

The Order of St. Augustine of Canterbury
Of
The Archdiocese of the Alpha and Omega
Of
The Anglican Church of the Americas
The Most Rev. Michael B. Simmons, PhD, Bishop Protector

THE CHARTER OF THE ORDER OF ST. AUGUSTINE OF CANTERBURY

I. THE NAME AND ITS RELATION TO THE COMMUNION OF EVANGELICAL EPISCOPAL CHURCHES.

The Archdiocese of the Alpha and Omega of the Anglican Church of the Americas (Henceforth, “ACA”) espouses the tenet that God, by the power of the Holy Spirit, and to the glory of the Lord and Savior of the world, Jesus Christ, has in recent times and amongst various Christian ministries, begun to do a new work of spiritual renewal in the earth. Commonly referred to as the Convergence Movement, it embraces the “three streams” of the One Holy, Apostolic and Catholic Church: the Evangelical, the Charismatic, and the Liturgical/Sacramental, all of which are clearly documented in scripture as being the salient features of the Holy Spirit’s work in birthing the Early Church (Cf. Acts 2). These three streams can be found in various periods and movements within the early Patristic period (Sub-Apostolic), Ante-Nicene, Post-Nicene, the Medieval Church, Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Christianity, the Protestant Reformation, the Wesleyan Revival, the Great Awakening in America, the Holiness Movements, the Azusa St. Revival and the emergence of Pentecostalism, and the Charismatic Movement.

The evangelical aspect of the ACA can be found in the emphasis upon preaching sound biblical doctrines which enables the Holy Spirit, because the preacher is speaking the Truth from God’s Holy Word, to bring conviction, repentance, regeneration, nourishment, and growth to the believer in Christ. The charismatic aspect is found in the belief in the power and immediate presence of the Holy Spirit during the experience of corporate worship, often characterized by a free and spontaneous expression of worship in the form of lifting the hands, clapping, singing praise songs, dancing, and the manifestation of the charismata, otherwise known as the gifts of the Holy Spirit (I. Cor. 12-14). These latter include miracles, healings, tongues, the interpretation of tongues, discerning of spirits, and prophecy, amongst others. The sacramental/liturgical stream is expressed by the regular observance of the Holy Eucharist, as known as the Holy Communion, the Blessed Sacrament, the Lord’s Supper, or the Lord’s Table. As the ACA is an Anglican communion, the Holy Eucharist is normally observed by using the rites found in the Book of Common Prayer, including the vesting of ministers, processions, and other liturgical acts of worship, although there is a variety of liturgical expressions within the ACA ranging from “high,” “middle,” to “low” church traditions.

One important emphasis of the ACA is the Celtic and Anglo-Saxon heritage of the Anglican tradition, a rich and inspirational part of the history of Christianity in England and the British Isles. The three streams mentioned above played a vital role in the development of this tradition during the period c. A.D. 300-1000.

II. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ST. AUGUSTINE OF CANTERBURY

St. Augustine of Canterbury is significant for the history of Christianity in England, an emphasis of the ACA. Augustine practiced the monastic life as prior of St. Andrew’s monastery in Rome before he was sent to England by Pope Gregory the Great to evangelize the people of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. Arriving in 597, Augustine met King Ethelbert,

who was the Bretwalda or senior king of the Saxon kingdoms of Middlesex, Essex, together with those of East Anglia and Mercia. Ethelbert married the princess Bertha, the daughter of Charibert of Paris, who was a Christian. Augustine was instrumental in the conversion of king Ethelbert, who consequently gave him and his fellow monks permission to evangelize the people of England. Using Canterbury as his ministerial headquarters where he found a monastery, he began to win many of the people to Christ, giving them catechetical instruction and the sacrament of holy baptism. He journeyed to Gaul where he was consecrated the first Archbishop of Canterbury by Virgilius, the Metropolitan of Arles. On December 25, 597, more than 10,000 persons who had been led to Christ were baptized by Augustine the Apostle of the English people and their first Archbishop! He then set out to plant churches in England and organize his archdiocese. He promoted Catholic unity amongst the Celtic churches, and was known for his supernatural anointing to prophesy (futuristic prophecies), to work miracles, and to heal the sick in Christ's name. He died in 605, respected and loved dearly by the English people to whom he preached the Gospel of salvation through Christ.

The life and ministry of St. Augustine of Canterbury fits well an archdiocese in an Anglican Communion that embraces the charismatic, evangelical, and sacramental-liturgical traditions of the Early Church.

