The Annual General Meeting is convened by the Parish Council with the concurrence of the Parish Priest. The notice of an Annual General Meeting, its place and time is announced by the Parish Priest from the altar steps in the church; and the notice of the General Meeting of the Parish signed by the chairman and the secretary of the Parish Council is displayed on the parish notice board not later than thirty (30) days before the date of the meeting.

24. The proceedings of a General Meeting are opened and closed with a prayer.
25. The Annual General Meeting is declared open by the chairperson or by another member of the Parish Council. In special cases the meeting is declared open by a representative of the Governing Bishop or of the Governing Authorities of the Diocese.
26. The General Meeting is presided by a panel comprising a chairperson, deputy chairperson and two minute secretaries elected by the General Meeting. The Parish Priest shall be the Honorary Chair person of the Meeting. The minutes of the Meeting are recorded in Ukrainian.
27. The General Meeting shall carry all resolutions by a simple majority of votes in a show of hands or in a secret ballot. Each financial Parish Member has one vote. Proxy votes are not allowed.
28. The Parish General Meeting shall be conducted in accordance with the accepted practice of the conduct of meetings.
29. The chairperson of the Meeting may take part in all deliberations and is entitled to vote. In the event of a tied vote the Chair Person shall have a second or a casting vote.
30. Only the financial Parish Members shall have the right to attend a General Meeting. Other persons may attend a General Meeting with the approval of a simple majority of the present financial Parish Members. Any such persons admitted to the Meeting may take part in the deliberations of the Meeting but only in an advisory capacity.
31. The responsibilities of General Meeting shall comprise:
 - a. discussion of the spiritual moral state of the Parish;
 - b. election of the delegates to the Diocesan Synod;
 - c. reception, discussion and confirmation of the reports of the Parish Council and the committees (if any committees are functioning within the Parish) for the past financial year of the Parish;
 - d. confirmation of the annual budget, including determination of amounts for diocesan, internal parish and other charitable objectives;
 - e. If needed, selection of the candidate for the Parish Priest to be confirmed by the Governing Bishop, and recommendation of a candidate for consecration to priesthood;
 - f. Election of the Parish Council and of the Supervisory Board and election in a separate vote of the chair persons of the Parish Council and of the Supervisory Board;
 - g. Determination of the amount of membership fees, confirmation of rite fees and maintenance expenses of the parish clergy.
32. The Annual General Meeting may consider matters which were not included in the agenda but have arisen in the course of the Meeting and require resolution by the general Meeting.
33. All resolutions carried by a General Parish Meeting shall be read back and recorded in the minutes of the meeting before the conclusion of the meeting.
34. A report on the Annual General Meeting of the Parish and the minutes of the Meeting signed by the chairperson, the secretary of the presiding panel, and the Parish Priest shall be submitted to the Consistory of the Diocese not later than four weeks after the Meeting. If the General Meeting carried resolutions, which contradict the Canons of the Church or contradict Diocesan Constitution, the Consistory has the right to demand convocation of an Extraordinary General Meeting for the purpose of rescinding such resolutions.
35. The Extraordinary General Meeting of the Parish shall be convened when the need arises.

36. The Extraordinary General Meeting shall be convened on any of the following grounds:
- a. when so resolved by the Parish Council;
 - b. when required by the Parish Priest;
 - c. when required by the Supervisory Board;
 - d. when directed by the Governing Bishop or by the Governing Authorities of the Diocese; and
 - e. when requested in writing by not less than two thirds of all financial Parish Members.

The Extraordinary General Meeting shall be convened and conducted in the same manner as the Annual General Meeting. The Extraordinary General Meeting may deal only with matters for which it was convened.

37. The minutes of the Extraordinary General Meeting shall be submitted to the Consistory in accordance with Paragraph 34 of this Constitution.

