

including those donated or left for pious causes, shall devolve and be assigned to the new canonical entity.

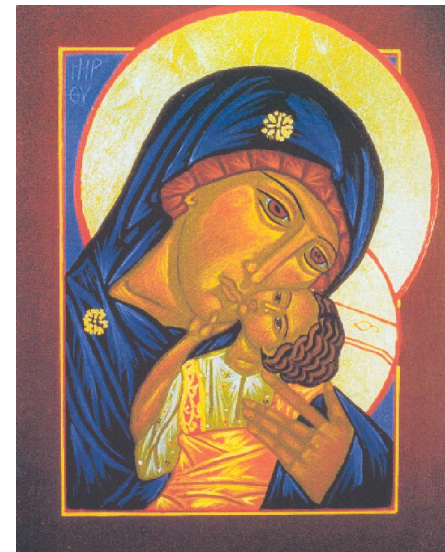
## **X Revision of the Statutes**

- 10.1 The Council will review the Statutes at least every three years and report their findings to the Community.
- 10.2 A member of the Community desiring to bring about a change in the Statutes may submit the suggested change and its rationale. The Council will discern the proposal to establish its merit. If the Council decides that the proposal has merit, it then presents the issue to the entire Community for deliberation and voting.
- 10.3 Statutory changes are made by a simple majority of all voting members of the Community
- 10.4 Any changes to the Statutes must be reviewed and approved by the diocesan bishop.

# STATUTES

————— *of the* —————

## Mother of God Community



Revised March 13, 2008

# PROLOGUE

## The Calling of Mother of God Community

Mother of God is a Catholic and ecumenical covenant community with an evangelistic mission, called together by God as a fruit of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the twentieth century. We believe that God has united us as a community within the Body of Christ in order to live out the New Covenant in a specific way by the grace of the Holy Spirit as we await Christ's coming in glory. As members of Mother of God Community, we desire to accept his call and commit our lives to his purposes, relying on his love and grace to complete in us the work he has begun.

Our life together takes place within the context of God's glorious and eternal plan, by which he has exalted his Son as Lord over all creation and given us, his sons and daughters, a share in his divine life (cf. Col 1:15-20, 2 Pet 1:3-4). Our covenant is a commitment to God and, through him, to one another to live life in the Spirit as a community within the Body of Christ.

### Our Founding Charism

Mother of God Community is rooted in God's work in the Church through the Charismatic Renewal and the Second Vatican Council. The Renewal is characterized by the grace of baptism in the Holy Spirit, that is, a personal encounter with the living Christ and an experience of the power of the Holy Spirit and his gifts, which brings alive our participation in the Church through the Word of God and the Eucharist. From this grace flows an interior awareness of the lordship of Jesus and a longing for his return. We have experienced a thirst to read the Scriptures and an awareness that God speaks to his children

## IX Dissolution

- 9.1 These Statutes provide for the cessation of the Mother of God Community under any of the following conditions:
  - 9.1.1 should membership be fewer than two members;
  - 9.1.2 by a vote of three-fourths of the membership to dissolve the Community or to associate in a different way under the provisions of the law;
  - 9.1.3 by a decree of the diocesan bishop, should he decide to suppress the Community in accord with Can. 326 §1.
- 9.2 Should the dissolution of this private association of the Christian faithful arise in one of the three instances cited above, the following Statutes provide for the allocation of goods of the association in accord with Can. 1301:
  - 9.2.1 Should extinction arise by way of dissolving the Community, after all financial liabilities have been absolved and after consultation with the diocesan bishop, all remaining funds and goods are to be distributed, with due regard for the religious affiliation of the members, at the discretion of the Council. These Statutes expressly provide that there is to be no division or distribution of assets among the remaining members. Any administration or disposition of funds that have been donated or left for pious causes will be determined in conjunction with and under the authority of the diocesan bishop.
  - 9.2.2 Should extinction arise by way of choosing to associate in a different way, all goods, both real and personal, funds, contractual rights and obligations,

