

THE CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

OF THE

Federation of Tamil Catholic Associations of North America (FeTCANA)

FeTCANA - the Federation of Tamil Catholic Associations of North America, is a legally constituted and incorporated entity operating as a Non-Profit organization. Governed by the Board of FeTCANA, its activities are subject to regulation by both the state and federal authorities of the United States of America. This formal establishment ensures adherence to legal standards and transparent governance within the jurisdiction of the United States.

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ARTICLE I. PREAMBLE, NAME AND PURPOSE

Section I.1.1 PREAMBLE:

Whereas, the establishment of The Federation of Tamil Catholic Associations of North America (hereinafter referred to as "FeTCANA") aims to concretize the enduring aspiration of the Tamil Catholics residing in North America to advance in their faith, uphold and advance the tenets of the Catholic faith, engage in acts of charity, uphold moral standards, foster social cohesion, celebrate cultural diversity, facilitate education, support Catholic Tamil literature, and perpetuate artistic heritage.

Section I.1.2: NAME:

The nomenclature of this entity shall be denoted as the "**Federation of Tamil Catholic Associations of North America**," hereinafter acknowledged by the abbreviation "**FeTCANA**."

Section I.1.3: STRUCTURE:

FeTCANA's organizational structure is delineated as follows, comprising distinct leadership bodies endowed with specific functions and responsibilities. The term "Board" consists of Board of Founders, Board of Executives, Board of Spiritual Advisors and affiliated members from Tamil Catholic associations.

I.1.3.1 Board of Founders:

The Board of Founders assumes the pivotal role of formulating comprehensive policies that govern the Federation, consistently aligned with its predefined objectives. For the inaugural ten-year span, these esteemed individuals will shoulder the primary leadership role, ensuring the effective translation of FeTCANA's Vision and Mission into tangible actions.

I.1.3.2 Board of Executives:

The Executive Board assumes accountability for the operational intricacies of the Federation. Tasked with the management and execution of day-to-day activities, this body guarantees the practical realization of policies and initiatives set forth by the Board of Founders, thereby contributing to the attainment of FeTCANA's overarching goals.

I.1.3.3 Board of Spiritual Advisors:

The Board of Spiritual Advisors shall render guidance to FeTCANA on matters pertaining to spiritual and liturgical concerns. Comprised of individuals renowned for their spiritual insight and expertise, this body offers valuable counsel to ensure the Federation's activities remain steadfastly aligned with its spiritual underpinnings.

I.1.3.4 Board of Members from Affiliate Associations:

The Board of Members hails from FeTCANA's Affiliate Associations and plays an integral role in the effective implementation of the vision and mission and functioning of the Federation. Collaborating with the various catholic association Boards, these members contribute their insights and perspectives, thus fostering a collective approach to decision-making and ensuring the harmonious operation of FeTCANA.

This delineated organizational structure ensures a balanced distribution of responsibilities, safeguarding both the spiritual essence and pragmatic operations of FeTCANA in accordance with its established objectives and principles.

Section I.2.1: PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES:

The objectives and purpose of this Federation, as expressed in the Preamble, are hereby set forth in precise legal terms as follows:

I.2.1.1 Exclusive Aims:

The primary purpose for the establishment of this Federation is to accomplish the exclusive aims articulated in the Preamble.

I.2.1.2 Umbrella Support and Unity:

To serve as an overarching organization that offers assistance and encouragement to numerous Tamil Catholic Groups situated within North America, while upholding their unity and distinct Tamil Catholic identity.

I.2.1.3 Christian Faith Growth and Expression:

To provide assistance to Tamil Catholics residing in North America in fostering the growth of their Christian Faith and facilitating the expression of their faith through worship.

I.2.1.4 Tamil Language and Cultural Development:

To actively nurture the advancement of the Tamil Language and culture among Tamil Catholics residing in North America, and to promote its exceptional attributes through diverse means within the region.

I.2.1.5 Dissemination of Lived Experiences:

To extend the experiences and resources derived from lived Tamil Catholic realities to a broader audience, encompassing diverse locations wherever Tamil Catholics are situated.

I.2.1.6 Witness to Kingdom Values:

To serve as witnesses of the values emblematic of God's Kingdom, fostering interactions and services with individuals of varied faiths, cultures, and ideologies through dialogues and acts of service.

