

Catechism of the HCCoG

Prologue

The Gospel at the Heart

1. Why does the Holy Catholic Church of the Gospels exist?

To bear living witness to the good news proclaimed by Jesus Christ—news of radical love, boundless mercy, and the reconciliation of all creation to God.

2. What is our mission?

We are called to “fling the doors wide” (cf. Lk 14 : 23), gathering every person—without exception—into a community that worships, learns, and serves so that the image of Christ may be recognized in each face.

3. How do we pursue that mission?

By anchoring every aspect of our common life in three touchstones:

- The Gospel: the teaching and person of Jesus as revealed in Scripture;
- The Eucharistic Table: where strangers become kin;
- The Wounded World: where Christ is found among “the least of these” (Mt 25 : 40).

Article I – Holy Scripture

Q 1. What is the Holy Bible?

The Bible is the canonical collection of writings in which the people of God have borne witness to God’s self-revelation. It is “God-breathed” (2 Tim 3 : 16) and therefore wholly trustworthy for faith and life.

Q 2. Why do we call Scripture “infallible”?

Because the divine message it conveys cannot deceive or be deceived. Human authors wrote in their own languages, cultures, and limitations, yet the Spirit safeguarded the truth necessary for salvation.

Q 3. Does infallibility mean Scripture is a scientific or linguistic textbook?

No. Infallibility refers to the reliability of God's saving purpose, not to the precision of every historical datum or turn of phrase. The Word became flesh, not paper; therefore, we read the text so that we may meet the Living Christ to whom it points.

Q 4. How does the Church honor the Bible?

- By proclaiming it publicly in every liturgy;
- By studying it in community, listening for the Spirit's voice;
- By submitting doctrine, ethics, and worship to its witness;
- By allowing its story to shape our own.

Q 5. How does the Church understand this?

Holy Scripture, as presently received by this Church, is infallible. This infallibility belongs to the divine message by which God reveals Himself and saves, and not to every incidental feature of human expression. The canon of Holy Scripture is what the Church receives as Scripture for preaching, doctrine, and worship. The Church also affirms that God's providence may, in time, bring forth additional ancient witnesses of the faith; such writings do not become Holy Scripture by discovery alone, but only by the Church's formal reception under the authority entrusted to her.

Article II – Interpreting Holy Scripture

Q 1. Why must Scripture be interpreted?

Because the biblical authors spoke in the languages, symbols, and social structures of their own times. Words shift, cultures change, yet the Word of God—Jesus Christ—remains the same. Interpretation lets each generation hear the one Gospel in its own tongue (Acts 2 : 8).

Q 2. What governs authentic interpretation?

Three converging lights:

1. The Spirit's Witness – The Holy Spirit, who inspired the text, illuminates its meaning in hearts and communities.
2. The Mind of Christ – The life, teaching, death, and resurrection of Jesus are the definitive key: any reading that contradicts Christ-like love, mercy, and justice is self-refuting.
3. The Communion of Saints – The Church—past and present—tests private insights, guarding against both rigidity and novelty untethered from the apostolic faith.

Q 3. What is meant by “reading in the Spirit of the text”?

It means seeking the divine intention beneath the changing garb of grammar. We listen for the logos—the saving logic of God's inclusive love—rather than fixating on idioms that once served that logic but no longer carry the same nuance.

Q 4. Does this approach dismiss difficult passages?

No. We wrestle with every verse as Jacob wrestled the angel (Gen 32 : 24-30). Yet we refuse to weaponize texts in ways that deny the Gospel's arc toward life, freedom, and dignity for all.

Q 5. Who interprets Scripture for the Church?

All the baptized share in “the royal priesthood” (1 Pet 2 : 9) and therefore read the Bible prayerfully. The bishops, as guardians of unity, offer authoritative teaching after wide consultation, but every believer is invited into the dialogue.

Q 6. How does the HCCoG handle disagreements?

With charity and patience. We gather at the table of Word and Sacrament, trusting that truth emerges where people listen deeply, speak honestly, and remain open to the Spirit's refining fire.

Q 7. What attitudes does the Church reject in interpretation?

- Literalism that entombs the text, ignoring genre, context, or the witness of Christ.
- Judgmentalism that usurps God's prerogative, using Scripture to condemn rather than to heal.
- Relativism that empties the Bible of authority, treating it as mere opinion.

Q 8. What fruit should faithful interpretation bear?

Repentance, compassion, justice, and joy—the hallmarks of a people being conformed to the image of Jesus.

Article III – The Holy Trinity

Q 1. What is meant by “the Holy Trinity”?

The one God eternally exists as three distinct Persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—each fully and equally God, of one and the same divine essence, “undivided in nature, distinct in relation” (Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed).

Q 2. How are the three Persons distinguished?

By their eternal relations of origin:

- The Father is unbegotten Source and Maker of all.
- The Son is eternally begotten of the Father, the Word made flesh in Jesus Christ.
- The Holy Spirit eternally proceeds from the Father (and is breathed forth through the Son), the Life-giver who indwells creation and the Church.

These distinctions do not divide the Godhead; they express the inner life of perfect communion.

Q 3. Why do we confess each Person to be fully God?

Because Scripture ascribes the divine Name, attributes, and worship to each:

- The Father creates and sustains all (Gen 1 : 1).
- The Son forgives sins, calms seas, and is addressed as ho Theos (“God”) (Jn 20 : 28).
- The Spirit searches “the deep things of God” (1 Cor 2 : 10) and gives life (Rom 8 : 11). Were any less than God, true monotheistic worship would be broken.

Q 4. How has God revealed the Trinity to humanity?

Progressively: hinted in the Hebrew Scriptures, disclosed in the baptism of Jesus where Father speaks, Son is baptized, Spirit descends (Mt 3 : 16-17), and made explicit in the risen Lord’s command to baptize “in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Mt 28 : 19).

Q 5. How does belief in the Trinity shape Christian prayer?

We address God as one but may pray to the Father through the Son in the Spirit, or invoke any Person directly, confident that every prayer reaches the same divine heart. Doxology (“Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit...”) keeps our worship balanced and whole.

Q 6. What practical mystery does the Trinity teach?

That unity and diversity are not enemies. As the three Persons share one life without coercion, so the Church seeks communion without uniformity, justice without domination, inclusion without dilution of truth. The mutual love of Father, Son, and Spirit is both model and power for human reconciliation.

Q 7. Does the Trinity limit whom God may call?

On the contrary, the overflowing life of the triune God delights to draw all peoples into partnership. The same Spirit who spoke through ancient prophets still bestows gifts and calls apostles today; therefore the Church remains open to discerning every authentic vocation, unfettered by human prejudice.

Q 8. How do we summarize the doctrine?

One God in three Persons, co-equal, co-eternal, worthy of the same glory, whose everlasting love creates, redeems, and sanctifies the world.

Article IV – The Four Marks of the Church

Q 1. What are the “Four Marks” confessed in the Creed?

That the Church of Jesus Christ is One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic.

The Church Is One

Q 2. In what sense is the Church “one”?

There is a single Body whose head is Christ (Eph 4 : 4-5). Diversity of language, rite, or culture cannot sever the baptismal bond that unites all who confess Jesus as Lord.

Q 3. How does the HCCoG safeguard unity?

By centering every ministry on Word and Sacrament; by listening before judging; and by submitting major decisions to the common discernment of bishops, clergy, and laity.

The Church Is Holy

Q 4. Why call the Church holy when its members still sin?

Holiness derives from Christ, not from our merit (1 Pet 1 : 16). The Spirit continually sanctifies the baptized, calling the Church to model repentance, transparency, and healing.

Q 5. How does holiness express itself in practice?

Through worship rooted in reverence, ethics shaped by the Sermon on the Mount, and concrete works of mercy that lift the poor, the wounded, and the forgotten.

The Church Is Catholic

Q 6. What does “catholic” mean here?

Not a denominational trademark but the Greek kath’olon—“according to the whole.” The Gospel is for every people, class, and era; nothing genuinely human is alien to its embrace.

Q 7. How is this universality lived out?

- By welcoming all persons, including LGBTQ+ siblings, without qualification.
- By drawing on the treasures of global Christianity—liturgy, hymnody, theology—while remaining rooted in local culture.
- By collaborating with other churches in the service of justice and peace.

The Church Is Apostolic

Q 8. What makes a church apostolic?

Fidelity to the teaching, mission, and authority Christ entrusted to the apostles (Acts 2 : 42). Apostolicity is preserved when the Church stands under that same sending (“As the Father sent me, so I send you” – Jn 20 : 21).

