

IKCC WOMEN'S FORUM

Constitution and By-Laws

11/14/2020

PREAMBLE

In A.D.345, Thomas of Cana, a leading navigator, merchant and intrepid world traveler of Cana in the Middle East lead a bold band of his people consisting of 72 families to Cranganore in the Kerala coast with a view to strengthen Christianity in India. This group of Christian pilgrims won the respect of the local king and were awarded several honors and social distinctions. The descendants of this group maintained their unique identity and traditions, although they co-operated in all spiritual activities of the Indian Catholic hierarchy of which they formed an integral part.

The Knanaya Catholics were originally disbursed among different Diocese in Kerala State. The desire to keep their unique identity and heritage, led to a strong move for a separate Diocese for the Knanaya Catholics. Through the intercession and personal appeal of His Excellency Bishop Mathew Makil, His Holiness Pope Pius X, on August 29, 1911, by a special Decree “In Universi Christiani” instituted a new Vicariate Apostolic of Kottayam for the suddhists (southists) and appointed Bishop Mathew Makil as the Vicar Apostolic by transfer from his former Diocese of Changanacherry. On December 21, 1923 the Vicariate Apostolic of Kottayam was elevated to an Eparchy by Pope Pius XI. The diocese of Kottayam is a multi-ritual diocese consisting of Syro Malabar and Malankara rites. Bishop Mathew Makil was succeeded by Mar Alexander Chulaparambil (July 16, 1914 – January 8, 1951), Mar Thomas Tharayil (January 8, 1951 – May 5, 1974), Mar Kuriakose Kunnacherry (May 5, 1974 – January 14, 2006). During Mar Kuriakose Kunnacherry’s tenure, on May 9, 2005 Eparchy of Kottayam was elevated to a Metropolitan See. On June 3, 2005, Mar Kuriakose Kunnacherry was ordained and enthroned as the first Metropolitan Archbishop of Kottayam. Upon Mar Kunnacherry’s retirement on January 14, 2006, Mar Mathew Moolakatt became the Metropolitan Archbishop of Kottayam. Mar Joseph Pandarasseril is the Auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Kottayam.

With the softening of immigration rules and the increasing need for hospital personnel in North America, thousands of Knanaya Catholics migrated to this part of the world and settled in different parts of the USA and Canada, of which a good majority settled in the tri-state (New York, New Jersey and Connecticut) area. Mar Kuriakose Kunnacherry, the Bishop of Kottayam formally inaugurated the Association (IKCC NY) on August 14, 1976. The association is a duly registered not-for-profit organization and the Archbishop of Kottayam Diocese is its patron.

Over the years, as the community grew rapidly, the Women's Forum was formed as a sub organization of IKCC NY. Women’s Forum was established for women of the community to come together to share and lead in the growth of the community. IKCC Women’s Forum was formed in 2001, under Mrs. Annakutty Uralil and inaugurated by Mar Kuriakose Kunnacherry.

ARTICLE 1

Section 1 – The Name

The name of the sub organization shall be INDIAN KNANAYA CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF GREATER NEW YORK WOMENS' FORUM (IKCCWF).

Section 2 – The structure

IKCC WF shall be the Women's wing of Indian Knanaya Catholic Community of Greater New York (IKCC)

ARTICLE 2

Section 1 – Mission Statement

The Knanaya Catholic Women's Forum will be a platform for Knanaya women to meet, share ideas and empower themselves and one another.

Section 2 – Vision Statement

The vision is to sustain Knanaya cultural heritage through empowerment of women and their families.

Section 3 – Aims and Objectives

The overall objective is to share knowledge and expertise and provide representation of women in the IKCC and KCWFNA (Knanaya Catholic Women's Forum of North America).

- a. Create a community network for women and support them in the challenging task of assimilating Indian Knanaya culture in North America.
- b. Strive towards bridging the gap between women of all ages
- c. Promote career advancement, networking and leadership among Knanaya women
- d. Improve family relations and promote a healthy, supportive environment for Knanaya Catholic Women
- e. Encourage women to seek help when facing hardship or abuse.
- f. Inculcate Knanaya culture in our children.
- g. Award scholarships and financial aids to deserving candidates/organizations

Section 4 – Fees and Compensation

The service by the Women's Forum Committee Members will be voluntary and no fees is to be expected or charged for their services.

ARTICLE 3

Section 1 – Membership

All Knanaya Catholic women who are registered members of the IKCC as stipulated in the IKCC constitution and are 25 years or older are members of the IKCC WF. All Knanaya Catholics born of or born to both Knanaya parents practicing endogamy and residing in the Greater New York area (the State of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut) and are 18 years or older are eligible to be members of the IKCC. Members of IKCC who marries individuals who are not born to both Knanaya parents will not be members of IKCC. For further clarification and for the purpose of this constitution, born of or born to refer to biological birth.

Section 2. Representation in IKCC

The IKCC WF President (If president is not available, any IKCC WF Executive Committee member assigned by the President) shall be included in IKCC Executive Meetings. She shall serve in the Executive Committee as an ex-officio member with voting rights.

Section 3 Membership in KCWFNA National Council

President, Vice President, Secretary, Joint Secretary, and Treasurer shall be members of the National Council of KCWFNA.

ARTICLE 4

Section 1 – Officers

The Officers of IKCC WF are the following 5 members:

1. President
2. Vice President
3. General Secretary
4. Joint Secretary
5. Treasurer

The term of officers will be a two year period concurrent with the IKCC officers' term.

