BYLAWS of the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Sacred Heart Church
La Plata, Maryland

ARTICLE I—NAME

SECTION 1 The name of this organization shall be the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Sacred Heart Church of La Plata, Maryland (Sacred Heart Sodality).

SECTION 2 The Sodality shall function under the guidance of the pastor of Sacred Heart Church and his representative, the Moderator, and as a member of the Sodality Union of the Archdiocese of Washington.

ARTICLE II—INSIGNIA

To Jesus through Mary

The emblem of all Sodalities is the insignia adopted by the International Sodality Congress in 1947.

ARTICLE III—OBJECTIVES

SECTION 1 To unite Sodalists in a fourfold bond of community:

a) A common commitment;

b) A common way of life;

c) A deep concern for all; and

d) A filial love for Mary.

SECTION 2 To foster a deeper spiritual foundation.

SECTION 3 To provide a medium through which Sodalists may exchange ideas, develop a meaningful apostolate, and implement programs.

SECTION 4 To promote and cooperate in various types of activities that will enable our Sodality to be effective in the Church and community.

ARTICLE IV—MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 1 To become a member of Sacred Heart Sodality, potential members must:

a) Be women age 18 or older who are willing to abide by the objectives of the Sodality

b) Participate in meetings and/or activities for at least six months prior to reception into the Sodality.

SECTION 2 Members of Sacred Heart Sodality have the following privileges and responsibilities:

a) To attend meetings and/or support Sodality activities

b) To pay annual dues of $5 in October. Dues are optional for members who have reached 80 years of age or who are residing in a nursing home or assisted living facility.

c) To wear the miraculous medal to promote devotion to our Blessed Virgin Mother.

d) To attain lifetime membership: once a Sodalist, always a Sodalist.

ARTICLE V—GOVERNANCE

SECTION 1 The General Body of Sacred Heart Sodality shall comprise all duly received members of the Sodality.

SECTION 2 The elected officers of Sacred Heart Sodality shall be: Prefect, Vice Prefect, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, and Treasurer.

a) These officers shall be elected by the General Body for the term of two (2) years at the monthly meeting in May of the election year. Prefect and Corresponding Secretary shall be elected in even years, and Vice Prefect, Recording Secretary, and Treasurer in the odd years.

b) A vacancy in the Office of the Prefect is filled by the Vice Prefect as "interim" prefect for the remainder of the term. In the event that the Vice Prefect is unable to serve in this capacity, the Executive Committee shall elect one of its members to fill the vacancy. A majority vote shall elect.

c) Should a vacancy occur in any other elected office, the Executive Committee shall appoint a successor for the unexpired term.

d) No elected officer shall hold the same office for more than two consecutive terms (4 years). If there is no candidate willing to run for that office and the seated officer is willing to remain for one additional term, the membership may vote to approve her for a third term.

e) Elected officers will be installed at the June meeting and will assume full responsibility beginning with the new Sodality fiscal year in July.

SECTION 3 The Moderator shall be appointed by the pastor of Sacred Heart Church.

SECTION 4 The Executive Committee shall consist of the elected officers and shall have power to transact urgent business between monthly meetings. The Executive Committee will develop an annual budget to be presented to the membership at the September meeting. This budget shall include amounts approved for routine events or committee expenses based on historical data, and set goals for income. Preparation of the budget will be completed with committee chairpersons as needed.

SECTION 5 The Sodality Board shall comprise the members of the Executive Committee and the chairpersons of each standing committee, and will meet at the request of the Prefect.

ARTICLE VI—DUTIES OF OFFICERS

DUTIES OF THE MODERATOR

SECTION 1 Serves the Sodality as representative of and liaison with the parish office, acts as Spiritual Advisor, assists the members of the Sodality in the accomplishment of their mission, and attends meetings as available.

SECTION 2 Consults with the Nominating Committee on nominees for office, and with the Executive Committee on appointed officers and Committee Chairs.

SECTION 3 Encourages and fosters the spiritual growth of Sodalists, and promotes the development of the Church and community.