4. PARISH PRIEST AND CLERGY

38. The office of the Parish Priest may be held only by a priest of the UAOC appointed by the Governing Bishop on the recommendation of the Governing Authorities of the Diocese in concurrence with the Parish Council.
39. The Parish Priest shall be the Honorary Chair person of the Parish Council and the first counsellor of the Parish in all ecclesiastical matters, and as such he participates in all meetings of the Parish Council. If it is the wish of the General Meeting, the Parish Priest may be elected as the Chairperson of the Parish Council.
40. The Parish Priest is the prime counsellor of the parish in ecclesiastical matters, which concern the Canons and pastoral duties. The Parish Priest is subordinate to the Governing Bishop and shall submit to him report on his activities.
41. The duties of the Parish Priest include:
- a. supervision of church discipline within the Parish and care for ecclesiastic moral life of Parish Members;
 - b. regular celebration of the Holy Liturgy and other Divine Services in accordance with church regulations;
 - c. care for the teaching of the foundations of Faith and for religious education of parishioners, especially young people and children and taking part in the church community life;
 - d. extending pastoral care to Parish Members, comforting, counselling and visiting them;
 - e. supervision of the work of the parish clergy and assistants in performance of their ecclesiastical and pastoral duties;
 - f. maintenance of the Parish Register of Births, Marriages, and Deaths of the Parish Members, and the Parish Chronicle and issuing certificates of baptism and marriage;
 - g. carrying out the directives of the Governing Bishop and of the Governing Authorities of the Diocese;
 - h. annual reporting before the end of January to the Governing Bishop on the spiritual state of the Parish; and
 - i. representing the Parish before Church and civil authorities.
42. Any disagreements between the Parish Priest and the Parish Council or the members of the Parish, which cannot be resolved within the Parish, shall be referred to the Consistory, or if necessary to the Governing Bishop whose decision is final.
43. The responsibilities of the parishioners towards the Parish Priest:
- a. deferring to him as their spiritual pastor and counsellor; and
 - b. assisting him in performance of his pastoral duties.

5. PARISH COUNCIL

44. The Parish Council is the executive body of the Parish and is responsible to the Parish at General Meeting. The Parish Council is elected at the General Meeting for the term of one to three years from morally irreproachable and active members of the Parish who are respected and trusted by the parishioners.

45. The Parish Council consists of seven (7) members and two (2) reserve members:

- a. Chairperson;
- b. Deputy chairperson;
- c. Secretary
- d. Treasurer;
- e. Church warden; and
- f. two members and two reserve members

46. To facilitate the co-operation and co-ordination of activities of the Parish chairpersons of the Brotherhood and Sisterhood shall be ex-officio members of the Parish Council with full voting rights.

47. The Parish Council functions in the period between General Meetings of the Parish with the following rights and responsibilities:

- a. Management of all administrative, economic financial and other matters of the Parish, except those which are the responsibility of the Parish Priest;
- b. responsibility for the maintenance of the church building, other buildings and property;
- c. care for the fitting out of the church building with everything needed for the proper conduct of Divine Services and for the adornment of the church building;
- d. construction and alteration of parish buildings, preservation and renting out parish real estate and acquisition of parish property;
- e. appointment of committees for various purposes, which function in accordance with the directives of the Parish Council and are responsible to it. If such committees do not perform the tasks assigned to them, the Parish Council has the right to dissolve them;
- f. carrying out charitable activities in cooperation with the Brotherhood and Sisterhood helping out in the first instance the needy members of the Parish;
- g. maintenance of the register of Parish Members, all Parish records, various documentation, except that maintained by the Parish Priest; and
- h. regular payment to the treasury of the Diocesan Consistory of church dues and other financial obligations determined by the Diocesan Synod or the Diocesan Council.

48. Members of the Parish Council must not be closely related to the members of the Supervisory Board.

49. The first meeting of the Parish Council following the General Parish Meeting shall assign duties to all members of the Parish Council. In the event of a vacancy on the Parish Council due to a resignation or a temporary absence, illness or dismissal of a Member of the Parish Council, that vacancy is filled temporarily or permanently by the first and then the second reserve member.

50. Members of the Parish Council who fail to perform their duties or misuse their authority, having been found guilty of the charges, may be relieved of their duties and dismissed from the Parish Council by a resolution of the Parish Council or of the Supervisory Board before the expiry of their term of office. Persons relieved of their duties or dismissed from the Parish Council have the right of appeal to the General Meeting of the Parish, the Governing Bishop or the Diocesan Council. Changes in the membership of the Parish Council shall be advised to the Consistory.

51. The Parish Council is not authorised to interfere with the directives of the Parish Priest concerning his ecclesiastical, pastoral or teaching duties. In such matters the Parish Priest may be directed by the Governing Bishop.

52. All parish documents (contracts, titles) shall be lodged for safekeeping with the lawyer of the Parish and photocopies of such documents shall be kept by the secretary of the Parish Council.

53. The meetings of the Parish Council shall be held when required, but at least once a month, to resolve all current affairs. Half the members of the Parish Council, if including the Chairperson or deputy chairperson, present at the meeting shall constitute the quorum.

54. Every member of the Parish Council shall be notified in writing by the secretary of the date, time and venue of the meeting of the Parish Council at least ten (10) days in advance, unless the Parish Council introduces an alternative notification procedure. The meeting shall receive reports from the Chairperson, the secretary, and the treasurer. Other members of the Council report as required. Minutes of the preceding meeting of the Parish Council shall be read and confirmed.

55. Meetings of the Parish Council are opened and closed with a prayer.

56. Meetings of the Parish Council are declared open and are presided by the Chair person or, in the absence of the chairperson, by the Deputy Chairperson. In exceptional cases a Parish Council meeting may be convened on the instruction of the Governing Bishop or the Governing Authorities of the Diocese. All resolutions of the Parish Council are carried by a simple majority vote of the present members. In the event of a tied vote the person chairing the meeting shall have a casting vote.

