

CANON 14: Of Religious Orders and Other Christian Communities

Sec. 1 (a) A Religious Order of this Church is a society of Christians (in communion with the See of Canterbury) who voluntarily commit themselves for life, or a term of years: to holding their possessions in common or in trust; to a celibate life in community; and obedience to their Rule and Constitution.

(b) To be officially recognized, a Religious Order must have at least six professed members, and must be approved by the Standing Committee on Religious Communities of the House of Bishops and be registered with the Committee.

(c) Each Order shall have a Bishop Visitor or Protector, who need not be the Bishop of the Diocese in which the Order is established. If, however, the Bishop Visitor or Protector is not the Bishop of the Diocese in which the Mother House of the Order is situated, the Bishop Visitor or Protector shall not accept election without the consent of the Bishop of that Diocese. The Bishop Visitor or Protector shall be the guardian of the Constitution of the Order, and shall serve as an arbiter in matters which the Order or its members cannot resolve through its normal processes.

(d) Any person under vows in a Religious Order, having exhausted the normal processes of the Order, may petition the Bishop Visitor or Protector for dispensation from those vows. In the event the petitioner is not satisfied with the ruling of the Bishop Visitor or Protector on such petition, the person may file a petition with the Presiding Bishop, who shall appoint a Board of three Bishops to review the petition and the decision thereon, and to make recommendation to the Presiding Bishop, who shall have the highest dispensing power for Religious Orders, and whose ruling on the petition shall be final.

(e) A Religious Order may establish a house in a Diocese only with the permission of the Bishop of the Diocese. This permission once granted shall not be withdrawn by the Bishop or any succeeding Bishop.

(f) The Constitution of every Religious Order shall make provision for the legal ownership and administration of the temporal possessions of the Order, and in the event of dissolution of the Order, or should it otherwise cease to exist, shall provide for the disposition of its assets according to the laws governing non-profit (religious) organizations in the State wherein the Order is incorporated.

(g) It is recognized that a Religious Order is not a Parish, Mission, Congregation or Institution of the Diocese within the meaning of Canon I.7.3, and its provisions shall not apply to Religious Orders.

Sec. 2 (a) A Christian Community of this Church under this Canon is a society of Christians (in communion with the See of Canterbury) who voluntarily commit themselves for life, or a term of years, in obedience to their Rule and Constitution.

(b) To be officially recognized such a Christian Community must have at least six full members in accordance with their Rule and Constitution, and must be approved by the Standing Committee on Religious Communities of the House of Bishops and be registered with the Committee.

(c) Each such Christian Community of this Church shall have a Bishop Visitor or Protector, who need not be the Bishop of the Diocese in which the community is established. If, however, the Bishop Visitor or Protector is not the Bishop of the Diocese in which the Mother House of the Community is situated, the Bishop Visitor or Protector shall not accept election without the consent of the Bishop of that Diocese. The Bishop Visitor or Protector shall be the guardian of the Constitution of the Community, and shall serve as an arbiter in matters which the Community or its members cannot resolve through its normal processes.

(d) Any person under full commitment in such a Christian Community, having exhausted the normal processes of the Community, may petition the Bishop Visitor or Protector for dispensation from that full commitment. In the event the petitioner is not satisfied with the ruling of the Bishop Visitor or Protector on such petition, the person may file a petition with the Presiding Bishop of the Church, who shall appoint a Board of three Bishops to review the petition and the decision thereon, and to make recommendation to the Presiding Bishop, who shall have the highest dispensing power for Christian Communities, and whose ruling on the petition shall be final.

(e) Each such Christian Community may establish a house in a Diocese only with the permission of the Bishop of the Diocese. This permission once granted shall not be withdrawn by the Bishop or any succeeding Bishop.

(f) The Constitution of each Christian Community shall make provision for the legal ownership and administration of the temporal possessions of the Community, and in the event of dissolution of the Community, or should it otherwise cease to exist, shall provide for the disposition of its assets according to the laws governing non-profit (religious) organizations in the State wherein the Community is incorporated.

(g) It is recognized that a Christian Community is not a Parish, Mission, Congregation or Institution of the Diocese within the meaning of Canon I.7.3, and its provisions shall not apply to such Christian Communities.

Sec. 3. Any Bishop receiving vows of an individual not a member of a Religious Order or other Christian Community, using the form for "Setting Apart for a Special Vocation" in the *Book of Occasional Services* , or a similar rite, shall record the following information with the Standing Committee on Religious Communities of the House of Bishops: the name of the person making vows; the date of the service; the nature and contents of the vows made, whether temporary or permanent; and any other pastoral considerations as shall be deemed necessary.