

# Constitution for the International Catholic Confederation (ICC)

Rev. 18.12.2018

## Introduction

In considering the formation of a new communion of Catholic Jurisdictions, we are cognizant of both the past and present; the giants of the Catholic faith on whose shoulders we attempt to stand, as well as the failures that certain groups and jurisdictions have, or are encountering, in attempting to remain faithful to the historic deposit of faith.



The goal of The International Catholic Confederation is not the creation of something new, but rather reaffirming our understanding of how Catholics of the earliest age understood and practiced their faith. As a Catholic Jurisdiction, we will affirm the sufficiency of scripture as viewed through the lens of the First Seven Ecumenical Councils, accepted creeds, and Fathers of the Church.

We also affirm that as a jurisdiction, we hold the four marks of catholicity, being: One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic. We are comprised of bishops and jurisdictions that trace our authority back to Jesus Christ and His Apostles. The ICC also affirms our Catholic Sacramental and liturgical roots.

One motivation in forming this confederacy is confronting the expansion of modernism within a growing number of Protestant and Catholic Jurisdictions. In this, we define “Modernism” as the trend towards changing established doctrine to conform to politically correct ideals regarding human sexuality and other concerns.

In moving forward, we must actively review doctrinal developments that have crept into the Church over the centuries. In this understanding, we must avoid the pitfalls of becoming “pharisaic,” teaching for doctrine/dogma the teachings of men.

In this understanding, we are both prayerful and humbled in considering such a venture. It is the prayer of our founding council of bishops that we each may remain both humble in our intentions, focusing our goals more on our fidelity to an orthodox practice of faith rather than imprecatory judgments against those who choose a different path.

We are also prayerful that our efforts will be truly guided by the Holy Spirit, leading us towards sanctification of heart as well as collegiality in all we do. A test of our success will be in our ability to put aside issues of pride.

It is in the spirit of the above, that we, the International Catholic Confederation invite Catholic Jurisdictions from all over the earth to join us on our journey back to orthodoxy. We define the Catholic Church as consisting of those churches that affirm

their belief in and maintain the “Four Marks” of classic Catholicism: “One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic.” In this understanding, we are not as concerned with your ecclesiastical history as much as where you are heading on your spiritual journey.

Churches currently engaging in this project come from a variety of rites and traditions; Anglican, Old Catholic, and Roman Catholic. We find our common ground in our love for Christ and our commitment to a common understanding of the historic deposit of faith.

Note: This document contains specific titles, for particular ministries. These titles are being used to differentiate between various roles in within the ICC. These titles may change as we further develop our internal working relationships.

### **Vision Statement**

To become an evangelion of Jesus Christ’s good news building an international community of National Catholic churches in full-communication committed to orthodoxy and orthopraxy of the authentic and historic deposit of faith against the multiple errors of modernism.

### **Mission Statement**

To be a contemporary voice in the rejection of rules of men as dogmatic articles of faith, in the spirit of the principles and founding vision of the declaration of the Union of Utrecht.

### **Membership Requirements**

- The ICC will be comprised of individual, conservative, National Catholic Churches, with active ministries. Active ministries are not limited to parishes but could include chaplaincy, religious communities, and Apostolates, and Catholic specific ministries such as hospitals, orphanages, orders of exorcists, schools, and seminaries.
- Each jurisdiction must be open to building relationships with other like-minded jurisdictions within their own country, attempting to build common ground based upon ICC tenets.
- Each national jurisdiction must have at least one bishop in authentic Apostolic Succession, or be under the authority of an ICC member jurisdiction until they are able to elect their own bishop and fulfill the appropriate requirements thereof.
- Member jurisdictions without a bishop in their nation will provide a non-voting member to participate in our college of bishops
- Must agree to be in full communion, which will include agreeing to our Mission, Vision and a firm commitment to traditional (non-negotiable) Catholic teachings and moral values (to be defined later in this document).
- The presiding bishop (regardless of title), or delegate, of each jurisdiction will actively participate as a voting member of our council of bishops. Other bishops are invited and even expected to participate in our meetings, synods, and committees.
- Voting member bishops are encouraged to develop a consensus from among their individual colleges of bishops on important subjects prior to voting. In this format, it is our prayer that our Synod of National Churches will operate on an

equal level, with the overall number of bishops in each jurisdiction not diminishing the voices of smaller jurisdictions.

