



**STATUTES
OF THE
EPARCHY OF SAINT MARON OF BROOKLYN**

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THE SACRAMENTS

Baptism

Statute 1. Preceding the celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism, the mother and the newly-born infant are to be formally welcomed into the church as indicated in our Maronite liturgical books. This ritual, familiarly called “The Churching”, is to take place the first time the mother enters the church with her infant after child birth. If it is not done at that time, it is to be celebrated immediately before the Baptism.

Statute 2. The Sacrament of Baptism is ordinarily celebrated only by a priest, unless there is a danger of death. The priest is to be the pastor or administrator of the local parish, or another priest delegated by him.

Statute 3. Before celebrating the Baptism of an infant, the priest is to verify that the parents themselves want the infant to receive this Sacrament, and that there is a founded hope that the infant will be raised in the Catholic Church. The priest may want to verify this by having the parents participate in a Baptism preparation session, especially if the parents are not fully practicing their faith.

Statute 4. If the parents of the infant are not legally married in accord with civil law, or are separated or divorced, the pastor is to verify that both parents are consenting to the celebration of the Baptism, unless legal custody has been granted to only one parent.

Statute 5. When celebrating the Baptism of anyone over 14 years of age, the priest is to verify that the candidate is suitably prepared to receive this Sacrament. If the candidate for baptism is younger than 18 years of age, the permission of his parents or legal guardian is also required.

Statute 6. Baptisms are to be celebrated in the parish church, in a fixed Baptismal font located near the main entrance of the church.

Statute 7. Baptisms are not to be celebrated in private homes, unless there is a danger of death.

Statute 8. For the celebration of a Baptism, the priest is to wear a full set of vestments, or a *jibbee* and stole.

Statute 9. It is preferred that Baptisms are not to be celebrated during the Divine Liturgy, but rather as a distinct service using the complete liturgical text for Baptisms.

Statute 10. An aborted fetus, if born alive, should be baptized.

Statute 11. The person to be baptized should have at least one sponsor. “Christian Witnesses” are not permitted. For a person to serve as a sponsor it is necessary that he/she:

- a) Be at least 18 years of age;
- b) Have received the three Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Chrismation, and the Eucharist;
- c) Be a member of the Catholic Church in good standing as determined by his/her pastor, with the exception of a member of the Orthodox Church as long as he/she serves with a Catholic sponsor;
- d) Not be the father, mother, or spouse of the person being baptized.

Statute 12. The pastor of the place where the Baptism was celebrated must record without delay, in the Baptism Register, the name of the person baptized, the place and date of birth, the parents, the Church *sui iuris* (Rite) of the parents, the sponsors, the date of the Baptism and Chrismation, and the celebrant.

Statute 13. In the case of a child born to an unwed mother the name of the mother is to be recorded in the Baptism Register, if possible. Likewise, the name of the father is to be indicated if his paternity is certain. In other cases, no indication is to be made of the father or the parents.

Statute 14. In the case of an adopted child, the names of the adoptive parents are to be recorded in the Baptism Register. If the adoption takes place after the Baptism, the names of the adoptive parents are to be added to the names of the natural parents.

Statute 15. In the case of a child who has 2 male parents or 2 female parents, and if those parents approach the priest to baptize their child and are willing to abide by all of the norms regarding Baptism, the child is not to be denied the Sacrament. The names of the parents as recognized by civil law are to be recorded in the Baptism Register.

Chrismation

Statute 16. Chrismation must be administered in conjunction with Baptism, even when baptizing members of the Latin Church.

Statute 17. When Chrismation is administered to a member of the Latin Church or any other Eastern Catholic Church other than our own, the permission of their respective Bishop should be obtained.

Statute 18. If for some reason a child or adult did not receive the Sacrament of Chrismation at the time of Baptism, the priest may administer this Sacrament to him/her at any time. In this case, one sponsor is needed and must fulfill the prerequisites of the baptismal sponsor. This Chrismation must be recorded in the Chrismation Register and a notification is to be sent to the candidate's parish of Baptism.

The Holy Eucharist and the Divine Liturgy

Statute 19. The Holy Eucharist is not to be administered to a child until he/she has reached the age of reason, which is 7 years old, or to those who do not have the capacity of distinguishing between the Holy Eucharist and ordinary bread and wine.

Statute 20. The candidate for First Holy Communion must receive the Sacrament of Penance prior to the reception of the Holy Eucharist.

Statute 21. First Communions are to be recorded in the First Communion Register.

Statute 22. The Eucharistic bread must be made of pure wheat and unleavened. The Eucharistic wine must be made of natural grapes, and it is to be mixed with water for a valid celebration.

Statute 23. For the faithful who suffer from allergic reactions to gluten, “low-gluten” hosts, which are duly approved, may be used. These hosts must not come into contact in any way with the regular hosts in order for them to remain low gluten. If the faithful in question have a reaction even to “low-gluten” hosts, they are permitted to refrain from receiving the host and to drink the precious Blood directly from a cup prepared for this purpose. In this case, the priest is to take a small cup (like the ones used in our intinction sets) and place some wine, mixed with water, in it. This cup is consecrated during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy along with the chalice. The priest must be sure never to pour from the main chalice into this small cup in order to avoid any hint of gluten. The faithful who suffer from this allergy are not to be turned away from Holy Communion.

Statute 24. Priests who cannot drink any alcohol whatsoever may use *Mustum* for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. For the faithful who cannot tolerate any alcohol, they may receive the host alone, but always on the tongue.

Statute 25. The chalice and paten to be used are not to be made of glass or any other breakable material. If the chalice and paten are made of a porous substance (such as wood), the inside cup of the chalice and the top of the paten are to be coated with a precious metal.

Statute 26. The Eucharistic fast is to be observed for a period of one hour prior to receiving Holy Communion.

Statute 27. During the Divine Liturgy, Holy Communion is to be distributed by priests and deacons. If there is a need, subdeacons may also distribute Holy Communion.

Statute 28. Those distributing Holy Communion are not to refuse the Sacrament to the faithful, without having first explained the situation to the Eparchial Bishop and received his permission to do so.

Statute 29. During the Divine Liturgy, Holy Communion is always to be distributed on the tongue, under both species by intinction.

Statute 30. During the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, or of any other Sacrament, or at funeral services, the Gospel and the homily (sermon) are to be proclaimed only by a deacon or a priest, without exception.

Statute 31. The English version of the Sacred Scriptures to be used during the Divine Liturgy or any other liturgical celebration must be approved by the Apostolic See and the Eparchial Bishop. The Arabic version to be used must be approved by the Maronite Synod of Bishops.

Statute 32. During the Divine Liturgy or any other liturgical celebrations, the Scriptural readings, other than the Gospel, may be read by any member of the congregation. However, the reader is to be appropriately and modestly dressed.

Statute 33. During the Divine Liturgy and other liturgical celebrations, it is encouraged that male servers assist the priest. Females are not permitted to serve in this capacity, but are encouraged to participate in other ways such as assisting as readers, ushers, choir members, etc.

Statute 34. The Syriac language is always to be maintained in parts of our Divine Liturgy regardless of the language in which the Divine Liturgy is being celebrated. It is ideal that the following be chanted in Syriac: the Entrance Dialogue, the *Qadeeshat*, the Access to the Altar, the Words of Institution, and the Epiiclesis. At the very least, the *Qadeeshat* and the Words of Institution are always to be chanted in Syriac without exception.

Statute 35. Before celebrating the Divine Liturgy, the priest is to pray the “vesting prayers” according to our Maronite liturgical books.

Statute 36. Before the Divine Liturgy, the subdeacon, deacon, or server is to light the altar candles during the “Hymn of Light” as indicated in our Maronite liturgical books.

Statute 37. Once the offerings for the Divine Liturgy have been prepared, they are to be covered with 2 palls and the anaphora veil as indicated in our Maronite liturgical books.

Statute 38. The principle celebrant of the Maronite Divine Liturgy is always to be fully vested including for weekday celebrations, in Maronite vestments: alb (white or off-white), amice, stole, belt, and cope. Concelebrants ordinarily are also to be fully vested, including when concelebrating in a Latin Rite Mass. The use of the *jibbee* and stole for concelebrants should be used only as a rare exception.

Statute 39. The liturgical colors to be used in the Eparchy are as follows:

- a) White for any Sunday or Feast Day;
- b) Gold for a solemn Feast;
- c) Violet for times of fast and penitence;
- d) Red for the Holy Spirit and Feasts of the Martyrs;
- e) Very dark burgundy, black, or violet for Great Friday;
- f) White, black, or violet for funerals;
- g) Blue may be used for feasts of the Virgin Mary.

Statute 40. Priests from different Churches *sui iuris* are encouraged to concelebrate together. They are to follow the liturgical books of the principle celebrant avoiding any additions from other liturgical traditions. They are to wear the liturgical vestments of their own Church *sui iuris*.

Statute 41. Visiting priests who wish to concelebrate the Divine Liturgy or who are asked to serve as substitutes in any of the churches or institutions of the Eparchy, must present the pastor with a letter of suitability from their bishop. If the priest is coming from another country, his letter of suitability must be presented to the Chancery as well. The same applies to visiting deacons and subdeacons who wish to assist the priest at the celebration of the Sacraments.