## VIII Temporal Goods

- 8.1 The Community may acquire and administer goods and property, both real and personal, to facilitate its goals and purposes. Such goods and property are to be administered by the Coordinator and/or his delegates in accordance with the guidelines established by the Council.
- 8.2 Potomac Charismatic Community, Inc., T/A Mother of God Community, is a not-for-profit corporation organized and incorporated under the laws of the State of Maryland (see Corporate Bylaws)
- 8.3 The officers of the Community Council are identical to the officers of Potomac Charismatic Community, Inc. (see Corporate Bylaws).
- 8.4 Contributions of members come by way of free-will offerings.
- 8.5 The Community through its Council will provide the diocesan bishop with an annual written financial report.
- 8.6 Membership in the Community in no way affects or interferes with a member's right or responsibilities to own and administer property, both real and personal, to maintain health insurance, retirement provisions or financial investments. Accordingly, the Community assumes no obligation to maintain or financially care for a member of the Community other than that demanded by charity.

personally through Scripture, the Sacraments and prayer. We have seen an outpouring of the charismatic gifts: tongues, prophecy, healing and the prayer of praise. We have been given an increased docility to the action of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, a desire for unity among Christians and the grace to live in community with one another.

Mother of God Community treasures this grace of baptism in the Holy Spirit and seeks to appropriate it more deeply. Bible study and weekly prayer meetings have held a place of importance in the Community since its beginnings. We ponder the Scriptures daily and seek the Lord in prayer with expectancy, knowing that God desires to reveal himself to us. Certain aspects of the gospel have especially impacted the life of the Community: the primacy of Christ, the inworking of the cross, the efficacy of the precious blood of Jesus and the power of his name, the practice of the presence of God, taking authority over our thoughts, the perspective of God's eternal plan, the importance of inner healing and deliverance, and more recently, an understanding of the theology of the body.

The name Mother of God signifies that the Community, receiving and treasuring the Word of God like Mary, is called to imitate her faith and obedience to God. As we yield ourselves to God, Christ is formed in us and we become vessels through which Christ is brought forth into the world.

### Our Call to Holiness

*"And while he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at table, a woman came with an alabaster flask of ointment of pure nard, very costly, and she broke the flask and poured it over his head" (Mark 14:3).*

The example of the woman at Bethany, who poured out on Jesus what was most precious to her, moves us to pour out our lives to God in response to the love he has manifested to us through his Son. Far from being a waste, a life laid at the feet of Jesus bears witness that he is worthy and suffuses the Church with the fragrance of his presence.

The grace of baptism in the Spirit is essentially a mystical grace; that is, a grace of experiential participation in the divine life given to us in Christ (1 Cor 2:9-12), which is meant to lead us to holiness. We experience an inner working of the Holy Spirit, who convicts us of sin, renews our minds through the scriptures, and enables us to reject the temptations of the world, the flesh and the devil. Through prayer we begin to realize the great call that every human person has to be intimately joined to the Trinity, not only in heaven but here and now. This realization moves us to lay down our lives in surrender to the Father's plan for us, and to spread his Kingdom through works of mercy, hospitality and evangelization (cf. *Christifideles laici*, 15).

## Our Call to Community

*“Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if one has a grievance against another, as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do. And over all these put on love, that is, the bond of perfection. And let the peace of Christ control your hearts, the peace into which you were also called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as in all wisdom you teach and admonish one another, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him” (Col 3:12-17).*

Although this Community, like the whole Body of Christ, is made up of weak and imperfect people, God has worked in each person's life, and in his great love he is transforming us into a pure and holy bride for his Son. Members of the Community, recognizing that our lives are not our own, commit ourselves to a covenant relationship with God and, through him, with each other, to encourage one another in yielding to the transforming work of the Holy Spirit (Col 3:12-17; 2 Cor 3:18). Every member exercises some charism which builds up the body for the service of the Church (Rom 12:6, Eph 4:12).

The call to Mother of God Community is a call to live our Christian life together, in communion with one another as a reflection of the

but are not limited to, moral turpitude or financial impropriety.