Q 9. Does apostolicity require an unbroken line of hands-on heads?

Historic succession is a venerable sign, yet God is not chained by it. Scripture shows Christ raising up apostles by direct call (Luke 6 : 13; Acts 9 : 15). Therefore the HCCoG discerns apostolic vocation through:

- Manifest gifts of the Holy Spirit,
- Conformity to Gospel truth,
- Fruits of love, justice, and sound teaching.

Q 10. How are new ministers recognized?

Through prayerful examination by the College of Bishops and the gathered faithful, followed by ordination with the laying on of hands—an outward sign of the inward call.

Article V – Creation, Human Dignity, Sin & Grace

Q 1. Why does the Creed begin with “I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth”?

Because everything that exists—cosmos, atom, and heartbeat—springs from God’s overflowing love. Creation is neither accident nor afterthought; it is the theatre in which divine glory is displayed and human vocation unfolds (Ps 19 : 1).

Q 2. What is humanity’s place in this creation?

We are formed “in the image and likeness of God” (Gen 1 : 26-27). Every person therefore possesses inviolable dignity—before talent, tribe, gender, or faith—called to reflect God’s creativity, compassion, and communion.

Q 3. How does the Church understand the rich diversity found in nature and in human experience (e.g., varieties of sexual orientation or gender)?

Diversity is woven into the fabric of a world God repeatedly calls “very good.” The natural sciences reveal patterns of same-sex behavior in non-human species; Scripture testifies to persons “fashioned by God” beyond binary expectations (Mt 19 : 12). The Church therefore receives human diversity not as a defect but as a field where the Spirit paints in many hues.

Q 4. If creation is good, what is “sin”?

Sin is any will, habit, or system that distorts right relationship—with God, neighbor, self, or earth. Christians speak of the Fall to describe humanity’s historic turn from trust toward self-curved isolation (Rom 5 : 12). The consequences—violence, domination, estrangement—pervade every level of life, yet they do not erase goodness at its root.

Q 5. Does the HCCoG teach inherited guilt?

We inherit a wounded world and disordered desires, but guilt attaches only to acts freely chosen. What we truly inherit is a universal need for healing—a need Christ meets with unmerited grace.

Q 6. What is grace?

Grace is the free, effective love of God poured out in Christ through the Spirit. It precedes repentance, enables faith, mends broken hearts, and empowers holy living. Grace is not a substance to be earned but a relationship to be received.

Q 7. How is grace received?

Primarily in Word and Sacrament, but also through daily mercies—friendship, conscience, beauty, bread. God’s outreach is wider than any ritual; nonetheless, the sacraments provide sure signs that “where two or three are gathered,” Christ is surely present (Mt 18 : 20).

Q 8. What is the Christian response to grace?

Gratitude that flowers into discipleship: worship, ethical action, solidarity with the poor, stewardship of creation, and joyful witness that “all things can be made new” (Rev 21 : 5).

Q 9. How does this article guide the Church’s public mission?

- Affirmation of every person’s worth counters prejudice and exclusion.
- Confession of universal brokenness grounds humility in moral discourse.
- Confidence in redeeming grace fuels ministries of healing, justice, and ecological care—signs that the world God loved is the world God means to restore.

Article VI – The Sacraments & Sacramentals

A. General Principles

Q 1. What is a sacrament?

A sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church as a sure means for receiving that grace. Through ordinary elements—water, bread, oil—God communicates extraordinary life.

Q 2. How many sacraments does the HCCoG recognize?

Seven: Baptism, Confirmation, Reconciliation (Confession), Holy Eucharist, Marriage, Holy Orders, and Extreme Unction (Anointing of the Sick). All seven spring from the ministry of Jesus and the practice of the apostolic Church; each will receive its own article that details form, matter, and pastoral application.

Q 3. Are the sacraments optional graces?

They are expected gifts—normative, not coercive. The Church urges every believer to partake because the sacraments knit the Body together, nourish faith, and embody the Gospel in gesture and flesh.

Q 4. Who may receive them?

All who sincerely seek to live in Christ’s love. No person is barred on account of race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, economic standing, or past failures. The table is Christ’s, not ours. The only exception is to those persons excommunicated validly by the Church; they have self-excluded themselves from the table of Christ by action.

Q 5. Who may celebrate them?

Ordained ministers—deacons, priests, bishops—act publicly on behalf of the gathered faithful. Yet every baptized person has a vocation to bear sacramental grace: parents at the font, sponsors in confirmation, spouses in marriage, the whole assembly lifting Eucharistic praise.

B. Brief Overview of Each Sacrament

Sacrament:	Core Sign:	Principal Grace:	Key Notes in HCCoG Practice:
Baptism	Water & Trinitarian Name	New birth, union with Christ	One baptism suffices for life; infants or converts alike welcomed.
Confirmation	Laying-on of hands & chrism	Strengthening by the Spirit for mature witness	Voluntary public affirmation of baptismal covenant.
Reconciliation	Spoken confession & absolution	Release from the burden of sin, restoration to fellowship	Private rite; see further information in VI-C

Sacrament:	Core Sign:	Principal Grace:	Key Notes in HCCoG Practice:
Holy Eucharist	Bread & wine with thanksgiving	Real presence of Christ, spiritual nourishment, foretaste of the kingdom	Christ is truly present; transformation is mystery, not chemistry. No defilement tolerated.
Marriage	Exchange of vows & rings	Covenant love mirroring Christ-Church union	Open to any two consenting adults; permanence expected save for abuse or infidelity.
Holy Orders	Laying-on of hands & prayer	Grace to teach, sanctify, and shepherd	Vocations discerned without prejudice; apostolic calling judged by gifts and fruits.
Extreme Unction	Oil & prayer	Healing, comfort, courageous passage through illness or death	Offered freely in hospitals, homes, or worship.

C. Sacramentals

Q 6. What are sacramentals?

Blessed objects or actions—crucifixes, holy water, medals, rosaries, even a whispered peace be with you—that dispose us to receive grace and remind us of God’s nearness. They do not confer grace ex opere operato as sacraments do, yet they stir faith and open the heart.

Q 7. How are sacramentals blessed?

Clergy use forms approved by the Bishop; some items (e.g., holy water, ashes) have proper prayers, while a general blessing suffices for others. The faithful may request blessings freely, without fee.

Q 8. May sacramentals ever replace the sacraments?

Never. They point beyond themselves to deeper realities; they do not create those realities. A rosary without prayer is beads; holy water without repentance is only water.

D. Pastoral Accessibility

Q 9. How does the Church ensure equitable access?

- No paywalls: Sacraments and blessings are never sold.
- Mobile ministry: Clergy bring rites to prisons, hospital beds, refugee camps, and street corners.
- Education: Catechesis accompanies each sacrament, tailored to age and context, with scholarships for formal study when needed.

Article VI-A – Holy Baptism

Q 1. What is Baptism?

Baptism is the foundational sacrament of new birth in Christ. Through water and the Trinitarian Name—“Father, Son, and Holy Spirit” (Mt 28 :19)—the believer is united with Christ’s death and resurrection (Rom 6 :3-5), washed of sin, and incorporated into the one Body of the Church.

Q 2. Why did Christ command Baptism?

Because the Gospel is embodied good news: just as Jesus entered the Jordan to stand with sinners, so we enter the waters to share his redeeming life. Baptism marks us publicly as disciples and assures us that grace precedes any achievement.

Q 3. Who may be baptized?

Anyone who desires to follow Christ, or any child whose parents and sponsors pledge to nurture that desire. Age, ability, orientation, past religion—none exclude the thirsty soul (Acts 8 :36-38).

Q 4. Is Baptism repeatable?

No. “One Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Eph 4 :5). The sacrament seals an irrevocable covenant; subsequent lapses are healed by Reconciliation, not re-immersion.

Q 5. What are the essential elements?

- Matter: natural water applied by immersion, pouring, or sprinkling.
- Form: the words, “I baptize you in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” Both are necessary; additional symbols (oil, candle, white garment) enrich but do not replace these essentials.

Q 6. Who is the ordinary minister?

A deacon, priest, or bishop acts in the Church's name. In danger of death any baptized person may—and should—baptize, provided they intend what the Church intends and use water with the Trinitarian formula.

Q 7. What graces are conferred?

- Forgiveness of all sin and birth into a new humanity.
- Adoption as a child of God, indwelt by the Spirit.
- Membership in the universal Church, with a vocation to ministry.

Q 8. Why baptize infants who cannot yet profess faith?

