
CONSTITUTION OF THE LAITY COUNCIL: CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SUNYANI

OFFICE OF THE LAY APOSTOLATE



PREAMBLE:

Baptism accords all the Christian faithful a fundamental equality through which they share in the three-fold mission of Jesus: namely his royal, priestly and prophetic mission (cf. cc. 204 §1, 208). Besides this fundamental equality in dignity, however, there exists a functional inequality among the baptized in terms of the ministry they exercise. The Church is therefore made up of two basic groups: sacred ministers (i.e. Bishops and priests) and the lay Christian faithful (cf. c. 207 §1; LG 33). Since the work of evangelization is entrusted to the whole church by Jesus, both the laity and the sacred ministers have their respective roles to perform in order to fulfill Jesus' command of bringing the good news to the whole world by means of evangelization; roles that are collaborative and complementary, and unique to each person's state and condition in the church.

The Laity are especially charged by the Church, to fulfil certain specific functions in the Church and in the world because of their special and unique role as people working in all sectors of society. In order to enhance and to ensure, as well as to promote the effective apostolate of the laity in collaboration with their Bishops and priests, it has become necessary to restructure the Laity Council in the Diocese of Sunyani in order to provide an effective response to the pastoral needs of the faithful in the diocese in view of the changing times and circumstances. The collaborative nature of the role of the laity with their priests and bishops is very essential for what the Church essentially is: missionary. The Church exists to evangelize, and it is together that we are a Church. The Church therefore encourages pastors to acknowledge and promote the proper role which the lay members of the Christian faithful have in the Church's mission (cf. c. 529 §2).

In view of the above, the following principles are going to be the new directives for the functioning of the Laity Council in the Catholic Diocese of Sunyani. This has become necessary following a prayerful reflection, study and discussions as the diocese seeks to embark upon new ways of effective and a more enduring and vigorous methods of evangelization in the light and spirit of the theme of the second synod of the diocese: *Re-awakening the faith through a new wave of evangelization*.

Article I: NAME

There shall be five (5) levels of the Laity Council based on the pastoral structure of the Diocese to be known and called as follows:

1. Sunyani Diocesan Laity Council (SDLC), for the entire Diocese of Sunyani,
2. Deanery Laity Councils (DLCs) for the respective deaneries in the diocese,
3. Parish Laity Councils (PLCs) for the various parishes in the diocese,
4. Quasi-Parish Laity Councils (QPLCs) for the quasi-parishes in the diocese, and,
5. Local Laity Councils (LLCs) for the various outstations of the parishes in the diocese.

Article II: NATURE OF THE COUNCILS

The Councils are primarily a group of lay consultors of the Bishop and priests; their collaborators in matters pertaining to the Catholic education and formation of the laity for the growth and well-being of the Church in the Diocese of Sunyani.

Article III: GENERAL AIMS OF THE COUNCILS

- 1 The members of the Councils shall in collaboration with their sacred pastors assist the other members of the laity either as organized communities or as associations to fulfil their essential roles as lay members of the Church under the guidance and supervision of the Bishop and the priests in the diocese.
- 2 The Councils shall, under the direction of the Bishop, harmonize the action and commitment of the laity and shall also coordinate the efforts of the lay apostolate in the outstations of the parishes and quasi-parishes, the mains parish centers, as well as in the deaneries.
- 3 The Councils shall serve the apostolate of the Church through the activities of its members.
- 4 The Councils shall offer the needed and necessary assistance to the lay organizations and associations at the various levels in the diocese to function effectively.
- 5 The Councils shall infuse the secular public opinion with Catholic doctrine for a holistic development and transformation of the human person and the secular world for a positive attitudinal change in our society.

Article IV: GENERAL FUNCTIONS OF THE COUNCILS

In pursuance of the general aims, the Councils shall perform the following functions.