I.2.1.7 Non-Profit and Volunteer Nature:

Recognizing its non-profit and volunteer status, the Federation shall exclusively allocate its generated income towards the advancement of the delineated objectives.

I.2.1.8 Expanded Powers in Alignment:

The Federation reserves the right to exercise any additional powers that are not explicitly enumerated above yet remain congruent with the overall objectives of the association and in alignment with the guiding principles set forth in the Preamble.

I.2.1.9 Avoidance of Benefit to Directors and Members:

None of the funds of this non-profit organization shall directly or indirectly provide any pecuniary advantage to the board of directors or any individual member(s). Furthermore, the Federation shall refrain from engaging in activities influencing legislation of any kind or participating in political campaigns for any individual.

I.2.1.10. Promotion of Fellowship and Collaboration:

To promote a sense of camaraderie and to organize, facilitate, and engage in cultural and social events with other Organization(s) possessing analogous or akin objectives.

These precise objectives shall guide the activities, endeavors, and governance of FeTCANA in accordance with the established principles and purposes laid out herein.

ARTICLE II. MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

II.1 FeTCANA membership categories

1. Founding Members
2. Lifetime Members
3. Affiliate Association Members

II.1.1: Founding Members

- II.1.1.1 Founding members are individuals who played a pivotal role in establishing FeTCANA and are dedicated to its vision and mission.
- II.1.1.2 Founding members shall have the responsibility to guide, implement, and execute the Federation's objectives and goals.

II.1.2: Lifetime Members

- II.1.2.1 Lifetime members are individuals who are committed Tamil Catholics residing in North America.
- II.1.2.2 Lifetime members may or may not be affiliated with any local or regional association.
- II.1.2.3 Lifetime members shall hold membership for their lifetime and shall have the privilege to participate in FeTCANA activities and contribute to its advancement.
- II.1.2.4 The one-time, non-refundable membership dues for Life Membership of individuals shall be one thousand U.S. dollars (\$1,000.00 US) and it must be approved by the majority of the founding members.

II.1.3: Affiliate Association Members

- II.1.3.1 Affiliate Association members are Tamil Catholic Associations located across North America.
- II.1.3.2 Affiliate Associations must align with and accept FeTCANA's vision, mission, and norms as outlined by the Board of Founders.
- II.1.3.3 Affiliate Associations shall be approved for membership by the Board of Founders and shall have the right to nominate Affiliate Association Members to partake in FeTCANA activities.
- II.1.3.4 The number of delegates from each affiliated association depends on the number of registered members within the affiliated associations.
- II.1.3.5 One Delegate member will be allocated to the affiliate association who have registered members less than 150 and greater than 25.
- II.1.3.6 Two Delegate members will be allocated to the affiliate association who have registered members of 150 and above.
- II.1.3.7 Membership fee at the Federation is for two consecutive calendar years. Each affiliated Tamil Catholic organization shall renew its membership every two years by paying its dues to the Federation in full and continue to avail all the privileges and rights as a member until their membership expires at the end of the two-year membership period set by the Board. The fee for each delegate membership will be determined by the Board and shall not be prorated.

II.2: Rights and Privileges of Members

This subsection delineates the rights and privileges endowed upon members of FeTCANA, in alignment with its overarching objectives and principles. Recognizing the pivotal role that members play in furthering the mission of the FeTCANA, this section outlines the entitlements that ensure their active participation, engagement, and contribution to the collective aspirations of the organization.

II.2.1: Founding Members

- II.2.1.1 Founding members shall have the right to shape FeTCANA's policies, initiatives, and strategic direction.
- II.2.1.2 Founding members may hold leadership positions and engage actively in decision-making processes.

II.2.2: Lifetime Members

- II.2.2.1 Lifetime members shall have the privilege to participate in FeTCANA's events, programs, and activities.
- II.2.2.2 Lifetime members shall receive regular updates and communications regarding FeTCANA's endeavors.

II.2.3: Affiliate Association Members

- II.2.3.1 Affiliate Association members shall have the right to nominate Affiliate Association Members to represent their association in FeTCANA activities.
- II.2.3.2 Affiliate Association members may collaborate with FeTCANA in pursuit of shared objectives and initiatives.

II.3: Responsibilities and Obligations of Members

II.3.1: Founding Members

- II.3.1.1 Founding members shall actively contribute to the implementation of FeTCANA's vision and mission.
- II.3.1.2 Founding members shall adhere to the Federation's bylaws, policies, and guidelines.