Augustine was the first Archbishop of Canterbury, now the See of our mother church, the Church of England. In that capacity, his main work was sending out missionaries in England. As the first Archbishop of Canterbury, St. Augustine appointed Ruffinias as the Abbot of the monastery established by the archbishop in honor of St. Peter outside the eastern walls of the Kentish capital; Mellitus was appointed the first English bishop of London; Justus was appointed to the new see of Rochester; and Paulinus became the Metropolitan of York.

III. ST. AUGUSTINE OF CANTERBURY'S IMPORTANCE FOR THE CEEC.

It is appropriate that St. Augustine of Canterbury is the name of the order established in the Archdiocese of the Alpha and Omega of the ACA for the following reasons.

1. **MISSIONARY WORK.** He was known for his successful and courageous missionary work which was characterized by church-planting in England. This is fitting for a missionary archdiocese.
2. **EVANGELISM.** St. Augustine led many lost souls in England to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ in a missionary diocese, again appropriate for the missionary nature of the archdiocese.
3. **EVANGELICAL.** He was certainly evangelical, and this is one of the "three streams" of the Convergence Movement to which the ACA is committed.
4. **SACRAMENTAL-LITURGICAL.** As a monk, priest, and Archbishop in the Catholic church in Rome, St. Augustine was a sacramental-liturgical Christian leader, another stream in the Convergence Movement to which the ACA is committed.
5. **PRAYER AND THE DEVOTIONAL LIFE.** This is one of the emphases of the OAC.
6. **SERIOUS BIBLE STUDY AND CATECHETICAL INSTRUCTION.** This is another emphasis of the OAC.
7. **CHARISMATIC SPIRITUALITY.** This is the third component of the convergence theology, embraced by the ACA, which also includes the evangelical and the sacramental-liturgical. St. Augustine was known for his strong and accurate gift of (futuristic) prophecy, and the gifts of healing, discerning of spirits, and working of miracles.

8. A SUCCESSFUL PRIOR AND FOUNDER OF A MONASTERY. His Christian leadership in this area provides inspiration for a new order in a missionary diocese.
9. EPISCOPAL LEADERSHIP. As a new Anglican Communion, the ACA possesses an Episcopal form of government. St. Augustine was a very successful Archbishop, and he provides an excellent example for the members of the order named after him to emulate.
10. DISCIPLINE AND ORGANIZATION. Archbishop Augustine was known also for his strong Christian character which demonstrated the fruit of the Holy Spirit. His disciplined life, totally devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ, is a key to his success as the Apostle to the English. He was also possessed with superb organizational skills which he used to develop his archdiocese in England.
11. CATHOLIC UNITY. Perhaps a modern term would be ecumenical affairs. Augustine worked with other bishops who worked in the Celtic churches of England in order to promote Christian unity among all Christians. As the OAC is not restricted to members of the ACA, but is open to those who are from other Christian backgrounds and traditions, provided that they live according to the rule, constitution, principles, and canons of the order and the ACA, the ecumenical nature of its ministry is evident.
12. APOSTOLIC CHRISTIANITY. Whereas the clergy and laity of the ACA believe in the restoration of the five Ascension Gifts of Jesus Christ commonly referred to as the "Fivefold Ministry Gifts," and St. Augustine provides ample evidence that the ministry gift of the Apostle did not disappear when the last Apostle of Christ died (St. John, c. A.D. 100); and whereas the Alpha and Omega Theological Colleges, which are set up as a Bishop's School in the Anglican tradition of reading for Holy Orders, and espouse the teaching that the Ascension Gifts are being restored to the Body of Christ, it is appropriate that the OAC is named after this great Apostle of Jesus Christ.
13. SEXUAL PURITY. St. Augustine preserved his vow of chastity when a woman of questionable character made advances to him while he was journeying through Gaul on his way to England. In this day when all the sexual sins which the Bible condemns, from homosexuality to adultery to pre-marital promiscuity, are openly and unashamedly practiced by many; and because all candidates for the ministry in the ACA must sign a statement of sexual purity before they are considered for ordination; it is appropriate that the OAC be named after a man who was known for his sexual purity and total dedication to Christ.
14. PERSONAL HOLINESS. St. Augustine was known for his personal piety, and this is an inspiration for all members of the OAC.

IV. NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE ORDER OF ST. AUGUSTINE.

The Order of St. Augustine of Canterbury (OAC) is a new order of regular and secular clergy, as well as laymen and lay women, with a distinctive emphasis of the Convergence Movement of the ACA, the evangelical, charismatic, and sacramental/liturgical. With the exception of the regular clergy (the monks) who live cloistered according to their own rule, the secular clergy and lay members of the order commit themselves to the following principles.

1. To study and meditate upon a passage from both the Old and New Testaments daily. It is suggested that the Old Testament passage come from Psalms.