## VII Activities

- 7.1 In pursuit of its goals and purposes, the Community may conduct the following and other similar activities:
- ◆ meetings, retreats, conferences and seminars for spiritual growth, prayer, sharing, fellowship, and study;
  - ◆ liturgical and other worship celebrations;
  - ◆ outreach and service;
  - ◆ educational and catechetical religious instruction;
  - ◆ recreational and social events; and
  - ◆ other activities that represent the interests of the Community in accordance with its Statutes and the leadership of the Council and support of the members.

### ***Mother of God School***

- 7.2 The Mother of God School is a primary outreach of the Mother of God Community.
- 7.3 The members of the School Board are the trustees of Emmanuel, Inc., which is the corporate name of the school. Nominees to the School Board are confirmed by the Community Council (see School Bylaws).
- 7.4 The School Board is responsible for directing the operation of the School in accordance with its bylaws and is responsible to the Community Council.

- 6.2 The Spiritual Advisor must be a priest legitimately exercising ministry within the Archdiocese of Washington.
- 6.3 The members of the Council, after consulting the Community membership, select the Spiritual Advisor by majority vote. The Coordinator presents the name of the Spiritual Advisor to the diocesan bishop for confirmation.
- 6.4 The Spiritual Advisor is an ex-officio, non-voting member of the Council.
- 6.5 The Spiritual Advisor serves a three-year term and may serve for an unlimited number of terms.
- 6.6 The responsibilities of the Spiritual Advisor include the following:
- ◆ participating in Council deliberations in a consultative, non-voting capacity;
  - ◆ assisting the Council with the spiritual formation, direction, and maintenance of the Catholic heritage and ecumenical vocation of the Community;
  - ◆ providing and coordinating the liturgical and sacramental needs of the Community (sacramental administrations that require jurisdiction or delegation—e.g., weddings, baptisms—do not properly belong to the duties of the Spiritual Advisor unless so authorized by the diocesan bishop);
  - ◆ supporting and encouraging Orthodox and Protestant members in their life within the Community and being a liaison, where necessary, with the ministers of their churches or ecclesial communities;
  - ◆ promoting good relations between the Community and Archdiocese.
- 6.7 After consultation with the diocesan bishop, the Spiritual Advisor may be removed by the unanimous vote of the Community Council members. Causes for removal include,

Trinity. Families, clergy, widows, widowers, singles, and consecrated lay people are united by this commitment to live in covenant relationship with one another. We experience that each of our steps toward holiness and deeper conversion builds up the body. Counter to the world's individualistic culture, we need each other for encouragement, fellowship and support. Some of this takes place in structured community activities such as the prayer meeting, Lord's Day celebrations, retreats, and small group meetings. But much of our common life is lived in our daily interactions, in our affection for one another, our enjoyment in being together, and in schedule choices that center our lives around each other.

## Our Call to Christian Unity

*"That they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you... that the world may believe that you sent me" (Jn 17:21).*

Reverencing this prayer spoken by Jesus on the eve of his passion, members of the Community strive to love one another as brothers and sisters, as did the early Christians. Mindful that what separates us as believers in Christ is much less than what unites us, Mother of God seeks to be a sign of unity within the Body of Christ. Unity in Mother of God Community includes a strong commitment to maintaining relationships and resolving any conflict that keeps us apart. While cherishing the various traditions to which we belong—Catholic, Protestant, or Orthodox—we work toward the fulfillment of Jesus' prayer, when his Body will be completely one.

## Our Call to Evangelize

*"Put out into the deep and lower your nets for a catch" (Lk 5:4).*

Members of the Community desire to bear witness, in word and in deed, to the majesty of God and the love he has lavished on us in Christ. Our experience of God's forgiveness, mercy and love through our community relationships impels us to share that gift with others. We seek to spread the good news of Jesus both through personal witness and through Community ministries such as education, missions, retreats, publications, and service to the poor.

## Our Call to Ecclesial Maturity

*“Speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love.”* (Eph 4:15-16).