- The Presiding Archbishop of the ICC will not vote unless there is an insurmountable tie vote. It is for that reason that the Coadjutor bishop (or equivalent) for the Presiding Archbishop's home jurisdiction will also have a voting seat on the College of bishops. (More on this topic later)
- Member jurisdictions must provide documentation to the Primate/presiding Archbishop of their lines of succession and canons — for review by the ICC membership committee.
- Prospective members MUST be willing to align their canons or constitution so as not to be in conflict with ICC Constitution, mission and vision.
- Member Jurisdictions agree to provide an annual census including: membership, clergy, parishes and accounting of sacraments administered
- Membership is voluntary and may be terminated at will, by either the individual jurisdiction's resignation, or by a two-thirds vote of the ICC College of Bishops.
- Issues, which may precipitate removal: changes to member's canons which are contrary to the ICC constitution, (other issues to be discussed)

### **Administration**

The ICC shall be governed by a College of Cardinals (presiding bishops of each member jurisdiction), operating in parity of rank, responsibility, and honor, with a Presiding Archbishop at the head to be the final arbiter in voting and disputes.

The Presiding Archbishop will be elected from among the college of bishops and serve for life or if his health requires retirement. As the founding Archbishop, the Primate of the Catholic Church in America will be the inaugural head of our jurisdiction.

### **ICC Coadjutor**

The College of bishops will elect a Coadjutor bishop from its ranks to serve as Vice President of the Council and successor to the current presiding Archbishop. This is not to be confused with the Coadjutor of the Presiding Archbishops primary jurisdiction, though in fact at times they may indeed be one and the same if elected.

### **Finances**

It is a fact of life that in the business of running a church, there are unavoidable expenses. In order for any business to responsibly plan an annual budget is essential to accurately forecast both income and expenses.

Therefore, it is imperative that member jurisdictions commit to financially supporting the ICC with a portion of the resources they themselves receive. The amount each jurisdiction tithes to the Mother Jurisdiction will be at the discretion of each Member Church. The ICC College of Cardinals will appoint a finance committee that will be tasked with working with the Presiding Bishop to oversee the budget. Part of the budget must contain the costs to retain an outside, independent accounting firm to manage our financial resources.

Once we have ascertained forecasted income, we will develop a budget that is consistent with reasonable expectations for professional business operations. Prayerfully we will also be able to facilitate evangelism and charitable outreach in

multiple regions around the world.

Under no circumstances will the financial support of the ICC become the sole responsibility of the ICC Presiding Bishop, nor his jurisdiction. Membership in the ICC must also become a covenant agreement between our confederation of jurisdictions.

### **Core Values**

“IN ESSENTIALS UNITY, IN NON-ESSENTIALS LIBERTY, IN ALL THINGS CHARITY.” At first blush, the above quote (probably not St Augustine) sounds pretty good and reasonable. In preparing to form the International Catholic Confederation, the idea of “UNITY” around the essentials is, well, ESSENTIAL. And yes, we should give each other a bit of leeway when it comes to issues that are non-essential unless they are contrary or somehow deleterious to our understanding or practice of faith.

So, that brings us to the final point — “in all things charity” or as often-phrased “love.” This is where we run headlong into trouble. In the modern view of propriety, everyone’s views must be respected, affirmed, or loved.

In modern faith-based conversations, we are usually told that we are not to Judge. In this same discussion, even identifying something or an action as “sinful” is both judgmental and unloving. This idea of Christian propriety is actually 100% contrary to how we are how Christians are to act.

We must always love individuals as children of God. In love, we need to be instructing believers and those seeking faith understanding what scripture and tradition actually have to say about sin. Anything less would be un-loving. It is in this understanding that we, the founding council of bishops have compiled this list of “immutable” truth that we believe, from both diligent study and prayer, are essential elements of the Catholic faith. These truths are found in both Testaments of Scripture, the canons of the First Seven Ecumenical Councils of the primitive Church, as well as the accepted teachings of the early Fathers, Apologists, and other sources routinely deemed to be authoritative from the historic Deposit of Faith.

The ICC constitution in not being produced as Canon Law or a comprehensive list of dogma or doctrine. The list below may be appended as we mature as a communion, by a two-thirds of our college of cardinals. Each item to follow will be (over time) followed up with a descriptive letter or encyclical, either produced by our Presiding Bishop or individual communities of Scholars. These letters will serve as doctrinal or dogmatic position statements and must be approved by a two-thirds vote of our council of bishops.