2. To be involved in fervent prayer at least twice daily for those who do not know Jesus Christ as their savior. Members are expected to become more effective prayer warriors armed and led in prayer by the Holy Spirit through His spoken word and through God's written word.
3. To be involved in the ministry of evangelism in their communities on a very regular basis. This may take the form of personal visitation, telephone ministry, correspondence, passing out tracts and cassettes, or in other ways that the member is led by the Holy Spirit. Members will be equipped and emboldened to announce the Good News of Jesus Christ and to minister His love, mercy, grace, forgiveness, and freedom for lost and hungry souls.
4. To be involved in Spirit-filled worship characterized by the manifestation of the charismata or gifts of the Holy Spirit mentioned in I Corinthians 12, and to use these spiritual gifts in the work of evangelism beyond the walls of the local church. They are expected to encourage others to be filled with the Holy Spirit and use the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the ministry of evangelism. Members are expected to deepen their fellowship and friendship with the Lord Jesus Christ through God, the Holy Spirit. Their meetings are not to discuss religious affairs, but to exalt and glorify the risen Lord of Lords, Jesus Christ, in anointed praise and worship offered to God.
5. They must be a member in good standing in a local church under the spiritual nurture, authority, and guidance of an ordained minister; or under similar spiritual authority (Bishop, President, Elder, etc.) if they are ordained ministers themselves.
6. To encourage church growth and church-planting in order to build up God's Kingdom on earth.
7. To make positive contributions of time, money, talent, and other resources to the work and ministry of the order.
8. To make a firm commitment to take the Holy Eucharist on a very regular basis. Where possible, this would normally mean at least once a week.
9. To offer biblical teaching on praying for unbelievers who are "natural men" without access to the things of the Spirit, and whose eyes are veiled. This should include teaching on spiritual and prayer warfare in the context or within praise and worship sessions, and praying the "binding and loosing" prayers for oneself and for others.

V. THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE ORDER.

The chief executive officer of the order will have the title of Abbott General. He will be a member of the Regular Clergy. However, until there is a candidate for this position from the Regular Clergy, the Bishop Protector will appoint an assistant bishop, Coadjutor or Suffragan, to be the acting Abbot General. The Abbot General has the responsibility for the common welfare of the order in general, and his monastery is the headquarters of the order. He will ensure that all the obligations of the members are upheld with the highest standards, and the rule and constitution of the order are obeyed. His specific responsibilities and duties will be set forth in the rule and the constitution of the order.

VI. THE ABBOTS.

The chief officers of the Chapter Houses or Chapters (see XVIII.3 below) will have the title of Abbots of the Chapter House/Chapter. Their responsibilities and duties will be in conformity with the canons of the ACA, diocesan policies, and the rule and constitution of the order and/or chapters/chapter houses.

VII. OTHER OFFICERS.

Both with respect to the officers of the order and those of the individual chapters, other officers shall be defined and elected to serve as assistants to the Abbots.

VIII. PRINCIPAL INTERNAL OFFICERS.

The principal internal officers of a community (chapter/chapter house) will be the Abbot and the Novice Guardians, and other required by the constitution of the order and/or the chapter.

IX. THE TYPES OF MEMBERS AND VOWS OF THE ORDER.

There are four categories of membership:

1. Regular Clergy or monks who live in a monastery or a Chapter House.
2. Secular clergy or ordained priests or ministers who are members of a Chapter
3. Laymen who hold membership in a Chapter.
4. Lay women who hold membership in a Chapter.

X. MEMBERSHIP OF REGULAR CLERGY (MONKS).

1. Aspirant. A person who expresses interest to an Abbot in becoming a member of the order. The interested person should make several visits to the community (either a monastery or a Chapter House) while he is in the process of consulting the Abbot.
2. Postulant. An aspirant who is a resident in the community under the care of a novice guardian and will embark upon the preliminary discipline required by the constitution of the order before he is admitted to the novitiate.
3. Novice. A probationary member of the community who has demonstrated the spiritual maturity and commitment required of members in the order, and who is in good health, is admitted to the community for training in its life and order. Admission to the novitiate is signified by the giving of the habit. The manner of the rite of admission to the novitiate is decided by the Abbot in consultation with the Abbot General and the Bishop Protector.
4. Profession. Full membership occurs when the novitiate fulfills all the requirements of his novitiate, which normally is after one year as a novice, but can be extended by the decision of the Abbot. At this time, the novitiate will profess his vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience to God during a public worship service which normally includes the Holy Eucharist. The vows are binding upon the conscience until either they are fulfilled, or a dispensation or commutation is granted by the Abbot General in consultation with the Bishop Protector. The vow of chastity signifies a Christ-centered life characterized by celibacy, and at the moment the vow is professed, a life of perpetual virginity similar to that made by self-control, discipline, humility, and the development of the fruit of the Spirit. It involves putting the spiritual life and the Kingdom of God as first priority in one's life, and a concomitant detachment from material things. The vow of obedience concerns living daily for the sole purpose of loving and obeying God, the Abbot, and living as a humble servant for Christ's Church and humankind.
5. The formulae of profession are to be designated by the Abbot General of the order in consultation with the subordinate officers of the order.