Our specific call from the Lord comes in the context of the universal Church. We embrace Pope John Paul II’s call to lay movements to grow toward ecclesial maturity. This entails: giving paramount importance to the call to holiness, fidelity to the Magisterium in doctrine and morals, steadfast communion with the Pope and the bishops, participation in the apostolic aims of the Church, and a commitment to transforming society in light of the values of the gospel.

who was elected last or with the least number of votes will serve for a two-year term, in order to maintain proper rotation on the Council. A Council member whose initial term was two years or less is still eligible to serve two consecutive full terms.

- 5.15 In the event of resignation, serious illness or death of a Council member during his or her term of office, the Community will elect a replacement only if the remaining term of office is more than one year.
- 5.16 After consultation with the diocesan bishop, a Council member(s) may be removed by the unanimous votes of the remaining Council members. Causes for removal include, but are not limited to, moral turpitude or financial impropriety.
- 5.17 For the sake of good pastoral order, an individual and his/her spouse or other immediate relative may not serve in elected leadership at the same time.
- 5.18 No more than two Council members who are ineligible to serve on the Mother of God School Board (see School Bylaws, Art. II.1) may be in office at the same time.

## VI Spiritual Advisor

- 6.1 A Catholic priest, preferably a member of the Community, serves as the Spiritual Advisor for the Community. He works with the Community Council to oversee and secure the ongoing spiritual development of Catholic members and is available to Orthodox and Protestant members, as detailed below. One of his primary duties is to foster the ecumenical vocation of the Community.

four years, and who demonstrates Christian maturity, wisdom and fidelity to the covenant.

5.14 The nomination and election of candidates are coordinated by the Community Council.

5.14.1 Nominations for Council members are solicited from the Community membership in a manner established by the Council and communicated to all voting members. The Council may, if there is good reason and after consultation with the Spiritual Advisor, remove a nominee from candidacy. In such a case the Council will explain the reason in person to the individual, and will inform the Archdiocese of these circumstances.

5.14.2 Prior to the day of election, all eligible voters receive a list of eligible nominees who have accepted their nomination.

5.14.3 Candidates are given a forum and sufficient time to present their views both orally and in writing, and the Community enters a process of discernment through prayer and dialogue with candidates.

5.14.4 A day of discernment and election is established at which only voting members are in attendance. Voting for Council members is by written, secret ballot continuing until all positions are filled by simple majority from the previously determined list.

5.14.6 There are no provisions for absentee voting. A voting member who cannot be present for the election may designate in writing another voting member to vote as proxy.

5.14.7 If for any reason more than three Council members are to be elected in a given election, the candidate

# STATUTES

## **Nature and Purpose**

- 1.1 Mother of God Community is a private association of Christ's faithful established in the Archdiocese of Washington. While enjoying its own autonomy, it is subject to the supervision and governance of ecclesiastical authority from both the diocesan bishop and the Apostolic See. The Community fully embraces the authority and teachings of the Catholic Church.
- 1.2 The Community arose out of the transforming grace of the Holy Spirit intervening in the lives of lay people in the 1960s. Weekly prayer meetings began in 1968. In 1971, members made a commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ and to each other, and in 1972 the first households of single members were established. The name Mother of God was chosen to signify that the Community, receiving and treasuring the Word of God like Mary, is called to bring forth Christ into the world.
- 1.3 The Community is rooted in the grace of the worldwide Charismatic Renewal during the twentieth century. Members of the community are empowered through baptism in the Holy Spirit to live lives of holiness, unity, mutual love and service to the Church in anticipation of Christ's return.
- 1.4 While the Community in its origins and history to the present has been primarily comprised of members of the Catholic Church, Christians of other traditions have been and remain integral to the charism and life of the Community. Community members of different traditions have been enriched by one another, which leads us to a deeper desire to be an instrument of unity in the Body of Christ.

