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ܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܩܝܡܐ
SYRIAN PATRIARCHATE
OF ANTIOCH AND ALL THE EAST
DAMASCUS - SYRIA



By the Grace of God
Ignatius Zakka I Iwas
Patriarch of Antioch and All the East
Supreme head of the Universal Syrian
Orthodox Church

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دمشق - سوريا

No. E62/04

February 17, 2004



Apostolic Benediction to our Beloved Metropolitan His Eminence Mor Theethos Yeldho Pathickal of our Malankara Archdiocese of the Syrian Orthodox Church in North America.

As you know, for the protection of the true faith and ancient traditions of our Holy Apostolic Church and for the smooth functioning of the Malankara Archdiocesan administration, our clergy and faithful of that Archdiocese have unanimously passed a Constitution in the last Family Conference of our Archdiocese which was held in July 2003. It was then sent to us for our approval. We have received the legal opinion also on the said Constitution. We went through the same, and found it good for the proper administration of the affairs of our Archdiocese there. We are now pleased to grant our approval for this new Constitution for our Malankara Archdiocese in North America with effect from January 1, 2004. We have affixed our seal and signature on all the pages of the Constitution in testimony of our approval and send it to you. Henceforth all affairs of our Malankara Archdiocese in North America should be administered in accordance with this new Constitution. We appreciate the tedious services rendered by the members of the Constitution Committee in drafting, preparing and finalizing the Constitution which would be a landmark in the history of that Archdiocese.

We extend our Apostolic Blessings to you. May the grace of God be with you.

Copy to: Very Rev. Corepiscopos Eapen Ezhamalil, Secretary of the Malankara Archdiocese in North America.

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS
Of the
Malankara Archdiocese of the Syrian Orthodox Church
in North America

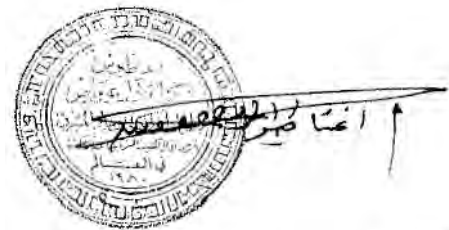
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PART - TWO : PARISHES / CONGREGATIONS



**MALANKARA ARCHDIOCESE
OF THE SYRIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
IN NORTH AMERICA**

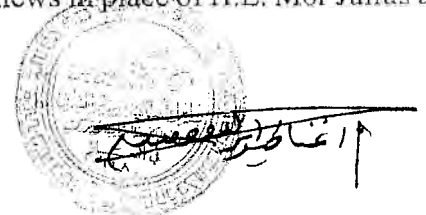
ARCHDIOCESAN CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

PREAMBLE

In the recent past, especially since the 1960's, a considerable number of people from India migrated and settled down in North America. Many of them were Malankara Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Christians. They followed the Syrian Orthodox faith, maintained their distinct identity and preserved the glorious traditions of the Syrian Orthodox Church. They formed parishes and spiritual organizations such as Sunday school for children, Youth Association for young adults and St. Mary's League for women under the spiritual supervision of Late Lamented Archbishop H.E. Athanasius Yeshue Samuel (Apostolic Bull No.E59/84). For a smooth functioning of the parishes under the ecclesiastical hierarchy, a Malankara Council was constituted and became fully operational in 1987. From that time onwards the Malankara parishes conducted annual conferences in different parts of North America. As the number of people professing the Syrian Orthodox faith and their spiritual needs increased, The Delegates' Meeting held on July 12, 1992 at Nyack College, New York, presided over by the late lamented Archbishop Mor Athanasius Y. Samuel, decided to request His Holiness, The Patriarch of Antioch and All The East for a Metropolitan from Malankara to assist H.E.Mor Athanasius in administering the affairs of the Malankara Parishes. The Delegates' Meeting held on December 05, 1992 at the St. Mark's Syrian Orthodox Cathedral, Hackensack, New Jersey, proposed the name of Rev. Fr. P.G. Cherian and requested His Holiness to consecrate him Metropolitan to assistant H.E. Mor Athanasius Yeshue Samuel.

According to the decision of the Archdiocesan Council, an official delegation, consisting of three Clergymen and one lay member from the Council had an audience with His Holiness, the Patriarch, in Damascus, Syria, in June 1993 to address the spiritual needs of the Malankara faithful. Thereafter, His Holiness Moran Mor Ignatius Zakka I Iwas, Patriarch of Antioch and All the East and the Supreme Head of the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church, established an independent Archdiocese (Patriarchal Bull No. E235/93 dated June 24. 1993) directly under the Holy Apostolic See of Antioch and All the East comprising of all the Malankara (India) parishes in North America and named it 'Malankara Archdiocese of the Syrian Orthodox Church in North America'. His Holiness consecrated and appointed Rev. Fr. P.G. Cherian as Archbishop H.G Mor Nicholovos Zachariah on August 15, 1993 and appointed him as Archbishop to administer the affairs of the Archdiocese.

Sometimes after, when H.G Mor Nicholovos Zachariah disobeyed His Holiness the Patriarch and changed his allegiance from the Holy See of Antioch and All the East, he was suspended and relieved from all his spiritual and temporal authority and responsibilities as Archbishop by His Holiness Moran Mor Ignatius Zakka I Iwas (Patriarchal Bull No. E311/01 dated December 22, 2001). His Holiness then appointed His Eminence Mor Julius Kuriakose as the Archbishop of the Malankara Archdiocese of the Syrian Orthodox Church in North America, as an interim arrangement. On March 2, 2002, His Holiness Moran Mor Ignatius Zakka I Iwas, authorized and appointed His Eminence Mor Ivanios Mathews in place of H.E. Mor Julius as



the Archbishop to administer the affairs of the Malankara Archdiocese. (Apostolic Bull No. E 58/02, Dtd. March 02, 2002). And by the Patriarchal Bull No. E63/03 dated March 12, 2003, His Holiness excommunicated and expelled Mor Nicholovos Zacariah alias P.G. Cherian Poothicott from the office of the Metropolitan (Archbishop) of the Malankara Archdiocese and from the High Priesthood and from the primary membership of the Holy Universal Syrian Orthodox Church.

On January 04, 2004, His Holiness the Patriarch has consecrated and appointed His Eminence Mor Theethos (Titus) Yeldho Pathickal as the Archbishop / Patriarchal Vicar of this Malankara Archdiocese.