XI. ADHERENCE TO THE CANONS OF THE ACA and the Archdiocese of the Alpha and Omega.

All members of the order in every chapter where it is located are required to espouse and uphold the canons of the ACA and those of the Archdiocese of the Alpha and Omega.

XII. OPUS DEI: THE LITURGY OF THE HOURS.

The liturgy of the hours will be observed in each chapter of the order. This applies primarily to regular clergy (monks). This includes Vigils, Lauds, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers, and Compline, and, when it is possible, a daily celebration of the Holy Eucharist at a time designated by the Abbot. The entire Psalter is expected to be sung or recited in a spirit of prayer and meditation within a two week period. In addition to these, special involvement in spiritual warfare, fasts, scripture reading and studies, and intercessions on behalf of the diocese, province, and communion will also take place at the discretion of the Abbot.

It is expected that the Opus Dei of this new order for the monks will cohere with convergence theology and worship. Hence worship will be permeated by a spirit of excitement and anticipation, and an openness to the manifestations of the Holy Spirit and His charismata. It will not be seen as a burdensome religious exercise, but a refreshing and invigorating corporate adoration of the Holy Trinity accompanied by signs, wonders, and miracles.

XIII. SECULAR AND MONASTIC WORK.

In special circumstances and as the financial need arises, the Abbot may give permission to members of the community to hold secular employment in order to help in support of the community. The specific responsibilities of the members of the community on a daily basis, e.g., cooking, cleaning, administrative tasks, and so forth, will be determined by the Abbot in consultation with his immediate subordinates.

XIV. THE COMMUNITY AND THE CHURCH.

The members of the order are expected to participate in the regular worship services of the local parish church of the ACA in their community, including Sunday Eucharist and all other regular services.

XV. THE ORDER OF ST. AUGUSTINE OF CANTERBURY AND CONVERGENCE THEOLOGY.

As it is expected that all members of the order believe in and abide by the canons of the ACA and those of the Archdiocese of the Alpha and Omega, which is a convergence communion in the Anglican tradition, so it is equally expected that all members of the order fully embrace the evangelical, charismatic, and sacramental beliefs and practices of the convergence movement. In this way, the order is unique because it blends the old and the new to form a fresh and invigorating way of life for Christian men who, as celibates, are dedicated to Christ and His Church. This applies to all other members in addition to the monks.

XVI. THE CREST FOR THE ORDER.

The crest for the order will be a shield in white with a red purple cross transposed over it. This color symbolizes the Episcopal authority of St. Augustine and is one of the colors worn by bishops and archbishops in the Anglican Communion. In the top left section there is a dove representing the Holy Spirit and the charismatic stream of the Convergence Movement; in the top right section is found an open Bible representing evangelical stream including missionary work and evangelism; in the lower left section is a thurible with

incense coming out of the top which represents the life of consecrated prayer that both St. Augustine and the members of the OAC exemplify; it also stands for the sacramental-liturgical stream of the Convergence Movement; and in the bottom right section is a crozier which represents apostolic authority, fivefold ministry, and pastoral care.

XVII. TRANSFERENCE.

A member seeking admission to another chapter must first receive the permission from the Abbot General and all other Abbots involved in the respective communities before the transference can become official.

XVIII. SEPARATION FROM THE COMMUNITY.

1. Temporary leave of absence. The Abbot of a monastery or Chapter House (See XXXVIII.3 below) may give permission for a leave of absence of up to one year on the condition that the member who is granted such leave is still subject to the laws of the chapter. Short term leaves during emergencies or regular holidays may also be granted.

2. For nonresidential or secular clergy, as well as laity, it is expected that they live their lives in accordance with the rule, constitution, principles, and canons of the order and the CEEC although they are not cloistered.

3. Exclaustration. This is the permission given to a residential member to live outside of the community (monastery or Chapter House) for a specific period of time.

4. Permanent Separation. This takes two forms: release or dismissal. Release is the result of the community's responding to a request from a member for separation from the order. Dismissal is an act by which the community terminates the membership of a member because he/she has refused to obey the rule.

