

Societas Sancti Michaeli



the statutes

introduction to the statutes

Peace be unto you. This version of the statutes of the Society of Saint Michael is the organizing version, developed and approved by the first dozen brethren in online consultation in July 2007. They were approved unanimously on July 11, A.D. 2007, the feast of Saint Benedict of Nursia, Abbot.

As is true of all clerical fraternities, or as they are more accurately termed nowadays, societies of apostolic life, it is our voluntary allegiance to the Statutes, and to the Master-General who embodies not his own but the Statutes' authority, which unites us into one brotherhood. Everyone who holds office or seat on the Council should be familiar with the Statutes.

Chapters one and two together comprise a constitution for our Society, and deserve most attention. The next two chapters deal with how we intend to live and how we intend to support one another with prayer, affection, and respect. These chapters may even be seen as a link to all who have gone before us in the life of canons secular, especially in the peculiarly Anglican heritage that those bodies have in the British Isles, and which faithfully have been handed on throughout Great Britain's quondam colonial ventures, just as they have been received. We stand as inheritors of the kingdom, yes, but especial inheritors of Blessed Charles Lowder, Adrian IV, the only English pope, St Anselm, St Augustine of Canterbury, and the countless thousands of Canons Secular who have served, taught, and united God's people.

May the prayers of all the saints support and sustain us as we work for unity in Christ's One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.

Our Lady of Walsingham, pray for us.

Holy Michael, protect us.

*Father Richard Sutter SSM
Master-General*

St Apollinaris, Bishop & martyr, AD 2007

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the statutes

I

Of the Name, Membership, Objects, and Dedication of the Society

- A. The name of the Society shall be *Societas Sancti Michaeli* (The Society of Saint Michael).
- B. The Society is a clerical fraternity, a society of apostolic life the threefold objects of which shall be:
1. To maintain, promote, and extend the Catholic faith and discipline, especially against error;
 2. To unite its members in a special bond of mutual charity arising from their common faith, and to work and pray for the reunion of Christ's Church; and
 3. To strengthen and consolidate the spiritual life of its members; enabling and facilitating their service to God's people, especially in pastoral care and parish life.
- C. Membership in the Society shall be open to both clergy and ordinands or seminarians. Bishops, priests and deacons may become Members of the Society. These brothers shall be clergy who desire to bear witness to and support one another in the Catholic faith in their vocation, ministry within the Church, and in their whole lives, in accordance with the objects, spirit, rule, and customs set out hereafter. Ordinands, and seminarians may become Associates of the Society. Associates are entitled to the same rights and privileges as priest members, except they may not vote. Clerical members of the Society of St. Michael, by virtue of membership, form the Canons Secular of St Michael .
- D. The Society is dedicated to the glory of God under special invocation of St Michael the archangel, defeater of the evil one and defender of the Church.
- E. The special patroness of the Society is Our Lady of Walsingham, the Blessed Mother in her English apparition, praying her special blessing on all Christian families.

II

Of the Organization of the Society

- A. The Society shall be governed by an elected Master-General with the assistance and advice of a Council.
- B. A local chapter may be formed in any area where members and/or associates live sufficiently near one another to make a chapter practical. One of the chapter members or associates receives authority from the Master-General to govern the local chapter, and shall be known as the chapter's Local Vicar, who may make such arrangements for

the organization and governance of the chapter as he may see fit. Any members or associates not affiliated with a chapter shall be members-at-large.

C. The Council may at its discretion design or cause to be designed a medal, seal and any other such devices as it may see fit.

III

Of the Society's Rule of Life

A. Members and associates shall form and endeavor to keep a rule of life that includes but is not limited to:

1. Care for their souls by

- a. Celebration of or participation according the ministry of one's order in the holy sacrifice of the Mass on all Sundays and holy days of obligation, adding the concluding prayer to St Michael, either publicly, in the sacristy, or in secret;
- b. Keeping the Eucharistic fast as it is currently prescribed;
- c. Endeavoring to cultivate in one's self and others appreciation of the fullness of the Catholic faith and the Church's Tradition.