Because grace is gift, not wage. As Jewish boys received covenantal circumcision on the eighth day, so children are welcomed early into Christ's covenant, to claim it later in Confirmation and whole-life discipleship.

Q 9. What is the role of sponsors (godparents)?

Sponsors vow to pray, teach, and model the faith until the baptized can speak "Amen" with their own lips. They are spiritual kin who walk beside the family long after the liturgy ends.

Q 10. How does Confirmation relate to Baptism?

Confirmation completes Baptism's grace by the laying-on of hands for the strengthening gifts of the Spirit. In the HCCoG, Confirmation is never coerced; it is a free, joyful "Yes" to the covenant first spoken over the waters.

Q 11. Are baptisms from other churches valid?

All baptisms performed with water and the Trinitarian formula are gratefully recognized. We receive those Christians as already sisters and brothers; rebaptism would deny the Spirit's work.

Q 12. What pastoral provisions ensure access?

- Preparation courses (in person or online) tailored to age and context.
- No fees, ever. Free grace cannot bear a price tag.
- Mobile fonts: clergy bring rites to hospitals, prisons, refugee camps, or riversides when church walls are far away.

Article VI-B – Confirmation

Q 1. What is Confirmation?

Confirmation (or Chrismation) is the sacrament in which the Holy Spirit strengthens the baptized with the gifts needed for mature discipleship, sealing them “for the day of redemption” (Eph 4 : 30). It is the believer’s free, public “Amen” to the covenant first spoken in the waters of Baptism.

Q 2. Where is its origin in Scripture?

- Jesus promises the Spirit who will “teach you all things” (Jn 14 : 26).
- On Pentecost the apostles lay hands on new believers, and they receive power to witness (Acts 8 : 14-17; 19 : 6).
- Paul links the anointing of the Spirit with being “established in Christ” (2 Cor 1 : 21-22).

Q 3. How does Confirmation differ from Baptism?

Baptism grants new birth and membership in Christ; Confirmation deepens that grace, equipping for prophetic service and adult responsibility in the Church. Baptism is rebirth; Confirmation is commissioning.

Q 4. Is Confirmation required for salvation?

No sacrament coerces God. Yet Confirmation is strongly encouraged because Jesus never leaves disciples half-formed; he breathes the Spirit so they may flourish (Jn 20 : 22).

Q 5. Who may be confirmed?

Any baptized person who can, in conscience, profess faith—typically early adolescence or older. Adults baptized at Easter Vigil may be confirmed in the same liturgy; children baptized as infants undertake age-appropriate preparation when they can understand the vows.

Q 6. What preparation is expected?

- Study of Scripture and the Catechism, with space for honest questions.
- Participation in worship and service to neighbor.
- A sponsor who prays and models Christ-centered life.

Courses are offered online or in person, free of charge, tailored for neurodiversity and different learning styles.

Q 7. What are the essential elements of the rite?

Matter – consecrated chrism (olive oil mixed with balsam).

Form – the bishop (or delegated priest) lays hands on each candidate, anoints the forehead, and says:

“N., be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.”

The newly confirmed respond, “Amen,” and receive the sign of peace.

Q 8. Who is the minister?

Ordinarily a bishop, signifying the bond of unity. When pastoral need requires, a priest delegated by the bishop may confirm.

Q 9. What graces are conferred?

- A fuller outpouring of the Spirit’s sevenfold gifts (Isa 11 : 2-3).
- Deepened union with Christ and the Church.
- Courage to witness, serve, and, where necessary, suffer for the Gospel. The sacrament is unrepeatable; its seal is permanent.

Q 10. How does the HCCoG welcome diverse vocations through Confirmation?

The Spirit distributes charisms without discrimination—preaching, healing, administration, artistry, advocacy. The Church’s task is to recognize and nurture each gift, especially in persons often overlooked because of age, disability, gender, or orientation.

Q 11. Are confirmations from other traditions recognized?

Yes, provided they involved laying-on of hands (or chrismation) with intent to bestow the Holy Spirit. Rebaptism or reconfirmation is neither necessary nor permitted; instead, we offer a rite of reception to those entering full communion.

Q 12. Can someone renew their commitment later in life?

The seal of Confirmation endures, but faith may be rekindled through a Reaffirmation of Vows—a pastoral rite for those returning after estrangement or marking a vocational milestone.

Article VI-C – Reconciliation (Confession)

Q 1. What is the Sacrament of Reconciliation?

Reconciliation—also called Confession, Penance, or the Rite of Forgiveness—is the sacrament in which a penitent personally encounters the mercy of God, receives absolution for sins committed after Baptism, and is restored to the full joy of communion with God, neighbor, and self (Jn 20 : 22-23).

Q 2. Why is confession necessary when God already knows everything?

Because sin wounds relationships. Naming our failures aloud before God and a minister of the Church breaks denial, invites accountability, and allows the priest to proclaim Christ's liberating word: "Your sins are forgiven; go in peace" (Mk 2 : 5).

Q 3. Where is this practice grounded in Scripture?

- Jesus entrusts the apostles with authority to bind and loose sins (Jn 20 : 23).
- Believers are admonished to "confess your sins to one another" (Jas 5 : 16).
- The prodigal son's return (Lk 15) dramatizes confession, contrition, and the Father's lavish pardon.

Q 4. What are the essential elements?

- Matter: the contrite heart expressed in spoken confession.
- Form: the priest's prayer of absolution, e.g., "I absolve you from all your sins in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

The sign of the cross seals the grace.

Q 5. Who is the minister?

A priest or bishop acts in the person of Christ and on behalf of the Church. Deacons and lay leaders may lead penitential prayers but cannot pronounce sacramental absolution.

Q 6. How often should a Christian confess?

Whenever conscience is burdened. Many find spiritual health in a seasonal rhythm (Advent/Lent) or after grave sin. Frequent confession is encouraged, not to breed scruple, but to foster honesty and growth.

Q 7. What is required of the penitent?

- Examination of conscience in light of Scripture and love of neighbor.
- Contrition (sorrow for sin and resolve to change).
- Confession of all serious sins known.
- Satisfaction, usually a prayer, act of charity, or restitution that nurtures new habits.

Q 8. How does the HCCoG address sins linked to trauma or systemic injustice?

Penitents are never shamed for wounds inflicted on them. The priest helps distinguish moral agency from trauma responses and may recommend therapy alongside sacramental grace. Structural sins (e.g., racism, exploitation) call for both personal repentance and collective action.

Q 9. What is the “seal of the confessional”?

Absolute confidentiality. A priest must not disclose, directly or indirectly, anything heard in confession, even under threat of law or violence. Breaching the seal gravely violates both canon and civil ethics. This is governed under Church law, see question 13.

Q 10. May reconciliation be communal?

Yes. Penitential liturgies with individual absolution highlight the social dimension of sin; however, individual confession remains the ordinary form. General absolution without individual confession is reserved for imminent danger of death or circumstances judged by the Bishop.

Q 11. How is this sacrament offered to those in prison, hospital, or on the margins?

Clergy travel to cells, sick-beds, refugee camps, or city streets. Digital appointments (video or encrypted audio) are provisionally permitted where physical presence is impossible, though an in-person rite is preferred when feasible.

Q 12. What grace does Reconciliation impart?

- Forgiveness and interior peace.
- Re-integration into the Eucharistic community.
- Renewal of baptismal dignity and freedom to love without fear.

Q 13. When does the Seal of Confession Apply?

Under Church law, it is the Church that defines when a sacramental confession has occurred. The Seal of Confession applies, and binds the confessor absolutely, only when the Sacrament of Confession has been validly constituted and completed according to the doctrine and discipline of this Church.

For clarity, the “penitent” is the person who confesses, and the “confessor” is the priest who receives the confession. The Seal exists for the protection of the penitent before God, and the obligation of silence binds the confessor.

A confession is “validly constituted” when it is received as sacramental confession, by a priest acting as confessor, with the penitent seeking reconciliation with God in truth. A confession is “completed” when the penance imposed by the confessor has been performed, because this Church demands performance and not merely assent.

Therefore, until the sacrament is completed, the Seal has not yet attached in full, and the confessor is not bound to treat the disclosure as sealed sacramental content. Once the sacrament is completed, the Seal attaches fully and permanently, and no minister may disclose, directly or indirectly, anything received under that Seal.

Q 14. What does “completed” mean in this Church?

“Completed” means the penitent has actually carried out the penance given by the confessor. This Church teaches that confession is ordered toward repentance, repair, and reconciliation. For that reason, words alone do not complete confession where penance has been imposed. Performance completes the sacrament.