XIX. CHAPTER GOVERNMENT.

1. It is the sole responsibility of the Abbot General, working in conjunction with the Bishop Protector, and those members of the order whom he designates to assist him, to write a constitution for the order. This must meet the approval of the Bishop Protector.
2. There will be a place designated as the headquarters of the order (Luverne, Alabama or a place designated by the Bishop Protector) where the Abbot General will reside either in a house or (eventually) in a monastery.
3. Communities separate from the primary house or convent will be called chapters of the order preceded by the name of the city where the chapter is located, e.g., the Birmingham Chapter of the Order of St. Augustine of Canterbury, the Archdiocese of the Alpha and Omega, the ACA. For the distinction between Chapter and Chapter House, see XXXVIII.3 below.
4. Members who are not yet in life vows can attend chapter meetings, but do not have voting rights.
5. Freedom of debate should be maintained in all chapter meetings. Voting on important issues should occur only after all members have been given the opportunity to express their sentiments about the issues before the meeting.
6. The Abbot of the chapter will serve as president of the chapter meeting. Various functions and responsibilities of the chapter may be delegated to committees or councils, and these must be clearly defined in the constitution of the chapter.
7. There will be a general constitution for the order, and, where appropriate, constitutions for each chapter. Individual chapter constitutions must not in any way contradict the general constitution of the order.

8. Distinctions may be made between chapters, such as greater, ordinary, general, special, and so forth, determined by the Abbot General of the order.
9. The Abbot General of the Order is the supreme executive of all chapters of the order. The president or Abbot of each chapter/chapter house will be elected by the members of the chapter to life tenure, and his title will be Abbot of the Chapter. Initially, in the development stages of the order, the Bishop Protector will appoint Abbots to the individual Chapters/Chapter Houses, and the length of their tenure will be determined by the Bishop Protector.
10. The principal responsibilities of each chapter shall include the election of the members and novices to profession; decisions on questions of separation; alterations or amendments to the constitution or rule; decisions relating to property; decisions relating to the expenditure of money; and any other important decisions affecting the community.
11. The constitution must clearly define the process of electing the Abbot of each chapter/chapter house; the authority of the Abbot; the relation between the Abbot and members of the chapter/chapter house; the regularity of meetings; the manner in which the chapter/chapter house is to be convened, including advance written notice; and the precise order to be followed at meetings.
12. The Abbot is not to show favoritism to any members, and all members should at all times be able to speak without fear, and with a spirit of humility and respect.
13. The constitution should set up the various names and responsibilities of officers in the chapter, length of tenure, and which members are eligible for the offices.
14. The constitution should clearly define the election and voting process, how the voting will take place, whether abstentions will be allowed, and what exactly constitutes a majority.
15. The constitution should make provisions for voting in absentia.
16. The Abbot of a Chapter/Chapter House may be required by the constitution to seek the approval of the members of the chapter/chapter house before taking a certain course of action.
17. The agenda, attendance, and minutes of each chapter meeting must be recorded in the chapter's/chapter house's official book, and the accuracy duly attested by those present. The president (Abbot) must sign the minutes of the meeting.
18. The constitution should make provision for the legal possession, maintenance, and administration of all properties and materials of the community. Competent legal advice should be acquired to ensure that all possessions of the community are held according to local, state, and federal laws. For the purposes of receiving tax-deductible monetary (or other) contributions, it is advisable that the order and, where appropriate, each chapter, be duly registered with the Internal Revenue Service.
19. The constitution should clearly state whether those members in life vows should continue to hold personal property, and define the meaning of the vow of poverty.
20. The visitor must be the Bishop Protector or an assistant bishop (Coadjutor, Suffragan, etc.) designated by him to be the visitor. The visitor is the guardian of the constitution of the order or the chapter/chapter house. He represents the Church at large and ensures that the members of the order are living in accordance with its constitution and rule. The visitor also acts as a court of appeal to guarantee the maintenance of discipline and accountability. The visitor can make visits to a chapter as an invited guest; or he may visit at his own discretion without prior notification. He may hear the appeals from the community, a group within the community, an individual member, or from any appropriate person external to the community.

Unless he has good reasons to do otherwise, and especially in the case of a protracted visitation which requires the conducting of financial auditing or other business matters, it is expected that the visitor will notify the Abbot two weeks in advance of his visit. If he has a questionnaire, also called Articles of Visitation, he should send this to the Abbot at least one month before his visit. He should receive a copy of the rule and constitution of the community, a list of members, and the audited accounts of the community since his last visit. The visitor can also draw up a list of questions for the Abbot or any member of the community. The visitor must meet with each member of the community individually. In the case of complaints and criticisms, wisdom and discretion must be maintained, and all concerns discussed openly and honestly. In the event of misconduct or behavior that is not compatible with the teachings of the scripture and the canons of the ACA, the visitor will take the necessary action to remedy the situation. This will be done in consultation with the Abbot unless he is the guilty party. In visiting individual members, it is advisable, if possible, that the visitor be accompanied by an assistant who is licensed by the Bishop Protector to serve the visitor in this manner.