DUTIES OF THE PREFECT

SECTION 1 Develops agenda for meetings of the Executive Committee and General Body in coordination with the Executive Committee.

SECTION 2 Presides at all meetings of the Sodality and the Executive Committee according to parliamentary procedure.

SECTION 3 Is an ex-officio member of all committees except the Nominating Committee.

SECTION 4 Appoints, after consultation with Executive Committee, Standing Committee and ad-hoc committee chairs and co-chairs.

SECTION 5 Represents the Sodality to Sacred Heart Church office and to the Sodality Union of the Archdiocese of Washington.

SECTION 6 Directs the work of the Sodality with the aid of the other officers and the committee chairs.

SECTION 7 Keeps the Moderator informed on essential matters of the Sodality.

SECTION 8 Delivers to the incoming Prefect all pertinent files within 30 days of installation.

DUTIES OF THE VICE PREFECT

SECTION 1 In the absence of the Prefect, the Vice Prefect shall preside at all meetings and perform the duties of the Prefect.

SECTION 2 Assumes duties as Prefect for the unexpired term of the Prefect upon vacancy.

SECTION 3 Assists in all ways and performs other duties as may be assigned by the Prefect or the Executive Committee.

SECTION 4 Delivers to the incoming Vice Prefect all pertinent files within 30 days of installation.

DUTIES OF THE RECORDING SECRETARY

SECTION 1 Records minutes of all meetings of the Executive Committee and the General Body.

SECTION 2 Presents for approval minutes of General Body meetings and furnishes copies of all minutes to the Executive Committee.

SECTION 3 Maintains records of the Sodality.

SECTION 4 Delivers to the incoming Recording Secretary all pertinent files within 30 days of installation.

DUTIES OF THE CORRESPONDING SECRETARY

SECTION 1 Conducts all correspondence of the Sodality and reads received correspondence at monthly meetings.

SECTION 2 Writes a newsletter after each meeting to include highlights of the meeting and upcoming events, spiritual, charitable, and social. The newsletter is to be sent out to each Sodalist before the next monthly meeting.

SECTION 3 Keeps in current and good order a permanent file of all newsletters and correspondence received by the Sodality, to serve as a historical record.

SECTION 4 Answers all correspondence and sends thank-you notes in the name of the Sodality.

SECTION 5 Delivers to the incoming Corresponding Secretary all pertinent files within 30 days of installation.

DUTIES OF THE TREASURER

SECTION 1 Collects, secures, and disburses the Sodality's funds.

SECTION 2 Disburses funds only upon receipt of original bills and receipts, and files all expenditures in the Treasurer's records. All Sodality expenditures must be preapproved by the General Body or by the Executive Committee.

SECTION 3 Obtains Moderator's approval for all checks $500 or more drawn on the Sodality account.

SECTION 4 Deposits all funds received and maintains a record of funds available.

SECTION 5 Presents a financial report at each meeting of the General Body.

SECTION 6 Serves as a member of the Ways and Means Committee.

SECTION 7 Assists the Executive Committee in preparing the annual budget.

SECTION 8 Remains available for questions when financial records are audited by the parish office.

SECTION 9 Delivers to the incoming Treasurer all pertinent files within 30 days of installation.

ARTICLE VII—NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

SECTION 1 Nominations.

a) At the March General Meeting preceding the election, the Vice Prefect will announce the qualifications to become a nominee for elected office.

b) The Nominating Committee of three members shall be formed at the March General Meeting. The slate of nominees for Sodality officers shall be presented at the April General Meeting.

c) The guidelines for nominations are as follows.

1) Each nominee shall have:

(a) Been duly received into Sacred Heart Sodality.

(b) Participated in General Meetings or Sodality activities at least twice in the past 12 months.

2) The consent of the nominee shall be obtained before her name is presented.

d) The meetings of the Nominating Committee for selection of a slate of nominees will be held between the March and April General Meetings. Nominations from the floor will be accepted at the April General Meeting.

