



## **STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES**

### **WHO ARE WE?**

The Catholic Apostolic Church in North America (CACINA) is a community of Christians comprising an independent and self-governing Catholic church.

### **INDEPENDENT CATHOLICISM**

During the first generations of Christianity, all local churches were independent and there was no central governing organization. These local communities were ministered by what we would, today, call bishops and deacons.

Beginning in the second century with the spread of Christianity into rural areas outside of cities, local churches were grouped together to permit better organization and cooperation. Priests began to lead parishes, serving as assistants to the bishops. Bishops became heads of regions called dioceses.

All groups were organized under the leadership of a principal bishop called a patriarch who headed the most important dioceses. In ancient times the patriarchs were the bishops of Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Rome, and Constantinople. Each was equal in rank, prestige, and authority; though particular honor was given to the patriarchs of Rome and Constantinople as their sees were the seats of the Imperial Roman Government. Today, the Patriarch of Rome is also called the Pope. The Patriarch of Constantinople, called the Ecumenical Patriarch, is the leader of the Eastern Orthodox Churches.

Western Catholic Christianity experienced a more authoritarian style of leadership under the control of the Bishop of Rome, the Pope. Propelled by a vacuum of civil leadership after the fall of the Western Roman Empire and fueled by medieval political intrigue, over time popes soon asserted greater and greater authority. Through the years, assertions of papal power and authority frequently led to conflict and scandal. The Great Schism of 1054 in which Roman Catholicism split Christianity by breaking ties with Eastern Orthodoxy, the scandalous conduct of the Renaissance Church, the Reformation of the sixteenth century, and numerous smaller schisms which have occurred since, can be traced in large measure to this authoritarian approach.

Western independent Catholic churches (i.e., those whose roots are through the Roman Catholic Church), have maintained Catholic identity, apostolic succession, continue sacramental and liturgical worship, and follow the traditions of the historic church, although distancing themselves from the authoritarianism.

## **WHERE IS CACINA'S PLACE?**

Like the Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches; CACINA is an independent and self-governing part of the "...one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church."

The Church is one because it is one with its founder, Jesus Christ, and his mystical body is one with all believers. The Church is holy because Christ is holy and sanctifies the Church by his continued presence in the sacraments and his Word. The Church is catholic both because, as a member of Christ's mystical body, it is universal and because it consciously links itself to the traditions and practices of the historic Church. The Church is apostolic because it is linked to the faith, teachings, and authority of the apostles, both sacramentally and historically, through the apostolic succession of the bishops and clergy.

CACINA's foundations can be traced to Brazil, where, on July 6, 1945, as a result of ecclesiastical and civil persecutions there a new community of independent Catholics was established. The founding community, which still exists today, is called Igreja Catolica Apostolica Brasileira (ICAB -- the Catholic Apostolic Church of Brazil). Apostolic succession was brought to the Catholic Apostolic Church of Brazil by its first bishop, the late Bishop Carlos Duarte-Costa, who had been the Roman Catholic diocesan bishop of the Brazilian diocese of Botucatu, and later titular Bishop of Maura, before separating from the Roman Catholic Church.

CACINA, itself, was founded on January 23, 1949 with the consecration of the Most Reverend Stephen Corradi-Scarrela as bishop for the purpose of establishing a mission in the United States. Bishop Corradi was sent as a missionary, first to Panama and then to the United States. Bishop Corradi founded the first parish of what became CACINA in Albuquerque, New Mexico in 1949.

CACINA is governed by a General Assembly in which bishops, priests, deacons, and lay persons are represented. The bishops of the Church make decisions related to matters of faith and doctrine and to the discipline of clergy. All other decisions, including the selection of candidates for ordination, are made jointly by the entire General Assembly. The Church is led by the Presiding Bishop who acts as first among equals among the bishops. Each diocese is headed by a diocesan bishop who provides pastoral and administrative leadership.

Though its roots are in Latin America and Rome, CACINA, today, is a thoroughly American Catholic Church that seeks to integrate the uniquely American cultural experience with the ancient traditions of the Catholic faith.

**WHAT DO WE BELIEVE?**

Please see the Statement of Beliefs of the Catholic Apostolic Church in North America

## **LITURGY**

Liturgical worship, especially the liturgy of the Holy Eucharist, is customarily celebrated using the current rites of the Roman Church with minor changes reflecting the beliefs of CACINA. Occasionally, other rites are used with the guidance of the diocesan bishops. Use of the Rite of the Roman Council of Trent (Tridentine) in Latin is permitted if the diocesan bishop concurs. Other rites, including the Eastern Rites, are permitted as well with the approval of the local diocesan bishop.

