



DIOCESE OF SOUTH-WEST AMERICA
ELECTION PROCEDURES
DIOCESAN COUNCIL (2012-2017)

1. ELECTED POSITIONS

- a. There shall be a total of eight (8) elected positions on the Diocesan Council. These positions are:
 - a. Diocesan Secretary (Priest Position)
 - b. Two (2) Priests on Diocesan Council
 - c. Four (4) Laymen on Diocesan Council
 - d. Diocesan Auditor

2. DIOCESAN SECRETARY

- a. The Diocesan Secretary shall be an ordained priest of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church who is a Priest Representative Assembly Member of a Parish of the South-West Diocese of America.

3. DIOCESAN COUNCIL

- a. The two (2) priest council-members, four (4) laymen council-members and Auditor are to be elected. These individuals must be members of the Diocesan Assembly representing any of the parishes of the Diocese of South-West America.

4. NOMINATION PROCESS

- a) The Nomination Form shall be posted on the Diocesan Website and sent to all the Vicars of the parishes of the South-West Diocese of America by January 7, 2012.
- b) Those interested in contesting for the positions listed above (priests and laymen) shall submit a completed Nomination Form to the Diocesan Office by **January 30, 2012.**
- c) Only completed and verified nominations that are received at the Diocesan Office within the deadline shall be considered for the purposes of Council election.
- d) Each Nomination Form submitted for the priest/laymen Diocesan Council positions shall have two (2) other Diocesan Assembly members name and signature from this Diocese.
- e) All nominated candidates shall be given the opportunity to withdraw from the election process by filing the Nomination Withdrawal Form and submitting to the Diocesan office by **February 5, 2012.**
- f) A list of the nominated candidates shall be published on the Diocesan website by February 7, 2012.

5. ELECTION PROCESS

- a. The election process will be managed by a Returning Officer who will be appointed by the Diocesan Metropolitan.
- b. The Returning Officer will be assisted by the Election Committee appointed by the Diocesan Metropolitan.

- c. The list of valid nominations shall be presented at the Diocesan Assembly.
- d. All candidates shall be present in the meeting.
- e. All candidates will be given a maximum of two (2) minutes each to speak to the Assembly.
- f. A secret-ballot process will be followed for the election.
- g. All Assembly Members (Priests and Laymen) will have their assembly membership verified by the Returning Officer and will then receive individual numbered ballot papers from the Returning Officer.
- h. All Assembly Members can mark their vote for all eight (8) elected positions.
- i. All Assembly Members will be provided an opportunity to cast their secret vote (as instructed on the ballot).
- j. Once the ballot paper is completed, the Assembly Member shall fold the ballot paper and place it in the designated ballot boxes.
- k. The ballot boxes will remain locked till the vote-counting process is initiated.

6. VOTE COUNTING PROCESS

- a. Once all Assembly Members have completed the voting process, the vote-counting process will start.
- b. Only the Returning Officer, Election Committee, nominated candidates and one (1) representative of each candidate shall be present at the vote-counting venue.
- c. Each ballot box shall be opened with all witnesses present.
- d. The ballots shall be opened one at a time and the selections on each ballot shall be read out in public by the Returning Officer.
- e. After being read, each ballot shall be made available to the Election Committee for verification.
- f. Any incomplete, illegible or incorrectly marked ballot shall be presented to the witnesses, classified as an ineligible vote and will not be counted.
- g. Any ballot can be challenged at any time by the candidates or their representatives and the challenged ballot shall be verified by the Returning Officer.
- h. As the selections are read, a running tally of votes received by each nominated candidate shall be maintained.
- i. Once the ballot is read out, it shall be placed in a designated box for safekeeping.

7. TIED VOTES

- a. In the event of a tie for any position, the tied candidates will be given a chance to withdraw voluntarily.
- b. If a tie still remains after 7(a), the Returning Officer will pick lots to determine the winner of a tied vote count.

8. ANNOUNCEMENT OF ELECTION RESULTS

- a. At the end of the election, the Returning Officer shall present the final tally of votes and list of winners, with their names and parishes, to the Diocesan Metropolitan for certification and publishing.
- b. After the vote-counting process is complete, all ballot papers shall be handed over to the Diocesan Office for record retention.

- 9. In any circumstance, the Diocesan Metropolitan will have the authority to take any immediate decisions in order to make sure the election process continues and concludes in an efficient way.