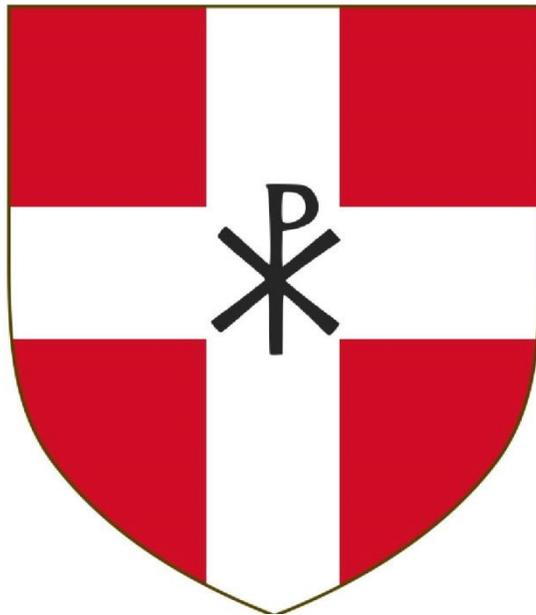


CONSTITUTIONAL CHARTER

OF

THE ORDER OF ST. WILLIBROD



OLD CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES
(OLD CATHOLIC CONFEDERATION)

AND

CHURCH OF NIGERIA
(ANGLICAN COMMUNION)

TITLE I: THE ORDER AND ITS NATURE

Article 1: Origin and Nature of the Oder

The Order of St. Willibrord is an Old-Catholic religious order of priests, oblates and associates.

§1. The Order's structure comprises: Grand Priories, Priories and Sub-Priories.

Article 2: Purpose and Identity

The purpose of the Order is the promotion of the glory of God through the sanctification of its members and the promotion of the Christian faith and culture through education.

§1. The members of the Order are dedicated to a life of contemplation, study and teaching, which expresses the spiritual, intellectual and apostolic life of the Order.

§2. While the Order is Old-Catholic in ecclesial identity, it is ecumenical in its desire for Christian unity. As such, the Order exists as a living witness of the ecclesial bond between Old-Catholics and Anglicans as embodied in the Bonn Agreement of 1931 between the Church of England and the Old-Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht, which is acknowledged by the Old Catholic Confederation and several Churches of the Anglican Communion. Under the patronage of the Dean of the Church of Nigeria, the Order of St. Willibrord is the only Old-Catholic religious Order serving within the worldwide Anglican Communion.

Article 3: The Order and the Old Catholic Confederation

As an Order founded by the Prelate of the Old Catholic Confederation, the Order is a canonical religious Order in communion with the Old Catholic Church in the United States recognized by the Code of Canon Law of the Old Catholic Confederation and the Synod of Bishops of the Old Catholic Church in the United States.

§1. In accordance with the Code of Canon Law of the Old Catholic Confederation and the historic rights and privileges of religious orders throughout the ages, the Old Catholic Confederation recognizes that the highest canonical authority of an

independent religious house is the religious superior of the house. Therefore, the Order and the local religious house are exempt from the authority of the local bishop.

§2. The Order of St. Willibrord is an independent religious Order and its priories are autonomous and entirely self-sufficient.

Article 4: The Order and the Church of Nigeria of the Anglican Communion

In accordance with the Decree promulgated on September 20, 2018 by His Grace, The Most Rev. Lamido Ali Buba, Dean of the Church of Nigeria, Archbishop of Kaduna Province and Bishop of Wusasa, the Order was recognized as a canonical religious Order of priests, oblates and associates and licensed for service within the Church of Nigeria, the Convocation of Anglican Churches in North America and within the worldwide Anglican Communion.

§1. In accordance with the *Principles of Canon Law common to the Churches of the Anglican Communion*, published by the Anglican Communion Office in 2008, and in conformity with the historic rights and privileges of religious orders through the ages, Church of Nigeria recognizes that the highest canonical authority of an independent religious house is the religious superior of the house. Therefore, the Order and the local religious house are exempt from the canonical authority of the local bishop.

