

# Canonical Responsibilities of The Standing Committee of The Diocese of California

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*Includes changes made to canons at the 77<sup>th</sup> General Convention (2012) and the 164<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Diocese (2013). Submitted for review by the diocesan chancellor.*

## **The Standing Committee**

- consists of four clerics and four lay communicants of the Diocese
- is elected by Diocesan Convention, with each member serving a four-year term
- elects its own officers of President, Vice President, and Secretary
- serves as a council of advice for the Bishop
- shares with the Executive Council and Bishop “primary responsibility for planning and directing the temporal affairs of the Diocese”
- organizes and supervises the diocesan Committee on Governance
- in the absence of a bishop, serves as the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese
- must “make a full report of its activities” to Diocesan Convention
- is called to order by its President, or at the request of the Bishop
- “may meet in conformity with their own rules”

### **In the conduct of SC business:**

- a simple majority constitutes a quorum
- signing documents in counterparts is permitted
- particular subjects may be discussed in executive session, but all decisions must be taken in regular session
- minutes must be kept and made available for inspection by the Bishop, members of the Executive Council, and members of the Convention

### ***CANON I.12: Of Standing Committees***

***Sec 1. In every Diocese the Standing Committee shall elect from their own body a President and a Secretary. They may meet in conformity with their own rules from time to time, and shall keep a record of their proceedings; and they may be summoned to a special meeting whenever the President may deem it necessary. They may be summoned on the requisition of the Bishop, whenever the Bishop shall desire their advice; and they may meet of their own accord and agreeably to their own rules when they may be disposed to advise the Bishop.***

*Article IV, Canon I.12, DioCal Articles III, VIII, & Canons 8.02, 16.01*

## **The Episcopate**

- **at least one member of Standing Committee serves on the committee charged with advising the Executive Council on negotiating compensation and making contracts with anyone elected by the Diocese to the episcopate<sup>1</sup>**

*DioCal 8.02(c)(xii)*

- **receives notification from the Presiding Bishop's office of the Bishop's intention to resign and acceptance of the resignation from the House of Bishops, declaration of removal of the Bishop if he or she renounces orders, or if the Bishop is removed from office by the House of Bishops**

*Canons III.12.7(c), III.12.8(b)-(e)*

- **unless Diocesan Convention consents, must consent to the Bishop being absent from the Diocese for more than three consecutive months**

*Canon III.12.4(b)*

- **becomes the Ecclesiastical Authority should the Bishop (Ordinary) be absent from the Diocese for six consecutive months and there is no Coadjutor or Suffragan, or at the request of the Coadjutor or Suffragan until such request is revoked by the Ordinary**

*Canon III.12.4(c)*

- **may, by a two-thirds vote, determine a Bishop's pastoral relationship with the Diocese seriously imperiled or request dissolution of the pastoral relationship, and petition the Presiding Bishop in writing to intervene with mediation or dissolution proceedings via deliberation by the House of Bishops**

*Canon III.12.9-10<sup>2</sup>*

- **must consent to the Bishop's calling and appointing an Assistant Bishop**

*Canon III.12.5(a)*

- **must advise and consent to the resigning bishop's call for a special Diocesan Convention to elect a successor**

*Canon III.11.2*

- **appoints three diocesan members to a Joint Nominating Committee if Diocesan Convention calls on the Bishops of the Province or the House of Bishops to elect a new bishop for the Diocese**

*Canon III.11.1(b)*

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<sup>1</sup> Reflects 2013 shift of responsibility in this area from Standing Committee to Executive Council in accordance with the California Nonprofit Integrity Act.

<sup>2</sup> 2012-B021 passed by General Convention. The impetus for developing this canonical path to mediation or dissolution of the pastoral relationship with a bishop was a response in part to a protracted situation between the Bishop and Standing Committee in the Diocese of Pennsylvania. A two-thirds majority vote of the Diocesan Convention is also empowered to initiate this process.