1. The Councils shall study, plan, coordinate and promote the training and formation of the laity of the diocese for Christian leadership at the various levels in the Church.
2. The Councils shall arrange to/or organize seminars for the laity at the different levels of the communities in the diocese and shall foster the implementation of the resolutions from such seminars as shall be directed by the bishop of the diocese.
3. The Councils shall ensure that all the information and directives coming from the Diocesan Bishop or the National Laity Council are passed on to the other members of the Church in the diocese under the guidance of their sacred pastors.
4. The various levels of the laity Council in the diocese shall coordinate and harmonize the action and commitment of the laity for a closer bond with the Council of Priests, the Diocesan Secretariat, the Diocesan Priests' Association, Religious working in the diocese, the Diocesan Laity Council, the lay associations and all the laity in the Diocese, as well as with the National Laity Council.
5. The Councils shall motivate and sensitize members of the lay faithful in the diocese to acquire a comprehensive study of Catholic doctrines, the social teachings of the Church and all other church documents.
6. The Councils shall endeavor to promote family apostolate thereby making the Church truly present in Catholic homes and families by encouraging family prayer and the reading of Scripture for the formation of conscience, family unity and the building of happy and solid Christian homes, for *the family that prays together stays together*.

Article V: COMPOSITION AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE COUNCILS

In accordance with the provision in *article I* of this constitution, the Councils shall be composed of and made up mainly of practicing Catholics. The Secretaries to the recognized societies and associations at the diocesan, parish, quasi-parishes and local levels shall constitute the membership of the Councils in addition to those who shall be nominated. In the event of a lack of adequate membership due to the limited number of such practicing Catholics, the Bishop shall be consulted immediately by the Deans and Parish Priests (where applicable) and the Bishop's directives shall be followed.

The Diocesan Bishop, the Deans, the Parish Priests, and the Priests-in-Charge shall be the Presidents at the respective levels of the Laity Council. Presidency shall mean and be understood in accordance with church law that such church personnel represent the respective levels of church administration and that it is under their authority that the Laity Council operates (cf. cc. 393, 523). This, however, does not mean that the persons in question are to chair the meetings of the Councils. Neither is their physical presence required at meetings, unless such a need should become necessary. Nevertheless, they need to be aware of the agenda and of the periods and reports of the meetings of the Councils bearing in mind that the role of the Councils *is to assist their sacred pastors in the formation of the laity which is one of the primary functions of priests.*

Article VI: THE DIOCESAN LAITY COUNCIL

1. COMPOSITION:

The Diocesan Laity Council (DLC) shall be made up of six ex-officio members and other appointed members.

- a. The Diocesan Bishop (Ex-Officio)
- b. The Vicar General (Ex-Officio)
- c. The Diocesan Director of Lay Apostolate (Ex-Officio)
- d. The Chaplain/Spiritual Director (Ex-Officio)
- e. The Youth Coordinator (Ex-Officio)
- f. All Parish Catechists (Ex-Officio)
- g. The other members shall be:
 - i. Six (6) to twelve (12) members to be nominated and appointed by the Bishop.
 - ii. All the Chairpersons of the respective Parish and Quasi-Parish Laity Councils.
 - iii. All Diocesan Secretaries of the various recognized associations and societies in the Diocese.
 - iv. The persons mentioned in (g) of this article shall elect five members amongst them to constitute members of the Diocesan Laity Council Executive by a secret ballot.
 - v. The six (6) ex-officio members mentioned above, i.e. (a – f) shall be excluded from the election of the executives and shall not be eligible for election as Executive members of the Diocesan Laity Council by reason of their offices.

2. ACTIVITIES:

The activity of the Diocesan Laity Council shall consist principally in drawing up an annual programme of action for the formation of the laity. The details of such programmes shall be worked out by the Diocesan Executives subject to the approval of the Bishop or his representative. These programmes shall include:

- a. The organization of an annual Diocesan Easter Formation and Leadership training seminars.
- b. The supervision of the celebration of the Annual National Laity Week Programme in all parishes in the Diocese.
- c. The organization of seminars, lectures and other formation programmes at the deanery level throughout the diocese in consultation with the Deans and the parish priests/priests-in-charge in the deaneries.
- d. Keeping in constant touch with all Parish Laity Councils by making regular supervisory visits.
- e. Organizing at least two (2) diocesan plenary assemblies each year by bringing the Parish Laity Councils together to share ideas and evaluate parish progress reports.
- f. Ensuring that the various levels of the Laity Councils in the Diocese send active lay leaders to participate in Deanery, Diocesan and National leadership seminars, congresses and all other programmes designed for the laity.

Article VII: THE DEANERY LAITY COUNCILS

1. COMPOSITION

The officers of the Deanery Laity Councils shall comprise ex-officio and other members.