Statute 42. Catholic priests are forbidden to concelebrate the Divine Liturgy with non-Catholic priests or ministers, and similarly, non-Catholic priests or ministers may not concelebrate with Catholic priests.

Statute 43. The priest is to celebrate the Anaphora at the altar facing the congregation.

Statute 44. For the Divine Liturgy, the following is to be placed on the altar:

- a) A white cloth covering the entire top of the altar (the altar frontal, if any, can be of any appropriate color);
- b) A corporal and purificator;
- c) A crucifix placed in the center;
- d) At least one candle made of natural wax (usually 51% bees wax) on each side of the cross;
- e) An appropriate missal stand or pillow for the Anaphora book.

Statute 45. Flowers are not to be placed on the altar, and all flowers in the sanctuary are to be natural, not artificial.

Statute 46. The Divine Liturgy is to be celebrated always in a Catholic Church or Chapel consecrated for that purpose. The Divine Liturgy is not to be celebrated anywhere else without the explicit permission of the Eparchial Bishop to be received for each occurrence.

Statute 47. A chapel may not be established in the church, rectory, or hall, without the permission of the Eparchial Bishop.

Statute 48. The Holy Eucharist is to be reserved in a tabernacle placed in the center of the sanctuary behind the main altar. A vigil candle made of natural wax (usually 51% bees wax) is to burn constantly next to the tabernacle. The tabernacle is to be secured to its base, and it is to be locked at all times and the key kept in a safe place.

Statute 49. There is to be only one tabernacle for the reservation of the Holy Eucharist in a parish church, even if it has a chapel, unless permission is received from the Eparchial Bishop.

Statute 50. A tabernacle reserving the Holy Eucharist is not to be kept in the rectory without the permission of the Eparchial Bishop.

Statute 51. The established times of the Divine Liturgy on Sunday are not to be changed without the approval of the Eparchial Bishop. Divine Liturgies are not to be cancelled or added on Sunday without the same approval.

Statute 52. The times of the Divine Liturgy on Holy Days of Obligation must be scheduled at an hour that is convenient for the faithful, especially for those who work.

Statute 53. Every parish must have a scheduled Divine Liturgy daily at an hour that is convenient for the faithful to attend, with the exception of the priest's day off.

Statute 54. Ideally, a priest is to celebrate one Divine Liturgy per day. However, for pastoral needs, he may celebrate up to 3 Divine Liturgies in one day. A priest is not permitted to celebrate more than 3 Divine Liturgies in one day without the permission of the Eparchial Bishop. In such cases, the priest is never to accept more than one stipend per day.

Statute 55. One Divine Liturgy must be offered by the pastor each month for the intentions of his parishioners, preferably on a Sunday. He must also offer a Divine Liturgy for his parishioners on the feasts of the Nativity of the Lord, the Resurrection, the Patron of the parish, and the Sunday of the Faithful Departed. No stipend or other intentions can be accepted at those Divine Liturgies.

Penance

Statute 56. Each parish is to have an established day and time for Confessions every week, which are convenient to the faithful.

Statute 57. The Sacrament of Penance is ordinarily celebrated in the confessional. The confessional must ensure the anonymity of the penitent and the privacy of the priest.

Statute 58. When celebrating the Sacrament of Penance, ordinarily the priest is to wear a stole.

Statute 59. In the celebration of the Sacrament of Penance, absolution is to be given after the individual confesses his/her sins to the priest. General absolution without individual confession of sins is not permitted.

Statute 60. All priests of the Eparchy are given the faculty to absolve from all reserved sins and/or their penalties except for those sins that are reserved to the Apostolic See. Therefore, a priest may not absolve another priest who has violated the seal of the secrecy of the confessional, and he may not absolve anyone who was complicit with him in a sin against chastity.

The Anointing of the Sick

Statute 61. The priest must be available to celebrate the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick whenever the faithful are gravely ill. He is to use the Oil of the Sick blessed by the bishop for this purpose. Ordinarily the priest is to wear a stole when celebrating this Sacrament.

Marriage

Statute 62. Preceding the celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage, the couple is encouraged to have their engagement blessed by the priest as indicated in our Maronite liturgical books. This ceremony, called the “Ritual of Betrothal” traditionally takes place at the house of the bride-to-be. The priest ordinarily wears a *jibbee* and stole for this celebration.

Statute 63. Those intending to marry must notify the pastor at least 6 months prior to the planned date of the wedding.

Statute 64. At the initial meeting, the pastor must determine if both parties are free of any impediments to have their marriage celebrated in the Catholic Church.

Statute 65. At that first meeting, the Pre-Marital Questionnaire is to be completed by the pastor or a priest delegated by him, by asking the questions to the proposed spouses separately and under oath.

Statute 66. If one of the parties is awaiting the nullity of a former union, a marriage date cannot be given to the couple until the final Decree of Nullity is received.

Statute 67. Marriages are not to be celebrated during Lent, unless there is a very serious reason, in which case a dispensation from the Eparchial Bishop is needed.

Statute 68. Both parties must present the pastor with original Certificates of Baptism to be dated within 6 months of the initial meeting with him.

Statute 69. If a dispensation or permission is required from the Eparchial Bishop, this request with the entire marriage file is to be submitted to the Chancery at least 3 months prior to the proposed date of the wedding.

Statute 70. Three banns of marriage are to be published in the parish church on 3 consecutive Sundays prior to the wedding if both parties are Catholic.

Statute 71. The couple must attend together the marriage preparation program as required by the Church and determined by the pastor. That is to include:

- a) At least 3 meetings with the pastor or a priest delegated by him;
- b) The completion of a compatibility test similar to “Foccus”;
- c) Participation in classes organized either by the parish or the local Latin Diocese;
- d) Sufficient knowledge of Natural Family Planning.

Statute 72. The Sacrament of Marriage is to be celebrated by the pastor of the groom (if both parties are Catholic), or a priest delegated by him, in a sacred place, that is, in the parish church, or other Catholic Church or Chapel.

Statute 73. Before the celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage, the spouses and the members of their wedding party who are Catholic, are encouraged to receive the Sacrament of Penance.

Statute 74. If both spouses-to-be are Catholic, it is encouraged that the Sacrament of Marriage be celebrated during the Divine Liturgy so that they may receive the Holy Eucharist.

Statute 75. The pastor of the place where the marriage was celebrated must record without delay, in the Marriage Register, the names of the spouses, their Churches *sui iuris* (Rites), Church of Baptism, their parents, their witnesses, the date of the Marriage, and the celebrant. Also, if any delegation and/or dispensations or permissions were given, they are to be notated.

Statute 76. The pastor must be sure to notify the churches of baptism of the Catholic spouses of their marriage.

Statute 77. The Sacrament of Marriage must be celebrated observing carefully all of the civil laws in force regarding marriages where the parish is located. Especially in regard to the following:

- a) The celebrant must have the proper license to act as the officiant, if so required;
- b) The couple must present the celebrant the civil Marriage License before the celebration of the Sacrament;
- c) The celebrant must complete and return the civil Marriage License to the proper authorities observing the instructions on the License.

Statute 78. Priests are to encourage parishioners who are in irregular marriages to reconcile themselves to the Church, and to assist them in the process of seeking a marriage annulment from the Eparchial Tribunal.

General Norms

Statute 79. The celebration of all of the Sacraments is to be carried out exclusively according to the approved liturgical texts of our Maronite Church and this Eparchy.

Statute 80. All of the Sacraments are always to be celebrated free of charge, notwithstanding the free will offering of the faithful to the celebrant and for the use of the church. When the faithful, of their own free will, wish to make an offering and inquire as to the customary amount of the stipend or stole fee, the response given to them is to be based upon the custom of the local Latin Diocese where the parish is located.

Statute 81. The use of sacred music during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and all other Sacraments and liturgical services should reflect our own Maronite heritage. Hymns from other traditions and popular songs are to be avoided. Hymns are to be sung in English, Arabic, and Syriac. The use of pre-recorded music (CD's, iPods, YouTube, etc.,) is not permitted during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, the Sacraments, or funerals.

Statute 82. Every parish is to have a choir and musicians to assist in the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, and with the other Sacraments if appropriate. In a special way, youth and young adults should be encouraged to take part in this ministry.

Statute 83. The role of the choir and accompanying musicians is to lead the congregation in liturgical hymns that are appropriate to the Divine Liturgy or other celebrations. Hymns are to be chosen so as not to give the impression of a performance, but rather to foster participation. In view of this, solos are to be limited, and the choir and musicians are to be situated in the back of the church, either in a choir loft, or on a slightly raised platform, or in a reserved section. The choir is not to be placed in the sanctuary or in the front of the church.

Statute 84. The use of electronic video screens (power point) is not permitted in the churches of our Eparchy.

FUNERALS

The Wake

Statute 85. At the Wake, a designated time is to be established for the priest to celebrate the “Hymn of Incense”, which is to be sung in English, Arabic, and/or Syriac. Ordinarily incense is to be offered during this hymn, and the priest is to wear a *jibbee* and stole. A deacon may preside at this service if a priest is not available. Preceding the “Hymn of Incense” other forms of prayer may take place according to custom, such as: the *Ginnaz*, the Rosary, the Litany of the Virgin Mary, or other prayers specific to a parish confraternity, sodality, or society to which the deceased belonged.