- **calls for the election of a new Bishop or a Bishop Suffragan with the consent of the Diocesan Bishop and a majority of all Bishops with jurisdiction and all Standing Committees. The electing convention requires at least thirty days' notice by the Committee Secretary**  
*DioCal Article XII (12.2); Canon III.11.10(b)*
- **may request the Diocesan Convention to elect a Bishop Coadjutor if the Bishop diocesan is declared medically unable to consent to the election of a successor**  
*Canon III.11.10(a)(3)*
- **forwards certificates and other testimonials of an episcopal election to the to the Standing Committees of the dioceses and the Presiding Bishop's office for consent of the wider Church**  
*Canon III.11.3 & 4*
- **receives consents from other Standing Committees and notification from the Presiding Bishop's office of consent from other bishops for the election of a new bishop**  
*Canon III.11.4*
- **receives notification of the ruling of a Court of Review should a complaint be filed regarding the electoral process for a new bishop**  
*Canon III.11.9(a)*
- **certifies to the Presiding Bishop that canons have been appropriately followed in the election of a Bishop Coadjutor**  
*Canon III.11.10(a)(4)*
- **in the absence of a bishop, may invite a bishop from outside the Diocese to perform episcopal duties**  
*Canon III.13.2*
- **confirms, with the Executive Council, the Bishop's appointment of Archdeacons, unless they are confirmed by Diocesan Convention; must consent to removal of Archdeacons by the Bishop**  
*DioCal 13.06*

## **Diocesan Convention**

- **must concur to a change in scheduling or venue of Convention**  
*DioCal Article V (5.4)*
- **in the absence of the Bishop, the President of the Standing Committee presides at Diocesan Convention**  
*DioCal Article IV (4.2)*
- **in the absence of a Secretary of Convention, the Secretary of the Standing Committee gives notice of Diocesan Convention**  
*DioCal Article V (5.3)*
- **in the absence of a bishop, prepares a list of clerics and clerical members of Diocesan Convention**  
*DioCal Canon 2.02*

- **appoints one Standing Committee member to the Nominating Committee and one member to Executive Council in an advisory capacity<sup>3</sup>**  
*DioCal Canons 6.09(b), 8.01(a)(ii)*
- **certifies, with the Bishop and Secretary of Convention, a recanvassing of votes in Diocesan Convention, if such a recount is in order**  
*DioCal Convention Rules of Order 7.9*

## **Diocesan Institutions**

- **President of the Standing Committee is an ex-officio Trustee of the Cathedral**  
*DioCal 10.03(a)(vi)*
- **must consent to the recognition of a group or entity as a Diocesan Institution.**  
*DioCal 17.03*
- **determines with the Bishop any special exceptions to canons concerning Diocesan Institutions**  
*DioCal 17.05(b)*
- **may require annual or special reports from Diocesan Institutions**  
*DioCal 17.06*
- **has authority in conjunction with the Bishop to terminate Diocesan Institutions**  
*DioCal 17.07*

## **Church Property, Parishes, and Missions**

- **SC oversees diocesan equity share agreements with any diocesan clergy**  
*DioCal Canon 16.01(g)*
- **generally must consent in writing for any diocesan congregation or institution's governing body to hold, encumber, or alienate Church property or consecrated buildings; Bishop and Standing Committee have final authority over the disposition of any Church property**  
*Canon I.7.3 & DioCal 19.01(a) (with exceptions outlined in 19.02)*  
*(paralleled for consecrated property in Canon II.6.2) DioCal Canon 11.02(c) & 11.08(b)*
- **must consent to the deconsecration of churches and chapels**  
*Canon II.6.3*

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<sup>3</sup> The member to Executive Council is appointed by the Standing Committee President. This position is no longer regarded as *ex officio* under 2013 revisions to diocesan canons.

- **must consent to the formation of new parishes and the establishment or changing of parish boundaries**

*Canon I.13.2-3*

- **receives application for admission to parish status, and may request additional information in support of such application; must approve organization for the formation of any new parish**

*DioCal 11.02 & 11.03(f) & 11.06*

- **Secretary of the Standing Committee notifies affected parishes when proposals for new parish or mission boundaries are established, and the Standing Committee must consent to the new boundaries, but only after appropriate notice is given**

*DioCal 11.04 & 12.02(a)*

- **must consent to the location or change of location of a church building**

*DioCal 11.07*

- **determines with the Bishop whether canonical criteria for parochial status are being met and must consent to moving a parish to mission status or the temporary condition of “aided parish” status**

*DioCal 11.08 & 11.09*

- **receives any objections to proposals for “specialized missions” and must consent to their authorization**

*DioCal 12.05(b)*

## **Ordination**

- **offers advice and must consent to any dispensations from the requirements of the ordination canons**

*Canon III.5.3*

- **establishes with the Bishop criteria for background checks of all ordinands and those being received into Holy Orders from other traditions**

*Canons III.6.5(j), III.8.5(k), III.10.1(a)*

- **receives notification from the Bishop when a postulant for Holy Orders is admitted or removed**