2. Care for their minds by engaging in sacred study, especially of Holy Scripture and the Fathers;

3. Care for their bodies by keeping the Church's laws of chastity.

B. Members and associates are encouraged to include in their Rule the following:

1. Celebrate, concelebrate, or assist daily in the Mass; appending the Prayer to St Michael to the Mass;
2. Commend the day to God on awakening and on lying down, by making the Sign of the Cross and briefly recollecting the Presence of God;
3. Pray daily for the Society, especially its priests, and engage in a regular habit of private prayer;
4. Make a daily self-examination;
5. Exercise charity in conversation, circumspection in behavior, and moderation in recreation;
6. Be especially diligent in prayer for the Society on the feast of Michaelmas (29 September) and on all angelic feasts;
7. Pray regularly for the Society's departed;
8. Make regular use of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

IV

Of the Duty of the Members towards the Society

- A. Members and associates shall consider their obligation to the Society as a close spiritual bond.
- B. Members and associates shall render holy obedience to the Statutes and Rule of the Society, and also to the Master-General and the Council in all things appertaining to the Society, according to conscience and within the bounds of the Catholic faith.
- C. Members and associates not in residence in a religious community shall contribute to the common fund of the Society as their means may allow. The Council shall determine the amounts of annual dues.
- D. Members and associates shall influence towards membership others of good repute who are in accord with the beliefs of the Holy Catholic Church and the aims of the Society. Members and associates will recognize that to put forward any candidate carries with it a serious responsibility, and must weigh the known aims of the Society against what they know of any candidate.
- E. Members and associates shall use their best endeavors to maintain the spirit of unity, peace, and charity within the Society.
- F. If any member or associate shall be known to have offended, in such a manner as to occasion scandal, against the doctrine and discipline of the Holy Catholic Church or against morals, it shall be the duty of any member or associate becoming cognizant of the fact to speak to the offending member or associate, first of all, in a brotherly way. If this remonstrance has no effect, the member or associate shall lay the matter before the Council or the Master-General.
- G. It shall be within the competence of the Master-General to suspend or terminate the membership of a member or associate for due cause.
- H. Members and associates shall be required to respect the confidence of the Society by not repeating anything reported to the Society as confidential, and by not speaking to non-members about any cases of scandal which may have been brought to their notice.
- I. Members and associates shall also exercise discretion and reticence concerning the internal affairs of the Society.

V

Of Episcopal Visitors

- A. The Master-General may invite a Bishop of the Church to act as the Society's Episcopal Visitor.

B. The Episcopal Visitor shall be considered as the guardian of the Society's Statutes and as a court of appeal for their interpretation, to whom every member or associate of the Society has the right of unhindered appeal. He is entitled to attend meetings of the Society and to receive a copy of all reports, notices, and letters circulated to the members of the Society. However, outside these functions, the office of Visitor does not convey any right of intervention or initiative in the affairs of the Society.

C. The Society shall regard its Episcopal Visitor as its official representative in the higher counsels of the Church, and shall look to him to be an adviser and helper in any time of need.

VI

Of the Officers of the Society

A. The principal officer of the Society shall be the Master-General, who may appoint a Secretary and Treasurer, or such other officers as he may find to be required from time to time to assist him in the execution of his duties.

B. Other officers shall be the Local Vicars of chapters when such are appointed.

C. It shall be the duty of the Master-General, in relation to the whole Society, either in person or by deputy or delegation and at his discretion, to:

1. Preside at meetings of the Council and of Synods and regulate the contents of their agenda;
2. Maintain the order and discipline of the Society;
3. Authorize the formation of new chapters and their reorganization and disbandment;
4. Appoint a Vicar to be his assistant, either for a fixed or for an indefinite period. He may, at his own discretion, re-appoint the same member after he has completed a fixed period of office. A newly elected Master-General may terminate the appointment made by his predecessor and make a new appointment;
5. Represent the Society at all times and places where the Society's objects shall require it;
6. Grant dispensations from the provisions of the Statutes and Rule;
7. For grave cause, remove from office any officer;
8. Suspend the membership in the Society of any member and, after consultation with the Council, terminate such membership.

D. It shall be the duty of a Vicar to:

1. Deputize for the Master-General in his absence at Councils, Synods, or other meetings or functions;

2. Act as Master-General in the event of the position falling vacant until an election can take place. Appointment as Vicar confers neither right nor presumption of succession to the office of Master-General;
3. Perform such other duties as the Master-General himself shall delegate.

E. It shall be the duty of a Secretary to:

1. Assist the Master-General in the conduct of the general business of the Society and especially in preparations for meetings;
2. Notify members and associates of forthcoming synods;
3. Be present at councils and synods and record business transacted;
4. Keep records of membership and publish from time to time a roll of members;
5. Conduct correspondence on the Society's business;
6. Preserve books, documents and other papers which, at the Master's discretion, are deemed valuable records of the Society's transactions;
7. Arrange for the nomination, election, and admission of members.

F. It shall be the duty of a Treasurer, either in person or by deputy to:

1. Have charge of the finances of the Society;
2. Take care that members and associates pay dues and to receive them when paid;
3. Take care of all offerings and other monies belonging to the Society;
4. Make all payments on behalf of the Society;
5. Report to the Master-General, Council and annual synod on the finances of the Society;
6. Prepare accounts for auditing by two members or associates appointed by the Council for presentation to the annual synod and answer questions thereon.