Statute 86. Ordinarily only clerics are to be waked in the church. However, at the discretion of the pastor, parishioners who have been outstanding examples in the parish may be waked in the church keeping in mind the sacredness of the space.

The Funeral

Statute 87. The funeral is to be celebrated with the Divine Liturgy. Preceding the Divine Liturgy, the celebrant meets the body at the main door of the church. He sprinkles it with Holy Water and incenses it as the hymn “Throw Open Your Gates” is sung. After the Divine Liturgy, the “Hymn of Incense” is to be sung as was done at the Wake.

Statute 88. A “funeral pall” is not to be used to cover the casket at a funeral.

Statute 89. In the event the family does not want to have the funeral in the church, the priest may conduct various prayers at the funeral home or graveside. The funeral Divine Liturgy is to be celebrated only in a Catholic Church or Chapel.

Statute 90. Funeral services of any kind are not to be celebrated on Sundays, Holy Days of Obligation, or during the Easter Triduum: Thursday of the Mysteries, Great Friday, and Saturday of the Light.

Statute 91. The priest is not to refuse anyone an ecclesiastical funeral without the permission of the Eparchial Bishop. It is the sole competence of the Eparchial Bishop to refuse an ecclesiastical funeral.

Statute 92. Although it is preferred that the body of the deceased be present for the funeral rites, cremation is permitted and the remains of the cremated bodies are to be treated with the same respect given to the corporal remains of a human body. These remains are to be present at the funeral Divine Liturgy, and must be buried in a cemetery or columbarium. The priest is not to refuse to celebrate the funeral of one who has been cremated without the permission of the Eparchial Bishop.

Statute 93. Eulogies by the laity may be given at the Wake, the cemetery, or the mercy meal. In the church, however, only the priest or deacon may deliver a eulogy which may be incorporated into his homily. No eulogy is to be given by the laity in the church.

Statute 94. As with the celebration of the Sacraments, funerals are always to be celebrated free of charge, notwithstanding the free will offering of the faithful to the celebrant and for the use of the church. When the faithful, of their own free will, wish to make an offering and inquire as to the customary amount of the stipend or stole fee, the response given to them is to be based upon the custom of the local Latin Diocese where the parish is located.

The Burial

Statute 95. The priest is to accompany the family to the cemetery, mausoleum, or columbarium for the burial of the deceased. If it is not a Catholic cemetery, the priest is to begin by blessing the grave or mausoleum. He is to offer prayer, sprinkle the body with Holy Water, and finally place some dirt on the casket reciting the admonition of Ash Monday: *Remember that you are dust...* Ordinarily the priest wears a *jibbee* and stole at the burial.

HOLY DAYS OF OBLIGATION TIMES OF FAST AND PENITENCE RITUALS AND DEVOTIONS

Holy Days of Obligation

Statute 96. The faithful are bound by the obligation to participate in the Divine Liturgy on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation. The available time to fulfill this obligation runs from 4:00 pm on the vigil, until the end of the Sunday or the Holy Day.

Statute 97. The following Holy Days of Obligation are to be observed, and they cannot be suppressed or transferred to a Sunday:

- a) The Nativity of the Lord (December 25);
- b) The Circumcision of Our Lord (January 1);
- c) The Glorious Epiphany (January 6);
- d) Saint Maron (February 9);
- e) The Ascension of the Lord (40 days after Easter);
- f) The Assumption of Our Lady (August 15);
- g) All Saints (November 1);
- h) The Immaculate Conception (December 8).
- i) The Patron of the parish. In this case, if this feast is not one of the above-mentioned Holy Days, it may be transferred to a Sunday at the pastor's discretion.

Statute 98. The parish is to have at least one evening Divine Liturgy to be celebrated in observance of these Holy Days, either on the day itself or on the vigil of the feast, in order to accommodate those who are working. In keeping with our Maronite custom, priests are highly encouraged to celebrate the first Divine Liturgy for the feasts of the Nativity of the Lord and for the Resurrection at midnight. However, for pastoral reasons, they may celebrate the Divine Liturgy for these feasts earlier than midnight as a vigil Divine Liturgy.

Times of Fast and Penitence

Statute 99. In our Maronite Church all Fridays of the year are considered to be days of penance, and days of abstinence from meat and dairy products, (with the exception of Fridays that fall on a Holy Day, or Fridays between the Nativity of the Lord and the Glorious Epiphany, and between the Resurrection and Pentecost). Although highly encouraged, this rule of abstinence is not obligatory in this Eparchy. However, it is obligatory to abstain from meat on Ash Monday and on all Fridays of Lent, as long as one is physically able to do so.

Statute 100. Ash Monday and Great Friday are not only days of abstinence, but also days of fast, whereby, no food or drink (except water or medication) is to be taken from midnight until noon, as long as one is physically able to do so.

Statute 101. Great Lent and Passion Week, beginning on Ash Monday and ending at 12:00 (noon) on Saturday of the Light, is a season of penitence. In our Maronite Church each day of this season is considered to be a day of fasting and abstinence from meat and dairy products, (with the exception of Sundays and Holy Days). Although highly encouraged, this fast is not obligatory in this Eparchy. However, it is obligatory to abstain from meat on Ash Monday and all Fridays of Lent, and to fast on Ash Monday and Great Friday, as long as one is physically able to do so.

Statute 102. In our Maronite Church the “Christmas Fast” is observed on all days, except Sundays, from December 16 until noon on December 24. Each day of this period is considered to be a day of fasting and abstinence from meat and dairy products, (with the exception of Sundays). Although highly encouraged, this fast is not obligatory in this Eparchy.

Statute 103. In our Maronite Church the “Fast of Our Lady” is observed on all days, except Sundays, from August 7 until noon on August 14. Each day of this period is considered to be a day of fasting and abstinence from meat and dairy products, (with the exception of Sundays). Although highly encouraged, this fast is not obligatory in this Eparchy.

Statute 104. In our Maronite Church the “Fast of the Apostles” is observed on all days, except Sundays, from June 17 until noon of June 28. Each day of this period is considered to be a day of fasting and abstinence from meat and dairy products, (with the exception of Sundays and Holy Days). Although highly encouraged, this fast is not obligatory in this Eparchy.

Rituals and Devotions

Statute 105. Parishes are encouraged to schedule a day and time for adoration before the Blessed Sacrament and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament at least once a month, and especially on the feast of the Body of Christ, where a Eucharistic procession is also encouraged. For Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament the priest is to be fully vested and use the humeral veil when holding the monstrance.

Statute 106. All parishes are to celebrate the Maronite Christmas Novena from December 15 through December 23 inclusive. (In our Maronite Church, this Novena is normally celebrated from December 16 through December 24 inclusive, however, seeing that many parishes have a Christmas Vigil Divine Liturgy on December 24, in our Eparchy we begin the Novena a day earlier.)

Statute 107. For Feasts of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Virgin Mary, and other Saints, priests are encouraged to have benediction (*zeeyah*) with the appropriate icon using the proper litanies and hymns for the occasion.

Statute 108. The praying of the Rosary is to be fostered for both public and private devotion, especially during the Months of October and May.

Statute 109. The following rituals are to be celebrated as follows:

- a) The blessing of water on the Glorious Epiphany (January 6);
- b) The blessing of candles on the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple (February 2);
- c) The blessing of ashes on Ash Monday;
- d) The Benediction of the Cross on Fridays of Lent and on Monday and Tuesday of Holy Week, which may be preceded by the Divine Liturgy, Evening Prayer (*Ramsho*), or the Stations of the Cross;
- e) The blessing of palms (and olive branches) on Hosanna Sunday;
- f) The “Rite of the Lamp” on Wednesday of Passion Week;
- g) The “Washing of the Feet” on Holy Thursday, with reposition of the Blessed Sacrament;
- h) The Anaphora of the “Signing of the Chalice” the morning of Great Friday;
- i) The “Burial of the Lord” on Great Friday;
- j) The “Prayer of Forgiveness” the morning of Saturday of the Light;
- k) The “Rite of Peace” on the Resurrection;
- l) The “Rite of Kneeling” and blessing of water on Pentecost;
- m) The blessing of water on Saints Peter and Paul;
- n) The blessing of water on the Feast of the Holy Cross.

PRIESTS

The Rights of Priests

Statute 110. All priests are entitled to an annual vacation of one month. At least 2 weeks prior to leaving the appropriate form is to be submitted to the Chancery. Vacations may not be taken during Lent.

Statute 111. All priests are entitled to one day off per week.

Statute 112. A priest is entitled to the following salary and benefits to be given him by the parish/institution to which he is assigned:

- a) A monthly salary as determined by the Eparchial Bishop;
- b) Medical and dental insurance through the program determined by the Eparchy;
- c) Reimbursement for his Social Security tax based solely upon the salary he received from his parish/institution;
- d) Reimbursement for medical expenses and co-payments for prescriptions;
- e) A matching contribution of any payment made by him into the Eparchial 403 (b) retirement plan, up to the limit determined by the Eparchial Bishop. Participation in this plan by the priest is optional, but whatever he decides to invest must be deducted from his salary. The wife of a married priest may also participate in this Eparchial plan.