### **Doctrinal Essentials**

1. Nicene Creed
  - A. Orthodox Christology
  - B. Orthodox Trinitarian understanding (without Filioque) (Letter required)
  - C. Virgin Birth of Jesus
  - D. Suffering and dying on the Cross
  - E. Rising/resurrected on the third day

- F. Seated at the right hand of the Father
  - G. Will come again to judge the living and the dead
  - H. His kingdom will have no end
  - I. Communion of Saints
  - J. The Four Marks: One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic
2. Canons of the First Seven Ecumenical Councils (Letter Required)
  3. Seven Sacraments
  4. Need for, means and mode of salvation (Letter required)
  5. Authentic Catholic Liturgies (Letter required)
  6. Authentic Apostolic Succession
  7. Evangelical (in the sense of spreading the gospel, expanding the kingdom of God On the earth)
  8. Charismatic (in that we believe that the Holy Spirit empowers us for ministry, and spiritual gifts are still active and available to believers in every age)
  9. Marriage between one man and one woman
  10. Homosexual activities always outside of God’s divine creative order and therefore considered sin and disordered. (Requires pastoral Letter)
  11. The offices of bishop and priest are presented in both scripture and tradition as reserved to men only.
  12. Men who “identify” as homosexual, transgendered, bisexual or any other sort of alternative sexual expression are not permitted into holy orders.
  13. The Bible specifically shows women in the diaconate. Though there is much debate regarding the role of women deacons in the early Church, we recognize that some jurisdictions may choose to honor qualified women to this level of holy orders.
  14. Birth Control methods that include abortifacient properties are always intrinsically evil, in that they intentionally end a pre-born life.
  15. Abortion. The intentional ending of a pre-born life is always an intrinsic moral evil.
  16. Medical procedures to save a mother’s life, which have the unfortunate consequence of losing the life of a pre-born child, should not be considered “sin” as long as the intention was in the best interest of saving one life.
  17. Death Penalty. The church has always understood that nations have the responsibility to make and enforce laws, including the right to imprison and capital punishment. (Letter required)
  18. We have a zero tolerance policy regarding sexual harassment and assault. All reports or accusations of such improprieties must be reported to both civil authorities and the bishop of immediate jurisdiction.
  19. The Seal of Confession. While we agree in principle that confidentiality between laity and priest is of the utmost importance. This aspect concerning total secrecy was not instituted until the 12th century, and therefore not authentic to the practice of faith in the earliest age of the Church. In our current age, laity, clergy, and Magisterium alike have abused the seal of confession. This seal of secrecy was never intended to become a so-called “get out of jail free card.” True confession and reconciliation require contrition and a commitment to be reconciled with all, including the victim and the law of the land. (letter required)
  20. Our Eucharistic Celebrations are open to all baptized Christians, regardless of their views regarding the character of the Eucharist.
  21. We believe that celibacy for those in Holy Orders is a personal decision and voluntary.

22. We believe that confession of sins before a priest is a sacrament that has been passed down to us by the Catholic Church, but is not a requirement for the forgiveness of sins.
23. We believe that the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary is a new innovation that has crept into the church. Therefore it is not binding on all Catholics, nor is a belief in such a requirement for salvation.
24. We believe that the pope, as bishop of Rome is an heir to the authority and ministry of the apostles; therefore the Bishop of Rome is to be respected.
25. We believe that all Bishops hold an equal apostolic calling and authority, and no particular See is of higher authority than another.
26. We believe that the dogma of the universal episcopate of the Roman Pontiff is a new innovation, not in keeping with the ancient traditions and teachings of the Church, and believing in such is not a requirement for salvation.
27. We reject the idea that the term Catholic only applies to Churches that are in full communion with the Bishop of Rome. We view this as a new innovation that is not binding on other Churches, nor is it a requirement for salvation.
28. We believe that marriage is a Sacrament. We also recognize that divorce is an all too common reality. We do not believe that either divorce or divorce and remarriage are the unforgivable sins; neither do we believe that divorce, in and of itself, bars anyone from the sacrament of Holy Orders.
29. We believe in teaching what the whole church has always taught, everywhere, and for all time, we do not accept theological speculation, new and controversial doctrines such as popular in liberal churches.
30. We believe that it is the role of the clergy is to guide the morality and faith formation of the Church.
31. We believe that the laity serves an important role in the Church and need to be active and working within the life and ministry of the Church