PART - ONE - THE ARCHDIOCESE

ARTICLE I

NAME OF THE ARCHDIOCESE

The name of this organization shall be 'Malankara Archdiocese of the Syrian Orthodox Church in North America', and it is a New York Religious Corporation having a seal. The location of the central office shall be decided by the Delegates' Meeting of this organization.

ARTICLE II

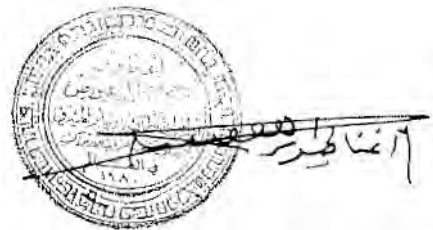
SPIRITUAL HEAD

His Holiness Moran Mor Ignatius Zakka I Iwas, Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, Supreme Head of the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church, of the Holy Apostolic Throne of Saint Peter and his legitimate successors in office shall be the supreme **spiritual, ecclesiastical and administrative heads** of this Archdiocese. **Such spiritual, ecclesiastical and administrative jurisdiction and authority cannot be changed, altered, modified or revoked.** The Archbishop/Metropolitan, who is appointed by His Holiness to administer the spiritual and temporal affairs of this Archdiocese shall be under the direct jurisdiction and control of **His Holiness the Patriarch** of Antioch and all the East.

ARTICLE II- A

CANON

The Archdiocese shall be governed spiritually in accordance with the rules and canons of the *Hudoyo*, the official law book of the Holy Church, **translated into Malayalam by the late Metropolitan Mor Julius Yakoub**, and by the canonical regulations established by the successive meetings of the Holy Universal Synods. Such authority cannot be changed, altered, modified or revoked. In cases of a contradiction between the Canon and the Constitution or a difficulty in interpreting the Constitution, in the light of a canon law, the **order of the Patriarch** shall prevail.



ARTICLE III ALLEGIANCE

SECTION- A ALLEGIANCE OF THE ARCHDIOCESE

This Archdiocese is a part of the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church, directly under the supervision and control of His Holiness Moran Mor Ignatius Zakka I Iwas, Patriarch of Antioch and all the East, and his legitimate successors in office. **His Holiness and his successors in office shall be the appellate authority whose decisions shall be firm, final and without appeal on all spiritual, ecclesiastical temporal and administrative matters of discipline within the Archdiocese.** Such spiritual, ecclesiastical and administrative jurisdiction and authority cannot be changed, altered, modified, or revoked.

SECTION-B ALLEGIANCE OF THE ARCHBISHOP / METROPOLITAN

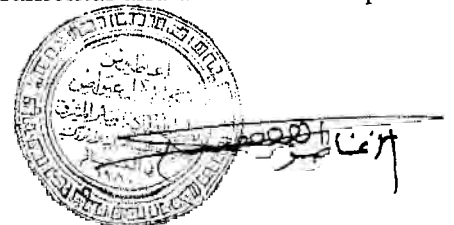
The Archbishop/ Metropolitan appointed and authorized by His Holiness shall govern the Archdiocese for its spiritual progress and stability, under the supervision and control of His Holiness Moran Mor Ignatius Zakka I Iwas, Patriarch of Antioch and all the East, and His legitimate successors in office. If and when the Archbishop / Metropolitan deviate from the allegiance or denounce the Holy Throne of St. Peter or **when he is de-recognized by H.H the Patriarch**, his spiritual, ecclesiastical, sacramental and administrative powers will cease thereafter.

SECTION-C: ALLEGIANCE OF THE PARISH / CONGREGATIONS

All the Malankara parishes / congregations under the Archdiocese, are subject to the **spiritual and administrative supervision and control** of His Holiness Moran Mor Ignatius Zakka I Iwas, Patriarch of Antioch and all the East, and of the Archbishop, who is appointed by His Holiness and their legitimate successors in office. When a parish / congregation or a group of members deviates from the allegiance to the Holy Throne of St. Peter, or denounces The Patriarch, the Supreme Head of the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church or acts against the orders of The Patriarch, their membership rights shall be revoked by the Archbishop and the parish administration shall be taken over through an Apostolic order from The Patriarch.

SECTION-D: ALLEGIANCE OF THE PRIESTS AND DEACONS

The Vicars, Priests, or Deacons appointed or consecrated by the Archbishop / Metropolitan **with the permission of the Patriarch**, shall serve the parish / congregation or any other institutions or trusts in the Archdiocese, directly under the supervision of the Archbishop / Metropolitan. If and when the vicars, priests or deacons deviate from their allegiance or when they denounce the Holy Throne of St. Peter or **when they are de-recognized by the Patriarch**, their spiritual, ecclesiastical, sacramental and administrative powers will cease there after.



SECTION-E: ALLEGIANCE OF THE OFFICE BEARERS

All the elected or appointed office bearers of the Archdiocese shall discharge their respective duties in complete allegiance to the Holy Throne of St. Peter and the Patriarch of Antioch and All the East and his representative, the Archbishop. If and when an office bearer deviates from the allegiance or denounces the Holy Throne or denounces the Apostolic Bulls / Orders from His Holiness, his temporal and administrative powers will cease there after.

SECTION-F ALLEGIANCE OF THE MEMBERS

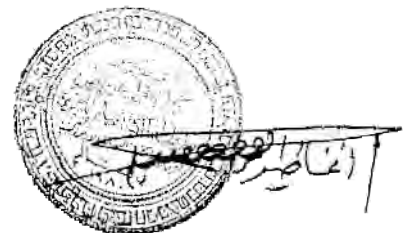
All the members in the affiliated parishes shall carry out their respective duties and responsibilities in full allegiance to the Archdiocese and to the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church and to His Holiness Moran Mor Ignatius Zakka I Iwas, Patriarch of Antioch and all the East, and to his legitimate successors in office. If a member of a parish within the Archdiocese deviates from the allegiance or denounces the Holy Throne of St. Peter, his membership rights will cease there after.

ARTICLE IV OWNERSHIP

His Holiness Moran Mor Ignatius Zakka I Iwas, the Supreme Head of the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church, and His legitimate successors in office shall be known as the legal and equitable owner of the all Archdiocesan properties, be they movable or immovable. No individuals, trusts, corporations, parishes, congregations or organizations shall hold or possess any assets of the Archdiocese, of any kind, or should any of the foregoing have legal title to such assets, same shall be held in trust for His Holiness Moran Mor Ignatius Zakka I Iwas, the Supreme Head of the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church, and His legitimate successors in office. The Archbishop, an office bearer or any appointed person shall not have the power to encumber, alienate, sell or dissolve the properties of the "Malankara Archdiocese of the Syrian Orthodox Church in North America" without the written approval of the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch and all the East.