II.3.2: Life Time Members

- II.3.2.1 Life time members shall uphold FeTCANA's values and principles.
- II.3.2.2 Life time members shall contribute to the growth and development of the Federation through active engagement and support.

II.3.3: Affiliate Association Members

- II.3.3.1 Affiliate Association members shall align their activities with FeTCANA's objectives and norms.
- II.3.3.2 Affiliate Association members shall collaborate in harmony with FeTCANA to achieve shared goals.

This Membership Clause is hereby adopted and shall come into effect upon approval by the Board of Founders and subsequent endorsement by the Board of Executives of FeTCANA.

II.4: Members' Roles and Responsibilities

This subsection outlines the roles and responsibilities that members of FeTCANA are entrusted with, in harmony with its established goals and legal framework. By defining the specific functions and obligations of members, this section aims to ensure a cohesive and purpose-driven community, where each member's contributions are integral to the realization of the FeTCANA's mission.

II.4.1: Founding Members

II.4.1.1 Founding members shall lead and guide FeTCANA in accordance with its vision and mission.

II.4.1.2 Founding members shall actively participate in decision-making processes, strategic planning, and implementation of Federation initiatives.

II.4.2: Life Time Members

II.4.2.1 Life time members shall contribute positively to FeTCANA's growth and success through their active involvement in events, programs, and activities.

II.4.2.2 Life time members shall uphold the Federation's values, promote unity, and encourage fellow members to embrace diversity.

II.4.3: Affiliate Association Members

II.4.3.1 Affiliate Association members shall support and promote FeTCANA's objectives within their respective associations and communities.

II.4.3.2 Affiliate Association members shall nominate Affiliate Association Members who actively engage in FeTCANA activities and effectively communicate Federation initiatives to their associations.

II.5: Code of Conduct and Active Participation

II.5.1: Code of Conduct

II.5.1.1 All members shall adhere to a code of conduct that promotes respect, integrity, and collaboration.

II.5.1.2 Members shall refrain from engaging in actions that spread hatred, create division, or indulge in divisive politics that could harm the unity of FeTCANA and its members.

II.5.2: Active Participation in Meetings

II.5.2.1 All members are expected to actively participate in Federation meetings, discussions, and events.

II.5.2.2 Members shall contribute constructively to discussions, share insights, and provide valuable input to drive FeTCANA's progress.

II.6: Removal of Disobedient or Disloyal Members

II.6.1 The Board of Founders shall have the authority to remove any member who disobeys Federation rules, exhibits disloyalty against FeTCANA, or undermines its leadership.

II.6.2: Process of Removal

II.6.2.1 In cases where a member's actions are deemed contrary to the Federation's principles, the Board of Founders shall initiate a review process.

II.6.2.2 The member in question shall be provided an opportunity to present their case before the Board of Founders prior to any decision being made.

II.6.2.3 The decision to remove a member shall require a majority vote of the Board of Founders.

II.6.3: Impact of Removal

II.6.3.1 A member who is removed shall lose all rights, privileges, and responsibilities associated with FeTCANA membership.

II.6.3.2 The decision of the Board of Founders regarding the removal of a member shall be final.

This comprehensive framework of Members' Roles and Responsibilities, along with the adherence to a Code of Conduct and the authority to remove disobedient or disloyal members, aims to ensure that FeTCANA remains a vibrant, united, and inclusive community dedicated to the promotion of Tamil Catholic values, heritage, and unity across North America.

ARTICLE III. BOARD OF FeTCANA

This subsection expounds upon the designated roles and associated responsibilities vested in the members of the Federation, within the context of the established FeTCANA Organizational Structure. Comprising the Board of Founding Members, Board of Executives or Office Bearers, Board of Spiritual Advisors, and Board of Affiliate Association Members, this structured framework delineates the specific duties that members are legally bound to undertake in pursuit of FeTCANA's articulated objectives. Through these legally defined roles and responsibilities, the Federation endeavors to orchestrate an efficient and purposeful cooperative effort towards its overarching mission.

III.1 Board of Founders

III.1.1 Responsible for the overall operation, management, and administration of FeTCANA.

III.1.2 Governs the organization during the initial ten years.

III.1.3 Selects and appoints officer bearers, including President, Vice Presidents for departments, Secretary, Joint Secretary, Treasurer, and Executive Committee members.

III.1.4 Sets strategic goals, policies, and direction for FeTCANA.