Q 15. Does the Seal ever apply differently in cases of clergy abuse?

Yes, in one specific way. In cases of clergy abuse, this Church does not recognize a confession as completed, and thus does not permit the Seal to attach, unless the penance given is the penance required by the Church for such cases, and unless that penance has been performed. This rule exists to prevent the Sacrament of Confession from being used as psychological release without repair and accountability.

Q 16. May a confessor ever impose a lesser penance in cases of clergy abuse?

No. In cases of clergy abuse, the Church has established a required penance. A confessor may not replace it with a lesser penance, and may not declare the confession completed unless the required penance has been performed.

Q 17. Who may waive the Seal of Confession?

Only the penitent may waive the Seal, and only by an affirmative and voluntary act. A waiver is limited to the specific confession the penitent places at issue. No other person may waive it, and no minister may assume waiver by silence, rumor, or convenience.

Q 18. What if the penitent calls the confessor to testify about a sealed confession?

If the penitent affirmatively calls the confessor to answer about a confession that has been completed under seal, the penitent has waived the Seal as to that confession and to that scope. The confessor may answer only to the extent necessary for what the penitent has placed at issue.

Q 19. What if civil authorities compel testimony?

Compulsion by civil authorities does not constitute waiver by the penitent, and does not become moral consent by the Church. The application of the Seal, as a matter of conscience and Church discipline, is governed by the doctrine and discipline of the Church, even when civil tribunals classify privilege differently.

Article VI-D – Holy Eucharist

Q 1. What is the Eucharist?

The Eucharist—also called the Lord’s Supper, Holy Communion, or the Divine Liturgy—is the sacrament instituted by Jesus at the Last Supper (Mt 26 : 26-29; 1 Cor 11 : 23-26). In it the Church gives thanks (eucharistia) for Christ’s self-offering, participates sacramentally in his once-for-all sacrifice, and is fed with the life he pours out “for the healing of the nations.”

Q 2. How is Christ present in the Eucharist?

We confess a real and personal presence: through the Spirit, Christ is truly encountered in the consecrated bread and wine and in the gathered community. The mystery is sacramental, not chemical; the elements remain bread and wine in their natural substance while becoming vehicles of the risen Lord’s life. Attempts to pinpoint a physical change exceed what Scripture requires and may obscure the gift’s relational nature.

Q 3. What are the essential signs?

- Matter: ordinary bread (leavened or unleavened) and wine; valid gluten-free or alcohol-reduced alternatives are provided for medical need.
- Form: the Great Thanksgiving in which the priest recalls salvation history, invokes the Spirit (epiklesis), repeats Jesus’ words over the elements, and breaks the bread for sharing.

Q 4. Who may preside?

A priest or bishop authorized by the Church. Deacons assist; lay members proclaim readings, lead prayers, and administer the cup when licensed.

Q 5. Who may receive Communion?

All who hunger for Christ and peace with neighbor are welcome. Baptism is the ordinary gateway, but pastoral discernment allows others who earnestly seek union with Christ to partake while preparing for Baptism. No one is refused on the basis of race, orientation, gender identity, disability, or social standing.

Q 6. How often should believers communicate?

The Eucharist is the Church's principal act of Sunday worship and is celebrated on the Lord's Day and major feasts. Frequent Communion—weekly or even daily—deepens union with Christ and one another.

Q 7. What graces does the sacrament confer?

- Union with Christ's Body and Blood in a manner that nourishes the soul.
- Forgiveness of sins that do not rupture communion gravely.
- Strength to live the Gospel in mercy, justice, and joy.
- A foretaste of the heavenly banquet where every tear is wiped away.

Q 8. How does the HCCoG guard the Eucharist's sanctity?

- Consecrated elements are reverently consumed or reserved for the sick; none are discarded irreverently.
- Spaces and vessels are treated with care; linens are cleaned in a manner mindful of sacred use.
- No act of desecration—symbolic or physical—is tolerated, whether perpetrated from malice, ignorance, or spectacle.

Q 9. What about reported miracles (e.g., bleeding hosts)?

The Church receives such events with humility: they belong to God's sovereign action, not to clerical technique. Authentic faith rests on Christ's promise, not on extraordinary phenomena.

Q 10. May Communion be taken to the sick or imprisoned?

Yes. Deacons, priests, or trained Eucharistic visitors carry the Sacrament in a pyx, using an authorized liturgy. The same table that gathers the able-bodied extends to hospital wards, homes, and cells.

Q 11. How does the liturgy embody inclusion and catholicity?

- Multilingual proclamation echoes Pentecost.
- Music may draw from any Christian tradition, provided it lifts hearts to Christ.
- Intercessions remember the poor, the oppressed, prisoners, refugees, Earth's groaning creation—signifying that the altar of praise is inseparable from the altar of service.

Q 12. What is expected of communicants after receiving?

Grateful wonder that issues in transformed living: feeding the hungry, confronting injustice, forgiving enemies, and practicing ecological stewardship. “Be what you receive,” said Augustine; the loaf becomes the life-pattern.

Article VI-E – Marriage

Q 1. What is the Sacrament of Marriage?

Marriage is a lifelong covenant in which two persons freely bind themselves in faithful love before God and the community. Their mutual consent, exchanged in vows, becomes a living icon of Christ's self-giving union with the Church (Eph 5 : 25-32). The household they create is meant to shelter growth in holiness, hospitality, and service.

Q 2. Who may enter this covenant?

Any two consenting adults who intend a faithful, loving, and exclusive partnership. The HCCoG affirms that God calls couples of every orientation or gender configuration; therefore the Sacrament is open to same-sex, mixed-sex, and gender-diverse couples without distinction.

Q 3. Where is marriage grounded in Scripture?

- Creation blesses companionship (“It is not good that the human should be alone,” Gen 2 : 18).
- Jesus honors marital fidelity and celebrates covenant love (Mt 19 : 4-6; Jn 2 : 1-11).
- The prophets and apostles use spousal imagery to describe God's steadfast commitment to humanity (Hos 2 : 19-20; Rev 19 : 7-9).

Q 4. Must marriage be open to procreation to be sacramental?

Procreation is a cherished gift but not a prerequisite for sacramental validity. Many couples—through age, infertility, or choice—cannot or do not bear children; their union still manifests divine love. The primary goods of marriage are covenant fidelity, mutual joy, and shared mission.

Q 5. What are the essential signs?

- Matter: the spouses themselves, offering and accepting each other.
- Form: publicly spoken vows of lifelong faithfulness, sealed by the declaration of the Church's minister and the exchange of rings or another agreed sign.

Q 6. Who is the minister of the sacrament?

The spouses minister the sacrament to one another; the priest or deacon serves as the Church's witness, receives their vows, and bestows a nuptial blessing.

Q 7. How does the Church prepare couples?

- Pastoral conversations exploring faith, communication, finances, sexuality, and conflict-resolution.
- Reflection on the theology of covenant and the couple's hoped-for ministry in the world.
- Freedom to adapt liturgical texts so cultural heritage and personal story are honored, provided core elements remain.

Preparation is offered without cost; online options exist for long-distance or mobility-limited couples.

Q 8. May divorced persons remarry?

The Church recognizes human frailty and the tragedy of broken covenants. After pastoral discernment, persons divorced for reasons such as abuse, abandonment, or irreconcilable breakdown may be blessed in a new union, trusting God's grace to heal and renew. Civil divorce suffices; no fee-based annulment system is maintained.

Q 9. When can a marriage be dissolved?

While intended as lifelong, the covenant may be judged gravely harmed by abuse, habitual infidelity, or persistent endangerment. In such cases the Bishop—after counselling and safeguarding assessment—may grant an ecclesial release so that the injured party is free to seek peace and, if they wish, another sacramental marriage.

Q 10. How does the liturgy express inclusivity?

- Gender-neutral or gender-specific language is chosen by the couple.
- Readings and prayers may be selected from a broad lectionary celebrating love, justice, and partnership.
- The assembly is invited to voice its commitment: "Will you uphold these two in their covenant? We will."

Q 11. What responsibilities flow from the sacrament?

- Daily conversion toward mutual self-gift.
- Hospitality to friends, strangers, and especially the vulnerable.
- Stewardship of shared resources in service of God's reign.

Thus the home becomes a "domestic church," radiating the Gospel's welcome.

Q 12. Does civil recognition matter?

The Church respects civil law for legal protections, yet sacramental validity rests on covenantal vows before God. Where civil authorities deny recognition (e.g., certain same-sex unions), the Church still binds the couple sacramentally and advocates for equal civil dignity.