Statute 113. A priest who has not collected his salary, benefits, or reimbursements for 2 months is to notify the Chancery. Failure to do so results in the forfeiture of any right to the salary, benefits, or reimbursements.

Statute 114. Three months prior to his 65th birthday the priest must apply for Medicare benefits. At the end of each calendar year, as long as he remains in active ministry, he is to submit the amount he paid for these benefits to the Chancery. The Chancery will reimburse him based upon the tax-bracket of the common salary for priests determined by the Eparchial Bishop

Statute 115. After every 10 years of service in this Eparchy a priest may request a 3 month sabbatical subject to the approval of the Eparchial Bishop. The priest's salary and benefits will be paid from the parish/institution he is currently serving. Before being approved, the priest must secure another Maronite priest to cover for him during his absence. The substitute priest must also receive the approval of the Eparchial Bishop. The expenses of the particular sabbatical program are to be assumed as follows: 1/3 by the Eparchy, 1/3 by the parish/institution, and 1/3 by the priest himself. Sabbatical time is not cumulative.

The Obligations of Priests

Statute 116. All priests are to pray Morning Prayer (*Safro*) and Evening Prayer (*Ramsho*) from the Maronite Divine Office daily.

Statute 117. Priests are strongly encouraged to celebrate the Divine Liturgy daily.

Statute 118. Priests are to frequent the Sacrament of Penance and to meet with a spiritual director regularly.

Statute 119. All priests assigned in this Eparchy are to attend the annual Eparchial retreat, annual Clergy Convocation, and any other events as determined by the Eparchial Bishop.

Statute 120. All priests assigned in this Eparchy are to attend regional meetings as called by their protopresbyter.

Statute 121. Expenses for Eparchial and regional meetings and retreats are to be paid by the parish/institution to which the priest is assigned.

Statute 122. All priests are required to wear clerical attire when in public. Exceptions to this norm should be rare but are permissible based on common sense. The formal clerical attire of the priest is the cassock, *jibbee*, and *tabeeyee*. Practically speaking, the priest is to wear a black clergy shirt or clerical vest, with a white clerical collar, and black dress pants or a black suit.

Statute 123. All parish priests are to reside in the parish rectory, and they are to have private living quarters there, separate from their offices.

Statute 124. The norms for rectory guests are as follows:

- a) Unaccompanied minors, male or female, are never to be alone with the priest in the living quarters, unless they are members of his immediate family;
- b) Unaccompanied adult woman are never be alone with the priest in the living quarters, unless they are members of his immediate family;
- c) Overnight guests are limited to priests, seminarians, or immediate family members. Should the priest need to offer hospitality to anyone else he should be extremely prudent. Unaccompanied women and minors are never to be overnight guests unless they are members of his immediate family;
- d) Only the parish priests and those assigned by the Eparchial Bishop are to live in the rectory;
- e) Members of the priest's immediate family are welcome to visit with him in the rectory, however, their stay is not to exceed one month without the permission of the Eparchial Bishop;
- f) Live-in housekeepers are not permitted in the rectory.

Statute 125. No pets are to be kept in the rectory or in any parish buildings.

Statute 126. Smoking is not permitted in the rectory or parish offices.

Statute 127. Priests of the Eparchy or assigned in the Eparchy are not to carry out full-time or part-time employment in another position without the written permission of the Eparchial Bishop. Priests are forbidden to exercise any business or trade without the permission of the Eparchial Bishop.

Statute 128. All priests are to have a Last Will and Testament. The priest is to notify the Chancery of the location of his Will and of the following:

- a) The Executor of his estate;
- b) The place where he wishes to have his funeral celebrated;
- c) Who he would like to preach at his funeral;
- d) The place where he wishes to be buried.

Statute 129. A priest who dies while serving a parish or institution normally has his wake and funeral celebrated at that parish or institution, unless he has expressly given other instructions to the Chancery. The expenses of his funeral are to be paid 50% by his parish or institution and 50% from his estate. Should it be necessary, according to his wishes, to bury him in a distant city or in another country, the expenses for transportation and burial are to be paid completely by his estate.

Statute 130. A priest is not to act as a guardian, administrator, trustee, or agent for anyone, child or adult; and he shall not endorse notes, nor post surety or bond in any circumstances, without the permission of the Eparchial Bishop.

Statute 131. A priest is not to institute a civil action (a law-suit), or a criminal action, and he is not to volunteer to give testimony in a court of law, whether in personal or ecclesiastical matters, without the permission of the Eparchial Bishop.

Statute 132. If a priest is obliged to give testimony because of a subpoena, he is to notify the Eparchial Bishop in advance.

Statute 133. Priests are not to have an active role in political parties or run for public office without the permission of the Eparchial Bishop.

Statute 134. When a priest is transferred to another assignment by the Eparchial Bishop, he is to contact the priest at his new assignment and make all of the necessary arrangements for a smooth transition. Expenses of the move are to be paid by the parish to which he is to be assigned.

Statute 135. Pastors are assigned by the Eparchial Bishop for a term of 6 years. At the end of the term the Eparchial Bishop may renew the term, extend it, or transfer the pastor.

Statute 136. Prior to the date of his transfer, the pastor is to submit a financial report to the Chancery for that current year, from January 1 to the month prior to the date of his transfer.

Statute 137. Before a pastor leaves for his new assignment, he is to see that his successor will have all the necessary amenities in the rectory and ensure that it is clean and orderly.

Married Priests

Statute 138. Married priests, like celibate priests, are subject to all Eparchial norms and statutes.

Statute 139. The married priest and his wife are to reside in the rectory of the parish to which the priest is assigned. If another assigned priest is living in the rectory, a suitable residence must be provided for the married priest and his wife.

Statute 140. Married priests will receive the same salary and benefits as the celibate priests. If the priest's wife is not provided with health insurance by her employer, the parish must provide her with health insurance.

Statute 141. The wife of a married priest is encouraged to continue in her employment as long as her work is not contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Medical and Disability Leaves

Statute 142. A priest who requests a medical leave of absence is to send his medical records in this regard directly to the Eparchial Bishop, along with the recommendation for such a leave from a duly licensed physician acceptable to the Chancery. The Eparchial Bishop in his sole discretion, may then grant the priest a leave of absence for medical reasons for a period not to exceed 3 months. During that medical leave, the priest may remain in his assignment and remains eligible for all salary, allowances, and benefits.

Statute 143. Any assigned priest who is enrolled in the Eparchy of Saint Maron and who has been granted disability status from the government may be granted disability from the Eparchy if he so requests it.

Statute 144. The priest on disability is considered to be a retired priest in all senses except for his monthly stipend. The Eparchial disability fund supplements his government disability stipend so that, combined, the total monthly amount he receives is equal to that of a retired priest.

Statute 145. Once the priest on disability reaches his 65th birthday, his status will be changed to that of a "retired priest".

Retirement Program

Statute 146. The benefits provided by the Eparchial Priest's Retirement Program are in addition to any Social Security benefits to which a priest may be entitled, and to the 403 (b) plan which the priest may have participated in. It is not the purpose of this Retirement Program to be the total and sole provider of funds for a priest's retirement. The Retirement Program does not intend to vest any rights with regard to benefits. Each priest of the Retirement Program shall make no contribution to the Retirement Program and he, his estate, or legal representatives, shall have no claim for any benefits by reason of his death or in the event of his ineligibility for any cause.

Statute 147. A priest who is nearing retirement age must begin to consider his living arrangements, as a retired priest is no longer permitted to live in a rectory. Once retired, he is responsible for his residence and all daily living expenses.

Statute 148. When an active priest has reached his 75th birthday he must submit his letter of resignation from his assignment to the Eparchial Bishop who may accept or defer the resignation.

Statute 149. To become eligible to receive the benefits of the Retirement Program, a priest (including married priests) must:

- a) Have served in an assignment in the Eparchy in a full-time capacity for at least 20 cumulative years;
- b) Remain in good standing in the Church and in the Eparchy, leading a life of sound morals, and having an overall lifestyle that befits the clerical state;
- c) Satisfy the age requirements as follows:
 - Having reached his 75th birthday, he is entitled to completely relinquish all his Eparchial assignments and having done so, is eligible to receive benefits;
 - Having reached his 70th birthday, with special permission of the Eparchial Bishop, he may be entitled to receive benefits;
 - Having reached his 65th birthday, with the special permission of the Eparchial Bishop, for reasons of health, he may be entitled to receive benefits.

Statute 150. Once the priest has retired, his benefits will commence on the first day of the month subsequent to his retirement.

Statute 151. Each retired priest must be enrolled in Medicare as his primary health insurance carrier. The Chancery shall pay the monthly premium for his secondary health insurance from the retirement fund. No other Medicare or medical reimbursements are made to retired priests.

Presbyteral Council

Statute 152. All priests assigned to serve on a full-time basis in the Eparchy are permitted to vote and to serve as members of the Presbyteral Council.

Statute 153. Retired priests of the Eparchy in good standing are permitted to elect one retired priest, who resides in the United States, as their representative, to serve and to vote on the Presbyteral Council.