- III.1.5 Ensures compliance with legal, ethical, and regulatory requirements.
- III.1.6 Provides guidance and mentorship to subsequent levels of the organization.

III.2 Board of Executives

The Board of Executives are the Officer Bearers of FeTCANA which manages the operation of FeTCANA. Board of Founders with advice from other bodies will select/elect Board of Executives. The term of the Board of Executive position is two years.

III.2.1 President

- III.2.1.1 Serves as the leader and spokesperson of FeTCANA.
- III.2.1.2 Presides over meetings of the Board of Founders, Executive Committee, and General Body.
- III.2.1.3 Provides overall direction and vision for the organization.

III.2.2 Vice Presidents for Departments

- III.2.2.1 Leads and oversees specific functional areas or departments within FeTCANA.
- III.2.2.2 Coordinates with respective committees to achieve departmental goals.
- III.2.2.3 There will be up to five Vice Presidents as per requirement

III.2.3 Secretary

- III.2.3.1 Maintains accurate records of meetings, decisions, and correspondences.
- III.2.3.2 Facilitates communication within the organization and with external stakeholders.

III.2.4 Joint Secretary

- III.2.4.1 Assists the Secretary in their duties and responsibilities.
- III.2.4.2 Fulfills the role of the Secretary in their absence.

III.2.5 Treasurer

- III.2.5.1 Manages financial matters, including budgeting, accounting, and reporting.
- III.2.5.2 Ensures responsible and transparent financial management.

III.2.6 Executive Members

- III.2.6.1 Comprises key individuals who volunteer to assist office bearers of Board of Executives
- III.2.6.2 Executes decisions made by the Board of Founders and Board of Executives.
- III.2.6.3 Implements strategies and initiatives for the organization's growth.

III.3 Board of Life Time Members

- III.3.1 Nominated and elected by the Board of Founders from Lifetime Members of FeTCANA and Affiliate Association Members from affiliated associations.
- III.3.2 Serve a two-year term.
- III.3.3 Contribute to decision-making, policy formulation, and overall governance.
- III.3.4 Provide expertise and insights to drive the organization's mission.

III.4 Board of Spiritual Advisors

- III.4.1 Tamil Catholic Priests who are supportive to FeTCANA and willing to assist FeTCANA in its spiritual journey will be selected as part of Board of Spiritual Advisors
- III.4.2 The Board of Spiritual Advisors will have a director who will take the lead role.
- III.4.3 The Board of Spiritual Advisors will not participate in governing or managing FeTCANA, but only advise on spiritual and liturgical matters.

III.5 Board of Affiliate Association Members

- III.5.1 Comprises individuals nominated by Affiliate Associations of FeTCANA. Tamil Catholic Prayer Groups, Registered and Non-Registered Catholic Associations from North America can become Affiliate Associations.
- III.5.2 Pursuant to the legal authority vested in the Board of Founders and the Board of Executives, these bodies retain the prerogative to approve, restrict, or otherwise regulate the inclusion of Affiliate Association Members within the Federation. This discretionary power ensures that the admission of such members aligns with the Federation's strategic objectives and adherence to its established legal framework. The decision-making process regarding membership acceptance or restriction shall be conducted in a manner consistent with the Federation's bylaws and applicable legal provisions.
- III.5.3 These Affiliate Associations will nominate a member to this Board of Affiliate Associations.
- III.5.4 Affiliate Association Members will support the Board of Founders and Board of Executives as requested.
- III.5.5 Operates under the guidance and direction of the Board of Founders, Executive Committee, and officer bearers.
- III.5.6 Affiliate Association Members will be invited to participate in discussions, deliberations, and activities aligned with FeTCANA's objectives.
- III.5.7 Affiliate Association Members, as integral constituents of the Federation, shall fulfill a supportive role, refraining from direct involvement in the governance or operational management of FeTCANA activities. Instead, their function shall primarily revolve around serving as liaisons on behalf of their respective affiliate associations. This delineation of roles is established to ensure a clear demarcation between the decision-making bodies of the Federation and the collaborative engagement facilitated by Affiliate Association Members. This approach maintains the integrity of FeTCANA's organizational structure while fostering productive collaboration and representation from affiliate associations.

III.5.8 This organizational structure ensures a strong foundation for FeTCANA's governance and operations, facilitating effective decision-making, transparent management, and collaboration across various levels of the organization.