ARTICLE V DISSOLUTION

- Section- I This Diocese and its office bearers or members shall not have the power to dissolve this organization as long as the Holy See of Antioch and all the East exists.
- Section-II In the event that no person or persons of the Universal Syrian Orthodox faith are left in the United States and Canada, a bona fide representative of the Holy See of Antioch with proper authorization, shall have full power to administer the Archdiocese and all of its properties.



**ARTICLE VI
JURISDICTION**

The Archdiocese and all its parishes shall be under the direct jurisdiction and control of His Holiness Moran Mor Ignatius Zakka I Iwas, Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, Supreme Head of the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church and His successors in office. His Holiness shall be the appellate authority whose decisions shall be firm final and without appeal on all Spiritual, Sacramental, Ecclesiastical, Temporal, Administrative, and Disciplinary Matters or any dispute within the Archdiocese. Since the Archbishop is the representative of His Holiness the Patriarch, he shall administer all the sacramental, ecclesiastical and temporal affairs of the Archdiocese in order to uphold the True Faith of The Holy Church and maintain spiritual conformity and discipline within the Archdiocese.

**ARTICLE VII
COMPOSITION AND STRUCTURE OF THE ARCHDIOCESE**

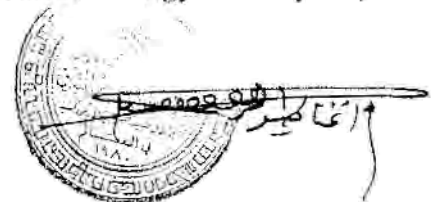
All parishes / congregations under the Holy Apostolic See of Antioch and All the East, with faithful believers who are following and professing the Syrian Orthodox faith and its venerable traditions (hereafter referred to as Malankara Parishes), are the only legitimate members of the Archdiocese. Each Malankara Parish must adhere to the Universal Syrian Orthodox faith and Apostolic orders and guidance beyond doubt through the Sacrament of Baptism and other Holy Orders and confess the faith as confirmed in the Nicene Creed. No Malankara Parish shall be established within the Archdiocese without prior written permission from the Archbishop Metropolitan.

The minimum requirement to form a new Malankara Parish shall be fifteen families that are not members of any of the Archdiocesan Malankara Parishes within twenty-five miles. All new Malankara Parishes must be affiliated with the Archdiocese and they are bound to obey the rules and regulations of the Holy Church and the Malankara Archdiocese.

**ARTICLE VIII
THE ARCHDIOCESAN DELEGATES MEETING**

The Archdiocese shall have a Delegates' Meeting, consisting of all the Malankara Parishes within the Archdiocese. The Delegates shall meet at least once a year or as needed. It shall make decisions with a two-thirds (2/3) majority on administrative matters of the Archdiocese with the approval of the Metropolitan. The Vicar of each Malankara Parish and two lay representatives, 21 years of age or older, elected by the membership or general body of that Parish, shall be the official delegates. The elected representatives shall produce a certification from the Vicar of that Parish stating that they are the elected representatives, indicating the date of membership or general body meeting during which the election was held. The Archdiocesan Council members shall participate in the Delegates Meeting as observers without voting rights unless they are elected as delegates by the membership or general body of the respective Malankara Parishes. In case of the absence of a Vicar in a particular Parish, the Archbishop / Metropolitan shall have the power to authorize the representatives from that Parish.

Written notice with Agenda, time, date and place shall be sent by the Archdiocesan Secretary to the vicars of the Malankara Parishes at least six weeks prior the meeting. The Delegates Meeting shall elect fifteen members to the Archdiocesan Council, consisting of clergy and lay members, giving representation to all regions of the Archdiocese. The specification of the regions and the ratio of clergy and laity may be



determined by the Delegates Meeting with the approval of the Archbishop. The Council shall have the primary responsibility of assisting the Archbishop in managing the day to day affairs of the Archdiocese.

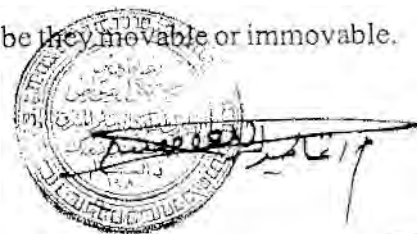
Director of Sunday Schools, Secretaries, Treasurers and other office bearers for St. Mary's Women's League, Youth Association, The Association for Protection of Antiochean True Faith, MGSOSA, and St. Paul's Men's Fellowship shall be elected at their own membership or General Body meetings, during the Annual Convention, or at a special Delegates' Meeting called with an agenda for elections. The Secretary of the Clergy Council and Clergy Council members shall be elected from the General Body of the Clergy Association meeting during the Annual Convention, or at a special Delegates' Meeting called with an agenda for elections. For the Sunday School Association, St. Mary's Women's League, Youth Association, The Association for Protection of Antiochean True Faith, MGSOSA and for St. Paul's Men's Fellowship, the Delegates' Meeting will elect 6 clergymen as Vice Presidents.

The term of office of all elected office bearers shall be 2 years. All elected candidates and their positions shall be confirmed by the Archbishop and declared as soon as the elections are over. Within one month of the Annual Archdiocesan Delegates Meeting, the minutes of the Delegates meeting shall be sent to all Malankara Parishes.

All decisions taken by the Archdiocesan Delegates Meeting from the properly distributed agenda items shall be binding on all the member parishes. The Board of Trustees / Managing Committee and the membership or general body meetings of a member Parish shall have no authority to overrule, amend, revoke or disobey the decisions of the Archdiocesan Delegates Meeting. Any decisions of relevant matters not included in agenda but presented as other matters allowed by the Chairperson, shall be ratified by the membership or general body of each Parish by a two-thirds (2/3) majority before enacted as a law or a decision of the Delegate meeting.