- 1.5 Community members share in the common grace of baptism in the Holy Spirit which has brought Christians from all churches to praise and worship God together. At the same time, the Community encourages its members to preserve and foster their active participation in the life of their respective ecclesial communities. Members of the Community pray, long for, and work towards the day when there will be full visible unity of the Body of Christ.
- 1.6 The community upholds each member's dignity and freedom of conscience. The vocations to consecrated life and family life are revered and fostered within the Community, and the Community covenant is recognized as subordinate to the primary covenants of marriage and consecrated celibacy. Likewise, the Community upholds parents in their primary authority over the spiritual development of their children.
- 1.7 The evangelistic mission of the Community has manifested itself in various ways in response to the times. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Community continues to discern new ministries. The work of the Community has included: The Word Among Us, the Mother of God School, the Pastoral Institute, Bible study groups, Growing in Faith Together, Life in the Spirit Seminars, the Good News Café, the Catholic Healing Symposium, youth and young adult ministries, and men's and women's retreats.
- 1.8 With the guidance of the Spirit, the Community aspires:
- ◆ to be a people whose deepest desire is that God be revered, loved and honored;
  - ◆ to be a people who witness to the primacy of Christ, the firstborn of all creation, in whom all things are held together, and proclaimed Lord by the Father through his resurrection from the dead until he returns in glory;
  - ◆ to be a people who seek to deepen the Christian life in close fellowship under the Lordship of Jesus Christ;

- 5.9.1 Prior to the Council elections (see 5.14), the Council elects the Coordinator from among the current Council members.
- 5.9.2 The Coordinator is elected to a four-year term, and may serve only two consecutive terms.
- 5.9.3 The Coordinator is not subject to Council term limits but only to the Coordinator term limits.
- 5.10 The duties of the Coordinator are:
- ◆ to preside at Council meetings;
  - ◆ to facilitate the work of the Council and ensure that its obligations are properly pursued;
  - ◆ to moderate the provision of pastoral care for members and ensure adequate training for those involved in pastoral care;
  - ◆ to moderate the orientation, acceptance and continuance of members in the Community;
  - ◆ to submit for confirmation to the diocesan bishop a candidate to serve as the Spiritual Advisor for the Community;
  - ◆ to manage the daily operations of the Community and supervise its staff.

### ***Elective Process***

- 5.11 Those serving on the Council are either elected or ex-officio (non-voting); those who are elected are chosen by a simple majority of the members of the Community.
- 5.12 Council members are elected to four-year terms, with staggered elections; i.e., three Council members are elected every two years. Elected Council members may serve only two consecutive terms.
- 5.13 An eligible candidate for the Council is one who has been a covenant member of the Community for at least the previous



- 5.4 All Council members, except those who are ineligible according to the School Bylaws, serve as Corporate Members of the Mother of God School Board of Directors. In this capacity they oversee the work of the Board and ensure that the school is animated by the charism of Mother of God Community and fulfills its mission statement.
- 5.5 The Council is presided over by the Coordinator.
- 5.6 The Council meets at least monthly with a required quorum and with the non-voting participation of the Spiritual Advisor whenever possible.
- 5.7 Insofar as possible, the Council makes decisions based on a principle of unanimity, which means a consensus of agreement among voting members. In cases of serious disagreement, the Council will set aside a designated period of time for prayer before resuming its deliberations, seeking to arrive at unity through the Holy Spirit. If unanimity still cannot be reached, a decision will be made by majority vote of all elected Council members.
- 5.8 The Council maintains open dialogue with Community members and seeks consultation and approval regarding those decisions that affect the nature or direction of Community life and any major financial decisions. When appropriate, the Council will consult with the diocesan bishop or his representative.

### ***Coordinator***

- 5.9 The Coordinator is selected through the discernment and the majority vote of the Council members entitled to vote. The Coordinator must be a member in good standing of the Catholic Church and must have served on the Council for at least two years.

- ◆ to be a people who recognize and encourage each member's gifts and irreplaceable role in the body (1 Cor 12:4);
- ◆ to be a people empowered by the Spirit to proclaim the Gospel by word and deed in anticipation of Christ's return;
- ◆ to be a people who witness to the call to Christian unity in the one Body of Christ.