- a. The Dean (Ex-Officio)
- b. The Parish Priests/Priests-in-Charge in the deanery (Ex-Officio)
- c. The Parish Catechists in the deanery (Ex-Officio)
- d. The Other members shall consist of :
 - i. The Parish Secretaries of the recognized societies and associations in the deanery.
 - ii. The Parish Youth Secretaries in the deanery.
 - iii. The Chairpersons of the various parish Laity Councils.
 - iv. The Secretaries of each Parish Laity Council in the deanery.
- e. The executive members of five (5) members of the Deanery Laity Councils shall be elected from the persons mentioned in (d) by a secret ballot.
- f. The Ex-officio members shall not stand for the office of executive members and shall not take part in the voting for the executive officers.

2. ACTIVITIES OF THE DEANERY LAITY COUNCILS

- a. The Deanery Laity Councils shall meet two times a year at a time and place to be decided by the Deanery Executive members with the approval of the dean and the parish priests to evaluate the activities of the Parish/Quasi Parish Laity Councils within the deanery.
- b. The Deanery Laity Councils shall not interfere in the activities of the Parish Laity Councils in the course of their functions.
- c. The Deanery Laity Councils, shall, nevertheless assist in the activities of the Parish Laity Councils with the approval of the Deans and the Parish/ Priests-in-Charge concerned as and when shall be necessary.

Article VIII: PARISH LAITY COUNCILS

1. COMPOSITION

The Parish Laity Councils shall be made up of the following ex-officio and other members:

- a. The Parish Priests (Ex-Officio)
- b. Associate Priest/s (Ex-Officio).
- c. The Parish Catechist (Ex-officio)
- d. The Catechist of the main station (Ex-officio)
- e. The senior catechists of the out-stations (Ex-officio)
- f. The President of the Parish Catechist Association (Ex-Officio)
- g. The other members shall comprise:
 - i. The Chairpersons and local secretaries of each Out-station Laity Council if there are any.
 - ii. The Secretaries of the various societies and recognized associations in the parish.
 - iii. The Secretary of the parish Youth Council.
 - iv. Between three (3) and five (5) persons to be appointed by the parish priest in consultation with his associates.
- h. The executive members of the Parish Laity Council, to be made up of five (5) members, shall be elected by the persons identified in (g) by a secret ballot.
- i. The Ex-officio members shall not be eligible for election and shall not take part in the voting for the executive members.

2. ACTIVITIES OF THE PARISH LAITY COUNCILS

- a. The Parish Laity Councils shall draw up a yearly programme of activities and incorporate the programme of activities from the Diocesan and National Laity Councils.
- b. The Parish Laity Councils shall directly assist in the organization, coordination and supervision of the Laity Week celebrations in the main station and in the outstations.
- c. The Parish Laity Councils shall organize seminars, lectures and other formation programmes at the main parish station and outstations in consultation with the parish priest and his associates.
- d. The Parish Laity Councils shall make regular supervisory visits to the outstations.
- e. The Parish Laity Councils shall organize at least two (2) plenary assemblies each year at the time to be determined by the parish executive with the approval of the parish priest by bringing the outstation Laity Councils together to share ideas and evaluate the outstations' progress reports.

- f. The Parish Laity Councils shall organize Easter formation programmes for the members of the councils in the entire parish.
- g. The Parish Laity Councils shall ensure that the outstations send active lay leaders to participate in the all programmes designed for the formation of the laity.

Article IX: THE QUASI-PARISH LAITY COUNCILS

1. COMPOSITION:

The membership shall be made up of ex-officio and other members.

- a. The Priest-in-charge shall be an ex-officio member.
- b. The other ex-officio members shall include the Catechist or his/her representative.
- c. Other members of the Councils shall include:
 - i. The secretaries from the respective approved societies and associations within the quasi-parish and the secretaries of the Youth Councils.
 - ii. Three (3) to five (5) members of the lay faithful appointed by the Priest-in-Charge.
- d. The members in (c) shall by a secret ballot elect five (5) persons to constitute the executive members of the quasi-parish Laity Councils.
- e. The ex-officio members shall not be eligible for contesting for an executive office and shall not take part in the voting for the executive members.