The Archdiocesan Delegates' Meeting shall:

1. Appropriate funds for the activities of the Archdiocese;
2. Approve or disapprove annual accounts;
3. Enact and decide on amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws;
4. Formulate general policies for the functioning of the Archdiocese;
5. Elect Secretary, Joint- Secretary, Treasurer, Joint- Treasurer and other members Archdiocesan Council;
6. Buy, sell, rent, lease, create mortgage or acquire properties for the Archdiocese, only in the incorporated name of the Archdiocese and subject to the approval of His Holiness, The Patriarch;
7. Decide the amount of the diocesan dues to be collected from each Parish and member families of the parish within the Archdiocese.
8. Annually account for all the properties of the Archdiocese be they movable or immovable.



Title to all real estate and other assets should be jointly in the name of the Patriarch of Antioch and in the ecclesiastical name of the Metropolitan / Archbishop who assumes the position of the Representative of the Patriarch of Antioch and All the East. If and when the Metropolitan who has been appointed by the Holy See denounces the Holy Throne or deviates from his spiritual mission, The Patriarch shall have full authority to forfeit / recover all of the Diocesan properties thereof.

The representation from a Malankara Parish to the Delegates' Meeting is specified to be the Vicar and two lay representatives. However, the delegates, upon a further perusal, proposed to modify that article to name the Vicar and two lay representatives for a Parish that has up to 50 families, three lay members for Parishes having up to 75 families, four lay members for Parishes having up to 100 members and five lay members for Parishes having over hundred families.

ARTICLE IX

THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE ARCHDIOCESE

Section-1 COMPOSITION

The Archdiocesan governing body shall be called The Archdiocesan Council. The Archdiocesan Council shall consist of fifteen elected members, and the Archbishop. The ratio of clergy and laymen shall be decided by the Delegates' Meeting. In the absence of the Archbishop, a Metropolitan, with a written authorization from The Patriarch of Antioch and All the East shall preside over the Delegates' Meeting.

Section - 2 ELECTION & TERM OF OFFICE

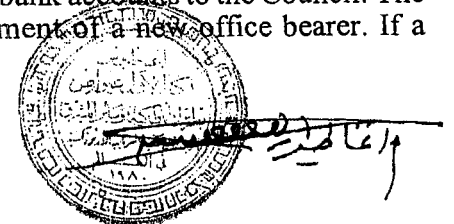
Total membership of the Archdiocesan Council shall be fifteen, excluding the Archbishop. Of the fifteen elected members, a clergy shall be elected as the Secretary and another clergy shall be elected as Joint Secretary. A lay person shall be elected as Treasurer, and another lay person shall be elected as Joint Treasurer, whose respective term of office shall be two years each. Immediately following the election, with the approval of the Archbishop, the names and designations of the members shall be announced in the Diocesan General Body. Six Clergymen shall be elected as Vice Presidents of the spiritual organizations at the Delegates Meeting and their respective terms of office shall be two years.

Section - 3 REMOVAL

Any elected member of the Council may be removed from office, by the vote of two thirds (2/3) majority of a quorum of the Delegates' Meeting, upon willful violation of this Constitution of the Archdiocese or deliberate actions against the best interests of the Archdiocese or the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church or its Patriarch of Antioch.

Section - 4 RESIGNATION AND RE-ELECTION

If the Secretary or the Treasurer resigns from office, such resignation shall be submitted to the Archbishop / Metropolitan. The Metropolitan at such a situation, shall appoint the Joint Secretary or the Joint Treasurer to complete the term of the resigning officer after convening a Council Meeting. The resigned Secretary or Treasurer shall present all of the current minutes, records and bank accounts to the Council. The elected auditors shall verify the books and accounts before the appointment of a new office bearer. If a



member of the council resigns, the Archbishop\Metropolitan, in consultation with council, shall nominate a person to finish the remaining term.

Section - 5 MEETINGS

The Council shall meet at least three times in a year at a convenient time, date and place agreed upon by the Archbishop. Written notices with agenda, date, time and place shall be sent to the members by the Secretary, at least seven days prior to the meeting of the Council. A three-quarters (3/4) majority shall constitute a quorum.

Section - 6 EMERGENCY MEETING

An Emergency Meeting of the Council shall be convened, at the discretion of the Metropolitan if there are urgent matters to be brought before the Council. In such a situation, the members of the Council shall be informed by telephone at least three days prior to the meeting.

Section -7 DECISIONS AND APPEAL

In case the individual Malankara Parishes have matters to be brought to the attention of the Council, such matters shall be sent in writing to the Archbishop, with a copy to the Secretary, at least one month prior to the Council Meeting, except on emergency matters. The Council shall gather information pertinent to the matter within a reasonable time frame and make recommendations to the Metropolitan to resolve the matter. The decision of the Metropolitan shall be binding on all the parties, If the decision is not satisfactory, the parties have the right to appeal to His Holiness the Patriarch.

ARTICLE X DUTIES OF

THE ARCHBISHOP / METROPOLITAN:

1. Provide general supervision and spiritual leadership for the smooth functioning of the Archdiocese;
2. The Metropolitan shall visit the Malankara Parishes;
3. Send pastoral letters;
4. Ordain priests and deacons;
5. Appoint priests or transfer them as and when it is necessary.
6. Grant permission to form new Malankara Parishes ;
7. Approve or disapprove elected office-bearers of parishes with a written notification;



8. Convene and preside over Diocesan Delegates meeting and Archdiocesan Council meetings;
9. Distribute *Holy Mooron, Holy Oils and Thabilaitha*, when such a need arises;
10. Select candidates for the ministry and arrange for their training;
11. Receive annual reports on the activities of parishes;
12. Provide general supervision and leadership to spiritual organizations;
13. Participate in the Holy Synod;
14. Counsel and mediate dispute between members or parishes;
15. **Always abide by the directions of H.H the Patriarch. He shall have right to hold office only so long as H.H the Patriarch recognizes him as the Metropolitan of the Archdiocese; and**
16. **The Metropolitan shall administer all affairs of the Archdiocese in consultation with the Archdiocesan Council.**

SECRETARY

1. He shall be a priest of the Archdiocese;
2. His term of office shall be two years;
3. He cannot be elected for more than one term consecutively;
4. He shall send notices for meetings as advised by the Metropolitan;
5. He shall assist the Archbishop in executing the decisions of the Council and the Delegates Meeting;
6. He shall keep the records & minutes of all meetings; and
7. He shall handle all the correspondences of the Archdiocese as directed by the Archbishop.