TITLE II: THE MEMBERS OF THE ORDER

Article 5: Classes of the Order

The members of the Order are divided into three Classes: 1) Priests, 2) Oblates and 3) Associates.

§1. The First Class consists of Priests who make simple or solemn promises of obedience.

§2. The Second Class consists of Oblates who make simple or solemn promises of obedience. Oblates are lay men who may remain in the second class perpetually or may advance to the first class if called by their local superior to holy Orders.

§3. The Third Class consists of Associate Members who may be either laity or clergy.

§4. Membership in the Order is ecumenical in nature; and thus, may accept any baptized Christian who professes the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed and the fundamentals of Old-Catholic theology.

§5. While all members of the Order may be celibate or married, members of the First and Second Class may not remarry after the death of one's spouse and are required to remain celibate for the rest of their lives.

Article 6: Obligations of the Members

All Members of the Order are obliged to dedicate their lives to striving toward spiritual perfection in accordance with the holy Gospel and the Christian apostolic life. Further, as an order in the Benedictine tradition, all members must regard the *Rule of St. Benedict* as the foundation of their spiritual life. All members are further expected to make an offering of a portion of their wealth, income and resources to the Order in accordance with their state in life.

§1. The Priests constituting the First Class make simple and solemn promises of Obedience, dedicating their priestly lives in service to the Church and their respective priory through their sacred ministry and contributing whatever wealth or income they have to the Order to advance its mission. While Solemnly Professed Priests of the Order are obliged to live in community, a married priest may be granted permission to reside in close proximity to his priory so that he may remain a full member of the priory and maintain spousal and familial privacy. Otherwise, married priests are required to have private quarters within a priory or on its grounds.

§2. The Oblates constituting the Second Class are lay members of the Order who make simple and solemn promises of Obedience, dedicating their lives and contributing a portion of their wealth or income to the Order to advance its mission. While Oblates in simple promises are not obliged to live in community, they are required to visit their priory at least once a year in order to participate in the life of the community and in meetings of the Chapter. Only Oblates who live in community may be permitted to make solemn promises of Obedience, making them fully-incorporated members of a priory with the right to vote in Chapter.

§3. The Associate Members constituting the Third Class are attached to a specific priory for their own pursuit of spiritual perfection. While Associate Members may be clergy or laity, they are obliged to observe the spiritual life of the Order in their everyday lives.

§4. All members of the Order must belong to the Grand Priory, or to a local Priory or Subpriory.

Article 7: The Order and the Benedictine Rule of Life

The Members of the Order shall strive to live the *Rule of St. Benedict* within their respective state of life and in accordance with their respective class within the Order, as priests, oblates and associates.

§1. As such, the members of the Order should strive to integrate the Benedictine ideal of “*ora et labora*” (prayer and work) into their spirituality and way of life.

§2. Thus, from the Master General to the Postulant, Priests, Oblates and Associates, should understand their work as an extension of their prayer so their scholarship and teaching will stem from their love of God and demonstrate the unity of mind and heart as well as body and soul. Although the members of the Order are obliged to focus on their intellectual life, in scholarship and teaching, the priests, oblates and associates of the Order should not regard the maintenance of their respective priory beneath them. In fact, it is the duty of the members, so long as health permits, to take good care and cultivate an authentic responsibility for the physical aspects of the priory, such as the administration of the priory as well as the maintenance of its buildings and the grounds, from accounting to cooking, cleaning and landscaping, which will also ground our brothers in humility.

§3. While our members are not monks, every priory should nevertheless dedicate several hours of the day to the monastic ideal of silence to provide for a peaceful environment, appropriate for the contemplative life. Thus, every priory should strive to incorporate the practice of the “Grand Silence” as the respective Priory Chapter sees fit; for example, from after Night Prayer to after Morning Prayer. Every priory should also incorporate silence at least during one meal every week when the *Rule of St. Benedict* is read aloud by one of the brothers to the community.