G. The offices of Secretary and Treasurer may be held by the same member or associate. When such is the case, the office shall be referred to as Secretary-Treasurer.

H. The duties of other officers shall be defined in writing by the Master -General at the time of appointment.

I. The duty of a chapter's Local Vicar shall be to:

1. Act as the representative of the Master-General in the area of the chapter, standing in the same relationship to the chapter as the Master-General does to the Society, but subject to his authority;
2. Preside at chapter meetings;

3. Render an annual report to the Master-General;

4. Report to the Master-General any matter connected with the affairs of the chapter which may merit his attention.

J. The officers of the Society are all personally, individually, and directly responsible to the Master-General for the good order and fidelity to the spirit and objects of the Society.

K. Upon the election of a new Master-General, all officers of the Society shall tender their resignations to the newly elected Master-General.

L. The Master-General and Council may organize the society into geographical provinces as need arises, each province to be headed by a Provincial Master appointed by the Master-General, said appointment confirmed by the Council. Provincial Masters, when there be such, shall also be ex officio members of the Council. A Provincial Master may be removed with cause by the Master-General.

VII

Of the Election, Appointment, Term of Office, and Admission of Officers

A. The Master-General shall be elected by the members of the Council of the Society. He shall hold office for one year, and may be re-elected. He may not normally hold office for more than five years consecutively, however the Council may waive this restriction with a two-thirds majority.

B. The Secretary and Treasurer shall be appointed by the Master-General, subject to confirmation by the Council.

C. A Vicar and other officers of the Society may be appointed by the Master-General, subject to confirmation by the Council.

D. Chapters elect their own Local Vicars, subject to the approval of the Master-General.

E. The term of office of every office holder shall be one year.

F. The detailed procedures for the election and admission to office of the Society's officers shall be set forth in the Customary and Manual of the Society.

VIII

Of the Council of the Society

A. There shall be a Council of the Society which shall have the duty of advising and assisting the Master-General in the government of the Society and execution of the Objects of the Society, and of performing such other functions as are defined herein or may be added later.

1. The initial Council shall be composed of the first twelve members of the Society, who shall elect the first Master-General.

B. The perpetual members of the Council shall be the first twelve members, the Master-General of the Society, and all former Masters--General of the Society. Ex officio members of the Council shall be all other officers, Local Vicars of all chapters and the Vicar of the Society when such have been appointed, and such other members as the Council may from time to time unanimously elect to membership.

C. The Council shall advise the Master-General on all matters which he lays before it, or on which a synod of the Society may request him to consult it. The advice of the Council shall not bind the Master-General on any matter which lies within his own discretion, but he shall be bound to give serious regard to its advice. If the judgment of the Master-General differs from that of the Council and the matter admit of delay, the question shall be submitted to the next synod for advice. If the matter will not admit of delay, the Master-General may act on his own judgment and report to the synod, which shall expressly approve or disapprove of his action.

D. The Council shall have the right of veto over any decision of a synod which in their judgment fails to conform to the objects and spirit of the Society. The fact that such a veto has been applied shall be reported to the synod for information and comments, and any further action they deem necessary.

E. Sufficient notice shall be given of each meeting of the Council, with details of the business to be laid before it.

IX

Of the Meetings of the Society

A. The purpose of meetings held within the Society shall be to promote the objects of the Society by fraternal encounter, consultation, and encouragement, by study and devotion, and by common action in matters affecting the objects of the Society.

B. The Society shall meet in synod in person at least once in the triennium at a time and place determined by the Council and announced with sufficient notice to all members.

1. The Society may meet more frequently, in person or online, at the decision of the Council.

2. In the case of emergency, the Master-General may call an extraordinary synod at a time and place of his choice, clearly stating in the notice summoning it the object for which the synod is summoned. Sufficient notice must be sent to all members.

C. Chapters of the Society shall meet at least twice in the year at a time and place determined by the Local Vicar.

D. No chapter shall have power to commit the Society to any action or public statement, but a chapter may request the Master-General to call an extraordinary synod to consider any matter which it regards as sufficiently urgent or important to warrant such action.

E. The minimum period of notice required for meetings of the Society shall normally be one calendar month, except when the meeting will be online, in which case the minimum period of notice shall normally be seventy-two hours.

1. In the event of an online meeting of synod or Council, the acknowledgement of receipt of notice shall waive any time requirement.

F. One third of the total members and associates qualified to attend Council meetings shall be a quorum, and the number of members and associates present at synod meetings shall be a quorum, unless the Master-General for special reason varies this requirement and specifies the variation in the notice of the meeting.

X

Of the Nomination, Election, and Admission of Members

A. Every candidate for admission to the Society shall be nominated by a member or associate who has sufficient personal knowledge of the individual to recommend that individual with confidence.