2. ACTIVITIES

- a. The activities of the Quasi-Parish Laity Councils shall essentially be the same as the activities of Parish Laity Councils.
- b. The Quasi-Parish Laity Councils shall also plan and organize the annual Laity Week celebrations and all other laity programmes as may be directed by the Diocesan, Deanery or the National Laity Council.
- c. The Councils shall take into account the needs of the quasi-parish and draw up programmes in consonance with the activities mentioned above to address their respective pastoral needs.

Article X: THE OUTSTATION LAITY COUNCILS

1. COMPOSITION

The membership shall comprise ex-officio members and other members.

- a. The Parish Priest (Ex-Officio)
- b. The Associate Priest/s (Ex-Officio)
- c. The Senior Associate Priest (by appointment if there are more than one) shall act in the absence of the parish priest.
- d. All the Catechists in the outstations shall be ex-officio members.
- e. Other members shall include:
 - i. The secretaries of the various recognized associations and societies in the outstations.
 - ii. The Secretaries of the outstation Youth Councils.

- iii. Three (3) to five (5) persons to be appointed by the Parish Priest in consultation with his associate(s).
- f. The persons identified in (e) shall elect five members by a secret ballot who shall constitute the executive members of the Outstation Laity Councils.

2. ACTIVITIES

- a. The main activities of the Outstation Laity Councils shall be similar to those of the main parish and tailored to meet the needs of the outstations.
- b. The Outstation Laity Councils shall also organize the annual Laity Week celebrations and all other laity programmes as may be directed by Parish, Diocesan or National Laity Councils, with the help of the Parish executive members, should there be the need.

Article XI: MEETINGS:

- a. All meetings shall be called at the instance of the chairperson and the executives in consultation with the Presidents of the respective levels of the Council.
- b. The summons to meetings shall be communicated to members in writing by the secretary one month to the time of the meeting. A reminder may be made during announcement times on Sundays in the week of the meeting.
- c. Suggestions of items for the agenda for the meetings shall be received from other members of the Councils and shall be communicated to the chairperson either verbally or through writing two weeks prior to the meeting.
- d. The meeting place for the Councils shall be the parish hall, or the church where there is no parish hall.
- e. A member who absents himself or herself from a meeting for two consecutive times without a reasonable excuse shall lose his or her membership on the council at any level and shall be replaced in accordance with his or her mode of membership by another person to serve the rest of the duration of the one who has lost his or her office or membership.
- f. Matters discussed at any meeting shall not be disclosed by any member, except by persons thus authorized by the constitution.
- g. Issues that need to be communicated to the whole diocese shall remain the preserve of the Diocesan Bishop.
- h. Other matters as shall deal directly with any level of the Council shall be discussed at the deanery, parish, quasi-parish and outstation Council meetings shall be disclosed by the dean, parish priest, or priest-in-charge. The Chairpersons at such levels shall be authorized by the President to communicate the outcome of the meetings as he shall deem appropriate.
- i. Copies of the minutes of all the meetings of the Laity Councils shall be given to the Presidents and copies of the minutes of Councils below the Diocesan Laity Council shall be sent to the office of the Diocesan Director of Lay Apostolate.
- j. The outstation Councils shall come under the direct supervision of the Parish Priest/Priest-in-Charge. The communication of the result of the deliberations of the outstation Councils shall be made by the respective chairpersons, unless the nature of the matter requires otherwise, in which case the result shall be communicate by letter from the Parish Priest/Priest-in-Charge.

Article XII: FINANCING OF THE COUNCILS

- a. The activities of the respective Councils shall be financed through the offerings received through the celebration of the Laity Week celebrations, and through other fund raising activities by the lay faithful.
- b. Voluntary contributions and other donations shall be encouraged.
- c. Other sources for financing the Councils shall be explored by the Councils and approved by the Bishop on case by case basis or as a general instruction for all the Councils.
- d. The Diocesan Laity Council's finance shall be kept with the Finance Department at the Diocesan Secretariat.
- e. The Deanery Laity Council's finance shall be kept with the Dean.
- f. The finances of the parish and quasi-parish as well as the outstation Councils shall be deposited with the parish priest/priest-in-charge.