## **INFALLIBILITY**

CACINA believes that Christ calls each of us as a free gift of grace to be equal members of his mystical body. No individual, regardless of position in the Church, including the Bishop of Rome (the Pope), receives an infallible personal insight into the mind of God by virtue of their call or position in the Church. Rather, the Holy Spirit inspires each person, lay, religious, and clergy, with gifts for the building of God's Kingdom (cf. 1 Corinthians 12, et al.) according to the Spirit's plan for God's people.

The clergy are ordained as leaders and teachers of the Gospel; not as infallible arbiters of theological opinion. It is the duty of each person, under the teaching guidance of the Church, to inform themselves through prayer and study and arrive at an understanding of the truth revealed to our world by Jesus Christ and to apply their individual gifts to the building of God's Kingdom.

Christ committed to his apostles a ministry of teaching which they, in turn, passed on to their successors, the bishops. It is, therefore, the responsibility of the bishops of the Church to define the beliefs of the Church and to regulate the sacraments. CACINA, therefore, rejects the dogma of infallibility for the Bishop of Rome as well as claims by the incumbents of that office, holy men though they may be, to supremacy over other bishops.

### **FREEDOM**

Following the guidance of Bishop Duarte-Costa, CACINA respects "...freedom of thought in matters...religious, civil, political, scientific, and philosophical ... not permitting any person to be questioned under any pretext in relation to his beliefs, so that his rights and obligations are not conditioned or limited in any way" (quotations from the English translation of the Statutes of ICAB 1945).

CACINA, therefore, leaves to the informed conscience of its people those matters which are properly theirs to decide before God.

### **A WELCOMING CHURCH**

CACINA welcomes all people, regardless of their gender, marital status or sexual orientation, to full and unrestricted participation in the life and sacraments of the Church; asking only moral conduct which is appropriate for all Christians.

The call to be a Christian entails moral and ethical behavior which flows from a conscience informed by prayer and study. While it is not the function of the Church to be judgmental regarding the conduct of individual members, this should not be seen as affirming immoral conduct of any kind, but as a recognition that we are incompetent and unworthy to judge another.

It is the Church's function to offer instruction and guidance in a Christian way of life so that those whom he calls may lead lives in imitation of Christ out of love for God and not from fear of damnation nor of censure by their sisters and brothers (cf. Matthew 7:1-5; John 8:7, et al.).

## **DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE AND THE SACRAMENTS**

Divorce is not, generally, an impediment to remarriage in CACINA and does not bar one from the reception of the Sacraments.

## **LIFE COMMITMENTS AMONG PERSONS OF THE SAME GENDER**

CACINA believes that love between two persons is a gift from God. We believe that the sacrament which has historically been termed matrimony is conferred between the two individuals, the role of the Church being solely to recognize in public, witness, and bless the bond of love between two persons, irrespective of the gender of the parties. CACINA, therefore, will minister to those making commitments for life to each other in marriage, where this is permitted by civil law, or in the rite of holy union.

## **ADMISSION TO HOLY ORDERS**

For details on selection of candidates for Holy Orders and the reception (incardination) of clergy from other branches of the Church, please follow this link.

## **RELATIONS WITH OTHER CHURCHES**

We welcome all who come to us in the name of the Lord. We believe that all communities of faith honor and worship the one God. We extend to them the warmest of bonds of love and fellowship. They are our brothers and sisters in our common God. (cf. Mark 9:40)

We welcome to the Lord's table all persons who perceive within the consecrated elements the real presence of the risen Christ.

## **PENANCE AND RECONCILIATION**

All people sin. Sin is a sad but inherent part of a human nature which has yet to fully align itself with the will of God. As sinners we recognize the need for repentance and reordering of our lives; but also trust in the infinite love and forgiveness of our Lord. Reconciliation is the sacrament by which those who have wandered on paths which have led astray are reunited and reconciled to the Lord and his people.

Though not required, private confession is available from any priest by request. General sacramental absolution is customarily granted to all present at the start of mass, following the act of reconciliation.

## **CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

Those who feel that CACINA offers them the kind of worshipping community that they are seeking are invited to contact any member of the Church for information on joining with us.