57. If the Parish Priest did not attend a meeting of the Parish Council, it is the duty of the Chairperson to inform the Parish Priest of the resolutions carried at the meeting. The secretary shall provide the Parish Priest with a copy of the minutes of the meeting.

58. A member of the Parish Council shall forfeit the rights of a Council member if he or she:

- a. has failed to attend three consecutive meetings of the Council without a valid excuse;
- b. has been expelled by the Parish Council from the membership of the Parish;
- c. has voluntarily resigned from the office; and
- d. has been unable to carry out the duties of the office because of an illness or for any other reason preventing meeting the responsibilities of office.

59. Every member of the Parish Council is eligible for re-election for the next term.

60. The Parish Council every year shall submit to the Consistory within one month after the end of the financial year an annual report on the status of the Parish and its activities, composed in a format prepared by the Consistory.

6. SUPERVISORY BOARD

61. The Supervisory Board composed of three (3) members and two (2) reserve members is elected by the General Meeting of the Parish for the same term of office as the Parish Council and functions in the period between General Parish Meetings and is responsible to General Meetings.

62. Members of the Supervisory Board must not be in family relationship or spiritually related to the Parish Priest or the treasurer of the Parish Council.

63. The Supervisory Board shall carry out an examination of the financial affairs of the Parish at least once a year, not later than two weeks before the General Meeting of the Parish. In special cases the Supervisory Board may carry out an examination on demand of:

- a. The Governing Bishop;
- b. The Governing Authorities of the Diocese;
- c. The Parish Priest; and
- d. the Parish Council.

64. The duties of the Supervisory Board comprise:

- a. verification of the correctness and the accuracy of adherence to the budget approved by General Meeting of the Parish;
- b. auditing of the finances, the cashbook and the income and expenditure records;
- c. auditing cash held by the treasurer and verification of expenditure by appropriate documentation;
- d. auditing economic records of the parish;
- e. auditing the register of the parish members;
- g. auditing the inventory records and checking the condition of the parish property; and
- h. motion for acceptance of the retirement of the Parish Council at a General Meeting.

65. The Supervisory Board shall produce a report on the work carried out by the Board, with recommendations for improvements in the economic activities of the Parish and submits it to the Annual or the Extraordinary General Meeting of the Parish. A copy of the report shall be provided to the Parish Council.

66. The Supervisory Board shall maintain general supervision of the work of the Parish Council. The Board may take part in the meeting of the Parish Council in advisory capacity.

67. The Supervisory Board has the right, when the need arises, in the interests of the Parish or the Church as a whole, to suspend individual members of the Parish Council, if they consciously neglect their duties assigned to them by the Parish Council, or if they act contrary to the resolutions of General Meetings or of the Parish Council, and disobey directives of the Diocesan Council.

68. If the Supervisory Board suspends more than one third of all members of the Parish Council, an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Parish shall be convened by the Supervisory Board to endorse the suspensions by the Supervisory Board and to elect new Parish Council.

7. CHURCH ORGANISATIONS

69. A church organisation may operate within the Parish provided its Rules or Constitution do not contradict the Parish Constitution and the Diocesan Constitution.

70. The Parish Council shall support church organisations which assist the Parish to achieve its objectives.

71. The primary organisations of the Parish shall be the Brotherhood and Sisterhood youth organisations and the national - cultural societies.

72. All income of parish organisations shall be used in the first instance to meet the needs of the Church, the Parish and for charitable objectives.

73. Representation of the Parish externally and all fund raising activities shall be conducted by parish organisations only with the approval of the Parish Priest and the Parish Council.

74. In the event of dissolution of an organisation all its property, funds, and all records and files shall be handed over to the Parish Council.

8. REGISTRATION OF THE REAL ESTATE OF THE PARISH

75. All real estate of the Parish, the church, buildings, land and other assets are the property of the Parish and shall be legally registered for the Parish, according to the laws of the State, in the name of the Trustees of the Parish or in the manner provided by the relevant state laws.

76. Parish Trustees, not fewer than five in number, shall be elected by the General Meeting of the Parish. The rights and responsibilities of the Trustees as vested by General Meeting of the Parish shall be defined and legally formalised by a Deed of Trust. Officially all property is registered in the name of the trustees.

77. The property of the Parish shall remain registered in the name of the Trustees until the Trustees have been relieved of their duties and responsibilities by the General Meeting of the Parish, if that does not contradict the Trust Deed. The Trustees act in accordance with the directives of the General Parish Meeting of the Parish and of the Parish Council.

78. The General Parish Meeting may replace some Trustees during their term of office, if that does not contradict the Trust Deed, however, the grounds for any such replacement must be stated.