21. If the order has a chaplain, he/she must be licensed by the Bishop Protector. The chaplain of a monastery or chapter house must be a male member of the OAC either from the Regular or Secular Clergy.
22. The Abbot of a chapter must not hear the confessions of the members of his community.
23. There should be appointed in each chapter a novice guardian who is responsible for the spiritual development of all novices or associate members in his chapter/chapter house.

XX. THE CONSTITUTION AND THE RULE.

It will be the responsibility of the Abbot and his subordinate officers in the order to draw up both a constitution and a rule for the order. Both the constitution and the rule must have the approval of the Bishop Protector.

XXI. CONFESSORS.

Those priests who hear the confessions of the members of the order must be licensed by the Bishop Protector. Abbots are not allowed to hear the confessions of the members. Confessors should be experienced in hearing confessions and knowledgeable of the rule and commitments of the order. The confessor does not have any right to intervene in the internal or external affairs of the community.

XXII. MANIFESTATIONS OF THE CHARISMATA.

Because this is a pioneer order of monks, secular clergy, and laity unprecedented in the History of Christianity which possesses parts of the old treasures of the ancient monasticism of the Early Church, but at the same time it drinks from the new wine of charismatic movement of the Modern Church, it is expected that the gifts of the Holy Spirit will manifest themselves during the corporate worship of the members in a community accompanied by signs and wonders. Also, because there have been many cases in the history of monasticism of individuals who have had highly mystical experiences in the form of dreams, trances, visions, divine and angelic visitations, hearing the voice of God, and receiving personal prophetic revelations, all of which are found in scripture, it is advisable that each member, regardless of the category of membership, who has such experiences keep a record of them, noting carefully the date and the contents of the various spiritual experiences. In the case of prophetic revelations given for various leaders (e.g., the Abbot,

the Bishop, a church in the diocese, a particular priest or lay-leader), the recipient is encouraged to submit these to the Abbot, if he is given permission by the Holy Spirit, who will convey the prophetic word to the appropriate person(s) involved. In this way, the anointed intercessors and prayer-warriors (the monks) will be able to minister to the church at large, and thus true, biblical koinonia will take place. In fine, this is not monastic business as usual, but a fresh, new, and exciting movement of the Holy Spirit which uses those called to a life of holy celibacy and of being married to Jesus and His Church, and encompasses all the rich treasures, new and old, of the Convergence Movement: the evangelical, charismatic, and sacramental.

XXIII. PROFESSIONAL ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE.

Experienced professional persons who are experts in their respective areas are expected to be consulted by the officers of the order and the chapters concerning such issues as property, financial accountability, legal advice, and medical and insurance needs.

XXIV. DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS.

1. In the event that a member becomes recalcitrant, rebellious, or in any way disobedient to the Abbot General, a Chapter Abbot, the Canons of the ACA and those of the Archdiocese of the Alpha and Omega, or the rule and constitution of the order and/or the chapter of which he is a member, the spiritual authority over him will take the necessary action to ensure that such behavior is duly penalized and corrected.
2. When it becomes evident, after a thorough investigation which includes a hearing in which the accused member is given the opportunity to defend himself, that permanent separation from the order is necessary for the mutual benefit of all parties involved, then the member will be notified in writing. He will be expected to surrender all credentials, certificates, and official papers related to his membership in the order.
3. It is the responsibility of the Abbot General, meeting in council with all Chapter Abbots of the order, to specify both in the rule and the general constitution of the order, the judicial process, official committees, names and numbers of officials, the specific penalties involved in a disciplinary action, what constitutes disobedience, and all other specific questions related to the discipline of members of the order.
4. When it is evident that a member should be advised of permanent separation from the order, neither a Chapter Abbot nor the Abbot General can act alone in making the final decision for permanent separation. This should be done by means of a twofold process. First, the Abbot General, acting as the supreme judicial and executive authority of the order, shall meet with the Chapter Abbot in whose Chapter the disciplinary action of permanent separation from the order has been brought forward after an initial hearing in the local chapter which has provided sufficient evidence that permanent separation from the order of the accused member is necessary. This meeting can involve a defense of the accused member if he/she requests it.
5. If after the hearing mentioned in number 4 above concludes that the accused member should be permanently separated from the order, the Abbot General will meet with the diocesan bishop who has jurisdiction over the Chapter where the accused has his membership. This can serve as the last court of appeal for the accused, and he/she therefore can request to appear before the bishop and the Abbot General for a final appeal. The Bishop Protector has the authority to reopen the investigation if and how he deems it necessary, with the possibility of assigning

clergy from his diocese to be a special appeals committee; or he may rule that the decision submitted to him by the Abbot General to grant permanent separation is justifiable, in which case the accused will be permanently separated from the order.