Statute 154. In addition to the *ex officio* members, the Presbyteral Council is to be comprised of 5 elected priests:

- a) Four assigned priests based on years of ordination;
- b) One retired priest.

Statute 155. The following serve on the Presbyteral Council as *ex officio* members:

- a) The Eparchial Bishop (President);
- b) The Vicar General;
- c) The Chancellor;
- d) The Seminary Rector;
- e) The Judicial Vicar;
- f) The Protopresbyters.

Statute 156. The term of office for all elected members shall be 5 years.

Statute 157. A priest may serve on the Presbyteral Council in the capacity of more than one office. However, each member of the Presbyteral Council enjoys only one vote.

Statute 158. Elections are to be held by secret ballot at the annual clergy conference, or by absentee ballot.

Statute 159. Membership in the Council shall cease:

- a) Upon expiration of the term of office;
- b) In the case of *ex officio* members, departure from office;
- c) By resignation.

Statute 160. A vacancy for a member will be filled by an election from the same category at the subsequent clergy conference (or by absentee ballot) if it is an elected position, or by an appointment by the Eparchial Bishop if it is a case of an *ex officio* position.

Statute 161. The Presbyteral Council will meet at least once per year but may meet more frequently as determined by the Eparchial Bishop. It is the sole competence of the Eparchial Bishop to convoke a meeting of the Presbyteral Council and to approve the items on its agenda.

Statute 162. Attendance by the members at Presbyteral Council meetings is mandatory. Expenses are to be paid by the parish/institution, or the Chancery. Should a member miss 2 consecutive meetings without grave cause, that will be construed as his resignation from the Council.

Statute 163. When a newly appointed Eparchial Bishop has taken canonical possession of the Eparchy, he is to establish a new Presbyteral Council within one year.

Protopresbyters

Statute 164. The Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn is divided into 5 Protopresbyteral Regions:

- a) New England States;
- b) Mid-Atlantic States East;
- c) Mid-Atlantic States West;
- d) Southern States;
- e) States of the Far South

Statute 165. The term of office for the Protopresbyter and the Alternate Protopresbyter is five years. If the Protopresbyter is transferred to an office outside of his region, becomes unable to carry out his responsibilities, or is removed from office, the Alternate Protopresbyter will complete the five-year term. If both have been transferred out of the region, the Eparchial Bishop is to appoint a Protopresbyter to complete the term.

Statute 166. The clergy of the region are to meet on a periodic basis, but at least once every two years, to discuss issues of common concern, to deepen their understanding of the sacred sciences and pastoral affairs, to participate in spiritual retreats, and to offer each other fraternal companionship.

Statute 167. The duties of the Protopresbyters are:

- a) To visit every parish/institution in his region at least once every 2 years;
- b) To coordinate and promote common pastoral actions in his region as indicated by the Eparchial Bishop;
- c) To ensure that the clergy entrusted to his care are living a lifestyle becoming of their clerical state;
- d) To see that, in his region, all of the norms of the Eparchial Statutes are being carefully observed in the parishes/institutions and among the clergy;
- e) To convoke a regional meeting of all the clergy entrusted to his care and to foster fraternity and spiritual growth, at least once every 2 years;
- f) To show true concern for the retired and inactive clergy of the Eparchy residing in his region.

Statute 168. Any legitimate expenses of the Protopresbyter or the Alternate Protopresbyter in exercising his office are the responsibility of the parish/institution he is visiting.

DEACONS

Statute 169. A candidate for the diaconate must:

- a) Have served satisfactorily as a subdeacon;
- b) Have reached his 40th birthday;
- c) Have the approval and support of his wife and family;
- d) Have a letter of recommendation from his pastor;
- e) Be ordained before having reached his 66th birthday.

Statute 170. The diaconal candidate must successfully complete the program of formation for deacons in accord with the norms of the Apostolic See and the Eparchy. This Eparchy ordinarily avails itself of the diaconate program of the local Latin Diocese where the candidate resides.

Statute 171. The diaconal candidate is to be in close contact with the Director of the Eparchial Office of the Diaconate and Subdiaconate, for it is his role to review the file of the applicant, to set up interviews if needed, to make suggestions and recommendations to the Eparchial Bishop regarding the progress of his formation, and to be sure that the candidate is successfully completing the academic, ministerial, and liturgical components of formation.

Statute 172. Regarding the financial expenses incurred in the candidate's formation program in the Latin Diocese, the parish is responsible for half (½) of the expenses, and the deacon the other half (½) of the expenses.

Statute 173. The candidate's pastor is to work closely with the candidate as he is responsible for his liturgical and ministerial formation, and is to submit a report in that regard to the Director of the Eparchial Office of the Diaconate and Subdiaconate.

Statute 174. All deacons are to pray Morning Prayer (*Safro*) and Evening Prayer (*Ramsho*) from the Maronite Divine Office daily.

Statute 175. All deacons are to frequent the Sacrament of Penance and meet with a spiritual director regularly. If at all possible, deacons are to take part in the Divine Liturgy daily.

Statute 176. Deacons are not to have an active role in political parties or run for public office without the permission of the Eparchial Bishop.

Statute 177. The role of the Deacon is to:

- a) Prepare the church for Divine worship;
- b) Prepare the gifts and transfer them to the altar at the appropriate time;
- c) Read or chant the *Hoosoyo* or incense during the *Hoosoyo*;
- d) Proclaim the Gospel and preach when called upon by the pastor;
- e) Distribute Holy Communion;
- f) Visit the sick and homebound and bring them Holy Communion;
- g) To serve the poor and the vulnerable.

Statute 178. The deacon is not to give himself the Eucharist during the Divine Liturgy.

Statute 179. Deacons are to wear black clerical attire while performing their ministry or when participating in an ecclesiastical function.

Statute 180. The liturgical vesture for a deacon at Eucharistic celebrations is an alb (white or off-white) and stole. For non-Eucharistic celebrations a *jibbee* is worn.

Statute 181. When at the altar the deacon is to stand one step lower or slightly behind the priest.

SUBDEACONS

Statute 182. A candidate for the subdiaconate must:

- a) Have reached his 35th birthday;
- b) Have the approval and support of his wife and family;
- c) Have a letter of recommendation from his pastor;
- d) Be ordained before having reached his 66th birthday.

Statute 183. The candidate for the subdiaconate must successfully complete the formation program required by the Eparchy.

Statute 184. The subdiaconal candidate is to be in close contact with the Director of the Eparchial Office of the Diaconate and Subdiaconate, for it is his role to review the file of the applicant, to set up interviews if needed, to make suggestions and recommendations to the Eparchial Bishop regarding the progress of his formation, and to be sure that the candidate is successfully completing the academic, ministerial, liturgical, and spiritual components of formation.

Statute 185. The candidate's pastor is to work closely with the candidate as he is responsible for his liturgical and ministerial formation, and is to submit a report in that regard to the Director of the Eparchial Office of the Diaconate and Subdiaconate.

Statute 186. Subdeacons are not to have an active role in political parties or run for public office without the permission of the Eparchial Bishop.

Statute 187. The role of the Subdeacon is to:

- a) Prepare the church for Divine worship;
- b) Prepare the gifts and transfer them to the altar at the appropriate time;
- c) Read or chant the *Hoosoyo*;
- d) Read the Epistle, or other Scripture readings, with the exception of the Gospels;
- e) Distribute Holy Communion during the Divine Liturgy with the priest and deacon, if there is a need;
- f) Visit the sick and homebound and bring them Holy Communion;
- g) Serve the poor and the vulnerable.

Statute 188. All subdeacons are to frequent the Sacrament of Penance and meet with a spiritual director regularly. If at all possible, subdeacons are to take part in the Divine Liturgy daily.

Statute 189. A Subdeacon is not to give himself the Eucharist during the Divine Liturgy.

Statute 190. Subdeacons are to wear black clerical attire while performing their ministry or when participating in an ecclesiastical function.

Statute 191. The liturgical vesture for a subdeacon at Eucharistic celebrations is an alb (white or off-white) and stole. For non-Eucharistic celebrations a *jibbee* is worn.

Statute 192. When at the altar the subdeacon is to stand one step lower or slightly behind the deacon.

SEMINARIANS

Statute 193. Whenever a priest perceives that a man may be interested in the priesthood, he is to contact the Eparchial Vocation Director without delay so that together, they may help to cultivate the seeds of a possible vocation. Similarly, if a man approaches a priest and expresses his interest in the priesthood, the priest is not to hesitate to give that man the contact information of the Eparchial Vocation Director.

Statute 194. A candidate for the seminary is to work closely with the Eparchial Vocation Director, whose role is to assist the candidate with the entire application process, and to make recommendations to the Eparchial Bishop regarding what he perceives to be the suitability of the candidate. Also, the Vocation Director is to walk closely with the seminarian throughout all of his years of formation and assist him in any way possible.

Statute 195. When a married man approaches a priest and expresses his interest in the priesthood, he is to be informed that in order to be considered he must:

- a) Be a Maronite permanent deacon who has served in an Eparchial assignment as a deacon for at least 3 years;
- b) Have reached his 45th birthday, be married for at least 10 years, and his youngest child be at least 18 years old;
- c) Be ordained to the priesthood before having reached his 66th birthday.