Article VI-F – Holy Orders

Q 1. What is the Sacrament of Holy Orders?

Holy Orders is the rite by which the Church, through prayer and the laying-on of hands, sets apart and empowers certain baptized persons to serve the People of God in Word, Sacrament, and pastoral oversight (Acts 6 : 6; 1 Tim 4 : 14). Those ordained do not replace the priesthood of all believers; they exist to guard, nurture, and coordinate the gifts of the whole Body.

Q 2. How many degrees are there?

Three historic orders, each distinct yet interdependent:

- Deacon – icon of Christ the Servant, witnessing at the margin and bringing the Church's compassion to the poor, sick, and imprisoned.
- Priest (Presbyter) – shepherd of a local congregation, tasked to preach, preside at the Eucharist, pronounce absolution, anoint the sick, and equip the saints for ministry.
- Bishop – guardian of apostolic faith and unity across congregations, ordaining ministers, confirming the baptized, and articulating doctrine with the college of bishops.

Q 3. Where is ordination rooted in Scripture?

- Jesus calls the Twelve and sends the Seventy-two (Lk 6 : 13; 10 : 1).
- The apostles appoint deacons by prayer and laying on hands (Acts 6 : 1-7).
- Paul entrusts Timothy and Titus to "fan into flame the gift through the laying-on of my hands" (2 Tim 1 : 6).

These patterns reveal a Spirit-guided succession of servant leadership.

Q 4. Who may be called?

Anyone. “God shows no partiality” (Acts 10 : 34). The HCCoG discerns vocations without regard to gender, marital status, orientation, physical ability, or past life history, trusting that the Spirit’s fire often ignites in surprising places (Joel 2 : 28-29).

Q 5. How is a vocation discerned?

Through four converging signs:

1. Interior summons – a persistent sense of call confirmed in prayer.
2. Charisms – evident gifts for teaching, compassion, administration, or prophecy.
3. Fruits – a life bearing justice, humility, and love (Mt 7 : 16).
4. Community affirmation – recognition by laity, clergy, and the Bishop after interviews, background checks, and psychological assessment.

Discernment is never pay-to-play; all costs are covered by the Church.

Q 6. What are the essential elements of ordination?

- Matter: the candidate presented.
- Form: the Bishop’s laying-on of hands with the consecratory prayer invoking the Holy Spirit for the ministry of that order.

Additional signs—vesting, anointing, gifting of Scripture—express but do not constitute the sacrament.

Q 7. What grace is conferred?

- Empowering gifts to preach the Word and celebrate the sacraments faithfully.
- A share in Christ’s servant-leadership, marked by pastoral charity and moral accountability.
- A lifelong bond with the wider college of clergy, sustained by mutual prayer and discipline.

Q 8. How are clergy held accountable?

- Transparent safeguarding policy: allegations of misconduct are reported, in some way, shape, or form to civil authorities and published outcomes are posted on the diocesan website.
- Regular review: annual continuing-education and spiritual-direction requirements.
- Lay participation: independent review boards of laity oversee investigations to avoid conflicts of interest.

Ordination is a call to cruciform service, not a shield for abuse.

Q 9. What formation is required?

Ordinary path: accredited theological study and supervised ministry internship. Where finances or geography hinder, the Church provides scholarship, online courses, and local mentors. Lifelong learning is expected; stagnant clergy risk suspension until refreshed.

Q 10. May clergy marry or work bi-vocationally?

Yes. Celibacy is honored as a gift, not a rule. Many clergy hold secular employment, echoing Paul the tent-maker (Acts 18 : 3), provided it never compromises pastoral availability or witness.

Q 11. Can an ordained person resign or be removed?

Any cleric may request laicization for conscience or health. The Bishop, after due process, may depose clergy guilty of persistent grave offence or doctrinal defection, always seeking repentance and restoration where possible.

Q 12. How does the ordained ministry relate to the laity?

Ordained leaders serve the royal priesthood, not lord it over them (1 Pet 5 : 2-3). Every baptized person has a vocation; clergy kindle, coordinate, and celebrate those manifold calls.

Article VI-G – Extreme Unction (Anointing of the Sick)

Q 1. What is Extreme Unction?

Extreme Unction—more often called Anointing of the Sick—is the sacrament in which the Church, praying over those who are gravely ill, dying, or burdened in mind and body, anoints them with holy oil. Through this rite Christ the Healer draws near, granting forgiveness, inner peace, and, when God wills, physical restoration (Jas 5 : 14-15).

Q 2. Where is its origin in Scripture?

- Jesus sends the Twelve who “anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them” (Mk 6: 13).
- James exhorts the community: “Call for the elders ... let them pray and anoint; the prayer of faith will save the sick” (Jas 5 : 14-15).
- The Good Samaritan pours oil and wine on wounds (Lk 10 : 34), foreshadowing sacramental tenderness.

Q 3. Who may receive the sacrament?

Any baptized person whose health is seriously impaired—by acute illness, chronic condition, impending surgery, mental anguish, advanced age, or imminent death. No fee or elaborate proof of faith is required; the only prerequisite is desire for Christ's mercy.

Q 4. May the sacrament be repeated?

Yes. It is conferred whenever a new crisis arises or health worsens. Repeated anointing witnesses to God's companionship through every valley.

Q 5. What are the essential elements?

- Matter: olive (or other plant) oil blessed by the Bishop at the Chrism Mass.
- Form: the priest's laying-on of hands and prayer such as:

"Through this holy anointing, may the Lord in his love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit ... May he free you from sin, save you, and raise you up."

The forehead and hands (or another suitable part) are anointed with the sign of the cross.

Q 6. Who is the minister?

A priest or bishop ordinarily; a deacon or lay chaplain may lead prayers and read Scripture but does not anoint sacramentally.

Q 7. What graces are bestowed?

- Strength, peace, and courage to endure suffering.
- Forgiveness of sins when Reconciliation is impossible.
- Sometimes bodily healing, always deeper union with Christ's Passion and Resurrection.
- A pledge of resurrection hope for the dying.

Q 8. How does this sacrament relate to Reconciliation and Eucharist (Viaticum)?

When possible, the priest offers Reconciliation first, then Anointing, followed by Viaticum—Communion "for the journey"—so the sick person meets Christ the Forgiver, Healer, and Living Bread in one seamless act of care.

Q 9. Is Anointing only for physical illness?

No. The Church recognizes the grave wounds of mental illness, trauma, and addiction. Those suffering such afflictions may and should be anointed, with concurrent professional care encouraged and supported.

Q 10. How is access ensured?

- 24-hour clergy-on-call lists for hospitals, hospices, and prisons.
- Training lay Eucharistic visitors to notify clergy promptly.
- Tele-chaplaincy triage (video or phone) to arrange in-person anointing when distance or quarantine intervenes.
- No charge, ever.

Q 11. What pastoral care follows the rite?

Ongoing visits, prayer circles, meals, advocacy for medical and social support, and—when death nears—gentle preparation of family, including child-friendly resources on grief.

Q 12. How does the community participate?

Congregations regularly include the sick in public intercessions, send cards, and, when invited, lay hands lightly during the anointing liturgy, embodying the compassion of Christ.

Article VII – The People of God: Vocation & Ministry

Q 1. Who are “the People of God”?

All the baptized, sealed by the Spirit, form one Body whose head is Christ (1 Cor 12 : 12-13).

Their dignity is equal, their functions diverse; every member—from infant to elder—is indispensable.

Q 2. What is the universal priesthood?

In Baptism each believer is made priest, prophet, and ruler with Christ (1 Pet 2 : 9). This means:

- Priest: offering daily life as spiritual sacrifice;
- Prophet: speaking truth and mercy;
- Ruler (servant-leader): stewarding creation and society toward justice. Ordained orders do not replace this calling; they foster and coordinate it.

Q 3. How does the Spirit equip the People?

Through charisms—graces such as teaching, healing, administration, hospitality, artistry, advocacy (Rom 12 : 6-8). Charisms are not ranks but tools for the common good; discovering and deploying them is an act of love.

Q 4. What forms of ministry do lay persons exercise?

- Liturgical: lectors, acolytes, musicians, Eucharistic visitors.
 - Catechetical: teachers, small-group leaders, mentors.
 - Pastoral: chaplains, counselors, grief companions.
 - Missional: community-organizers, advocates for the poor, environmental stewards.
- Licensing and training are provided so gifts flourish responsibly.

Q 5. Are marriage, singleness, or celibacy true vocations?