XXV. THE ORDER AND THE DIOCESAN BISHOP.

1. The Bishop of a diocese in the ACA has jurisdiction over everyone in his diocese, and such jurisdiction is not delegated. The Bishop Coadjutor and all other bishops, including Suffragans, are always no more than assistant bishops who help the diocesan bishop in the affairs of his diocese.
2. Ordinary jurisdiction is a legal term derived from Roman civil law which refers to jurisdiction that is inherent in the rank or office and is not therefore delegated.
3. All members of the OAC who are also members of the ACA are expected to obey and be submitted to the spiritual authority of the diocesan bishop in whose diocese their chapter or monastery is located.
4. All members of the OAC who are not members of the ACA, excluding monks who must be members of the ACA, are expected to abide by the rule, constitution, and principles of the order. The diocesan bishop has ordinary jurisdiction over them insofar as they are members of the OAC.
5. A new chapter and/or chapter house cannot be set up without the agreement of the diocesan bishop.
6. Any Abbot of a local chapter/chapter house must first consult the Bishop Protector (also known as the diocesan bishop) before transferring a member from one chapter to another.

XXVI. DISTINCTIVE DRESS.

Throughout the history of the Church, members of orders have worn distinctive apparel, and the OAC has set forth the following standards for their members.

1. For the regular clergy (monks), a blue scapular will be worn with a hood over a blue cassock. A pectoral Canterbury cross will be worn over the chest.
2. Abbots will wear the same as above (number 1) with an added $\frac{1}{2}$ stripe down the sides of the scapular. The color of the stripe for the Abbot General will be gold; and for the other Abbots, it will be white. The crest of the OAC will be on the scapular for all abbots.
3. The Bishop Protector will wear a blue scapular with his diocesan crest on it.
4. All other bishops of the order will wear a blue scapular with purple trim, either blue (violet) or red (fuchsia) purple according to their preference. The crest of the OAC will be on the scapular.
5. All secular clergy will wear a blue scapular over an alb.
6. Members of the laity will not wear the robe and scapular, but will wear the distinctive cross of the order, in addition to a lapel pin with the design of the order which all members of the order would be required to wear on their everyday clothes.

XXVII. ABBREVIATION OF THE NAME.

The official abbreviation of the name of the order shall be OAC rather than OSA, as the latter would too easily be confused with those Augustinian orders, named after the great bishop and Church Father from Hippo, already in existence.

XXXVIII. LEVELS OF MEMBERSHIP FOR SECULAR CLERGY AND THE LAITY.

There will be two levels of membership, Associate and Full membership.

1. Associate Members. An associate member has filled out the application for membership form. He/she must submit a letter of recommendation from his/her spiritual director which in the case of an ordained minister would be his/her bishop, presiding elder, or similar authority; and for the laity, it would be the pastor of the one seeking membership. In addition, two other letters of recommendation from Christian leaders must be submitted with the application. A fee will be required.
2. Full Members. After one year as an associate member, with the exception of the Charter Members and regular clergy (monks), an Associate Member in good standing may apply for full membership status. At least five books on the required reading list of the order should be read before full membership is granted. Full members have life tenure provided that they live according to the principles of the order and pay their annual fees.

XXIX. MEMBERSHIP FEES.

Annual fees are required of all members of the order with the exception of the regular clergy (monks) and will be determined by the Abbot General of the order.

XXX. LIAISON FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND READING LIST.

1. A Liaison to the Abbot General for Communications shall be appointed for the entire order including all categories of membership (regular and secular clergy, and laity). His/her responsibilities shall include being the editor of the order's newsletter and comprising the current reading list for all members.
2. The Liaison, or someone to whom such responsibilities are delegated, will be responsible for providing information to all members of the order concerning scholarly publications in the area of biblical studies including biblical languages, history, and theology, in order that the members will be kept well informed of recent works in these disciplines.

XXXI. MONASTIC HEADQUARTERS AND CHAPTER.

1. The monastery of the order which will serve as its headquarters will be located in Luverne, Alabama or an appropriate place designated by the Bishop Protector in consultation with the Abbot General. Chapter/Chapter Houses can be formed throughout the diocese with the approval of the Bishop Protector.

XXXII. TEMPORARY RESIDENCE AND VISITATION RIGHTS.

OAC members who are of the secular clergy or laity possess first preference rights of temporary residence in a monastery or a Chapter House of the order, provided that they receive permission from the Abbot in charge. They are also welcome during the prayer and worship services of a monastery or Chapter House.

