

Mercy of God Community By-Laws (Amended)

Effective: October 23, 2017

ARTICLE I. NAME OF ORGANIZATION

1.1 The name of this corporation is "Mercy of God Community, Inc.," hereinafter referred to as "the community." Male members may be known as Brothers of the Mercy of God, and female members may be known as Sisters of the Mercy of God.

ARTICLE II. CORPORATE PURPOSE

Section 1. Nonprofit Purpose

The charisms and mission of this community shall be (a) to seek Christian maturity, (b) to engage in continuous spiritual formation, (c) to pursue Christian unity, (d) to provide opportunities for ecumenical worship, (e) to perform external and internal ministries based on the Beatitudes and the spiritual and corporal works of mercy commended in sacred scripture, (f) to maintain internal equality and collegiality, (g) to work toward the eradication of all constraints on personhood, and (h) to collaborate with other entities whose purposes and activities are consistent with our own.

Section 2. Specific Purpose

The corporate purposes of this association shall be (a) to constitute a community of sisters and brothers bound by religious vows as well as those wishing to be associated with them, (b) to conduct services of Christian worship in ecumenical and inclusive traditions, (c) to operate programs of religious education, (d) to perform humane good deeds, and (e) to maintain residential and programmatic accommodations to facilitate these purposes

ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Eligibility for Membership

3.1 Membership in this community shall be available to any adult, twenty-one (21) years of age or older, and regardless of gender, race, nationality, ethnic origin, physical ability, affectional orientation, marital or relationship status, socio-economic class, educational or occupational background, or place of residence.

3.2 There shall be candidates, novices, and professed members.

3.2.1 (A) A candidate is a person who fulfills the requirements set forth herein, has been in contact with the community for at least six months, and aspires to become a professed member.

3.2.2 (A) A novice shall have been a candidate for at least one year, satisfactorily completed the prescribed procedures and initial phases of the formation program, and been formally approved by the Council to be advanced to the novitiate.

3.2.3 (A) A professed member shall have been a novice for at least one year, satisfactorily completed the prescribed procedures and further phases of the formation program, and been formally approved by the Council to profess vows for an initial one-year period. Upon pronouncing initial vows in an appropriate ceremony, he or she shall be a full member of the community, with right to voice and vote, and be addressed as "brother" or "sister."

(B) A professed member, after having been in good standing over one-year periods, and subject to approval by the Council, shall be permitted to renew his or her vows as an annually professed member.

(C) Upon having renewed his or her vows after each of three (3) successive one-year periods, a brother or sister shall have the options of continuing to make annual professions or of pronouncing perpetual vows as a life-professed member.

3.2.4 A professed member in good standing is one who is faithful to his or her vows, prays daily, attends all community retreats and financially supports the community.

There also shall be associates..

3.3.1 An associate is any person who wishes to identify with the community and provide spiritual or material support, but who does not necessarily participate in its' worship services, meetings, and other activities, or perform any direct ministry.

ARTICLE IV. MEETINGS OF MEMBERS

Section 1. Regular Meetings

4.1 Members shall convene in meetings on a regular basis.

4.2 Plenary meetings shall be held not less than once every year.

4.2.1 The purpose of a plenary meeting shall be (a) to revise the Rule or amend the By-Laws, (b) to elect leadership, (c) to seek consensus on policies, programs, and activities, and/or (d) to address any other matters of importance to the community.

4.2.2 Full voice and vote at plenary meetings shall be accorded only to professed members in good standing, as defined in 3.2.4. Novices, candidates, and associates shall be permitted to attend and may be heard, but they shall not have the right to vote.

4.2.3 The dates, times, and places of plenary meetings shall be determined by a previous such meeting or by the Council.

4.2.4 All professed members shall be expected to participate in plenary meetings.

4.2.5 A consensus, shall be required for the approval of any action at any plenary meeting.

4.2.6 Minutes of plenary meetings shall be written by the Secretary, who also shall send a copy of said minutes to all members.

ARTICLE V. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

5.1 The community places itself under the inspiration and authority of the Holy Spirit. Temporal governance shall be on a collegial and democratic basis.

5.2 The Rule and By-Laws shall be the governing documents. Adoption and amendment thereof shall be reserved to the full membership at triennial chapters pursuant to 4.2.1. The interim determination of practices and routine administration of the community shall be entrusted to leadership elected by and from among the members pursuant to 5.6.

5.3 There shall be a Leadership Council, consisting of the President, the Vice President, the Secretary, and the Treasurer. The Council shall serve as the board of directors of the corporation. These positions may be combined.

5.3.1 The Council, collectively, shall (a) interpret, implement, and propose amendments to the governing documents; (b) approve the initial admission of candidates, advancement to novitiate, and profession of members; (c) make subsequent determinations of the qualifications and discipline of members; (d) appoint coordinators and/or committees for major programs and activities; (e) oversee the work of, and receive reports from, officers, coordinators and/or committees, and other appointees, and (f) fulfill applicable requirements of the federal, state, or local governments.

5.4 The titles and duties of the officers shall be as follows.

5.4.1 The President also shall have the title "Community Servant" and shall be the primary model of community life and provide over-all leadership; be the principal spokesperson for the community, and serve as liaison with other entities.