Yes. Covenant partnership, vowed religious life, or dedicated singleness each embody facets of Christ's love. The Church honors and resources all three.

Q 6. How are children and youth viewed?

Not as future Christians but present disciples. They serve as readers, choir members, tech hosts, and justice volunteers. Age-appropriate formation treats their questions with seriousness and wonder.

Q 7. How does one discern vocation?

- Prayer and attentive listening to joy and ache.
- Community feedback that mirrors strengths and shadows.
- Spiritual direction with trained guides.
- Experimentation in ministries, trusting that call often emerges through doing.

Q 8. What structures support ongoing formation?

- Parish and online learning hubs in Scripture, theology, and ethics.
- Mentorship circles pairing elders with newcomers.
- Annual gifts-in-ministry workshops to help members reassess charisms throughout life changes.

Q 9. How do ministries extend beyond church walls?

Believers carry their vocation into workplaces, schools, laboratories, legislatures, farms—seeking the common good, resisting oppression, and modelling servant leadership. “Worship ends when the last hunger ends.”

Q 10. How are ministries safeguarded from abuse of power?

- Clear codes of conduct for all ministers, lay and ordained.

- Background checks for those working with vulnerable persons.
- Lay-majority boards that investigate grievances promptly and transparently.

Q 11. How does the Church celebrate vocations?

- Annual Ministry Sunday when members share testimonies and are blessed.
- Liturgical rites of commissioning for catechists, justice teams, pastoral caregivers, and musicians.
- Public gratitude—newsletters, social media, feast-day shout-outs—affirming unseen labors.

Q 12. What is the goal of every vocation?

To join the Spirit's work of reconciling all things in Christ (Col 1 : 20). Whether one preaches, composes hymns, codes software, or nurses the sick, the aim is the same: "that God may be all in all" (1 Cor 15 : 28).

Article VIII – Moral Vision: Love of Neighbor

Q 1. What grounds the Church's moral teaching?

The twofold commandment of Jesus: "You shall love the Lord your God ... and your neighbor as yourself" (Mt 22 : 37-40). This love, measured by the cross, weighs every question in the scale of human dignity and the flourishing of creation.

A. Human Sexuality & LGBTQ+ Inclusion

Q 2. How does the HCCoG view sexual orientation and gender identity?

As facets of the diverse humanity God called "very good." Because same-sex attraction and gender variance appear in nature and bear fruits of covenant love, they cannot in themselves be sinful.

Q 3. What of scriptural texts sometimes cited against LGBTQ+ persons?

Read in context, they address exploitative acts—rape, cultic prostitution, unequal power—not loving, mutual relationships. All interpretation is tested by Christ's inclusive mercy; therefore condemnatory readings are self-invalidating.

Q 4. What welcome is extended?

Full participation: baptism, Eucharist, marriage, ordination, leadership. The Church pledges active defense against homophobia and transphobia inside and outside its walls.

B. Poverty & Homelessness

Q 5. Why is care for the poor central?

Jesus identifies himself with “the least of these” (Mt 25 : 40). Neglect of the hungry or houseless is neglect of Christ.

Q 6. How does the Church respond?

- Parishes partner with shelters, offer hot meals, shower and laundry facilities, legal clinics, and micro-grants.
- Budgets earmark at least 10 % for direct relief and systemic-justice campaigns.
- No coercive evangelism: aid is never barter for belief.

C. Prisons, Prisoners & Victims

Q 7. What stance does the HCCoG take toward incarceration?

Society has a right to protection; yet every prisoner retains God-given dignity. The Church visits cells, advocates restorative justice, and rejects profiteering from imprisonment.

Q 8. How are victims served?

Pastoral teams provide trauma care, legal-process accompaniment, and liturgies of lament.

Compassion is indivisible: it flows to the transgressed and the transgressor alike.

D. The Gift of Life & Abortion

Q 9. How is the right to life affirmed?

Life—womb to tomb—is sacred. Whenever possible the Church supports parents with medical, emotional, and material aid so that life may thrive.

Q 10. Does the Church ever recognize termination of pregnancy?

Yes. In cases of grave threat to a parent’s health, non-viability, or profound trauma, moral discernment may conclude that termination, though tragic, is the least harmful path. Decisions rest with those directly involved, in consultation with medical professionals and spiritual counsel; the Church accompanies without condemnation.

E. Creation Care

Q 11. Why is environmental stewardship a moral issue?

Earth is the first neighbor. Pollution, habitat destruction, and climate injustice wound the poor most acutely and deface God’s handiwork.

Q 12. What commitments does the Church make?

- Carbon-reduction targets for all church institutions.

- Congregational gardens, renewable-energy cooperatives, and divestment from extractive industries.
- Liturgical seasons (e.g., “Creationtide”) that nurture ecological spirituality.

F. Peacemaking & Political Engagement

Q 13. Is the Church political?

The Gospel has public consequences, but the HCCoG pledges no allegiance to parties or ideologies. It critiques any system—left, right, or center—that degrades human worth.

Q 14. What form does engagement take?

- Voter-education grounded in Catholic social teaching.
- Non-violent advocacy for policies that protect the vulnerable.
- Prayer, dialogue, and courage to speak truth when power oppresses.

G. Guiding Principles for Discernment

Q 15. When new ethical dilemmas arise, how does the Church decide?

1. Scripture in the light of Christ’s love.
2. The witness of tradition and science.
3. Voices of those most affected.
4. Prayerful consensus of the bishops and faithful.

The goal is always the same: abundant life for people and planet (Jn 10 : 10).

H. Excommunication

Q 16. What is excommunication

Excommunication is the most extraordinary act of the Church’s discipline. It is the Church’s formal acknowledgement that a person has, by their willful and grave actions, excluded themselves from communion, and that the Church must speak that truth aloud for the protection of souls, the integrity of worship, and the honor of Christ.

Q 17. Does Scripture and Early Church documents allow for such an act?

Our Lord Himself gives the pattern of correction and the final boundary. The Church admonishes privately, then with witnesses, then before the Church; and only when a person refuses to hear even the Church does the Church treat that person as one outside the fellowship. (Matthew 18:15–17). Saint Paul likewise commands the Church, when assembled, to remove the unrepentant offender in a manner meant to lead to salvation rather than destruction. (1 Corinthians 5:4–5). The earliest manuals of Christian order likewise command correction “in

peace,” withdrawal of fellowship from the unrepentant, and continued prayer and charity, until repentance occurs. (Didache 15).

Q 18. What are the Church's teachings on excommunication?

The Holy Catholic Church of the Gospels teaches:

1. Excommunication is not God's final judgment, nor a claim that a person is beyond mercy. It is the Church naming a present rupture of communion when lesser remedies have failed, or when the conduct is so grave and so dangerous that immediate separation is morally required.
2. Excommunication applies to baptized and non-baptized persons alike insofar as it concerns access to the Church's worship and sacramental life. It is the Church's declaration that a person may not enter into the Church's communion as if nothing has occurred.
3. The ordinary effect of excommunication is total exclusion from the sacramental life of the Church and from ecclesial privileges: no Holy Communion, no marriage under the Church's authority, no unction, no ordination, no exercise of ministry, no holding of office, no teaching or representation in the name of the Church. Baptism and confirmation are excepted as the Church's appointed door into deeper union with Christ, and as instruments by which repentance may be sealed and grace received.
4. Confession remains available to the excommunicated as the ordinary path out of excommunication. The person under sentence shall request a priest, or the Legate when the sentence was imposed by the Legate, to hear confession. Confession shall include truthful acknowledgement of the grave harm committed, a firm purpose of amendment of life, and a willingness to make reparations where possible and appropriate. Upon absolution, and upon such safeguards as the Church judges necessary to protect others, the sentence of excommunication shall be lifted.
5. Because excommunication is extraordinary, it is reserved to cases where it is clear that no other remedy can correct the offender or protect the faithful, and to cases of grave, public evil that directly contradicts the teachings of Jesus Christ in the Gospels. The Church names as especially relevant those acts done willfully, intentionally, and ruthlessly against the persons whom Christ identifies as the objects of special divine concern, the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick, the imprisoned. (Matthew 25). In such cases, excommunication may function as a refusal of entry, so that a person who has been turned away elsewhere for public evil may not treat the Church as a loophole or sanctuary from accountability.
6. Because excommunication can be abused, the Church binds itself to evidentiary seriousness. The standard is preponderance of the evidence, shown by reliable public proofs, such as multiple corroborating recordings, written policies actually enforced, findings of an impartial tribunal, admissions, or other comparably weighty evidence. Rumor is not enough, and faction is not evidence.

