

## **STATUTES OF THE ALABARÉ ROMAN CATHOLIC FELLOWSHIP**

(Private Association of Christ's Faithful)

### **I Nature & Purpose**

#### **A. Nature**

**1.** Among the many great freedoms which Jesus Christ has won for us by his incarnation among us, and above all by the mystery of his sacrificial death and resurrection is the liberty of the children of God to follow Christ the true, living Way in a variety of different manners. (Rom 8.21)

Some are called to specific expressions of the Way, married life, monastic life, institutes of consecrated life, consecrated virginity, associations of the faithful, and so on. (Canon 298). Others, even where they may not have discerned a special calling, are free to seek to marry, to join an institute or society of apostolic life, and to associate with other Christians in their living in the Spirit whom Jesus has given to us. In varied ways we accept and carry out the great commission to go into the world proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ. (Catechism #930) (1 Cor 7.39; Mt 28.19)

Even more, the community life of Alabaré, is an expression of the life of Christians, taking as its perfect model not some earthly society, but the mystery of the love of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, three Persons in one perfect unity. Just as the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are more distinct from one another than we might ever be able to grasp, so it is the very differences among us as Community that become the opportunities for grace. (1 Cor 12)

For the members of the Alabaré Christian Community this has meant a covenant relationship with one another in an ecumenical community. The purpose has been to advance ecumenism, to serve the poor, above all by hospitality through the Alabaré Christian Care Centres, which the Lord has prospered. We also seek to encourage one another in holiness, to join together for regular Community meetings and worship, and to reach out to all around us with the Good News.

Open to Christians of any denomination, we also recognise the freedom of members of the Community to form fellowships with brothers and sisters who share their particular ecclesial background to deepen their teaching of doctrine, worship and spirituality in accordance with their traditions. The Roman Catholic members are the first to form such a Fellowship so that they might find themselves at the service of the Church under the authority and direction of the diocesan bishop. (Canon 301)

If a number of Community members of another tradition wished to form a fellowship within the Community reflecting their own ecclesial structures, this would be encouraged also.

The Statutes of the Community shall always apply to the life of the Fellowship, except insofar as the Fellowship Statutes clearly derogate from those of the Community.

## **B. Purpose**

The purpose of the Catholic Fellowship is to help its members lead fervent Christian lives according to the entire teaching and practice of the Roman Catholic Church in every situation, in their personal living, family life, social relationships and occupations, as the Second Council of the Vatican has taught. (Lumen Gentium 40)

It means to assist each member in following Jesus Christ by growth in understanding, by a programme of formation, scripture reading, the Prayer of the Church at morning and evening prayer, and by ever closer bonds of fellowship. We would extend this to families of Fellowship members also.

We wait with great expectation for the constant renewal of the gifts of the Holy Spirit among us, and for the signs of grace drawing us together.

As an expression of what it is to be Church the Roman Catholic Fellowship exists to evangelise, and to engage in what has been called the new evangelisation, of which Pope John Paul II has spoken often, reaching out to all people, not least in secular environments. We wish to bring forth, by evangelical witness, and by explicit proclamation of the name of Jesus many more adopted brothers and sisters for Christ. (Paul VI, Evangelii Nuntiandi)

The Fellowship also wishes to be an instrument for ecumenism, collaborating where possible, according to the recommendations of the Decrees on Missionary Activity and Ecumenism of the Second Council of the Vatican and of the revised Ecumenical Directory. We also seek to foster relationships with the new House-Churches as they appear. We seek to see ecumenism properly understood as in Jesus Christ's prayer, that they may all be one. (Jn 17.22)

We are called to be of service to the diocese, co-operating and contributing wherever possible to the overall pastoral plan of the diocese, and to parish life by supporting and promoting parochial activities. (Evangelii Nuntiandi 58)

We will provide for Fellowship member's liturgical and sacramental life in whatever ways are deemed appropriate in consultation with the Bishop and local clergy.

We will renew our commitment to serving our neighbours in their needs, carrying out various charitable acts and corporal works of mercy, showing forth the love of Christ Jesus to all, especially attending to the dignity of those living on the margins of society, and serving Jesus Christ in all, especially in those most in need. (Mt 25:21)

## **II Membership**

**A.** Full Membership in the Fellowship is open to baptized Roman Catholics who are active members of the Alabaré Community. Individuals must seek membership and be confirmed by the moderator of the fellowship.