ARTICLE IV. TEAMS

The Board of Founders and the Board of Executives, in exercise of their authorized powers, retain the discretion to institute operational Teams within FeTCANA as necessitated by prevailing requirements. Such Teams shall be formulated with the objective of addressing specific operational needs of the Federation. The establishment of these Teams shall be guided by operational necessities and their composition, responsibilities, and functions shall be defined in accordance with the Federation's bylaws, policies, and relevant legal provisions. This framework is designed to facilitate efficient operational management within FeTCANA while adhering to established legal and governance standards.

The Board of Founders and the Board of Executives are endowed with the authority to institute and oversee a spectrum of operational Teams within FeTCANA, aiming to enhance the efficiency of its management. These Teams, fashioned to cater to diverse operational facets, may encompass but are not confined to: **Communication team, outreach team, liturgy team, social media team, events planning team, and similar entities as deemed requisite**. The formulation, supervision, and dissolution of such Teams shall be conducted in a manner consistent with FeTCANA's bylaws, operational requisites, and pertinent legal parameters. This provision seeks to ensure the judicious utilization of specialized teams in pursuit of the Federation's mission while upholding legal and governance protocols.

ARTICLE V. MEETINGS WITH BOARD OF FOUNDERS AND BOARD OF EXECUTIVES

V.1: MODE OF MEETINGS:

Meetings of the Board of Founders and Board of Executives shall be held virtually or In-person. Minutes of meetings for all the meetings shall be recorded and maintained.

V.2: REGULAR MEETINGS:

Regular meetings of the Board of Founders and Board of Executives shall be held at least once a month or more frequently as needed.

V.3: ANNUAL GENERAL BODY MEETING:

An annual meeting of the Board of Founders and Board of Executives, Board of Founders and General Body shall be held in the 4th quarter of the calendar year, if possible. At such meetings, the Board of Founders shall formally announce the Board of

Founders and Board of Executives of FeTCANA, present financial reports and other reports of the Federation, and transact any other business which is within the power of the Board of Founders and Board of Executives. However, additional general body meetings at any time of the calendar year can be called for by a resolution in a Board of Founders and Board of Executives meeting by simple majority.

V.4: SPECIAL MEETINGS:

Special meetings of the Board of Founders and Board of Executives may be called by the Board of Founders or by a simple majority of the Board of Founders and Board of Executives of FeTCANA.

V.5: NOTICE OF MEETINGS:

V.5.1 A written notice of each meeting, stating the place, day, and hour of the meeting, shall be given by the Board of Representative, or by the Board of Founders to call the meeting, to each Member of record entitled to vote at the meeting.

V.5.2 Regular monthly meeting notice shall be given at least seven (7) days before the date named for the meeting, once a firm date, time, and place have been publicized to all Board of Founders and Board of Executives.

V.5.3 Annual General body meeting notice shall be given at least a month before the date named for the meeting, once a firm date, time and place have been publicized to all Board of Founders and Board of Executives.

V.6: QUORUM:

The Members present at any properly announced meeting shall constitute a quorum at such meeting. A two-third majority of board members constitute a quorum to convene a meeting and to pass any resolutions.

ARTICLE VI. AMENDMENTS

Section VI.1: PROCEDURE:

These Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds absolute majority vote of Board of Founders and Board of Executives those present at any general body meeting of the Members of FeTCANA, provided fifteen days written notice of the proposed amendment and of the meeting is given.

ARTICLE VII. ACCEPTANCE OF BYLAWS

Section VII.1: VOTING:

Acceptance of these Bylaws shall be by a two-thirds absolute majority vote of the initial Affiliate Association Members of member associations, provided written copies of the Bylaws and written notice of the meeting is given to all Affiliate Association Members at least sixty days prior to the meeting.

ARTICLE VIII. ADHERENCE WITH BYLAWS

Section VIII.1: ADHERENCE WITH BYLAWS:

Nonadherence to the Bylaws of the Federation may result in thorough investigations. Based on the outcome, the Board shall give three written notices thirty days apart to comply with the Bylaws. The Board of Founders and Board of Executives may require corrective action in writing and may go through the arbitration process as needed.

ARTICLE IX. PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

Section IX.1: PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY:

The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern the FeTCANA in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these bylaws and any special rules of order the FeTCANA may adopt.

ARTICLE X. DISSOLUTION

In the event of the dissolution of this Association, all of its assets will be distributed to the Office of Asian and Pacific Island Affairs of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).