7. The purpose of discipline is restoration where restoration is possible. When repentance is real, the Church rejoices to lift the sentence. When the offense involved predation or grave abuse, repentance may reconcile a soul to God while still requiring permanent exclusion from ministry and other positions of power, because safeguarding is a moral duty.

Q 19. Who can exercise this ability?

The Church grants to priests, bishops, and The Legate, this ability.

Q 20. Who can lift the sentence of Excommunication?

A priest can lift an excommunication pronounced by them. However, they cannot lift excommunications pronounced by superiors. Similarly, a Bishop can lift an excommunication pronounced by a priest, or by themselves, but they cannot remove an excommunication pronounced by The Legate. Excommunication pronounced by The Legate is not reviewable, removable, or revocable, by any other clergy except The Legate. The Legate can lift any excommunication pronounced by any other cleric.

Article IX – Spiritual Warfare & Christian Hope

Q 1. Why speak of ‘spiritual warfare’?

Because Scripture and experience testify that creation is contested ground. Christ has conquered evil (Col 2 : 15), yet malevolent powers still resist the kingdom’s advance. Naming that conflict prevents both naïve denial and morbid fascination.

A. The Reality of Evil

Q 2. What is evil?

Evil is not a rival deity but a parasitic rebellion—personal and systemic—that distorts God’s good creation. It appears as:

- Sinful structures (slavery, exploitation, propaganda);
- Human malice (murder, abuse, deceit);
- Demonic intelligences—fallen angels—who “prowl like a roaring lion” (1 Pet 5 : 8).

Q 3. Does the HCCoG embrace dualism?

No. The triune God alone is omnipotent; Satan and cohorts are creatures whose end is already sealed. The Church resists them, confident of Christ’s victory.

B. Discernment of Spirits

Q 4. How distinguish ordinary hardship from demonic assault?

- Natural causes (illness, mental-health disorders, grief) are investigated first through medical and psychological assessment.

- Signs of oppression may include virulent hatred of the sacred, inexplicable knowledge, or phenomena beyond natural explanation.
- Holy sobriety forbids hasty conclusions; a diocesan discernment team—including clinicians—examines each case.

C. Exorcism & Deliverance

Q 5. When is the Rite of Exorcism used?

Only after exhaustive discernment shows no adequate natural cause and a reputable psychologist attests such. For infestation of a place, prayer may proceed at the residents' request without clinical referral

Q 6. Who conducts the rite?

A priest delegated by the Bishop, trained in theology, psychology, and pastoral care. Lay intercessors support through fasting, prayer, and hospitality.

Q 7. What does the rite entail?

- Proclamation of the Gospel, renunciation of Satan, invocation of the Trinity;
- Litany of saints, sprinkling of holy water, imposition of hands;
- Command of authority: "In the Name of Jesus Christ, depart."

All actions occur within safeguarding guidelines; coercion and sensationalism are forbidden.

D. The Armor of the Christian

Q 8. How do believers resist evil daily?

Paul's "full armor of God" (Eph 6 : 10-18):

- Truth – honesty dismantles the devil's native language of lies.
- Justice – righteous deeds starve systemic evils.
- Gospel readiness – mercy defuses conflict.
- Faith – trust extinguishes fiery darts of despair.
- Salvation-hope – identity in Christ steadies the mind.
- Scripture & prayer – constant dialogue with God repels deception.

Q 9. What sacramentals aid the struggle?

Crucifix, rosary, blessed salt, holy water: tangible reminders that Christ's cross eclipses darkness. They do not replace sacraments but focus faith on the Victor.

E. Death, Resurrection & the Last Things

Q 10. What happens when a person dies?

Body returns to dust; the soul rests consciously in God's care, awaiting the Last Day (cf. Rev 6 : 9-11). Scripture offers no detailed map of this interim state, only the assurance that we are "with the Lord" (Phil 1 : 23) or awaiting his light.

Q 11. What unfolds at the Final Judgement?

Christ, enthroned, judges the living and the dead (Rev 20 : 11-13). Two destinies follow:

1. Life in the New Creation – All whose names are, or become, inscribed in the Book of Life share the renewed heaven-and-earth (Rev 21 : 1-4).
2. The Lake of Fire / Second Death – Persistent, defiant evil meets the "second death," a definitive end (Rev 20 : 14-15; 21 : 8).

Q 12. Is the lake of fire eternal conscious torment?

We read "second death" literally: it signals final destruction, not everlasting torture. The punishment is real and just, yet finite; evil itself is abolished so that "God may be all in all" (1 Cor 15 : 28).

Q 13. Can repentance occur after a finite punishment?

Revelation's poetry leaves room for holy hope:

- The nations are still "healed" by the tree of life after judgment (Rev 22 : 2).
- Kings who once opposed God later bring their glory into the Holy City (Rev 21 : 24-26).

On this basis the HCCoG hopes—without presuming—that souls who turn from wickedness during finite punishment may yet be written into the Book of Life. Scripture does not settle the matter; therefore we entrust its resolution to the boundless wisdom and mercy of Christ.

Q 14. Where does purgatory fit?

Nowhere. Christ's saving work needs no post-mortem purgation for the redeemed. Whatever purification remains occurs in resurrection glory, not in a separate realm.

Q 15. What, then, is certain?

- God's judgment is righteous and unavoidable.
- God's mercy is deeper than we can fathom.
- Death will be destroyed, evil erased, and creation renewed.

How God brings these truths together is ultimately a sacred mystery to which the Church bears hopeful witness and humble silence.

F. Living in Watchful Joy

Q 16. How does eschatology shape ethics now?

Knowing the Master may return at any hour, disciples keep the house ready: feeding the hungry, reconciling enemies, stewarding Earth. Hope refuses escapism; it energizes engagement.

Q 17. What practices nourish hope?

Regular Eucharist, confession, fasting, works of mercy, study of apocalyptic texts through the lens of Christ's unfailing love, and daily examen to read the signs of the times without fear.

Article X – Prayer, Liturgy & the Liturgical Year

Q 1. Why is prayer the Church's first language?

Because the triune God eternally invites humanity into conversation: praise that delights, lament that trusts, silence that listens. "Pray without ceasing" (1 Th 5 : 17) is less a rule than a rhythm—breathing in the Spirit, breathing out adoration, confession, intercession and thanksgiving.

A. Personal and Common Prayer

Q 2. What forms of personal prayer does the HCCoG commend?

- Scripture-prayer (lectio divina, psalm-chanting).
- Fixed-hour offices—morning, noonday, evening and compline—adapted from the ancient Church.
- The Jesus Prayer, rosary, contemplative silence, spontaneous petition.

Members choose the pattern that best fits their temperament, assured that God hears the stammer as clearly as the sonnet.

Q 3. How do individual devotions connect to corporate worship?

Private prayer readies the heart to join the assembly; corporate worship teaches the vocabulary that personal prayer deepens. Two lungs, one breath.

B. Liturgy: "The Work of the People"

Q 4. Why does the Church prefer a fixed liturgy?

- Catechesis: recurring texts imprint Scripture on memory.
- Unity: a shared structure lets travelers recognize home in any HCCoG parish or language.
- Accessibility: predictable flow calms newcomers and neurodivergent worshippers. Yet within the framework there is room for local music, testimony, and symbol.

Q 5. What elements are non-negotiable in the Sunday Eucharist?

1. Gathering & confession of sin.
2. Proclamation of the Word with preaching.
3. Creed & prayers of the people.
4. Thanksgiving over bread and wine with anaphora & epiclesis.
5. Communion and dismissal into mission.

All other choices—language level, length of silence, style of music—serve these five anchors.

Q 6. How does music function liturgically?

Music is proclaimed theology: it carries doctrine from the page to the bloodstream. The Church welcomes hymnody and sacred song from every Christian culture—Gregorian chant, Shape-note, Taizé, spirituals, contemporary praise—provided the text aligns with the Gospel. Final selection rests with the priest and director of music in dialogue with the congregation.

C. The Liturgical Year

Q 7. What is the purpose of the Church calendar?

To rehearse the story of salvation so thoroughly that it becomes instinct. Advent hope, Christmas incarnation, Epiphany revelation, Lent repentance, Easter resurrection, Pentecost outpouring, and Ordinary Time growth—each season shapes the community after Christ's life.

Q 8. Why maintain traditional liturgical colors?