Statute 196. When in the seminary, the seminarian is to adapt himself fully to the rule of life at the seminary, observing all of the spiritual, liturgical, academic, ministerial, and human norms of formation.

Statute 197. Seminarians in theological studies (the major seminary) are to wear clerical attire when in public. The formal clerical attire of a seminarian is the cassock and *jibbee*. Normally, he is to wear a black clergy shirt or clerical vest, with a white clerical collar, and black dress pants or a black suit.

Statute 198. Seminarians not yet in theological studies (the minor seminary) are not to wear a clerical collar at any time. For formal occasions a minor seminarian is to wear the cassock and *jibbee*, or a black suit, white shirt, and black necktie, depending on the norms of the seminary. At other times, lay clothes are to be worn.

Statute 199. The liturgical vesture for all seminarians is the *jibbee*.

Statute 200. A seminarian becomes a “minor cleric” when he is ordained to the Minor Order of Cantor. The liturgical vesture for the ordained cantor is the *jibbee*.

Statute 201. A seminarian who is an ordained cantor is eligible, at the discretion of the Eparchial Bishop and with the recommendation of the seminary rector, to be advanced and be ordained to the Minor Order of Lector. The liturgical vesture for the ordained lector at Eucharistic celebrations is an alb (white or off-white) and stole. For non-Eucharistic celebrations a *jibbee* is worn.

RELIGIOUS MEN AND WOMEN

Statute 202. Whenever a priest perceives that a man or woman may be interested in a vocation to the Religious life, he is to encourage them to seriously consider this way of life in the service of our Eparchy. Should a man or woman approach a priest and expresses his/her interest in the Religious life, the priest is not to hesitate to give them the contact information for the Eparchial religious institutes.

ESTABLISHMENT OF MISSIONS AND PARISHES

A Maronite Community

Statute 203. Once the Maronite faithful in a given area have loosely established themselves as a core group interested in committing themselves spiritually and financially to the possible establishment of a future mission, they are to contact the Eparchial Bishop who may appoint a priest to visit them on an occasional basis.

Statute 204. If funds are acquired, either through donations or community activities, the funds are to be controlled by the priest assigned by the Eparchial Bishop to provide care for the community along with one local lay person. The funds are to be deposited using the EIN of the parish of the visiting priest. The community is responsible for the traveling expenses and stipend of the visiting priest in an amount determined by the Eparchial Bishop.

Statute 205. A patronal name is not to be assigned to a community; the community is to be simply identified as the Maronite Community of (insert name of city).

Statute 206. Periodic evaluations will be made by the Eparchial Bishop regarding the future viability of the community becoming a mission.

Establishment of a Mission

Statute 207. The priest who had been assigned by the Eparchial Bishop to visit occasionally a Maronite community, is to monitor its progress. When he feels it opportune, he may request that the Eparchial Bishop establish the community as a mission. This request for the concession of a mission status should take into account the community's membership, spiritual and financial situation, and potential for growth.

Statute 208. The establishment of a mission takes place as follows:

- a) The mission is given a patronal name by the Eparchial Bishop;
- b) The mission is to have at least a temporary place of worship;
- c) A worship schedule is to be put in place for Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation;
- d) The priest assigned is to establish Pastoral and Finance Councils;
- e) The mission is to be incorporated civilly and is to be given an Employer Identification Number (EIN #);
- f) The Mission is to maintain its own Sacramental and financial records.

Statute 209. If the mission is closed, the records and all assets are to be transferred to the Eparchy.

Establishment of a Parish

Statute 210. To be established as a parish the mission must:

- a) Show sufficient evidence of future spiritual, physical and financial growth, and stability;
- b) Have its own place of worship, social hall, and rectory;
- c) Have a determined territory established by the Eparchial Bishop.

PASTORAL PROGRAMS

Religious Education

Statute 211. Every parish is to have a religious education program. All students are to receive elementary and high school religious education that is reflective of sound theological and educational principles. Only catechetical materials approved by the Eparchial Bishop are to be used. It is strongly encouraged that a religious education program for adults also be established if at all possible. Such a program could consist of Bible studies, catechetical or liturgical studies, Maronite studies, etc.

Statute 212. In the appointment of a Director of Religious Education (DRE), the parish priest is to be sure that the candidate is well qualified. Likewise, he is to ensure that the catechists are well informed in the teachings of the Catholic Church, and the Maronite Church *sui iuris*.

Youth Ministries

Statute 213. Every parish is to have an MYO (Maronite Youth Organization) for children 12-18 years of age, and an MYA group (Maronite Young Adults) for young adults 18-35 years of age.

Child and Youth Protection

Statute 214. In order to safeguard our children and youth, every parish must comply, without exception, to the Eparchial policies in this regard. Priests are asked to work closely with the Coordinator of the Eparchial Office of Child and Youth Protection for this purpose.

Statute 215. All clergy (priests, deacons, and subdeacons, including candidates), seminarians (including candidates for the seminary), religious, employees, teachers, and volunteers, who serve children and youth of the parish on a regular basis, must:

- a) Have successfully completed the national/international criminal background check approved by the Eparchy;
- b) Be properly trained in a child/youth protection program approved by the Eparchy;
- c) Be well versed in the Policy of the Eparchy in this regard, the Eparchial Code of Ethics and Integrity, and Internet and Social Media Guidelines, and sign an acknowledgment attesting to this.

Statute 216. Priests of other Dioceses or Eparchies who enjoy Maronite Bi-Ritual faculties must be in full compliance with the norms of the previously cited Statute. This also applies to deacons and subdeacons of other Dioceses or Eparchies who assist in our parishes on a regular basis.

Statute 217. In the event of an alleged, suspected, or known accusation of child abuse, the Eparchial Victims Assistance Coordinator is to be contacted immediately. Local applicable civil laws must be observed, and complete cooperation with the civil authorities is mandated.

Parish Organizations

Statute 218. Every parish is strongly encouraged to have various groups of lay people forming organizations (such as confraternities, men's groups, ladies groups, prayer groups, ushers and usherettes, Knights of Columbus, Legion of Mary, etc.)

Pastoral Council

Statute 219. Every parish must have a Pastoral Council whose role is to cooperate with the pastor in all aspects of the pastoral life of the parish. It is to advise the pastor on pastoral matters, but it is not in any way to be construed as a decision-making body.

Statute 220. Ideally the Pastoral Council should be distinct from the Finance Council. In cases where two distinct councils cannot be formed due to a lack of numbers, a combined council is acceptable

Statute 221. The Pastoral Council is to be limited to the laity, and is to be comprised of no less than 6 and no more than 12 members, not including the pastor.

Statute 222. The members of the Pastoral Council are to be appointed, elected, or a combination of both, to be decided by the pastor, for a determined period of time. The pastor may remove a member of the Pastoral Council for a serious reason, after consultation with the Eparchial Bishop.

Statute 223. The pastor may invite his parochial vicar, deacons, or subdeacons to attend any or all meetings, however they are not considered members of the Pastoral Council.

Statute 224. All members of the Pastoral Council must maintain the confidentiality of the deliberations of the Council, especially with respect to privacy and personal reputations.

Statute 225. Meetings of the Pastoral Council are to be held in the parish facilities and meetings are to take place at least once every three months.

Statute 226. It is the competence of the pastor alone to call meetings of the Pastoral Council and to set its agenda.

National Apostolate of Maronites

Statute 227. Every parish is to foster participation in the National Apostolate of Maronites (NAM), which is the official apostolate of the laity in the Maronite Eparchies of the United States. NAM's basic purpose is to serve the Maronite clergy and laity by continually working to unify the laity and serving as a link between laity and clergy. It also helps preserve the Syriac-Maronite tradition by making people more aware of their rich heritage and promoting the Maronite Church and strengthening it for future generations.

Statute 228. Every parish is encouraged to sustain NAM by fostering membership, participation in its programs, and financial support.

Order of Saint Sharbel

Statute 229. Every parish is to foster membership in the Order of Saint Sharbel, which is an organization of laity and clergy who pledge their spiritual and financial support to the Eparchy for seminarians and retired priests.

Publications

Statute 230. Every parish is to publish a "Bulletin" on a regular basis, and to be sure that parishioners also receive all Eparchial publications and correspondence.

PARISH ADMINISTRATION

Statute 231. Responsibility for the administration of all affairs for the parish rests with the pastor, under the supervision and direction of the Eparchial Bishop, assisted by the cooperation and advice of parishioners, especially those serving on the parish Pastoral Council and the parish Finance Council.

Statute 232. Where there is mention of the “pastor”, reference is also made to that priest who is under some other title, such as “administrator”, placed in charge of the parish.

Statute 233. Whatever is stated here of a “parish”, applies also to a “mission” unless it is clearly expressed otherwise.

Statute 234. Every parish is to have a telephone land-line, an email address which is to remain constant and unchanged even after the transfer of pastors, and the capability of printing and scanning documents, and receiving faxes.

Statute 235. Parishes are encouraged to have a website which is to be kept up-to-date, and may find the responsible use of social media beneficial in reaching out to parishioners. Safeguards are to be in place to prevent inappropriate postings and links which could be a cause for confusion or scandal.