XXXIII. EXCLUDING NUNS.

Because the diocese in which the OAC originated has an order of nuns already in existence, The Order of St. Frideswide, there will be no order of nuns in the OAC.

XXXIV. SPECIAL APPOINTMENTS.

The appointment of members to various parish or institutional ministries such as the local church, cathedral chapters, colleges, schools, missions, and other institutions must be approved by the Bishop Protector and any other diocesan bishop related to said appointment. Any member in holy orders assigned by the abbot to parochial or diocesan

ministry are subject to the same Episcopal jurisdiction and canonical obligations as all other clergy in the diocese.

XXXV. THE THREEFOLD RULE.

The OAC will have a threefold rule for all members of the order as follows.

1. DAILY BIBLE STUDY. All members are expected to study and meditate upon a passage from the Old Testament and the New Testament every day. Maturity in the Christian life requires that one not only read the Holy Scriptures, but also meditate prayerfully on them. This is an avenue by which the Holy Spirit speaks revelation knowledge to us.

There are many fine lectionaries which serve as a system for reading through the Bible and keeping it fresh in one's mind. The daily lessons in the Book of Common Prayer keeps one on the Church year seasons, as does the Sunday lectionary. Two days' study could be on lessons for Sunday.

Those members with limited knowledge of the Bible might desire to read lessons from Year One and Year Two each day to cover most of the Bible in twelve months. On the other hand, a mature Christian could set his or her own schedule by regular study of the Law, Prophets, Wisdom and historical books, Gospels and Epistles. Yet another scheme is to study the Bible by major themes. A standard lectionary is best. Devotionals, while often thought-provoking, are what the Holy Spirit spoke to someone else. Still a young Christian might start with them.

2. THE DISCIPLINE OF PRAYER. Meditation on Scripture usually enlightens and enkindles our desire to have prayer communion, where early in the morning we begin the day alone with God. Often one scripture will "jump out" at us. We can apply that verse to ourselves or a known situation and actually pray words of an individualized verse.

Our prayers should include supplication for unbelievers who are often blinded by Satan from seeing the Kingdom of God. A Bible study of principles for praying for the lost is available. When we commit to this ministry of prayer, the Holy Spirit will put unbelievers in one's care.

3. EVANGELISM. Outreach ministry flows out of our prayer life when we are given the opportunities to share our witness based on biblical truths that apply to others' needs.

Prayer partnerships are strongly recommended. These provide the power of agreement that Jesus taught in Matthew 18:19, Those same prayer partners can go out together to meet others' needs and to share the Good News face to face. It is the ministry of the Lord Jesus; He supplies guidance, power, and opportunity. We go forward with Him.

XXXVI. ANNUAL CONVOCATION.

There will be held an annual convocation of the Abbot General, all Abbots of local Chapters/Chapter Houses, and other executive officials of the OAC in order to discuss the plan of God and His vision for the order, to conduct business, and to worship together in order to seek the Lord's guidance for the order. When the Abbot General deems it necessary, he can convene other convocations annually.

XXXVII. TREASURERS.

A Treasurer General for the order will be appointed by the Abbot General. He will have responsibility for keeping an accurate record of all approved expenditures, income,

investments, disbursements, the collection of membership fees, and all other financial matters related to the order. Abbots of each Chapter/Chapter House can appoint treasurers as the need arises.

XXXVIII. LOCATION OF MEMBERSHIP.

As this is an order that includes regular clergy (monks), secular clergy (persons in Holy Orders and ordained ministers), and laity, the location of their membership will be determined as follows.

1. Regular Clergy. Monks live either in a monastery or a Chapter House in a location approved by the Abbot General. They must have an Abbot as their spiritual director.
2. Secular Clergy and Laity. These hold their membership in a Chapter in a location approved by the Abbot General.
3. Because the Regular Clergy and other members can both hold membership in a Chapter, but the Regular Clergy must live separate from the other members either in a monastery or a Chapter House under an Abbot, it must be made clear at the foundation of a particular Chapter as to whether it is established for monks or for the other members of the order (Secular Clergy and the laity). In order to make this distinction, Chapter House by definition refers to a house in an approved location in the diocese where regular clergy live under the direction of an Abbot; and Chapter refers to a local body of secular clergy and laity who are members of the OAC in a location, or under a name approved by the Abbot General and the Bishop Protector.
4. A monastery and a Chapter House for Regular Clergy must be governed by an Abbot who is also of the Regular Clergy. A Chapter must be governed by a member of the secular clergy.

XXXIX. AMENDMENTS.

Amendments to the constitution of the order or that of a chapter or chapter house must have the approval of 75% of the votes of the members involved.