Article XIII: OFFICERS, THEIR DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS

1. DIOCESAN LAITY COUNCIL

a. Diocesan Officers

- i. President
- ii. Chairperson
- iii. Vice-Chairperson
- iv. Secretary
- v. Assistant Secretary
- vi. Treasurer
- vii. Diocesan Director of Lay Apostolate
- viii. Spiritual Director

b. Functions

i. THE PRESIDENT:

- a. The Bishop of the Diocese of Sunyani shall be the President of the Diocesan Laity Council.
- b. He shall make the necessary appointments at all levels of the Councils unless the constitutions provide otherwise (cf. c. 470).
- c. The Diocesan Bishop shall convene emergency meetings of the Diocesan Laity Council either at his own discretion or upon the recommendation of and in consultation with the Diocesan Executive committee.
- d. The Bishop may likewise direct the Diocesan Laity Council to undertake assignments as he shall consider opportune.

ii. THE CHAIRPERSON:

- a. The Diocesan Chairperson shall chair all the meetings of the Diocesan Laity Council.

- b. He or she may recommend the convening of an emergency meeting to the President after consulting the Director of the Diocesan Lay Apostolate, and the other members of the executive committee.
- c. The ordinary and regular meetings of the Council shall be convened by the Chairperson in accordance with the schedule of the Diocesan Laity Council which shall be communicated to the President and all members of the Council.
- d. The Diocesan Chairperson shall prepare the agenda for all meetings. Suggestions for issues to be discussed at meetings shall be made by any member of the Council to the Chairperson not later than two weeks before the meeting either in writing or by word.
- e. The Diocesan Chairperson shall sign the approved minutes of all the meetings of the Council and shall give a comprehensive written report to the President and as shall be required to other recognized bodies in the Church, either on the Diocesan or on the National level.

iii. THE VICE-CHAIRPERSON

The Vice Chairperson shall assume the responsibilities of the Chairperson should the latter be absent.

iv. THE SECRETARY

- a. The Diocesan Secretary shall be responsible for the recording of the minutes of all Diocesan Council meetings.
- b. The Secretary shall faithfully and safely keep all the records and documents of the Council.
- c. He or she shall summon members to meetings at the instance of the Chairperson in accordance with the schedule for meetings or as shall be required in the case of an emergency meeting.
- d. The Secretary shall handle all the correspondence of the Council under the direction of the Chairperson and/or the Director of Lay Apostolate.
- e. The Secretary shall also perform any other duty as shall be assigned to him or her by the Council.

v. THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY:

The Assistant Secretary shall assist the Secretary in the exercise of his or her regular duties and shall assume the role of the Secretary in the event of his or her absence.

vi. THE TREASURER:

- a. The Treasurer shall faithfully and diligently keep all the financial records of the monies released by the Diocesan Secretariat as well as all other monies received for the activities of the Council.
- b. The Treasurer shall further make payments as shall be directed by the Council.

- c. The Treasurer shall likewise prepare an annual financial report to the Office of the Bishop of all the income and expenditure relating to the activities of the Council.

vii. THE DIRECTOR OF LAY APOSTOLATE:

- a. The Director of Lay Apostolate shall among other things coordinate the activities of the Council throughout the Diocese.
- b. The Director of Lay Apostolate shall together with the chairperson be the official liaisons between the Diocesan Bishop, or in his absence, with the Vicar General of the Diocese and the Council.
- c. The Diocesan Director of Lay Apostolate shall be appointed by the Diocesan Bishop.
- d. Among other duties to be determined in his or her letter of appointment the Diocesan Director of Lay Apostolate shall administer the day-to-day affairs of the Office of the Lay Apostolate.
- e. His/her term of office and remuneration shall be determined by the Diocesan Bishop in accordance with the diocesan employment policy.

viii. THE CHAPLAIN/SPIRITUAL DIRECTOR

The Chaplain or Spiritual Director shall be responsible for the spiritual welfare of the members of the Council.

2. THE DEANERY LAITY COUNCILS

a) Deanery Officers

- i. The Chairpersons
- ii. Vice-Chairpersons
- iii. Secretaries
- iv. Vice-Secretaries
- v. Treasurers
- vi. The Dean

b) Functions.

i. THE CHAIRPERSONS:

- a. The Chairpersons shall convene and chair the meetings of the Councils
- b. The Chairpersons shall convene an emergency meeting after consulting the executive members and the Dean.
- c. The Chairpersons shall see to the drawing up of the agenda for all meetings.