79. The Parish Council, and not the Trustees, shall be the master of the parish assets, and it shall be responsible to the Parish Members for the proper management of the parish assets : payment of due rates and taxes, maintenance of buildings, renewal of fire insurance policies, sale or leasing of parish premises and other management activities.

80. In the event of sale of parish property the Trustees shall be responsible for the proceeds of the sale, but they shall manage any funds in accordance with the resolution of the General Meeting.

81. The Parish may incorporate as company limited by guarantee. In that case Parish Members automatically become company members and shall be bound by company articles.

9. PARISH ASSETS

82. Parish assets, real estate and other property is the property of and is under the control of the Parish for its purposes and for the use of its members, as a component of the Australian and New Zealand Diocese of the Ukrainian Autocephalic Orthodox Church in Diaspora.

83. No parish property may be distributed amongst the Parish Members.

10. PARISH FUNDS

84. All income received by the Parish and all funds of the Parish shall be used exclusively to meet the needs of the Parish according to the objectives of the parish. No funds of the Parish may be distributed amongst the members or the office bearers of the Parish as bonuses, dividends, or in any other form of income distribution.

85. The funds of the Parish consist of:

- a. donations;
- b. collections;
- c. income derived from sales of candles, religious literature, and other religious articles;
- d. annual membership fees;
- e. fees for rites and services;
- f. funds raised by subscriptions for special purposes such as acquisition of property, education; and
- g. income derived from investments and other sources.

86. The expenditure from parish funds shall include:

- a. the stipends of the Parish Priest, clergy and church assistants, and remuneration of teachers and other employees of the Parish;
- b. general parish needs;
- c. maintenance expenses of parish property and buildings;
- d. charitable objectives; and
- e. other objectives in accordance with resolutions of General Meetings.

87. All income and expenditure of the Parish shall be duly recorded in appropriate accounts. If required by state laws, accounts in English shall be submitted to appropriate authorities.

88. All moneys, which belong to, the Parish and all moneys received by the Parish shall be deposited in the parish banking account, preferably with a Ukrainian co-operative. All withdrawals from the parish bank account shall be signed by not fewer than two members of the Parish Council – the chairperson and the treasurer of the parish or by persons authorised by the Parish Council. For a more exact accountability all payments are made by cheques.

89. The Parish Council shall produce an annual financial report with appropriate explanation of individual paragraphs, and shall table the report at the General Meeting of the Parish. The financial report shall be signed by the Chairperson or Deputy Chair person and the Treasurer of the Parish Council.

11. PARISH SEAL

90. The Ukrainian and English Parish Seals shall be of circular shape with the name of the Church and of the Diocese inscribed around the periphery, with the outline of the cross and the name and location of the Parish in the middle in accordance with the design approved by the Consistory.

91. The seals shall be kept in the custody of the Parish Priest for application to official documents issued by him in his ecclesiastic capacity, namely the Certificate of Baptism, Marriage Certificate, official extracts from the Parish register, and to pastoral references. The Parish Seal may be applied to internal or external documents signed by the Parish Priest or by the Chairperson of the Parish Council.

92. A rubber stamp bearing the name and the address of the Parish shall be used for authentication of tickets for parish functions and internal fund raising activities.

93. All internal parish office work and the correspondence with the Governing Authorities of the Diocese and with Ukrainian organisations is conducted in Ukrainian using official forms carrying the name and the address of the parish in Ukrainian and in English. All correspondence with civil and state institutions is conducted in English.

12. ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS TO THE CONSTITUTION

94. If an amendment of the Parish Constitution is required, the Parish Council shall submit the proposed amendment with the supporting arguments for consideration of the Consistory which shall review the submission and submit it for the consideration of the Diocesan Synod.

95. Changes and alterations to the Constitution come into force on their approval by the Diocesan Synod.

13. DISSOLUTION OF THE PARISH

96. Dissolution or liquidation of the Parish as an organisation may take place on the basis of a resolution of the General Meeting of the Parish adopted with the majority of not less than three quarters of the financial Parish Members present at the meeting with the required quorum being not less than three quarters of all financial Parish Members. Such resolution comes into force after its confirmation by the Governing Bishop of the Diocese.

97. In the case of dissolution or liquidation of the Parish its assets after settlement of all outstanding debts and financial obligations must not be distributed among Parish Members or a group of Parish Members. All assets shall be placed at the disposal of the Consistory or another parish of the Australian and New Zealand Diocese of the UAOC in Diaspora after the resolution of the General Parish Meeting concerning the dissolution or liquidation of the Parish.

The church property of the Parish must not be handed over for any other objective.

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This Constitution was confirmed and adopted by the delegates to the 14th Diocesan Synod 26-27 September 1997 AD