JOINT SECRETARY:

1. The Joint Secretary will assist the Secretary in carrying out his duties;



TREASURER

1. He shall be at least 30 years of age;
2. His term of office shall be two years and he cannot be elected for more than one term consecutively;
3. He shall maintain the accounts of the Archdiocese;
4. He shall keep an inventory of the Archdiocesan properties;
5. He shall present the budget and accounts in the Archdiocesan Council and the Archdiocesan Delegates Meeting;
6. He shall collect all dues of the Archdiocese and pay all of its bills;
7. He shall be in charge of the Archdiocesan Funds subject to the decisions of the Archdiocesan Delegates Meeting and the Archbishop / Metropolitan; and
8. Be a signatory of the Archdiocese bank accounts, either singly or jointly, as decided by the Archdiocesan Council.

JOINT TREASURER

1. The Joint Treasurer will assist the Treasurer in carrying out his duties.

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Section 1.

They shall perform all duties imposed on them by the constitution or bylaws of the organization and shall perform such other duties as are generally performed by trustees under similar circumstances, among the said duties being the following:

- A. To be the board of trustees of this Archdiocese, and to perform all the duties thereof;
- B. To recommend the services of a properly qualified priests for the churches;
- C. To be present at the council meetings when such a meetings are called;
- D. To make complete annual accounts of the income and expenditures of the Archdiocese and to construct its budget for the following fiscal year which shall run from June 01 to May 31 of the following year. The audited accounts shall be sent to the Malankara Parishes as soon as possible after the Delegates Meeting at the Family Conference;



- E. All donations or gifts of any sort, shall be made through the Metropolitan, and no person shall make any purchase for or on behalf of the Archdiocese without permission of the council or the Metropolitan; and
- F. To have the full authority to dismiss any member of the committees affiliated with the Archdiocese in case of misconduct, after consulting with the other members of the committees affiliated with the Archdiocese when needed.

SECTION 2:

Any member who fails to attend three consecutive meetings of the council shall be relieved from his position as a council member. However, upon the vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the council, any member may be relieved from his office, for proper cause.

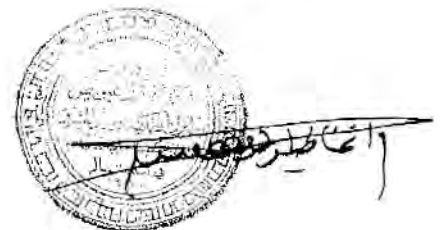
SECTION 3:

A vacancy in the council, however caused, shall be filled at the next meeting of the council, subject to the approval of the Metropolitan.

PRIEST / VICAR

The Priest in the performance of the following duties, is responsible directly to his spiritual superior namely The Metropolitan / Archbishop:

- A. He shall be regularly present at his Parish in order to be available to the parishioners;
- B. He shall conduct necessary services and celebrate the prescribed liturgies and other services in accordance with the rules and regulations of The Syrian Orthodox Church;
- C. He shall endeavor to encourage attendance at the church services and shall see that every member is registered in the records of the church;
- D. He shall form a Sunday school and church choir where church hymns are sung and our religious matters are taught by qualified teachers;
- E. He shall, as often as he is able to do so, visit the homes of all the members of the Parish;
- F. He shall visit the sick members of the church as soon as possible;
- G. He shall offer the sacraments of the church, and shall issue baptismal and marriage certificates upon request from the faithful;
- H. He shall register all births, baptisms, marriages and funerals;



- I. He shall preserve the *Holy Mooron* and other *Holy Oils*;
- J. He shall initiate with the board of trustees, a special collection (**Ressissa**) annually, for His Holiness our Patriarch.
- K. He shall preside over all meetings of the Board of Trustees, and the membership or general body of his Parish and take an active part and cooperate with the board of trustees in carrying out the various activities designed for the spiritual, social, educational, and financial progress of his Parish.

MEMBERS

- Section 1: It shall be the duty of all members of the Archdiocese to attend liturgical services, obligatory to a faithful, at his parish..
- Section 2: Each family shall make an annual pledge to their church in accordance with the financial resources of the family. If the church's membership or general body finds it feasible to establish a fixed annual membership fee to be paid to the church, this fee shall be remitted.
- Section 3. It being recognized that no church can be successful without the best endeavors and support of it's congregation, every member of a Malankara Parish is particularly urged and required to do everything in his or her power to promote the welfare of the church; to secure members, therefore, and to see that the youth of the church are instructed and nurtured at the parish Sunday school and that the children form the habit of regular church attendance, taking active interest in the affairs of the church.
- Section 4: During all meeting and gatherings, members are strictly forbidden to act or speak so as to bring dishonor to the church or to the board of trustees or the Archdiocese or to the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church or to the Patriarch who is the Supreme head of the Church. Anybody doing so must be ousted from the place, and in case such a member insists upon defying the order, then the appropriate law enforcement authorities shall be called in.

ARTICLE XI ACCOUNTS & AUDIT

The Archdiocesan Council shall keep proper accounts for all the income and expenditures and the assets and liabilities of the Archdiocese. The annual accounts shall be audited by the auditor(s) appointed by the Delegates' Meeting and the copies of the audited account shall be sent to each Malankara Parish, after the account is passed at the Annual Delegates' Meeting **and after getting the final approval of H.H the Patriarch.**



ARTICLE XII
SPIRITUAL ORGANIZATIONS

1. CLERGY ASSOCIATION

The Clergy Association shall be comprised of all the properly ordained priests and deacons who come under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop / Metropolitan. It shall meet at least once a year during the Annual Archdiocesan Convention and as many times as required for ongoing training, retreat, and to address matters related to the clergy. The Metropolitan or an authorized clergy by the Metropolitan, shall preside over all meetings of the clergy. A Secretary and four members as clergy council shall be elected at the clergy meeting at the Annual Convention and their term shall be two years. The Secretary shall keep the records of all meetings and shall be the custodian of the clergy funds, if any.

2. ST. MARY'S WOMEN'S LEAGUE

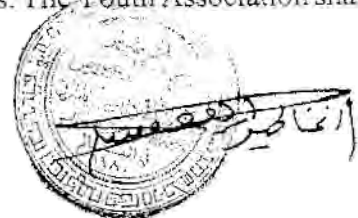
The St. Mary's Women's League shall be comprised of all the women 18 years of age or older within the jurisdiction of Archdiocese. They shall form primary units in each Malankara Parish and shall be governed by the its Bylaws under the guidelines of the Metropolitan, the Vice President, the Archdiocesan Council and their Archdiocesan level office bearers. It shall meet at least once a year during the Annual Archdiocesan Convention and as many times as may be decided by the office bearers. The association shall have representation at the Archdiocesan Delegate Meetings with observer status. A Secretary, a Treasurer and other regional organizers shall be elected at the annual meeting, held at the Annual Convention and their terms shall be for two years. The Secretary shall keep the records of all meetings and the Treasurer shall be the custodian of the women's association funds, if any.