- d. The Chairpersons shall sign the approved minutes of all the meetings of the Council.
 - e. The chairpersons shall present an annual comprehensive written report to the Council and to the Diocese.
- ii. THE VICE-CHAIRPERSONS
- The Vice-Chairpersons shall act in the absence of the Chairperson.
- iii. THE SECRETARIES:
- a. The Secretaries shall record the minutes of the Councils.
 - b. The Secretaries shall safely and faithfully keep proper custody of the documents of the Councils.
 - c. The Secretaries shall summon members to the meetings of the Councils at the instance of the Chairpersons.
 - d. The Secretaries shall deal with all the correspondence of the Councils.
 - e. The Secretaries shall perform any other duties assigned him or her by the Councils.
- iv. THE ASSISTANT SECRETARIES
- The Assistant Secretaries shall assist the Secretaries in the exercise of their duties, and shall assume the Secretaries roles in their absence.
- v. TREASURERS
- a. The Treasurers shall faithfully keep a record of all the monies released for the activities of the Councils.
 - b. The Treasurers shall record and submit an annual report of any income generated and received and expenditure incurred by the Councils to the office of the Deans.
- vi. THE DEANS
- a. The Deans shall be the Chaplains of the Deanery Laity Councils and shall be responsible for the spiritual welfare of the members of the Councils.
 - b. The Deans shall convene emergency meetings in consultation with the parish priests in the Deanery and the chairperson and the executives of the Deanery Laity Councils as shall become necessary.
 - c. The Deans shall direct the Deanery Laity Councils when and as necessary to undertake any assignment within Deaneries.

3. OFFICERS OF THE PARISH LAITY COUNCILS AND THEIR FUNCTIONS

a) Officers

- i. Chairpersons
- ii. Vice-Chairpersons
- iii. Secretaries
- iv. Assistant Secretaries
- v. Treasurers
- vi. Parish Priests/Associate (s)

b) Functions

i. THE CHAIRPERSONS:

- a. The Chairpersons shall chair all the meetings of the Councils.
- b. The Chairpersons shall convene emergency meetings in consultation with the executive and with the Parish Priests.
- c. The Chairpersons shall ensure that proper agenda is drawn up for all Councils meetings.
- d. The Chairpersons shall duly sign all approved meetings of the Councils, and shall present an annual comprehensive written report to the Councils and the office of the Diocesan Laity Council.

ii. THE VICE CHAIRPERSONS

The Vice-Chairpersons shall assist the Chairpersons in their duties and shall act in the absence of the latter.

iii. THE SECRETARIES

- a. The Secretaries shall record the minutes of the Councils.
- b. They shall safeguard and faithfully keep all the records and documents of the Councils.
- c. The Secretaries shall summon members to meetings at the instance of the Chairpersons after the Chairpersons and their executives have conferred with the Parish Priests.
- d. The Secretaries shall handle all the correspondence of the Councils and shall perform any other duties as may be assigned by the Councils.

iv. THE ASSISTANT SECRETARIES

The Assistant Secretaries shall assist and assume the duties of the Secretaries should the Secretaries be absent.

v. TREASURERS

- a. The Treasurers shall faithfully record all monies released to the Parish Laity Councils for its meetings.

- b. They shall record and submit any income generated and expended by the Councils at the end of every financial year as a report to the councils and submit it to the parish priests.

vi. THE PARISH PRIESTS/ASSOCIATE(S)

- a. The Parish Priests shall be the chaplains of the Parish Laity Councils and shall ensure the spiritual welfare of its members.
- b. The Parish Priests shall convene an emergency meeting after consulting the Chairpersons and the executive.
- c. The Parish Priests shall require the Councils to undertake certain assignments within the parishes when necessary.
- d. The Associate Priests shall act in the absence of the parish priests. When there are more than one Associate Priests, those who are senior by appointment shall act in the place of the parish priests.

4. OFFICERS OF THE QUASI-PARISH COUNCILS AND THEIR FUNCTIONS

All the provisions of this constitution pertaining to the Parish Laity Councils shall be applicable to the Quasi-Laity Parish Councils, unless the contrary is expressly indicated by the constitutions or the Diocesan Bishop provides otherwise.