5.4.2 The Vice President also shall have the title "Vicar" and shall assist the President in the duties of the presidential office as delegated by the President. The Vice President shall assume the title, duties, and responsibilities of President immediately upon the resignation, death, or removal from office of the President.

5.4.3 The Secretary shall be the custodian of the Rule, By-Laws, and other governing documents and, upon request by any member or other appropriate person or agency, shall certify and deliver copies thereof and send notices and write minutes of meetings of members and of the Council.

5.4.4 The Treasurer shall (a) draft the annual budget; (b) oversee and record all financial transactions; (c) collect revenues and make disbursements; (d) maintain bank accounts; (e) compile quarterly financial reports, and (f) advise the community on all financial and business matters.

5.5 The Leadership Council shall be elected at a triennial chapter by and from among the professed members in good standing.

5.5.1 (A) Not later than ninety (90) days prior to the chapter, any professed member who believes another professed member has the spiritual gifts and practical talents to serve in a leadership position (President/Community Servant, Vice President/Community Vicar, Secretary, or Treasurer) shall send a message so stating to the other member, thus inviting the latter to discern a calling to leadership. A copy of the letter shall be sent simultaneously to the Secretary.

(B) Not later than sixty (60) days prior to the chapter, the recipient member shall discern a response and disclose it to the original sender and to the Secretary.

(C) Not later than thirty (30) days prior to the chapter, the Secretary shall send a message to all professed members announcing the names and prospective offices of those who have responded affirmatively, which shall be deemed the preliminary list of nominees.

5.5.2 A consensus of the community present at the chapter meeting or a majority vote will be required to be elected to these positions.

5.6 Those elected to the Leadership Council shall serve terms of three years, commencing immediately after their election, and they shall hold office until their successors are elected, or unless and until interruption occurs by reason of death, resignation, or removal.

5.7 Any vacancy in any position, arising by reason of succession to another office, resignation, removal, or death, shall be filled by the Council, and the interim officer so chosen shall serve until his or her successor is elected in the next scheduled election.

ARTICLE VI. STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

6.1 Our spirit of poverty nevertheless recognizes that material resources are necessary to facilitate community living and activities, the members' ministries, and corporate administration.

6.2 All members share in the obligation to provide and maintain the material integrity of the community. Financial support by members shall be achieved primarily through stewardship, and external fund-raising efforts may be undertaken. The Council, and particularly the Treasurer, shall be responsible for financial management.

6.3 The Treasurer shall present a financial report at each meeting of the community.

ARTICLE VII. INDEMNIFICATION, DISCLAIMER, AND STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

7.1 Any person, currently serving or who ever has served as an officer, councilor, member, or in any other official capacity on behalf of the community, shall not be held liable for any action, based solely on his or her conduct in such capacity, pursuant to RIGL 7-6-9.

7.1.1 Such a person shall be reimbursed by the corporation for any and all expenses necessarily incurred or amounts paid in connection with the defense or reasonable settlement of

any legal or administrative proceedings to which he or she is made a party by reason of such service, except in matters which shall have constituted malicious, willful, or wanton misconduct in the performance of his or her duties and as to which he or she shall be finally adjudged to be liable.

7.2 Nothing herein shall be construed to constitute or imply that the community is a part of or affiliated with the structure, or subject to the control, of any other religious organization or denomination.

7.3 The community, in conducting its programs and activities, shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, gender, affectional orientation, religious affiliation, or handicap, except as to the minimum age for membership pursuant to Article 3.

ARTICLE VIII. DISSOLUTION OF CORPORATION

8.1 This corporation may be dissolved only if there are fewer than five (5) professed members in good standing, and they are unwilling to remain as members and assume responsibilities for the continuation of the community.

8.2 In the event that this corporation is dissolved, its net assets remaining after all obligations have been fulfilled, shall be distributed to one or more non-denominational Christian entities, prayerfully chosen by the remaining members. Said entity(ies) shall be tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code. If said entity(ies) is (are) not then exempt, the assets shall be distributed to one or more other entities which are exempt under said Section 501(c)(3), or under the corresponding section of any future tax code.

Article IX. EFFECTIVE DATE; SUSPENSION OR AMENDMENT OF BY-LAWS.

11.1 These By-laws, as amended, shall be effective on October 23, 2017.

11.2 These By-laws may be suspended, during any plenary meeting of members, by a consensus at a plenary meeting.

11.3 These By-Laws may be amended.

11.3.1 An amendment may be proposed, by any professed member in good standing, not less than ninety (90) calendar days prior to the triennial chapter at which it is to be considered.

11.3.2 The Secretary shall send a copy to every professed member in good standing.,

11.3.3 A consensus or a majority vote of members present at the chapter shall be required to approve any amendment.

11.3.4 An approved amendment shall become effective immediately upon the consensus or vote of the members, unless a different effective date is specified in the amendment.

ADOPTION OF BYLAWS

I certify that this is a true original or copy of the By-Laws of the Mercy of God Community, as amended through **October 23, 2017**.

[Corporate Seal] Br. Allan Cuseo, MGC

Secretary