SECTION 2 Elections.

a) Elections shall be at the May General Meeting, and a majority of votes cast shall constitute an election. To be eligible to vote, a Sodalist, according to the

attendance records, must have participated in two General Body meetings or Sodality activities from May of the prior term through April of the ending term. After the April meeting, the Nominating Committee Chair shall be given a list of Sodalists eligible to vote.

ARTICLE VIII—STANDING COMMITTEES

The Standing Committees shall be:

a) Spiritual Life;

b) Ways and Means;

c) Altar Guild;

d) Membership.

ARTICLE IX—FUNCTIONS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES

SPIRITUAL LIFE COMMITTEE

SECTION 1 Fosters growth and depth in the spiritual life of all Sodalists, including through leading prayer during General Meetings.

SECTION 2 Prepares the church for monthly Mass by setting up the Sodality banner, and leads Rosary before Mass.

WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE

SECTION 1 Plans and conducts the fundraising projects of the Sodality.

SECTION 2 Establishes goals and reports progress for each project.

SECTION 3 Assists in the development of the annual budget.

ALTAR GUILD

SECTION 1 Develops a plan and schedule for the care of Altar linens, flower displays, and general cleaning of the sanctuary.

SECTION 2 Coordinates with Moderator and parish office regarding Holy Days and special decorating needs.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

SECTION 1 Compiles and maintains up-to-date list and contact information of all duly received Sodalists.

SECTION 2 Maintains attendance files from each General Meeting and Sodality activity, which will be used to determine eligibility to vote in Sodality elections.

SECTION 3 Provides to the Nominating Committee Chair a list of eligible voters.

SECTION 4 Accepts applications from potential members and encourages them to immediately begin attending meetings and other Sodality activities.

SECTION 5 Provides contact information for new applicants to Prefect and Corresponding Secretary.

SECTION 6 Prior to the Reception ceremony, provides a list of eligible new members who have had at least about six months of activity with the Sodality.

SECTION 7 Collects annual dues from members as required.

ARTICLE X—DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STANDING CHAIRS

SECTION 1 Shall be approved by the Prefect.

SECTION 2 Attends all meetings of the Sodality Board and the General Body unless there is a valid reason for absence.

SECTION 3 Participates in developing the program for the year and budget as needed.

SECTION 4 Keeps the Executive Committee advised of all programs, and makes announcements and progress reports at monthly General Meetings.

SECTION 5 Submits a written event report including financial data within two months after the event or project.

ARTICLE XI—DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF AD-HOC COMMITTEES

SECTION 1 An ad-hoc committee may be created by the Executive Committee for a specific task or purpose.

SECTION 2 Ad-hoc Committees include the Nominating Committee every year, the Bylaws Committee every five years, as well as committees for such events as May Procession, First Communion or Confirmation reception, and Community Sunday.

ARTICLE XII—AMENDMENTS AND PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

SECTION 1 These Bylaws must be approved by:

a) The Sodality Executive Committee by two-thirds vote with the approval of the Moderator.

b) The Bylaws must be presented to the General Body by the Bylaws Committee within a 60-day period after being endorsed by the Sodality Executive Committee.

c) These Bylaws may then be amended by two-thirds vote of the Sodalists.

SECTION 2 The usual form of parliamentary procedure shall be as set forth in the current version of Roberts Rule of Order.

SECTION 3 These Bylaws shall be in force and in effect when adopted and shall supersede all previous editions.

ARTICLE XIII—GENERAL MEETINGS

SECTION 1 Regular meetings of the General Body are to be held the first Sunday of each month except the months of July and August or during holiday weekends, in the Friendship Room of Sacred Heart Church.

SECTION 2 Each meeting is preceded by a group Rosary at 8:30am and 9:00am Mass.

SECTION 3 The Prefect (or Vice Prefect in her absence) may call special meetings.

SECTION 4 Meeting notices will be sent by email prior to meetings.

Bylaws Committee in alphabetical order: Joni Fernbaugh, Maureen Freeman, Maureen Harris, Charlotte Hemsley, Phyllis Laidley, Agnes Lilly, and Theresa Moran (Bylaws Committee Chair)
Bylaws were updated, and approved by Fr. Greg Zingler in August 2024.