3. SUNDAY SCHOOL

It is the primary responsibility of the Archbishop, the Vice President and Archdiocesan council to establish Sunday schools at the Malnakara Parish level. Each Sunday school shall have it's own elected Headmaster and qualified teachers. Classes are to be conducted from grade I to XII and each grade shall have it's own curriculum approved by the Metropolitan, Archdiocesan council and Archdiocesan level Sunday School Committee. A Sunday School Committee shall be formed at the Archdiocesan level with the Metropolitan as it's Head, a Vice President, a Director and other regional directors for overseeing the affairs. The election of the office bearers shall be conducted at the annual convention and the term of the office bearers shall be 2 years. The association shall have representation at the Archdiocesan delegate meetings as observer. The Sunday School Committee shall form regional districts and its office bearers as and when it is necessary.

4. YOUTH ASSOCIATION

The Youth association shall be comprised of all the youths between the ages of 16 and 25 years with- in the jurisdiction of Archdiocese. They shall form primary units in each Maankara Parishes and shall be governed by the Bylaws of the unit's respective Parish, under the guidelines of the Metropolitan, the Vice President, the Archdiocesan Council and their Archdiocesan level office bearers. The Youth Association shall



meet at least once a year during the Annual Archdiocesan Convention, and as many times as may be required to address matters related to the youths. A Secretary, a Treasurer and other regional organizers shall be elected at the annual meeting held at the Annual Convention and their term shall be for two years. The Youth Association shall have representation at the Archdiocesan delegate meetings as observer. The Secretary shall keep the records of all meetings and the Treasurer shall be the custodian of the Youth Association funds, if any

5. ASSOCIATION FOR PROTECTION OF ANTIOCHEAN TRUE FAITH

This Association shall be comprised of all the members of the Archdiocese who are committed to promote and follow the Antiochean True Faith that has been established by the Holy Church. Any member of the Archdiocesan parish who submits a completed application form and pays the prescribed fee shall be given a membership in this association. They shall form primary units at each Malnakara Parish, and shall be governed by the bylaws of the unit's respective Parish under the guidelines of the Metropolitan, Vice President, Archdiocesan Council and their Archdiocesan level office bearers. The Association shall have representation at the Archdiocesan delegate meetings with observer status.

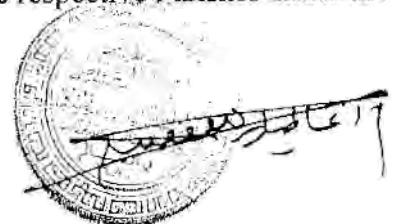
The Association shall meet at least once a year during the Annual Archdiocesan Convention and as many times as may be required to address matters related to the organization. A Secretary, a Treasurer and other regional organizers shall be elected at the annual meeting held at the Annual Convention and their term shall be for two years. The Secretary shall keep the records of all meetings and the Treasurer shall be the custodian of the Association funds, if any.

6. MOR GREGORIOS SYRIAN ORTHODOX STUDENT ASSOCIATION

This student association shall be comprised of all students attending high school and college between the ages of 15 and 25 years within the jurisdiction of Archdiocese. They shall form primary units at each Malankaran Parish and shall be governed by the Bylaws of the respective Parish under the guidelines of Metropolitan, the Vice President, the Archdiocesan council and its Archdiocesan level office bearers. It shall meet at least once a year during the Annual Archdiocesan Convention and as many times as required to address matters related to the Syrian Orthodox Students. A Secretary, a Treasurer and other regional organizers shall be elected at the annual meeting- held at the Annual Convention and their term shall be for two years. The Mor Gregorios Syrian Orthodox Student Association shall have representation at the Archdiocesan delegate meetings as observer. The Secretary shall keep the records of all meetings and the Treasurer shall be the custodian of the Student Association funds. if any.

7. ST. PAUL'S MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

This is a men's organization within the framework of the Archdiocese and it is parallel to the St. Mary's Women's League for women. This organization exists for the spiritual nurturing of faithful men through prayer meetings, gospel conventions and Bible study classes. It also enables men to become aware of the spirituality in daily life and lead a faithful Christian life in fellowship with God and other human beings. The motto of this organization is '*worship, Gospel and serve*'. The organization shall form primary units in each Malankaran Parish and shall be governed by the Bylaws of the respective Parishes under the



guidelines of the Metropolitan, the Vice President, the Archdiocesan Council and their Archdiocesan level office bearers. It shall meet at least once a year during the Annual Archdiocesan Convention and as many times as required to address matters related to the members. A Secretary, a Treasurer and other regional organizers shall be elected at the annual meeting held at the Annual Convention and their term shall be for two years. The St. Paul's Men's Fellowship shall have representation at the Archdiocesan delegate meetings as observer. The Secretary shall keep the records of all meetings. and the Treasurer shall be the custodian of the organization funds, if any.

ARTICLE XIII **COMPLAINTS**

SECTION - 1

Complaints about an elected member or a clergy or person administering a Malankaran Parish or performing Archdiocesan level duties are to be filed with the Archbishop in writing with a copy to the Secretary of the Council. Complaints of misconduct, financial irregularities, moral misconduct of any kind, deliberate attempts to destroy or damage church or Archdiocesan properties, failure to provide Holy Sacraments, the bringing of dishonor to the name and goodwill of the Church, participating, attending and having Holy Sacraments with the excommunicated or other religious factions against our church dogmas, canons, practice and traditions, etc. are considered grave and will be dealt with appropriately

SECTION - 2

Complaints regarding Administration of Malankaran Parishes or inter Parishes, liturgical, spiritual organizations, faith etc. shall be forwarded to Archbishop in writing. Two or more persons of good standing shall bring this kind of complaint.

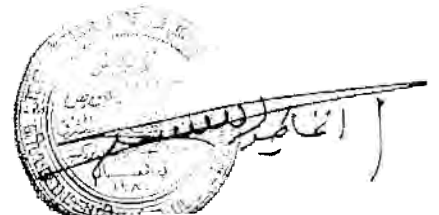
SECTION-3

All complaints shall be submitted to the Archbishop / Metropolitan in writing. Anonymous complaints shall not be entertained under any circumstances. Within thirty days after receiving the complaint, The Archbishop, in consultation with council members, will set up a commission to conduct an inquiry.