- 1.9 The corporate offices of the Mother of God Community are located in Gaithersburg, Maryland, with the following mailing address:

20501 Goshen Road  
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20879  
Tel: (301) 990-2081  
Fax: (301) 990-2087

## **II Membership**

- 2.1 Membership in Mother of God Community is open to baptized Christians who are in good standing in their church or ecclesial community, including single lay men and lay women, married couples, married persons with the consent of their spouse, clergy with the permission of their religious superior or bishop, and religious men and women with the permission of their religious superiors. Persons eligible for membership are those who:

- ◆ have made a personal commitment to God the Father to live under the lordship of Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit, and desire to grow in holiness;
- ◆ through prayer and discernment have recognized a call from God to live in this covenant community, and have freely responded to it;

- ◆ have committed themselves to the goals and purposes of the community;
  - ◆ have completed the initiation process;
  - ◆ have reached the age of 18;
  - ◆ have been confirmed in their call to the community by the discernment of the Community Council (see 2.10).
- 2.2 Membership is identified by a written and verbal commitment to the covenant, renewed annually at the feast of Pentecost or other public community occasion.
- 2.3 The Mother of God Community covenant is a commitment to God and, through him, to one another, to live life in the Spirit as a community within the Body of Christ.
- 2.4 Membership involves living the covenant way of life (see Covenant) and accepting responsibility for the continuity and vitality of the life of the community, including prayer meetings, programs and ministries, the financial solvency of the community, and peace and harmony within the body.
- 2.5 Children of Community members and others who are not yet 18 may be considered non-voting members of the Community.

### ***Initiation into Membership***

- 2.6 Those who wish to join the Community are invited to request participation in the initiation program. The initiation program is open to those:
- ◆ who desire to explore the life of the Community; and
  - ◆ who genuinely seek ongoing conversion and baptism in the Holy Spirit.
- 2.7 The goals of the initiation process are:
- ◆ basic formation in the Christian life;

- ◆ to foster the vision and charism of Mother of God Community and ensure that this vision is communicated regularly and is at the heart of all Community activities and ministries;
- ◆ to promote the members' spiritual growth and continuous formation in Catholic teaching (for Catholic members) and the heritage of the charismatic renewal through retreats and other gatherings for prayer, teaching, formation and fellowship;
- ◆ to foster relationships of brotherhood and sisterhood in the Community, including mutual love, support and affection, honesty and accountability, and forgiveness and reconciliation wherever needed;
- ◆ to provide spiritual leadership, especially through the prayer meeting and Community retreats;
- ◆ to ensure that all teachings in or on behalf of the Community are consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church and are true to the Community's charism and way of life;
- ◆ to oversee the planning and implementation of all programs and ministries, including evangelization, pastoral care, small groups, youth and young adult ministry, and formation of new and current members;
- ◆ to approve candidates for covenant membership and discern the continued membership of individuals in the Community;
- ◆ to mentor, train and support members taking leadership in various aspects of Community life;
- ◆ to promote active involvement in Community life;
- ◆ to foster the ecumenical dimension of the Community;
- ◆ to select a candidate to serve as the Spiritual Advisor for the Community (see 6.3);
- ◆ to oversee the Community budget and finances;
- ◆ to approve the sale, purchase or lease of any Community property (see 5.8);
- ◆ to foster relationships with other communities and organizations and with the universal Church.

Full communion of course will have to come about through the acceptance of the whole truth into which the Holy Spirit guides Christ's disciples (36).

- 4.4 Mother of God Community is a school of prayer, of community life and of mission. Members of the Community commit themselves to ongoing formation in Christian doctrine and practical Christian living, with the goal of sanctification by the grace of the Holy Spirit. All members are called to personally assimilate the truths of the gospel, to take responsibility for their share in the mission of the Church, and to live for the praise of God's glory.
- 4.5 The Community Council is responsible for providing this ongoing formation with the advice and counsel of the Spiritual Advisor.

