

**The Statute of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and all the East
Approved by the Holy Synod of Antioch on June 22nd, 1973**

General Provisions

- Article 1.** The Church of Antioch known as the “Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and all the East” is an ecclesiastically independent apostolic church associated with the rest of the Orthodox churches with the unity of faith, holy sacraments, and ecclesiastical traditions.
- Article 2.** The mandate of the Antioch Patriarchate extends to the territories of Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Kuwait, Turkey, Iran, Arabian Peninsula, North and Central America, Australia, and New Zealand.
- Article 3.** Antioch is the ancient apostolic centre, and Damascus is the current Patriarchal Residence.
- Article 4.** The Holy Synod is the supreme authority of the Church.
- Article 5.** The clericals along with seculars shall engage altogether in the life of the Church each by his Spirit-given gifts.
- Article 6.** The term “Clerical” in this Statute shall include: the Patriarch, Metropolitan, Bishop, Priest, and Deacon.
- Article 7.** Every clerical is a servant of the Lord and his people and his service is pro-bono whilst receiving no wage or money for rendering spiritual services.
- Article 8.** The Church shall secure the subsistence of its servants from the faithful’s bids and the religious endowments’ revenues.

Chapter One: Holy Synod

- Article 9.** The Holy Synod shall be comprised of the Patriarch being the President and the Diocesan Metropolitans being the members.
- Article 10.** The Holy Synod is the judge in matters of faith, being thus the legislative body of the Church and its supreme judicial authority.
- Article 11.** The Synod shall nominate and elect the Patriarch from amongst its members. It shall also nominate and elect the Metropolitans and Bishops in accordance with the Statute of the Religious Order of Antioch.
- Article 12.** The Patriarch, Metropolitan, and Bishop shall be judged by the Synod in accordance with the Statute and its concluded provisions.
- Article 13.** The Synod shall establish new dioceses and amend the boundaries of the existing ones.
- Article 14.** The Synod shall recognize the type of relations between the Church of Antioch and its extent with the independent Orthodox Churches, other churches, and different religious bodies.
- Article 15.** The Synod shall supervise “St. John of Damascus Institute of Theology”, the Seminary in Balamand and the Priest School.
- Article 16.** The Statute shall determine the functioning of the Synod, as well as the number of its committees and the powers assigned to each, and the conduct of its sessions.

Chapter Two: Patriarch

- Article 17.** The Patriarch is the President of the Holy Synod and the executor of its decisions, the symbol of the unity of the Church of Antioch, its bond with the Universal Church, and its representative to other Churches, religions and nations.
- Article 18.** The Patriarch shall have general jurisdiction over the Antioch, Damascus, and the Patriarchal monasteries and endowments, as well as the right to directly supervise it.
- Article 19.** The Patriarch shall enjoy the confessional rights and privileges.
- Article 20.** The Patriarch shall appoint the Patriarchal Vicars within the jurisdiction of the Antiochian Patriarchate and shall be their reference.
- Article 21.** The Patriarch shall not lend, borrow, replace, mortgage, or sell any of the Patriarchal sees’ endowments’ except by a decision of the Holy Synod, in accordance with the article 21 of this Statute.

Article 22. The See of Antioch shall be considered vacant in the event of death, resignation, exemption or constant impediments of the Patriarch.

Article 23. In the event of the vacancy of the See of Antioch, the Holy Synod shall meet and elect from among its members a Patriarchal Locum Tenens exercising the powers stipulated in the Statute.

Article 24. The Patriarchal Council shall call the members of the Holy Synod to convene within ten days from the date of occurrence of the vacancy to conduct the process of nomination and election of the new Patriarch in accordance with the provisions of the Statute.

Chapter Three: Metropolitan

Article 25. The Metropolitan is the pastor of the diocese, the symbol of its unity, its connecting link with the church, and its official representative to the state.

Article 26. The Metropolitan shall have the general mandate and direct supervision of the endowments, monasteries, churches, institutions, shrines and Maqamat.

Article 27. The Metropolitan shall not lend, borrow, replace, mortgage, or sell any of the Patriarchal sees' endowments' except by a decision of the Holy Synod and the written approval of the Patriarch.

Article 28. The Diocese shall be considered vacant in the event of death, resignation, exemption or constant impediments of the Metropolitan.