Ecclesiastical Registers

Statute 236. It is the responsibility of the Pastor to maintain the following ecclesiastical registers:

- a) Baptism Register to record all Baptisms that take place in the parish, those who converted by making a profession of faith, and those who have transferred from another Church *sui iuris* to the Maronite Church;
- b) Chrismation Register to record all those Chrismated outside of Baptism;
- c) First Communion Register to record all those who made their First Holy Communion in the parish;
- d) Marriage Register to record all marriages that take place in the parish;
- e) Funeral Register to record all funerals that take place in the parish.

Statute 237. Entries in the ecclesiastical registers are to be made in legible English.

Statute 238. Sacraments celebrated in other parishes are never to be recorded again in the sacramental registers of another parish, even if the individual has moved and established a domicile in a new parish.

Statute 239. Entries made in the ecclesiastical registers are never to be erased, defaced or destroyed. A correction is permissible if proved justified, that is, by an authentic document, sworn testimony, or the like (such as is the case in a legal adoption). Any such correction is to be made by additional notations which leave the original entry clearly discernible and which include a brief description that is dated and signed or initialed by the priest making the correction.

Statute 240. When the record in the ecclesiastical register has been destroyed, lost, or omitted, two affidavits testifying that the Sacrament was conferred shall be required. An entry is to be made in the appropriate register indicating the affidavit as the source.

Statute 241. The confidential nature of these ecclesiastical registers are to be safe-guarded.

Statute 242. Ecclesiastical registers are to be kept in the parish office in a fire-resistant safe, or in a fire-resistant, locked, file cabinet.

Statute 243. Certificates of records taken from the information contained in the ecclesiastical registers regarding the conferral of a Sacrament, or statements that no such record exists, shall be supplied free of charge and only to the individual concerned or under circumstances that are not prejudicial to his/her interest. Such certificates are to be denied to all other parties except when they are permitted by ecclesiastical or civil law to have access to them.

Statute 244. All official certificates are to bear the embossed seal of the parish and are to be signed by the pastor. Every parish is to have a seal, which is to be kept in good condition. The seal shall be used only by the pastor or other authorized persons. When not in use, it is to be kept with the ecclesiastical registers

Legal Documents

Statute 245. Copies of deeds, titles, and other legal documents relating to all parish properties are to be kept in the parish office in a fire-resistant safe, or in a fire-resistant, locked, file cabinet. The original documents are to be kept at the Chancery.

Statute 246. The Eparchy ensures that every parish is registered with the Federal Government granting it a charitable status of “501 (c) 3”, at which time an Employer Identification Number (EIN #) is assigned. It is the responsibility of the pastor to keep the EIN certificate with all other legal documents in the parish office in a fire-resistant safe, or in a fire-resistant, locked, file cabinet.

Statute 247. It is the responsibility of the pastor to apply for and maintain a State tax exemption status, which is to be used only for the benefit of the parish and not for any other entity or individual.

Politics

Statute 248. In order to maintain the tax exemption status of the parish, and to safeguard the neutrality of the Church in the political sphere, the following is to be observed:

- a) Neither the priests, other clergy, parish organizations, or parishioners acting on behalf of the parish, can endorse a political candidate in the name of the parish;
- b) Neither the priests, other clergy, or parish organizations, can encourage votes for or against any candidate in any way;
- c) Rental of parish facilities for political activities is not to be construed as an endorsement. The facilities must be rented for the normal fee; the fee cannot be waived or donated so that these services might be construed as a donation to the political candidate or function;
- d) Campaign posters or flyers are not to be displayed on parish property. Campaign literature is not to be distributed on parish property except in conjunction with the rental of the hall, and then not by a cleric or anyone employed by the parish;
- e) The appearance of an elected official at the parish in conjunction with a social function is not to be construed as a political assembly.

Finances

Statute 249. All entities of the Eparchy will operate on a calendar year beginning on January 1.

Statute 250. By March 1 of every year, the pastor is to submit to the Chancery the annual financial report of the previous year according to the requirements of the Eparchial Bishop.

Statute 251. By the end of the second quarter of each year, the pastor is to submit a complete written financial report of the previous year to the parish, including a detailed balance sheet and a statement of profit and loss.

Statute 252. To ensure that all parish bank accounts are properly managed the following is to be observed:

- a) All parish bank accounts, including parish organization accounts and all investment accounts must be reported;
- b) The pastor and Eparchial Bishop are listed as authorized sole signatories on all parish bank account;
- c) All bank statements must be reconciled monthly with the balances in the parish accounting system's ledger;
- d) All personal funds of the pastor must be completely segregated from the parish funds;
- e) All checks must be restrictively endorsed "For Deposit Only" with the parish name and account number;
- f) All donations of excess funds of parish organizations must be transferred to the parish on an annual basis.

Statute 253. In order to ensure that the collections taken at each Divine Liturgy are safeguarded, they are to be handled as follows:

- a) Collections are to be transferred from the church to the count room by more than one person;
- b) Collections are to be counted and deposited as soon as possible;
- c) Funds are to be deposited into institutions insured by the FDIC and are never to exceed the maximum amount established by the government;
- d) Collections are to be counted by at least 2 people on a rotating schedule;
- e) The parish is to maintain individual records of contributions made by parishioners;
- f) The count team is to verify that the contents of the offering envelopes are identical to the amounts written on the envelopes by the parishioners;
- g) Any second collection not related to the parish or parish event must be authorized in advance by the Eparchial Bishop;
- h) Collections authorized by the Eparchy are to be taken as scheduled, as a collection totally separate from the usual parish collection. They are to be counted separately, and to be submitted to the Chancery as soon as possible.

Statute 254. Every parish in the Eparchy is to participate in the Annual Bishop's Appeal. If the assessed quota is not obtained through a direct appeal to the parishioners, the pastor is to take the balance from the general parish funds. If the amount collected exceeds the quota, the excess funds may be either sent to the Eparchy or remain in the parish account to be applied to the assessed quota of the following year.

Statute 255. Collections are not to be taken at weddings or funerals.

Statute 256. Tax deductible donations made by individuals or businesses are to be acknowledged according to the norms of civil law. The letter of acknowledgment must cite the amount of the donation and the year it was made. Further, it is to include the following phrase or something similar: *The Internal Revenue Service recognizes (Name of Church using letterhead) as a tax-exempt organization, and all charitable contributions made to the church are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.*

Statute 257. The parish is to maintain an automated accounting system approved by the Eparchial Bishop.

Statute 258. All checks issued from any of the parish's accounts must be printed from the approved accounting system.

Statute 259. The parish profit and loss statements and balance sheet must be produced from the approved accounting system.

Statute 260. The financial information on the computer is to be properly backed-up, and the back-up data is to be kept away from the computer and in a secured place.

Statute 261. A financial report must be prepared after each fundraising event to give a detailed accounting of the income and expenses to the parish.

Statute 262. Bingo games and other games of chance sponsored by the parish, or that take place in a parish facility, must be licensed and operated in compliance with local laws. Bingo income and expenses must be maintained in a separate bank account.

Statute 263. The pastor is to be aware of all purchases made on behalf of the parish, and he is to approve every invoice prior to payment and check them for validity, accuracy, and price quotation.

Statute 264. All invoices are to be paid in a timely manner including invoices sent by the Chancery such as assessments, health insurance, retirement, etc. Once paid, all invoices should be marked "Paid" to ensure they will not be paid twice, and the invoices are to be marked with the date and check number to aid in tracing payments. All paid invoices for the fiscal year must be kept in a file according to vendor.

Statute 265. Other than the restricted use of a petty cash fund, all parish expenses are to be paid by check and never by cash.

Statute 266. Should the parish have a "petty cash" fund it must be properly set up by an accountant in the automated accounting system. All disbursements from the petty cash fund must be supported by adequate documentation, and the petty cash fund is to be kept in a secured place.

Statute 267. All checks must be signed manually by the pastor. The use of rubber stamps and signature plates are not permitted.

Statute 268. The pastor may opt to pay some parish bills using a parish credit card. In this case, the parish credit card is to be used only for parish purchases and never for personal use, and all credit card receipts are to be attached to the appropriate invoices and kept in the parish files in an organized fashion.

Statute 269. A debit card is never to be used for parish purchases or bank withdrawals.

Statute 270. Checks are never to be made payable to “Cash”.

Statute 271. Voided checks should be retained and accounted for in a specific file.

Statute 272. A priest cannot lend any of his personal funds to a parish/institution without the written permission of the Eparchial Bishop. Otherwise, said transactions are to be considered as donations from the priest to the parish/institution.

Statute 273. The parish is to have a professionally qualified accountant who has signed an “Accountant Engagement Letter” in accord with the directives of the Eparchial Bishop. Nonetheless, the pastor is fully responsible for the following areas of ordinary financial administration:

- a) Maintenance of financial records (financial reports, canceled checks, bank statements, etc.);
- b) Consultation with the parish Finance Council regarding the cash flow, financial projects, major expenditures, the annual financial report etc.;
- c) Paying all bills on a timely basis;
- d) Depositing all revenues of the parish on a timely basis;
- e) Properly maintaining all parish properties, autos, equipment and furnishings, and adequately insuring them with the insurance carrier approved by the Eparchial Bishop.