## **V Organization**

### ***Community Council***

- 5.1 The Community Council is the governing body in Mother of God Community. It fosters the vision, mission and goals of the Community in accordance with its Statutes and in prayerful seeking of God's will. The Council sets the direction and oversees all activities that affect the life of the community, its unity and its relationship with the Body of Christ.
- 5.2 There are six elected members on the Community Council, including the Coordinator.
- 5.3 The Council is responsible for the following:

- ◆ baptism in the Holy Spirit;
  - ◆ introduction to the life of the Community;
  - ◆ discernment and invitation to apply for membership in the Community.
- 2.8 The initiation program is administered by the Community Council, which may delegate this ministry to one or more qualified members who are held in respect for their leadership and discernment.
- 2.9 Those who have completed at least one year of the initiation program and who desire to join the community may enter Underway status upon the mutual discernment of the individual and the formation leader, with the approval of the Council. The Underway phase is a time of prayer and discernment, formation, increasing fellowship with the body, and integrating into the covenant lifestyle. Formation includes teachings on Christian maturity, Scripture and Church doctrine, charismatic spirituality, and the charism and covenant lifestyle of Mother of God Community.
- 2.10 The Underway phase generally lasts at least one year. Upon completion of the Underway phase an individual who has demonstrated faithfulness to the terms of the covenant and who has discerned a call to the community may apply for membership. Upon the Council's acceptance, the candidate will be invited to enter covenant membership at the next covenant signing.
- 2.11 In a case where an application for membership has not been confirmed by the Council, the candidate may request reconsideration by the Spiritual Advisor, who will bring his recommendation to the Council. The Council will prayerfully reconsider, and its ensuing decision is final.
- 2.12 Reasonable modifications to the initiation requirements or process for an individual applicant may be made at the

discretion of the formation leader, with the consent of the Council.

- 2.13 Membership in the Community may be terminated at the initiative of the member or the Council. An individual may terminate his or her membership by indicating a desire to do so in writing. The Council may take the initiative to dismiss a member only for grave reasons (such as conduct causing scandal, unrepented public violation of Christian morality, repeated failure to live out the basic commitments of membership, and public dissent from Church doctrine), and only after efforts to resolve the issue in accord with *Matthew 18:15-17* prove unsuccessful. Dismissal must be by absolute majority vote of the Council, and may be appealed only to the local bishop. Any person dismissed may reapply for membership after the cause for dismissal is resolved.

## III Affiliation with the Community

- 3.1 Formal affiliation with Mother of God Community is available to those who desire to experience the grace of belonging to the Community as their spiritual family and live in accord with its charism, but who are unable for any reason to participate fully in the life and work of the community.
- 3.2 Affiliates do not take on the obligations of covenant membership, and are not voting members of the Community. However, they are responsible to support the Community and its work by contributing of their time, talent and treasure in proportion to their participation in its life and ministry.
- 3.3 Affiliates are encouraged to grow spiritually and to participate in the activities of the Community in accord with their circumstances.

- 3.4 Affiliation is identified by the affiliate initiation ceremony which takes place at the prayer meeting at least annually when there is an interest.

## IV Spiritual and Theological Formation

- 4.1 The community's spiritual and theological heritage is rooted in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as prayed for by Pope Leo XIII and by Pope John XXIII at the convening of the Second Vatican Council, and experienced at Azusa Street and in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. The Community has also been profoundly enriched by the spiritual heritage of other church traditions. All spiritual and theological formation that takes place in the Community is consistent with these roots and spiritual heritage.
- 4.2 For Catholic members, all community teaching and formation is done in faithfulness to the authentic teachings of the Church and in communion with the local bishop. Members of other ecclesial communities are not required to contravene their respective church authority and traditions.
- 4.3 The Community's efforts to foster Christian unity are grounded in the prayer of Jesus that we might all be one (John 17:21), and are consistent with Church teaching as exemplified in *Ut Unum Sint*:

*Christ calls all his disciples to unity.... Believers in Christ, united in following in the footsteps of the martyrs, cannot remain divided. If they wish truly and effectively to oppose the world's tendency to reduce to powerlessness the Mystery of Redemption, they must profess together the same truth about the Cross. The Cross!... Consequently, the commitment to ecumenism must be based upon the conversion of hearts and upon prayer (1-2).*