The commission shall be headed by His Eminence and other members who shall be appointed from a panel of laymen and clergy by the council. The commission will submit a written report of its findings within thirty days of its appointment. to the Metropolitan. The Metropolitan in consultation with the council will take the necessary action based on the report of the commission.

SECTION-4

If a complaint is rejected, the complainer(s) has the right to lodge the same again within three months of the dismissal of the complaint if there are reliable new evidences to submit. If the outcome is



unsatisfactory, then he/ she / they shall file the same complaint to the Holy Throne for further action.

ARTICLE XIV
GENERAL

Section 1.

No person shall make any purchase for and on behalf of the Archdiocese without the permission of the Archdiocesan Council

Section 2.

Though certain terms of office have been specified in this Constitution, all bodies and authorities shall continue in office until the next body or authority assumes office. This shall not apply to a case where a body or authority is removed from office in accordance with the provisions in this Constitution.

Section 3.

The Archbishop and the Archdiocesan Council shall collect and send the canonical 'Ressisa' to His Holiness, the Patriarch every year.

Section 4.

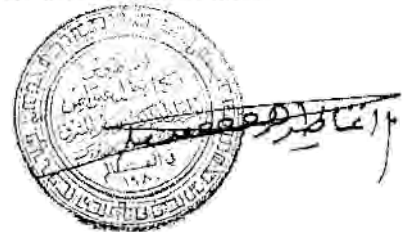
Generally the President of a meeting will have no vote. However at a meeting of a body mentioned in this Constitution, if there is a tie, the person presiding over that meeting may cast his vote to decide the matter.

ARTICLE XV
AMENDMENT TO CONSTITUTION

Articles I, II, II-A, III, IV, V and VI shall not be amended under any circumstances. Amendments to the other articles of the Constitution and Bylaws may be proposed by any member in good standing and such proposals shall be submitted in writing to the Metropolitan for submission to the Archdiocesan Council. The Council at its next meeting shall consider the proposal. If the Council approves the amendment, it shall be submitted to the next Archdiocesan Delegates meeting. If the Delegates Meeting approves it with a three fourths (3/4) majority of the members present and voting, the amendment shall take effect subject to the approval of the Metropolitan and His Holiness, The Patriarch.

ARTICLE XVI
SPECIFIC ISSUES

If the Constitution does not address any specific issue pertaining to the administration of the Archdiocese or the Parish, the ruling by the Patriarch shall prevail.



PART TWO
PARISH BYLAWS

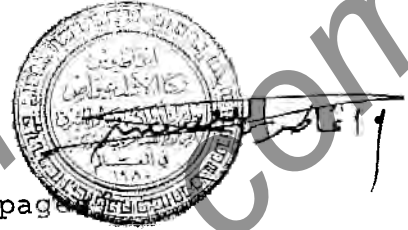
Most of the Malankaran Parishes are currently incorporated in accordance with its resident State's Religious Corporations or similar Law. Various States have different rules, regulations and guidelines with regard to the proper functioning of a corporation formed for religious purposes. The majority of Syrian Orthodox Churches are incorporated as per the guidelines provided by the late lamented Archbishop H.E. Mor Athanasius Yeshue Samuel. Accordingly, it is unnecessary, and might be confusing, to include herein any bylaws for the internal administration of the individual Malankaran Parishes. Each Malankaran Parish shall be internally administered in accordance with its respective constitution and bylaws. If there is a valid conflict between the Archdiocesan Constitution and a particular Parish constitution and/or bylaw, it shall be dealt with appropriately by the Archdiocesan Council. If it is not resolved at the Council level, it shall be brought to the Delegates' Meeting for final disposal.

THE END

Approved,

(altogether Eighteen pages)

Ignatius Zakka I Iwas
Patriarch of Antioch and All the East
Supreme head of the Universal Syrian
Orthodox Church



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SYRIAN ORTHODOX PATRIARCHATE
OF ANTIOCH & ALL THE EAST
BAB TOUMA, P.O.BOX 22260
DAMASCUS - SYRIA



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باب توما - ص.ب. ٢٢٢٦٠
دمشق - سورية



BY THE GRACE OF GOD

Ignatius Zakka I Iwas
Patriarch of Antioch and All the East
Supreme Head of the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church

No.E40/10



01-February-2010

Apostolic Benediction to our beloved Metropolitan His Grace Mor Theethose Yeldho and to our beloved spiritual children: the Venerable Cor-Episcopoes, the Esteemed Priests, the Reverend Deacons and all the dear Faithful of our Malankara Archdiocese in North America.

Inquiring about your welfare, we inform you the following. We are in receipt of the recommendation of the Delegates' Meeting held on July 10, 2008 to make some amendments to the existing Constitution of our Malankara Archdiocese of the Syrian Orthodox Church in North America, which was approved by us in January 2004. After studying your suggestions, we feel it is not necessary to amend the Article X, clause-7 - 'Duties of the Archbishop'. Rather we advise you all to get the approval of your Archbishop before the new Managing Committee takes charge in each parish. With that comment we hereby approve all the other amendments recommended by the Delegate's meetings of the Archdiocese. The approved amendments are attached herewith. We hope and pray that the Constitution will help you to function more effectively in a disciplined manner. We extend our Apostolic Blessings to you. May the grace of God be with all our faithful of North America. **ܐܘܨܝܐ ܕܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܥܢܢܐ**

Incl: Approved Constitution amendments - 4 pages

**MALANKARA ARCHDIOCESE
OF THE SYRIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA**
10 Stonehurst Court, Pomona, New York, 10970

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION AS DECIDED IN THE DELEGATES'
MEETINGS HELD ON APRIL 5, 2008 AND JULY 10, 2008**

**ARTICLE VII
COMPOSITION AND STRUCTURE OF THE ARCHDIOCESE**

Original:

All parishes / congregations under the Holy Apostolic See of Antioch and All the East, with faithful believers who are following and professing the Syrian Orthodox faith and its venerable traditions (hereafter referred to as Malankara Parishes), are the only legitimate members of the Archdiocese. Each Malankara Parish must adhere to the Universal Syrian Orthodox faith and Apostolic orders and guidance beyond doubt through the Sacrament of Baptism and other Holy Orders and confess the faith as confirmed in the Nicene Creed. No Malankara Parish shall be established within the Archdiocese without prior written permission from the Archbishop Metropolitan.