**B.** Its membership consists of Roman Catholic single lay men and lay women, families (including their minor children),(Can.97,1) Roman Catholic partners of Community member's from other Christian denominations, clergy, (with the consent of the proper religious superior or bishop) and religious (with the approval of their religious superior). (Can. 307,3).

**C.** Membership in the Fellowship parallels membership in the Alabaré Christian Community. Therefore, the first stage of membership is termed underway membership. It consists of members in formation being accepted by the moderator and in their agreeing to participate faithfully in the life of the Fellowship as well as being formed in their life ideals by attending the courses offered in the Fellowship formation programme.

**D.** The second stage of membership is called full membership. After a period of formation, underway members may be accepted into full membership if they have demonstrated their ability and desire to live the life of fellowship and are full covenant members of Alabaré Community.

**E.** An associate form of membership is available to active associate members of Alabaré Christian Community who desire to live the life of the Fellowship but who are unable, because of special circumstances, to take part in them as permanent members. Such special situations may include obstacles to ordinary membership raised by geographical distance, or public positions that would make regular participation difficult. Other circumstances such as age, marital status, may also be considered. In these cases, an associate membership may be advisable. Associate membership would allow someone to benefit from support in living a dedicated Christian life provided by the Fellowship and to share in the formation provided.

**F.** Initial membership will automatically be granted to current Roman Catholic members of the Alabaré , Christian Community who seek to join according to their status within the Community:

**Status:**

**1.** Underway members of Alabaré Christian Community will become underway in the Roman Catholic Fellowship.

**2.** Full covenant members of Alabaré Christian Community will become full members in the Roman Catholic Fellowship.

**3.** Associate members of Alabaré Christian Community will become associate members of the Roman Catholic Fellowship.

**4.** Members of Alabaré Youth will become members of the Roman Catholic Youth Fellowship

**G.** No form of membership in the Fellowship involves the taking of vows. Full membership involves the making of a personal commitment in writing and verbalizing that commitment at a gathering of the Fellowship.

**H.** Any level of membership in the Fellowship may be terminated either at the initiative of the member or at the initiative of the Fellowship. The Fellowship will take the initiative in terminating membership for grave reasons and will do so through a process that will allow ample opportunity for the person whose membership is being terminated to be heard through a meeting with the Elders of the Fellowship. The reasons for which termination of membership may be considered will include: serious, repeated, and un-repented violations of Christian doctrine or morality, public dissent from Church teaching and for failure to adhere to the basic commitments included in being a member of the fellowship. (Can. 308)

Note: Loss of membership in the Alabaré Christian Community automatically terminates membership in the Roman Catholic Fellowship.

The decision to terminate a person's membership in the Roman Catholic Fellowship will be made by the Body of Elders of the Fellowship and communicated in writing to that person after an agreed procedure has been followed. This action will be taken only after the person has been placed in an inactive status for a minimum period of six months, during which time effort will be made to restore the relationship and resolve outstanding issues. In the event that an underway or associate member requests termination of membership, termination will automatically be granted in writing. In event that a full member initiates termination of membership in writing, the termination request will be reviewed by the Elders of the Fellowship in collaboration with those who work in the closest pastoral relationship with the member. The Elders of the Fellowship may grant the request for termination outright or it may be denied. If the full member's request for termination is denied, and the member remains steadfast in his desire for termination, he/she/they will move into an inactive status for six months, during which time efforts will be made to restore the member. After six months, the member will have membership terminated in writing. Any member may appeal to the diocesan bishop for review of their termination or for redress from the six-month waiting period for termination if he/she so desires.

### **III Formation**

**A.** The members of the Fellowship will receive ongoing formation in Roman Catholic doctrine and practical Christian living. (can. 329)

**B.** New Members of the Fellowship will take a basic course in Roman Catholic doctrine and morality according to an outline or syllabus developed with the approval of the local Ordinary.

**C.** The Fellowship will provide assistance to parental members of the Fellowship in discharging their duties as the primary educators of their children. (Can.774,2)

**D.** A spiritual advisor will be chosen for the Fellowship by the Elders of the Fellowship with the approval of the local Ordinary. (Can.324,2)

### **V Governance**

**A.** The governance of the Fellowship rests with the Roman Catholic Elders of the Alabaré Christian Community. They are called the Elders of the Fellowship:

**1.** The Elders of Alabaré Christian Community fulfil an historical and functional role within the Community. They have had responsibility to oversee the outworking of the vision and life of the community and for the establishment of the Roman Catholic Fellowship for the Community's Roman Catholic members.