5. OFFICERS OF THE OUTSTATION LAITY COUNCILS AND THEIR FUNCTIONS

a) Officers

- i. Chairpersons
- ii. Vice-Chairpersons
- iii. Secretaries
- iv. Assistant Secretaries
- v. Treasurers
- vi. Chaplains

c. Functions

i. THE CHAIRPERSONS

- a. The Chairpersons who shall be appointed by the Parish Priests in consultation with the Associate Priests, shall convene and chair all meetings.

- b. The Chairpersons shall in consultation with the Parish Priests and the Associate Priests, senior by appointment (where there are more than one), shall convene an emergency meeting should it become necessary.
- c. The Chairpersons shall prepare the agenda for meetings in consultation with the Parish Priests and the Associate Priests, senior by appointment.
- d. The Chairpersons shall present an annual comprehensive report of the activities of the council to the Parish Priests.

ii. THE VICE CHAIRPERSONS

The Vice chairpersons shall act in the absence of the chairperson.

iii. THE SECRETARIES

- a. The Secretaries shall record all the minutes of the Councils.
- b. The Secretaries shall keep all the records and the documents of the Councils at the office of the Parish Priests.
- c. The Secretaries shall handle all the correspondence of the Councils, and shall perform other duties assigned them by the Councils or the Parish Priests in consultation with the Associate Priest(s).
- d. The Secretaries shall at the end of every year submit a comprehensive report to the office of the parish priests.

iv. THE ASSISTANT SECRETARIES

The Assistant Secretaries shall assist the Secretaries in the exercise of their duties and shall assume the duties of the secretaries should they be absent.

v. THE TREASURERS

The Treasurers shall keep an annual and accurate report of all monies of the Councils concerning income and expenditure and under the supervision of the Associate Priests and submit it to the Parish Priests.

vi. THE ASSOCIATE PRIESTS

The Associate priests shall be the chaplains of the Outstation Laity Councils and provide for the spiritual needs of the members.

Article XIV: ELECTION AND TERM OF OFFICE HOLDERS

- a. All elected and appointed officers shall serve for a three-year term. They may serve another term of three years if thus elected or appointed.
- b. Elections at all levels shall be by a secret ballot.
- c. A person shall be considered elected by a simple majority of the valid votes cast.

- d. The Secretaries of the recognized associations and societies shall serve on the council as long as they remain secretaries in accordance with the constitutions of their societies or associations.
- e. Elected members whose term expires shall be eligible for re-election after one term (3 years) has elapsed.

Article XV: LOSS OF MEMBERSHIP/OFFICE

- 1. Ex-officio members shall lose their membership with the loss of the office they hold.
- 2. Membership and or office shall be lost by defection from the Catholic Church.
- 3. Membership/office shall be lost by relocation within or outside of the diocese.
- 4. Membership/office shall be lost by the loss of a good name among upright and serious-minded persons.
- 5. Membership/office shall be lost by the expiration of the term of office on the Council.
- 6. Membership/office shall be lost upon the recommendation by other members of the council following a due examination of the matter at stake by the executive members of the council with the approval of the president (at the level of the case) and the member concerned given the opportunity to defend him/herself. The aggrieved member may seek redress by having recourse to the executive and the President of the next higher level of the Council in the Diocese.
- 7. A member or an office holder who loses his/her membership/office before the expiration of his/her term shall be replaced by a person recommended and approved by a unanimous decision by the council to fill the vacancy until the expiration of the term of such membership or office.
- 8. A member who discloses a decision by any the council at any level shall be warned or dismissed depending on the seriousness of the matter.
- 9. Secretaries of the respective societies or association shall lose their membership on the Laity Council with the loss of their offices in their respective societies or association in accordance with their constitutions before the expiration of their three year term on any level of the Laity Council and the new secretary of that society shall serve on the Laity Council for the rest of the term of the former member.

Article XVI: AMMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION

This constitution shall be amended either at the discretion of the Diocesan Bishop or upon the recommendation of the Diocesan Laity Council when and as needed in accordance with the circumstances and the needs of the time.

This Constitution goes into effect on

Promulgated in Sunyani on this (date) day of (month) of the year of Our Lord 2015.

Signed:

MOST REV. MATTHEW KAWSI GYAMFI
CATHOLIC BISHOP OF SUNYANI