§4. While most members of the Order will be university, college and seminary professors, high school teachers and catechists, the Order also welcomes those men who have a calling to support the charism and ministries of the Order in more practical ways, since each priory will also require groundskeepers, carpenters and artisans who may be called to our way of life and further provide the blessings of their gifts that may become the foundation of each priory.

Article 8: Formation of the Members

All of the members of the Order are required to go through spiritual and intellectual Formation.

§1. The stages of Formation for candidates seeking solemn profession and ordination commences with a year of postulancy, followed by two years of novitiate. Both years officially begin on the Feast of St. Willibrord, on the seventh day of November.

§2. The next stage of Formation is higher studies. For those without any higher education, the brother commences his undergraduate studies. For those with a bachelor or master's degree, the brother is encouraged to pursue further graduate studies to the doctorate if so desired.

§3. For those seeking ordination, the brother would first study philosophy and then theology.

Article 9: The Rights and Privileges of the Members

§1. All members of the First and Second Classes of the Order are vested with the black habit upon Novices upon making their simple profession on the Feast of St. Willibrord. The habit of the Order consists of the black cassock, a black pellegrina and black fascia.

§2. All solemnly-professed members of the First and Second Classes of the Order are vested with the scapular of the Order, bearing the *chi rho* cross over the white cross against the red shield, over the white cuculla, on the occasion of their solemn profession on the Feast of St. Willibrord. Our solemnly-professed members may wear their choir habit on solemn occasions, during meetings of General Chapter, Priory Chapters and in accordance with local norm.

§3. Members of the Second Class, the Oblates of the Order, use the abbreviated title of Frà, meaning Brother from the Latin, Frater.

§4. Members of the Third Class, Associates of the Order, may wear the lapel pin of the coat of arms of the Order and the white cuculla for liturgical purposes.

§5. Only solemnly-professed members of the Order have the right to vote in Chapter.

TITLE III: GOVERNMENT OF THE ORDER

Article 10: The Master General

Consistent with the hierarchical nature of the Church and the Order, the Master General is the Supreme Head of the Order.

§1. The Master General is elected for life by the General Chapter of the Order.

§2. In order to be considered eligible for election to Master General, one must be a solemnly-professed priest for at least ten years, having served as a superior for at least five years and known for wisdom and piety. Ideally, the candidate will hold an earned doctorate.

Article 11: The Powers of the Master General

The Master General holds supreme authority over the Order. As such, he is the Chief Executive Officer, Chief Judicial Officer and Spiritual Father of the Order.

§1. The Master General has full authority to govern over the Order and promulgate policies, procedures and canons and other such acts of governance over the Order by *motu proprio* decree.

§2. The Master General is assisted by his Curia and the General Chapter of the Order.

§3. When necessary, the Master General may appoint three solemnly-professed priests or oblates of the Order to serve as judges constituting an ecclesiastical court of the Order in order to give a hearing to cases, resolve disputes, or make judgement in judicial or canonical cases pertaining to a respective priory. The decisions of the tribunal must be observed by the Prior or Subprior of the respective priory or Subpriory. At the discretion of the Master General, he may further appoint two other solemnly-professed priests or oblates to serve with him as a supreme tribunal of the Order in the event of a request for an appeal.

§4. For just and grave cause, the Master General may, with the deliberative vote of the Chapter General, remove a Prior and appoint a Vicar to govern a priory or Subpriory in extraordinary cases when grave circumstances exist, or when just cause has been presented to the Master General. Then, and only until either the matter is resolved or a new superior has been duly elected by the local Chapter, may this judicial act take

place, which requires the consent of the Chapter General. Should it not be possible to proceed with the election of a new Prior in accordance with Canon Law, the Vicar remains in office until the end of the next Chapter General.