Section 2 – Duties of the Officers

1. The President
 - a. Shall be the executive officer of IKCC WF

- b. Shall preside over the Executive Committee meeting
- c. Shall direct General Secretary to call the Executive Committee meetings
- d. Shall communicate with IKCC officers and KCWFNA EC

2. Vice President

Shall perform the duties of President in her absence.

3. General Secretary

- a. Shall call for Executive meetings in consultation with the President.
- b. Shall keep minutes of meetings and send minutes of meetings to the Executive Committee members within a month of the meeting.
- c. Shall send out meeting notifications at least three weeks in advance or as agreed by the Executive Committee.

4. Joint Secretary

- a. Shall assist the Secretary with duties and functions.
- b. In the absence of General Secretary, shall assume all the duties of General Secretary.

5. Treasurer

- a. Shall maintain accounts for IKCC Women's Forum and any special projects established by IKCC Women's Forum.
- b. Shall make financial statements available throughout the year. It must be presented during IKCC semi-annual and annual general body meetings.
- c. Shall submit the financial documents to the IKCC auditor in a timely manner.

Section 3 -The Executive Committee

- a. The Executive Committee shall consist of the officers, Regional Coordinators and the outgoing IKCCWF president as ex-officio. The regional coordinators shall be elected, as follows by the voting members residing in the respective regions, to represent the members of each region: Brooklyn Queens, Staten Island and Long Island (2 members), New Jersey (2 members), Rockland and Upstate NY (2 members), Westchester, Bronx and Manhattan (2 members) and Connecticut (1 member). The term of the Executive Committee shall be the same as that of the officers.
- b. The regional coordinators communicate with the Women's Forum members of each region. They coordinate the activities from each area.
- c. The executive Committee shall have the power to appoint sub committees for special purposes as and when required.
- d. If a member of the Executive Committee wishes to resign from their position, the resignation should be sent to the IKCC Women's Forum President.

- e. Any Vacancy of the Executive Committee shall be filled as early as possible by the Executive Committee.

Section 4 – Executive Committee Meetings

Committee meetings are held at least every three months primarily via teleconference. General Secretary shall send out meeting notifications at least three weeks in advance or in a time frame agreed by the EC of each term. Decisions may be made using voting under circumstances where there are differences in opinion among executive committee members.

Quorum: Majority of members of the Executive committee shall constitute a quorum for the meetings.

ARTICLE 5

Nominations and Elections

Section 1 – Eligibility and nominations

- a) Eligibility to file nominations as an IKCC Women’s Forum President, Vice-President, Secretary, Joint Secretary, Treasurer and Regional Coordinator is limited to the Women’s Forum members who are on the current IKCC voting member list.
- b) Eligibility to file nominations as IKCC Women’s Forum President and General Secretary shall be limited to Women’s Forum members who are on the IKCC voting members list, who have served as an IKCC Women’s FORUM Executive Committee member in the past. IKCC Women’s Forum President, Vice President, Secretary, Joint Secretary and Treasurer should also have remitted the building dues of a minimum of 2000 dollars.
- c) All prospective candidates running for the IKCCWF executive position must file the nomination using the form attached in Appendix 1 to the current IKCC Women’s Forum President during the filing period. The candidate may file the nomination by mail, email, or in person. Filings made by mail must be received by the last day of the filing period.
- d) A nominee for election shall have completed at least one year as voting member as of the nomination due date.
- e) Filing period and withdrawal date will be same as IKCC election guidelines.

Section 2 – Elections and appointments

- a. In the event that there is more than one candidate for one particular position, elections shall be conducted. The elections shall be conducted by the IKCC Election Commission following IKCC election guidelines. The voting members are Women’s Forum members who are eligible to vote as per IKCC guidelines.

- b. IKCC WF shall elect new Executive Committee members by December 31st, prior to the national KCCNA election year.

ARTICLE 6

Patron

The Patron of IKCC WF will be the Archbishop of Kottayam

ARTICLE 7

Official Language

The official Language of IKCC Women’s Forum will be ENGLISH.

All documentation required shall be submitted in the official language.

ARTICLE 8

Amendments

- a. The Executive Committee may propose amendments to this constitution as and when it is deemed to be necessary.
- b. Any amendment(s) to these by-laws shall be made only during an IKCC General Body meeting. The proposed amendment(s) shall be circulated at least thirty (30) days prior to the meeting. At least a 2/3 (two thirds) majority of the voting members present during voting of the subject matter shall be required to approve any amendment. In the case of a re-convened General Body, a minimum of 75% majority of the voting members present during voting of the subject matter shall be required to approve the amendment.
- c. The by-laws and constitution shall be reviewed at least once every five years.

ARTICLE 9

The Oath of Office

I, (Name in full) do hereby solemnly swear that I will carry out the responsibilities and duties of my office (name of office) to the best of my ability and uphold the constitution of the IKCC Women’s Forum. So help me God, my Lord, Jesus Christ.

ARTICLE 10

These constitution and By Laws have been passed at the IKCC General Body Meeting held on 11/14/2020, when the constitutional amendments were appropriately included in the agenda after which they came into effect.

In witness where of we have here unto subscribed our names:

Rosamma Maikuzhiyil (President)

Smitha Thotam (Vice President)

Jaya Kusumalayam (Treasurer)

New York

Proposed By (*must be Women's forum member on the IKCC voting list*):

Name

Address

Phone _____

Email _____

Signature _____ Date _____