

STATUTE FOR SISTERHOODS IN NORTH AMERICA

Approved by Resolution of the Synod of Bishops on 15/28 April 1955

I. ORGANIZATION & OBJECTIVES OF THE SISTERHOOD

1. At *St. Vladimir* Church in the city of *Ann Arbor, MI* a church sisterhood has been established which bears the name of *St. Xenia of St. Petersburg*.
2. The sisterhood celebrates its annual feast on the day commemorating *St. Xenia of St. Petersburg (January 24/February 6)* and has an icon appropriate to this feast which is kept in the church.
3. The sisterhood comprises a component and integral part of the parish and exists in accordance with the parish's charter, as a parish organization.
4. It is the sisterhood's objectives on the one hand that those who enter its membership may perfect themselves morally in Christian virtue, in accordance with the teaching of the Russian Orthodox Church under the pastoral guidance of their Pastor and in close contact with the life of the Church; and on the other hand, the object of the sisterhood is, on the whole, to render active aid to its church and to carry out, in a practical manner, the duties of the parish in accordance with paragraph #2 of the Normal Parish By-Laws which are accepted by the local Parish Council.

Paragraph #2 of the Normal Parish By-Laws:

It shall be the aim of the parish to unite the believers around the parish church on the basis of the teachings, the canons, the traditions and the rules of the Russian Orthodox Church for the satisfaction of the religious need and moral benefit of its members.

5. The duties of the sisterhood are:
 - a. Maintenance of the Church building, both during the divine services and apart from them; care for the vestry; and the adornment of the church.
 - b. Visitation of the sick; inquiry into the cases of those in need and aid thereto; visitation of prisons and aid for the imprisoned.
 - c. Visitation of the dying and informing the priest of such cases; reading the services over the dying; moral support for the families of the dying and care for them.
 - d. Concern for the unbaptized and the unwed; bringing them to the church, that the Holy Mysteries may be performed over them;
 - e. To aid, with all the means at their disposal, schools for children within the parish.
 - f. Collection of materials and funds, in accordance with subscription lists distributed by the parish council, signed by the pastor: for the needs of the church (this is done outside the times appointed for the divine services), for the sick, the poor, invalids, etc.
 - g. To help the church's Warden (Starosta) in acquiring and distributing religious and liturgical literature, etc.

N.B.: For a greater degree of success in the fulfillment of these duties, a rotating schedule of sisters can be established.

N.B.: During their fulfillment of their duties in church during the divine services, the sisters should be appropriately attired in the prescribed form of head covering.

II. GOVERNMENT & MEMBERSHIP

1. With the priest's blessing, and on the recommendation of the sisterhood's Council, widows, maidens and married women who are members of the parish and who have attained the age of twenty-one may be admitted to membership.
2. In its activity, the sisterhood is subject to and is under the guidance of the parish priest.
3. The sisterhood is governed by the Council of the Sisterhood which is composed of the Senior Sister, her assistant and deputy, the treasurer and the secretary, all of whom are elected for a one-year term of office by the General Assembly of the Sisterhood. The Senior Sister is a member of the parish council.
4. The General Assembly of the Sisterhood is convoked no less than twice annually. Notification of such meetings is sent out two weeks prior to the event and the proposed date of the meeting is indicated. Additional meetings of the sisterhood may be convoked by the pastor, or by the Senior Sister with the pastor's blessing. The General Assembly is considered valid when a majority of the sisterhood's membership is present. Co-workers of the sisterhood have the right to an advisory voice at the General Assemblies. Elections of the members of the Council of the Sisterhood which are conducted at the General Assemblies are subject to confirmation by the pastor, who submits the name of the Senior Sister to the diocesan bishop, since she is an integral member of the parish council.
5. The Council of the Sisterhood manages the sisterhood's funds. The treasurer keeps a record of receipts and expenditures, which is countersigned by the parish priest and is sealed with the parish seal, as prescribed by the priest. The sisterhood's monetary resources and accounts are reviewed by the parish's Auditing Committee. The yearly accounts, along with the decision of the Auditing Committee, should be submitted to the General Assembly of the parish for confirmation.
6. A book of the minutes of all the meetings of the sisterhood and of the sessions of the Council is kept by the secretary and is signed by the Senior Sister and the secretary. A sister may be expelled from the sisterhood by the parish priest, and also at the suggestion of the sisterhood's Council or of its General Assembly.
7. The membership dues are fixed by the General Assembly of the sisterhood.
8. The sisterhood cannot establish titles of honor.

III. DISBANDING

1. The disbanding of the sisterhood is carried out by the parish priest with the blessing of the diocesan bishop, by resolution of a meeting of the General Assembly of the sisterhood especially convoked for that purpose and which is attended by two-thirds of the actual membership of the sisterhood.
2. In the case of disbanding, all the property of the sisterhood is transferred to the parish to which the sisterhood belonged.

IV. ALTERATION & AMENDMENT OF THIS STATUTE

1. If local conditions require, alterations and amendments of this statute may be made at the General Assembly of the sisterhood by resolution of a two-thirds majority vote of those present at the Assembly. No less than two-thirds of the actual membership of the sisterhood should be present at such an Assembly. The proposed text of alterations or amendments should be cited in full in notices distributed two weeks prior to the General Assembly.
2. Alterations and amendments of this statute which are accepted at the General Assembly of the sisterhood take effect only after they are confirmed by the diocesan bishop.