*Canons III.6.3(d) & (f), III.8.3(d) & (f)*

- **receives Commission on Ministry Reports regarding postulants preparing for Candidacy; interviews, certifies, and recommends postulants for Candidacy; and receives notification from the Bishop when a postulant is admitted as a candidate or a candidate is removed**

*Canons III.6.4(b) & (d), III.8.4(b) & (d), DioCal 14.04*

- **reviews diaconal candidates’ progress and any recommendations for their formation**

*Canon III.6.5(i)*

- **reviews results of candidates' examinations by the General Board of Examining Chaplains** *Canon III.15.4, DioCal 14.05*
- **receives ordination paperwork for all candidates from the Bishop and – if the Standing Committee certifies that all canonical requirements are met and there are no sufficient grounds for objection – recommends ordination** *Canons III.5.2(b), III.6.6(b-c), III.8.6(c-d), III.8.7(b-c), DioCal 14.04*
- **certifies suitability of clergy ordained in other Churches in apostolic succession but not in communion with The Episcopal Church, and must consent to their reception by the Bishop as clergy of this Church** *Canon III.10.3(e)&(g)*
- **may wave minimum requirements for the period of Candidacy for those candidates previously ordained in traditions outside of apostolic succession** *Canon III.10.4(a)(3)*

### **Clergy Discipline<sup>4</sup>**

- **must consent to the Bishop's appointment or removal of Church Attorney(s)** *DioCal 15.17*
- **must consent to the Bishop's appointment of or replacement of Disciplinary Board members** *DioCal 15.10 & 15.11(b)*
- **must consent to the Bishop's appointment of the diocesan Intake Officer(s).** *DioCal 15.15*
- **a member of the Standing Committee may NOT serve on the Disciplinary Board** *Canon IV.5.3(c), DioCal 15.05*
- **receives Accords and Orders stemming from clergy disciplinary processes** *Canon IV.14.12(a)*
- **must consent for any restricted or suspended member of the clergy to exercise authority in diocesan property or affairs.** *Canon IV.19.7*
- **investigates charges of abandonment of The Episcopal Church by a cleric of the diocese, and must certify the abandonment by a 3/4 majority vote**

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<sup>4</sup> Clergy Disciplinary processes are mostly outlined (with exceptions pertaining to the Standing Committee's authority noted above) in Title IV of The Episcopal Church canons. The Diocese of California currently shares a joint Disciplinary Board with Northern California, San Joaquin, and El Camino Real.

**prior to the Bishop's review for deposition or release from Holy Orders**

*Canon IV.16(B) 3 & 4*

- **must consent to a cleric's renunciation of Holy Orders** *Canons III.7.8 / III.9.8<sup>5</sup>*
- **receives notification from the Bishop of the removal of any clergy person from Holy Orders.** *Canons III.7.10 / III.9.11*
- **must consent to the employment of a priest in a non-ecclesiastical setting** *Canon III.9.3(e)1*
- **may receive evidence of misconduct or other actionable behavior of a priest seeking to enter the Diocese from another jurisdiction** *Canon III.9.4(d)*
- **in the absence of a bishop with jurisdiction in the Diocese, the Standing Committee must request the Bishop of a neighboring diocese to act as the Ecclesiastical Authority in resolving a disagreement involving the pastoral relation between a priest and congregation or act in the event of dissolution of a pastoral relationship** *Canon III.9.12, 9.13(b) & DioCal 11.32(b)*
- **must be consulted by the Bishop, and may be consulted by a Vestry and Rector, in the rendering of any godly judgment to settle a dispute** *Canon III.9.13(d) & DioCal 11.32*

**Church-wide Decisions**

***Unless these matters are taken up by General Convention, a majority of Standing Committees of the Church must:***

- **consent to the election of a Presiding Bishop** *Article I.3 & Canon I.2.1(g)*
- **consent to the election of any new bishop<sup>6</sup>** *Article II.2, Canon III.10.4*
- **consent to the election of a bishop to assume a new jurisdiction** *Article II.8*
- **approve any ceding of territory of one diocese to another, or the geographical reunion of dioceses** *Article V.6, Canon I.10.6(a)*

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<sup>5</sup> 2012-A030 revisions passed by General Convention now involve the entire Standing Committee — all members lay and ordained — in consenting to a renunciation of Holy Orders.

<sup>6</sup> A157 at the 77<sup>th</sup> General Convention (2012) finalized removal of provision for consent for new bishops being granted by General Convention. All newly elected bishops will now need consent from a majority of the Standing Committees, regardless of the timing of their election, before they are consecrated.