**2.** When a new Roman Catholic Elder is appointed to serve the Alabaré Christian Community, they will also be appointed to serve within the Roman Catholic Fellowship, with the approval of the diocesan bishop, providing they have become a member of the Fellowship.

**3.** Elders are appointed for an indefinite term of office with review of their individual roles made on an annual basis by the Body of Elders of the Fellowship. Individuals who are not Elders of the Alabaré Christian Community may be appointed, after consultation of the Bishop, elders of the Alabaré Roman Catholic Fellowship

**4.** The Body of Elders of the Fellowship may remove Elders with the approval of the local Ordinary.

**5.** The Body of Elders of the Fellowship shall appoint one of the members of the Fellowship to be the moderator of the Catholic Fellowship under the direction of the local Ordinary. He/she shall be the liaison with the bishop, relating to the bishop on behalf of the Elders of the Roman Catholic Fellowship. He/she will often be the leader of the Fellowship in gatherings. His/her term of office will be for three years with reappointment a possibility.

**6.** The Fellowship will call on the Alabaré Christian Community for all its financial needs. If at any time these cannot be met in full then Members and Associate Members of the Fellowship may raise sufficient funds for their needs with any excess being returned to the Alabaré Christian Community Charitable Trust.

## **V Ecumenical Relationships**

**A.** The Roman Catholic Fellowship, through the Alabaré Christian Community, enters into collaboration with other Christians in order to contribute to the fulfilment of the prayer of Christ and make the work of evangelism more effective, as expressed in the words of Pope Paul VI in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*.

**B.** Such relationships are based on the principles established by the Vatican Council II in the Decree on Ecumenism and covered by the guidelines issued periodically by the Holy See, such as the Ecumenical Directory, to guide ecumenical relationships.

**C.** Such relationships are the type described in 6B and 7 of the Ecumenical Collaboration at the Regional, National, and Local Levels issued by the Secretariat

for Promoting Christian Unity and conducted in keeping with the guidelines expressed therein.

**D.** These relationships have been entered into with other Christians who have accepted the necessity for Roman Catholics to be faithful to their faith and life as Roman Catholics.

**E.** This understanding is expressed in the covenant of the Alabaré Christian Community. This agreement enables the integrity of the life of the Fellowship and its members to be properly safeguarded in the midst of this collaboration.

**F.** Collaboration with other Christian fellowships and local congregations, approved by their legitimate authority, is envisioned for the future. Each such collaboration will be pursued and developed with the approval of the local Ordinary.

## **VI Relationship with the Diocesan Bishop**

**A.** Statutes of the Fellowship have been reviewed and recognised by the diocesan bishop. (can. 299, 2 & 3)

**B.** The diocesan bishop must approve changes to the recognised statutes which must have previously been approved by 75% of members, attending the meeting and eligible to vote, by a secret ballot.

Changes to statutes must first be submitted at an Annual General meeting and discussed at the following AGM. The proposed change together with any amendments will then be voted on at the following AGM i.e. the third meeting. This being a minimum of two years from when the proposed changes are brought forward.

**C.** The Elders of the Fellowship, or their representatives, will regularly report to the diocesan bishop to inform him of developments in the life of the Fellowship.

**D.** The diocesan bishop, or his delegates, will be invited to visit the Fellowship periodically to observe at first hand the life of the Fellowship. (Can. 305,1)

**E.** The diocesan bishop, or his delegate, will assist the Elders of the Fellowship in their endeavour to work in harmony with the overall diocesan pastoral plan.

## **VII Dissolution of the Fellowship**

**A.** The Elders of the Fellowship may dissolve the Alabaré Roman Catholic Fellowship after consultation with the diocesan bishop.

**B.** Property belonging to the Alabaré Roman Catholic Fellowship at the time of the dissolution will revert to the Alabaré Christian Community, a registered charity in England and Wales; after all acquired liabilities are fulfilled.

C. The Alabaré Roman Catholic Fellowship is recognised in the Diocese of Clifton and may not function in any other diocese without the recognition of the competent ecclesiastical authority.

DATED THIS \_\_\_\_\_ DAY

OF \_\_\_\_\_ 2005

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BISHOP OF CLIFTON