Article 12: The Chapter General

The Chapter General is the highest assembly of the Order under the Master General. It is convened once every five years, or whenever the Master General may deem it necessary.

§1. The following are members of the Chapter General: a) the Master General who presides; b) the Priors, c) Subpriors, d) one solemnly-professed priest from each priory, and e) one solemnly-professed Oblate from each priory.

§2. During such time that the Order only consists of the Grand Priory, the Chapter of the Grand Priory shall act as the Chapter General, consisting of: a) the Master General, Grand Prior of the Grand Priory, who presides; b) the Subprior, c) one solemnly-professed priest of the Grand Priory, and d) one solemnly-professed Oblate.

Article 13: General Norms for Elections

The members of the Chapter General, or the respective Priory Chapter, are those entitled to vote in the election of a Master General of the Order, or for Prior by the professed members of an established Priory. The members of the Chapter General or the Priory Chapter must act personally and may not appoint any representatives, or delegates or proxies or vote by phone or email.

§1. Without prejudice to any other provision, the basis of any vote is calculated on those with a right to vote who are present and vote. Where applicable, a two-thirds majority applies only for the first three ballots. For successive ballots a majority of those present having the right to vote is sufficient, without prejudice to any other provision.

TITLE IV: THE ORGANIZATION OF THE ORDER

Article 14: The Grand Priory and Establishment of Priories and Subpriories

The Priory of St. Willibrord, the Generalate and founding priory of the Order, shall have the honorific title of Grand Priory.

§1. Only the Master General has the authority to establish an independent Priory of the Order.

§2. A Subpriory may be established by any Prior of an independent Priory since in our Order a subpriory refers to a dependent religious house subordinate to the authority of the founding Prior.

§3. In order for a Subpriory to be elevated to the rank of Priory, it will require three professed members of the Order, one must be a priest. Further, with the blessing of the Prior, the Subpriory may request to the Master General its elevation to an independent Priory.

§4. Every priory must have suitable property (real estate) that is titled in the name of the new priory, with a provision that upon dissolution of the priory, the property shall become the property of the Order of St. Willibrord.

Article 15: Government of Priories

At least three professed members of the Order are necessary for the establishment of an independent priory.

§1. A new priory must have at least one professed priest.

§2. The Prior is assisted by his Curia whom he appoints to assist him in his duties.

§3. The Chapter consists of the solemnly-professed members of the priory. The Chapter consists of the following members: a) Prior, b) Subprior, c) solemnly-professed priests, and d) solemnly-professed Oblates.

§4. The solemnly-professed members propose by a majority vote a list of three candidates from which the members of the Priory Chapter elect the Prior when the founding the Prior has abdicated, retired or becomes deceased.

§5. The Prior-Elect may not take up office until he has received the blessing of the Master General and taken the oath of his office.

TITLE V: PROMULGATION, INTERPRETATION AND CANON LAW

Article 16: Authority and Interpretation

This constitutional charter is promulgated by the authority of the Master General, who with the assistance of the Chapter General, is responsible for interpreting whatever ambiguity might exist in this text.

§1. This constitutional charter is also subject to the Code of Canon Law of the Old Catholic Confederation, and especially Canon 2001 concerning jurisprudence and canon law.

§2. This constitutional charter is also subject to the Code of Canon Law within the respective Churches of the Anglican Communion and to the diocesan norms of the local Dioceses and their bishops with respect to the licensure of clergy of the Order who have been granted permission, or faculties, to function as ordained ministers within the local Diocese.

DECREED

ON THE FEAST OF ST. WILLIBRORD, THE SEVENTH DAY OF NOVEMBER
ANNO DOMINI TWO THOUSAND AND SIXTEEN,
AT THE GRAND PRIORY OF ST. WILLIBRORD, MOHNTON, PENNSYLVANIA.

(MOST REV.) CRAIG J. N. de PAULO, O.S.W., PH.D.
Master General of the Order of St. Willibrord