Article 29. In the event of the vacancy of the Diocese, the Patriarch shall appoint a Patriarchal Representative to exercise the powers stipulated in the Statute.

Article 30. The Patriarch shall call the members of the Holy Synod to convene within a period not exceeding forty days from the date of the diocese post falls vacant in order to nominate and elect the new Metropolitan in accordance with the provisions of the Statute.

Article 31. The Metropolitan or Bishop candidate shall:

- a. Be of the Antiochian See
- b. Be 33 years old
- c. Hold the official secondary certificate or its equivalent
- d. Hold a degree in theology from "St. John of Damascus Institute of Theology" or from any another Orthodox institute after completing his studies
- e. Brought before a committee appointed by the Holy Synod to express the reasons of his eligibility.

Chapter Four: Parish Priest

Article 32. The parish priest is the spiritual father of his parish.

Article 33. The priest shall render the spiritual services in the church assigned to him.

Article 34. The priest shall be under the Metropolitan of the Diocese to which he belongs and to which he is directly connected.

Article 35. The Priest candidate shall:

- a. Have completed his twenty-fifth birthday and known for his praiseworthy conduct and good reputation
- b. Have obtained the official intermediate certificate (baccalaureate)
- c. Have received a certificate of eligibility for priesthood from the Priest School

Chapter Five: Deacon

Article 36. The Deacon shall assist the Metropolitan and the Priest in rendering prayers and completing social work.

Article 37. The Deacon shall follow the Metropolitan to the Diocese to which he belongs.

Article 38. The Deacon shall not be ordained before he reaches the age of twenty-five if he is celibate.

Article 39. The provisions of sections (B) and (C) of Article 35 of this Statute shall be applied to the Deacon candidate.

Chapter Six: Monks

Article 40. The monk is he who lived in a monastery in which he complements his vows in accordance with the Orthodox monastic heritage within the framework of the monastery's regulations.

Article 41. Movable and immovable assets owned by a celibate clerical or a monk shall be returned to the Church upon his death.

Chapter Seven: Dioceses & Parishes

Article 42. The dioceses of the Patriarchal See of Antioch are geographically defined as set out in the Statute.

Article 43. The diocese shall be divided into pastoral circles, ruled by the priest, and the centre of each parish shall be the parish church.

Article 44. Every Orthodox inhabitant who lives within the limits of a certain parish is considered to be a member of this parish.

Chapter Eight: Councils

Article 45. An elected council shall emerge from the members of one parish in accordance with the Statute. The council's task shall be that of taking care of the parishes' affairs under the chairmanship of the priest.

Article 46. The Diocesan council of the parish shall be elected from the parish council and shall take in charge the dioceses endowments as well as its finances under the chairmanship of the Bishop.

Article 47. Every year, the Patriarch shall call upon the General Orthodox Conference of the Church of Antioch, in which the dioceses are represented by its clericals and seculars. The conference's aim is to coordinate the work and cooperate between the dioceses as well as plan for the development of the Orthodox capacities. The Conference shall then submit its recommendations to the Holy Synod.

Article 48. The Statute shall determine how the Parish Council, the Diocese Council and the Orthodox Conference shall be formed and the number of its members and powers endowed to them.

Chapter Nine: St. John of Damascus Institute of Theology

Article 49. The St. John of Damascus Institute of Theology is administered by a Board of Trustees in accordance with a special Statute approved by the Holy Synod.

Chapter Ten: Transitional Provisions

Article 50. The Patriarch shall publish this Statute and broadcast it to all Antioch dioceses.

Article 51. The Patriarch shall submit this Statute to the competent civil authorities.

Article 52. All previous laws and regulations shall be deemed null and void and all councils and emerging bodies therefrom shall be considered dissolved as of the date of the Statute's enactment.

Article 53. The provisions of this Statute shall enter into force in the parishes of the Diocesan councils upon the issuance of the Statute of the See of Antioch within a maximum period of six months of its enactment.

Article 54. This Statute shall be amended by a decision of the Holy Synod, which shall be adopted by a two-thirds majority of its members.

~ Issued by the Patriarchal Monastery of Saydnaya on June 22nd. 1973
~ Patriarch of Antioch and all the East, Elias IV