Statute 274. In order to decrease insurance liabilities and for the safety of the public, the pastor must:

- a) See that ample lighting is provided at night around the public areas of all church properties;
- b) See that all windows and doors are adequately secure and that there be an operative alarm system if necessary;
- c) See that the grounds are maintained in a safe condition, free of obstacles and hazards, especially in adverse weather conditions.

Statute 275. The pastor must report any and all incidents that may possibly lead to litigation to the Chancery immediately.

Statute 276. Other than ordinary maintenance and upkeep, the pastor is not to make any physical changes to any of the buildings or properties owned by the parish. This includes remodeling the sanctuary in any way, the addition or removal of statues or icons in the church or on the grounds, and major renovations to the rectory or parish hall, without the prior permission of the Eparchial Bishop.

Statute 277. The pastor is to maintain and preserve all of the moveable assets of the parish, such as rectory furnishings, office equipment, liturgical objects and vestments, etc. As he is the custodian of these assets and not the owner, he is not to alienate them in any way by selling them, gifting them, throwing them out, or making them his own, without the permission of the Eparchial Bishop.

Finance Council

Statute 278. Every parish must have a Finance Council whose role is to cooperate with the pastor in all aspects of the financial life of the parish. It is to advise the pastor on financial matters but it is not in any way to be construed as a decision-making body.

Statute 279. Ideally the Finance Council should be distinct from the Pastoral Council. In cases where two distinct councils cannot be formed due to a lack of numbers, a combined council is acceptable

Statute 280. The Finance Council is to be limited to the laity, and is to be comprised of no less than 3 and no more than 5 members, not including the pastor.

Statute 281. The members of the Finance Council are to be appointed by the pastor for a determined period of time. The pastor may remove a member of the Finance Council for a serious reason, after consultation with the Eparchial Bishop.

Statute 282. The pastor may invite his parochial vicar, deacons, or subdeacons to attend any or all meetings, however they are not considered members of the Finance Council.

Statute 283. All members of the Finance Council must maintain the confidentiality of the deliberations of the council, especially with respect to privacy and personal reputations.

Statute 284. Meetings of the Finance Council are to be held in the parish facilities and meetings are to take place at least once every three months.

Statute 285. It falls to the pastor alone to call meetings of the Finance Council and to set its agenda.

Statute 286. The pastor is to keep the Finance Council informed about the income and expenses of the parish and to seek its advice on the following matters:

- a) Raising funds to meet parish needs;
- b) Capital expenditures;
- c) Annual financial reports to the faithful and the Chancery;
- d) Investments of parish funds.

Investments

Statute 287. Parishes that have enough liquid assets may invest funds for a satisfactory return, to provide resources to further the mission of the Church, for spiritual, pastoral and educational programs, and the building maintenance of the church, hall, rectory, etc. The following investments may be made:

- a) Equity Issues, which include high quality common stocks or equivalents. Prudent standards should be developed and maintained by the investment advisor. Investments must be made in companies whose products and goals are not contrary to the teachings or mission of the Catholic Church;
- b) Fixed Income, which includes United States Treasury Securities and its Agencies, U.S. Corporations and U.S. Banks or other financial institutions. Domestic bonds should be rated investment grade “Baa” or higher by the rating services. Fixed Income should be laddered so it matures at different times with short-term, intermediate-term, and long-term investments. The average weighted maturity at cost of the Fixed Income is not to be longer than 10 years;
- c) Cash Equivalent Vehicles include Certificates of Deposit, United States Treasury Bills, U.S. Government repurchase agreements, Money Market Funds, and Commercial Paper. Commercial Paper must be high quality rated at least the equivalent of “A-1” or “P-1” by a rating service.

Statute 288. Investment funds should be diversified by asset class, equities, bonds, cash equivalents and within asset classes, within equities by economic sector, industry, quality, and size, to have reasonable assurance that no single security or class of securities will have a disproportionate impact on the total funds. The performance of these funds should be measured quarterly and compared to various market indices. The total return of funds should be compared with the appropriate benchmarks.

Statute 289. The investment advisor must keep in mind the teachings of the Catholic Church in the selection and retention of investments, and is subject to the following restrictions:

- a) Securities are not to be purchased on margin;
- b) Securities are not to be sold short;
- c) Trading puts and calls, are not to be sold short, whether the options are covered or not;
- d) No investments are to be made in commodity contracts;
- e) “Junk Bonds” are not to be bought;
- f) Bond purchases should be limited to so-called “investment grade bonds”;
- g) Mutual funds with “load” charges are not to be bought;
- h) Monies cannot be loaned for private placement and “start up” business ventures;
- i) Securities restricted as to public resale under the Securities Act of 1933 may not be purchased.

Employees

Statute 290. The Pastor is to provide fair financial remuneration for employees that conform to local laws, social justice, and equity.

Statute 291. All employees are to have payroll records in accord with civil law, and the following norms are to be observed:

- a) Each full-time employee (over 32 hours per week) is to furnish the parish with a Federal Income Tax Form W-4 for authorization of Federal Income Tax Withholding;
- b) Applicable payroll taxes withheld for all full-time employees must be remitted to the proper authorities;
- c) All tax forms must be filed by the date they are due;
- d) Federal Tax Form W-2 Statement of Wages must be issued to all full-time employees when due;
- e) Copies of the W-2 forms are to be submitted with W-3 forms to the appropriate taxing authorities;
- f) Unemployment Insurance Benefit forms are to be filed and paid in a timely manner.
- g) Part-time employees (32 hours or less per week) who work in the parish office, are to be issued Federal Tax Form W-2 Statement of Wages. Other part-time employees (housekeepers, maintenance personnel, landscapers, etc.) may be issued Federal Tax Form 1099 at the end of each calendar year.

Statute 292. All full time eligible employees (over 32 hours per week) are to be in an appropriate health plan, and they must be covered by Workmen's Compensation in accordance with local civil laws.

Statute 293. Parish priests are to be considered self-employed and are to be issued Federal Tax Form 1099 at the end of each calendar year.

Projects and Contracts

Statute 294. With regard to any parish project which has a projected cumulative expense of \$10,000.00 or more, a written request is to be made to the Chancery to authorize such an expenditure. In such instances the request must include:

- a) The detailed plan of the work to be completed;
- b) Three bids for the execution of the plan;
- c) The opinion of the parish Finance Council regarding the plan and how the parish plans to pay for it;
- d) The recommendation of the pastor and the Finance Council as to which bid they would prefer be approved.

Statute 295. When a contract requires that a vendor have proper insurance before initiating a job, those to be indemnified by the insurance policy are: the parish, the Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn, and the Eparchial Bishop.

Statute 296. All legal contracts between the parish and any contractors, vendors, tenants, etc., must be signed by the Eparchial Bishop.

Social Hall

Statute 297. For one day rentals of the parish hall or other facility, the pastor should have a “rental agreement” which he is authorized to sign, along with the party renting the space.

Statute 298. Parish facilities are never to be used for anything contrary to the teachings or mission of the Catholic Church. Belly dancing is not permitted in any parish facility or at any parish function whatsoever.

Statute 299. The following clause is to be added to all “rental agreements”: *(Name of church or institution) is an entity of the Catholic Church. Any and all persons renting, leasing, or using the grounds or any buildings owned by the Catholic Church, are not to undertake any activities which would be offensive or contrary to the religious, moral, and ethical principles of the Catholic Church. These activities are to be specifically determined in the absolute and sole discretion of the pastor/administrator or other ecclesial authorities of the Catholic Church.*

Statute 300. Alcoholic beverages may be served in parish facilities as long as all of the applicable civil laws in this regard are carefully observed. In this event, prudence must be used to be sure that those drinking alcoholic beverages do so in moderation.

Statute 301. Rental of parish facilities for political activities is permitted as long as it is clear that the parish itself is not endorsing any candidate. In this case, the facilities must be rented for the normal fee; the fee cannot be waived or donated so that these services might be construed as a donation to the political candidate or function.

Stipends

Statute 302. Offerings received for the celebration of Divine Liturgies are to be retained in a “stipend account”.

Statute 303. A “book of intentions” is to be maintained to accurately record the number, the intention, and the amount of the offering for the Divine Liturgies to be celebrated, and the date when they are celebrated.

Statute 304. Once the Divine Liturgy is celebrated, the pastor is to pay the stipend by check, either to himself or to the celebrant.

Statute 305. Offerings received for the celebration of Divine Liturgies are to be limited to those that can be celebrated within one year. If they cannot be celebrated at the parish church within a year, some of those intentions, with the entire offering, are to be sent to a priest who is able to celebrate them in a timely fashion.

Statute 306. Although stipends and stole fees are free will offerings, when the faithful wish to make an offering and inquire as to the customary amount of the stipend or stole fee, the response given to them is to be based upon the custom of the local Latin Diocese where the parish is located.

Statute 307. The priest can accept only one stipend per day regardless of how many Divine Liturgies he celebrates. If there is more than one stipend offered in a day, or if more than one intention is offered for a particular Divine Liturgy, the other intentions are to be offered again on another day, or the intention and stipend are to be remitted to another priest for celebration.