Added:

In general, a member of the Archdiocese means a parish or a congregation.

Original:

The minimum requirement to form a new Malankara Parish shall be fifteen families that are not members of any of the Archdiocesan Malankara Parishes within twenty-five miles. All new Malankara Parishes must be affiliated with the Archdiocese and they are bound to obey the rules and regulations of the Holy Church and the Malankara Archdiocese.

Added:

In places where there are no Syriac Orthodox parishes and there are faithful in need of a Church, this requirement of minimum number of families and the area specifications shall be waived and the Metropolitan / Archbishop upon receipt of an application shall give permission to establish a new parish in consultation with the Archdiocesan Council.

**ARTICLE VIII
THE ARCHDIOCESAN DELEGATE'S MEETING**

Page 7- original:

For the Sunday School Association, St. Mary's Women's League, Youth Association, The Association for Protection of Antiochean True Faith, MGSOSA and for St. Paul's Men's Fellowship the Delegates' Meeting will elect 6 clergymen as Vice Presidents.

Amended:

For the Sunday School Association, St. Mary's Women's League, The Association for Protection of Antiochian True Faith, MGSOSA and for St. Paul's Men's Fellowship, the Delegates' Meeting will elect 5 clergymen as Vice Presidents.

Page 7- original:

All decisions taken by the Archdiocesan Delegates Meeting from the properly distributed agenda items shall be binding on all the member parishes.

Amended:

All decisions taken by the Archdiocesan Delegates Meeting, unanimously or by a two-third majority, from the properly distributed agenda items shall be binding on all the member parishes

Page 8- Original:

The representation from a Malankara Parish to the Delegates' Meeting is specified to be the Vicar and two lay representatives. However the delegates, upon a further perusal, proposed to modify that article to name the Vicar and two lay representatives for a Parish that has up to 50 families, three lay members for Parishes having up to 75 families, four lay members for Parishes having up to 100 members and five lay members for Parishes having over hundred families.

Amended:

The representation from a Malankara parish to the Delegate's Meeting is specified to be the Vicar and two lay representatives for a parish that has up to twenty-five families, three lay members for parishes having up to fifty families, four lay members for the parishes having up to seventy-five families and thus one additional delegate for every twenty-five members thereafter.

ARTICLE IX GOVERNING BODY OF THE ARCHDIOCESE

Section 5: Original

Written notices with agenda, date, time and place shall be sent to the members by the Secretary, at least seven days prior to the meeting of the Council. A three-quarters (3/4) majority shall constitute a quorum.

Amended:

Written notices with agenda, date, time and place shall be sent to the members by the Secretary, at least 14 days prior to the meeting of the Council. A simple majority shall constitute a quorum.

Section 5: Original

The Council shall gather information pertinent to the matter within a reasonable time frame and make recommendations to the Metropolitan to resolve the matter.

Amended: The Council shall gather information pertinent to the matter within 90 days and make recommendations to the Metropolitan to resolve the matter.

ARTICLE X - THE DUTIES

Council Members-Section 1B Original:

To recommend the services of a properly qualified priests for the churches.

Amended:

To recommend the services of priests for the churches.

DO NOT PUBLISH ANYWHERE UNLESS AUTHORIZED TO DO SO!

Council Members-Section 1D Original:

To make complete annual accounts of the income and expenditures of the Archdiocese and to construct its budget for the following fiscal year which shall run from June 01 to May 31 of the following year.

Amended:

To make the complete annual accounts of the income and expenditures of the Archdiocese and to prepare a budget for the following fiscal year. The fiscal year shall be decided by the Delegate's Meeting from time to time.

Priest/ Vicar (Page 12)

Added at the beginning:

By virtue of the appointment by the Archbishop, the Vicar shall be the president of the parish.

ARTICLE XI - ACCOUNTS & AUDIT

Original:

The annual accounts shall be audited by the auditor(s) appointed by the Delegates' Meeting and the copies of the audited account shall be sent to each Malankara Parish, after the account is passed at the Annual Delegates' Meeting and after getting the final approval of H.H the Patriarch.

Amended:

The annual accounts shall be audited by the auditor(s) appointed by the Delegates' Meeting and the copies of the audited account shall be sent to each Parish, after the account is passed at the annual Delegates' Meeting.

ARTICLE XII - SPIRITUAL ORGANIZATIONS

It has been decided to combine the Youth Association and Mar Gregorios Syriac Orthodox Student Association (MGSOSA) as one spiritual organization, namely MGSOSA. So No. 4 Youth Association and No. 6 MGSOSA have been combined to read as follows.

Amended:

4. MOR GREGORIOS SYRIAC ORTHODOX STUDENT ASSOCIATION (M.G.S.O.S.A)

This student association shall be comprised of all students and youth between the ages of 15 and 30 years within the jurisdiction of Archdiocese. They shall form primary units at each Malankara Parish and shall be governed by the Bylaws of the respective Parish under the guidelines of the Archbishop, the Vice President, the Archdiocesan council and its Archdiocesan level office bearers. It shall meet at least once a year during the Annual Archdiocesan Convention and as many times as required to address matters related to the Syrian Orthodox Students. A Secretary, a Treasurer and other regional organizers shall be elected at the annual meeting held at the Annual Convention and their term shall be for two years. The Mor Gregorios Syrian Orthodox Student Association shall have representation at the Archdiocesan delegate meetings as observer. The Secretary shall keep the records of all meetings and the Treasurer shall be the custodian of the Student Association funds, if any.

Original:

7. ST. PAUL'S MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Amended:

6. ST. PAUL'S MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

ARTICLE XIII - COMPLAINTS

Original SECTION-3:

The commission shall be headed by His Eminence and other members who shall be appointed from a panel of laymen and clergy by the council.

Amendment: Delete the above sentence.

ARTICLE XV - AMENDMENT TO CONSTITUTION

Original: Amendments to the other articles of the Constitution and Bylaws may be proposed by any member in good standing and such proposals shall be submitted in writing to the Metropolitan for submission to the Archdiocesan Council.

Amended:

Amendments to the other articles of the Constitution and Bylaws may be proposed by any member parish in good standing and such proposals shall be submitted in writing to the Metropolitan for submission to the Archdiocesan Council.