1. Every candidate for admission to the Society shall state in writing that he agrees with and accepts the first two articles of the Affirmation of Saint Louis: the Principles of Doctrine and the Principles of Morality.

B. The nomination of a candidate shall be presented to the Master-General, who shall cause it to be published to all the members of the Society.

C. Based on information received and/or personal knowledge of the nominee, the Master-General and Council will together decide if a nominee is approved or declined. The Council's decision will be communicated by the Master-General to the nominee no later than 24 hours after the decision has been made.

D. It is an obligation binding most strictly upon members and associates who have reason to doubt the suitability of any candidate, whether on grounds of faith or conduct, to indicate dissent. The standing and good name of the Society depend upon adherence to this rule.

E. The admission of a candidate to membership or association should normally take place in a church, oratory, or at a chapter meeting, in the presence of a member or associate. The candidate being admitted shall make his promise to the Society in the following form:

"I, *N. N.*, for the glory of God and desiring to consecrate myself anew to Him in the brotherhood of (or, in the case of an associate, "in association with") the Society of Saint Michael, for the service of God and His Church and the furtherance of the Catholic faith, before you Reverend Father *Master (Vicar)*, promise that I will be loyal to the Society and will keep its Statutes and Rule of Life and also that I will give assistance and encouragement to the members in all things spiritual and temporal by the grace of the Holy Spirit."

F. If necessary because of geographic distance, the promise may be made online, but in that case it must be made directly to the Master-General.

G. Admissions which are not conducted before the Secretary shall be reported to him immediately by the member or associate admitting.

XI

Of the Periodical Renewal of the Promise

A. Each year, on Michaelmas or within its octave, each member shall renew his promise before the Blessed Sacrament and report that renewal in writing to the Secretary immediately thereafter.

B. If no such report of renewal of the promise is made within the appointed time by any member, the Secretary shall draw the member's attention to the default and warn the member that unless his reaffirmation is received before All Saints' Day, that member will be regarded as having withdrawn from membership in the Society.

XII

Of Separation from the Society

A member shall seek to withdraw from the Society if at any time its objects seem to be seriously at variance with his own. Withdrawal can be accomplished by notifying the Secretary to remove the member's name from the roll.

XIII

Of the Statutes

- A. The Statutes and the rule of life incorporated into them shall not be altered or added to except by the common consent of the members.
- B. An alteration or addition to the Statutes may be proposed by the Master-General, Council, a synod, or a chapter. Such proposal shall then be notified by the Master-General or Secretary to all the members and associates so that it may be fully discussed.
- C. Such a proposal shall then be laid before all the members and associates. If unanimously approved, it shall come into effect immediately. Should only a majority of the members and associates approve, the Council shall decide whether or not the majority decision should be confirmed.
- D. In the event of a matter of importance or urgency arising which requires some variation of the procedures and requirements laid down in these Statutes, the Master-General may, after consultation with the Council, take such action as he thinks fit. However, should his action be disapproved by the Council, he shall offer immediately his resignation to the Council. It shall be wholly at the discretion of that Council as to whether or not such resignation shall be accepted or refused.
- E. Chapter I of these Statutes shall be regarded as the constitution of the Society, and shall not be capable of revision except with the consent of the Episcopal Visitor of the Society, following the application of the procedures outlined in paragraphs B and C above.
- F. The Council may at its discretion prepare a Credenda, assent to which will be required of all members and associates as a condition of membership or association. If such a Credenda is prepared, the Council will cause it to be appended to these statutes.



Appendix I to the Statutes:

The Customary

In General

I. The members and associates should:

A. Wear, whenever practicable, a Canterbury Cross or a medal of St Michael on or about their persons;

II. The members and associates may:

A. Use the letters "SSM" after their names (Associates may use "a/SSM").;

B. Wear the choir habit of the Society, when such has been established by the Council.

Meetings

III. At a meeting of a synod or chapter, Mass should be celebrated, or at least some part of the Divine Office or some other act of worship shall be celebrated. The Mass or Office may be a votive of St Michael, when permitted by the rubrics of the calendar.

Elections

IV. Each member of the Society has one vote in elections.

V. Votes may be cast via electronic means.

The Manual

VI. The Manual of the Society shall be published by the authority of the Master-General, and revised by him from time to time, with the advice of the Council. It shall contain such material as the Master-General and Council may deem useful or appropriate.

The Prayer to St Michael

VII. The Prayer of St Michael, which is to be appended to the Mass by members and associates, follows.

Saint Michael, the Archangel, defend us in battle, be our defense against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly host, by the power of God, thrust into Hell Satan and the other evil spirits who prowl about the world for the ruin of souls. Amen.



MICHAEL
CHAMPION OF JUSTICE