Colors preach without words: violet for preparation, white/gold for joy, red for Spirit and martyrdom, green for ordinary discipleship. Retaining them honors centuries of visual catechesis and offers people with low literacy or different languages an immediate sense of sacred time.

Q 9. Which feast days does the HCCoG observe?

All principal feasts of the wider catholic tradition—Trinity, Presentation, Transfiguration, All Saints, etc.—plus local commemorations authorized by the Bishop. Saints and martyrs are remembered not as intermediaries we must placate but as elder siblings urging us onward.

D. Inculturation & Language

Q 10. How does the Church balance universality with local culture?

The core texts (collects, Eucharistic prayers) remain recognizably the same across the globe, but gesture, music, vesture fabrics, and art draw from local colors, instruments and idioms. Liturgies are translated with sensitivity to gender-inclusive language and poetic resonance.

E. Participation & Accessibility

Q 11. Who leads worship?

Worship is collective: presider, deacon, acolytes, sign-language interpreters, livestream hosts, children bearing candles—all minister. Full accessibility (ramps, large-print texts, visual-aid screens, sensory-friendly spaces) is treated as a theological, not merely legal, mandate.

F. Fruit of Worship

Q 12. How does liturgy flow into daily mission?

The dismissal (“Go in peace to love and serve”) is not an epilogue—it is the hinge on which sacrament turns into service. A Eucharist that ends at the church door has not truly ended; it must continue in casseroles delivered, protests joined, emails of reconciliation sent, seeds planted.

Article XI – Governance & Apostolic Calling

Q 1. What pattern of governance does the HCCoG follow?

An episcopal–synodal model: bishops guard apostolic faith, while clergy and laity share deliberative voice in synods, councils, and parish chapters. Authority flows from Christ through the whole Body, never from hierarchy alone (Acts 15).

A. Structures of Oversight

Q 2. Who is His Holiness, the Legate?

His Holiness, the Legate—also referred to as the Bishop Ecclesiae—serves as first among equals, seated at the Basilica of Saint Longinus (Mother Church). They convene synods, articulate doctrine, and symbolize unity across dioceses.

Q 3. What is the College of Bishops?

All diocesan bishops together form the College. They:

- Safeguard teaching; • Ordain new bishops; • Ratify major policy by two-thirds consensus.
- Each bishop is pastor of a diocese but remains accountable to the College and to the faithful.

Q 4. How are bishops chosen?

Through a triple discernment: local nomination, College examination, and final confirmation by His Holiness, the Legate. Discernment weighs Christian character, theological competence, evident charisms, and the people’s testimony.

Q 5. What is the role of priests and deacons in governance?

- Priests chair parish councils, administer finances transparently, and represent congregations at diocesan synod.

- Deacons bring the voice of the margin—poor, imprisoned, unhoused—into every council where decisions are made.

B. Participation of the Laity

Q 6. How do lay members share in decision-making?

At every level:

- Parish chapter (elected) approves budgets and ministries.
- Diocesan synod is at least 60 % lay.
- General Synod (church-wide) reviews canon law, safeguarding norms, and social-justice priorities.

Votes are recorded; proceedings are published online for full transparency.

C. Safeguarding & Accountability

Q 7. What measures address misconduct?

- Mandatory reporting of abuse to civil authorities.
- Independent review boards with lay majority.
- Annual public release of clergy-status list (active, suspended, deposed). Failure to cooperate triggers immediate suspension pending investigation.

Q 8. How are finances overseen?

- External audits;
- Open-book policy;
- Clergy salaries capped at modest multiples of local living wage.

Donations fund ministry, not luxury.

D. Apostolic Calling Beyond Succession

Q 9. Does the Church require historic laying-on-of-hands to recognize an apostle?

No. Following Luke 6 and Paul's Damascus call, the HCCoG teaches that Christ may call whom He wills.

Signs of apostolic call:

1. Direct encounter with the risen Christ (mystical or vocational);
2. Fruitful proclamation confirmed by miracles of grace;
3. Communal recognition through the College of Bishops.

Q 10. Can an apostolic call appear today?

Yes, but it is tested rigorously. Any self-proclaimed apostle submits to discernment; claims found fraudulent are publicly refuted to protect the flock.

E. Relation to Civil Authority

Q 11. Is the Church aligned with any political party or state?

No. Christ's reign transcends temporal ideologies. The Church prays for leaders, obeys just laws, and practices lawful civil dissent when conscience demands (Acts 5 : 29).

F. Evolution of Canon Law

Q 12. How may canons change?

By General Synod majority plus College of Bishops consent. Doctrinal definitions, however, require unanimity of the College and ratification by His Holiness, the Legate, ensuring stability of core faith while permitting prudent adaptation of discipline.

Article XII – Future Development of Doctrine & Final Provisions

Q 1. Why can doctrine develop?

Because the Gospel encounters new languages, cultures, and crises. Truth itself does not change, yet the Church must articulate that truth afresh so each generation may “hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God” (Acts 2 : 11).

Q 2. What safeguards guide development?

1. Scriptural Fidelity – every proposal is weighed against the plain sense of the Bible read through the lens of Christ's love.
2. Apostolic Continuity – harmony with the Creeds and the settled witness of the historic Church.
3. Communal Discernment – prayerful listening among bishops, clergy, theologians, and the whole People of God, especially those most affected by the issue.
4. Missional Fruit – doctrine must foster holiness, justice, and evangelistic credibility; “by their fruits you will know them” (Mt 7 : 20).

Q 3. Who may initiate doctrinal inquiry?

Any baptized member may petition the local bishop. If the matter is weighty, the Bishop brings it to the College of Bishops, which forms a theological commission including experts and laity.

Q 4. What is the formal process?

1. Study Period – commission gathers biblical, historical, scientific, and pastoral data.
2. Interim Paper – circulated church-wide for comment.
3. Synod Debate – at diocesan and General Synod levels, requiring public hearings.
4. Collegial Consensus – two-thirds vote of the College of Bishops.
5. Promulgation – His Holiness, the Legate issues an Encyclical that states the doctrine, the reasoning, and its pastoral implications.

Q 5. Can promulgated doctrine ever be reversed?

Core dogmas (e.g., Trinity, Incarnation) are irreformable. Non-core teachings can be refined or rescinded by the same process but require unanimity in the College of Bishops plus two-thirds in General Synod, ensuring change is rare, deliberate, and Spirit-led.

Q 6. What role do science and scholarship play?

All truth is God’s truth. Findings from natural and social sciences inform moral and pastoral doctrine, provided they respect the primacy of the Gospel.

Q 7. How is dissent handled?

Open, respectful argument is welcomed. Those who dissent from non-core teaching remain in good standing; public advocacy against core dogma may trigger a formal review for clergy but never suppresses conscientious inquiry.

Q 8. What is the status of private revelations or prophetic words?

They may edify the faithful but carry no binding authority unless confirmed through the full doctrinal process. “Test everything; hold fast what is good” (1 Th 5 : 21).

Q 9. How are doctrinal texts preserved and taught?

- Official Encyclicals are archived digitally and in print.
- Seminaries and parish study groups integrate new statements into curricula.
- A living Catechism—this document—receives periodic annotated editions to aid catechists.

Final Provisions

1. Supremacy of Christ

Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh and risen Lord, remains the living norm against which every doctrine is measured.

2. Authority of This Catechism

This Catechism, duly promulgated by His Holiness, the Legate with consent of the College of Bishops and General Synod, is the authentic summary of faith and morals for the Holy Catholic Church of the Gospels.

3. Revision Clause

Amendments require the same process outlined in Q 4 and take effect only upon formal promulgation.

4. Effective Date

The doctrines herein bind the Church from the Feast of Pentecost 20 XX (date to be inserted upon ratification).

Closing Exhortation

Hold fast the pattern of sound teaching; live in hope; walk in love. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all the saints. Amen.

Concluding Summary of the Catechism

This Catechism has declared:

- **God – triune, creating, redeeming, indwelling.**
- **Scripture – infallible in purpose, interpreted through Christ's inclusive mercy.**
- **Church – one, holy, catholic, apostolic; open to every calling.**
- **Sacraments – seven streams of grace; sacramentals as gentle tributaries.**
- **Moral Vision – love of neighbor expressed in radical welcome, justice for the poor, dignity for the imprisoned, stewardship of life and Earth.**
- **Hope – finite judgment, ultimate abolition of evil, and the renewal of all things.**
- **Worship – patterned prayer and inclusive liturgy that form disciples for mission.**
- **Governance – episcopal oversight joined to synodal collaboration, transparent and accountable.**
- **Future – a humble readiness to grow in truth as the Spirit.**