

**THE CONSTITUION AND BYLAWS
OF THE
VELANKANNI AROCKIA MATHA TAMIL CATHOLIC ASSOCIATION, INC.**

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VELANKANNI AROCKIA MATHA TAMIL CATHOLIC ASSOCIATION, INC.

(A Registered, Non-Profit, Religious, Educational, Cultural and Charitable Organization)

THE CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OF THE VELANKANNI AROCKIA MATHA TAMIL CATHOLIC ASSOCIATION, INC.

PREAMBLE

We, the devoted Tamil Catholics living in and around the state of Virginia, United States of America cherish our desires to form an organization, establish a bond with the local Catholic hierarchy, complement the general social ministries provided by the catholic church, foster unique and distinct Tamil Catholic traditions and values in ourselves, and impart them to our posterity, do hereby ordain and establish this Constitution for the **Velankanni Arockia Matha Tamil Catholic Association, Inc..**

ARTICLE I

Section 1.1 - Name

The name of this organization is **VELANKANNI AROCKIA MATHA TAMIL CATHOLIC ASSOCIATION, INC.** hereinafter referred to as "Association".

Section 1.2 - Consistency of Organization Name

For the purposes of these bylaws, the organization name written in any combination of upper case or lower-case letters shall refer to the same legal entity. For example, "**VELANKANNI AROCKIA MATHA TAMIL CATHOLIC ASSOCIATION, INC.,**" and "**Velankanni Arockia Matha Tamil Catholic Association, Inc.**" shall be considered interchangeable and have the same meaning.

Section 1.3 - Office

The Board of Directors shall decide the location of the Association's office.

ARTICLE II – PURPOSES AND OBJECTIVES

Section 2.1 - Objectives

The objectives of this association shall be:

A) To provide liaison between the Tamil Catholic community living in and around the state of Virginia, United States of America and the local Catholic hierarchy to address the special pastoral and religious needs of the Tamil Catholic community in Tamil language.

B) To bring together all Tamil Catholics living in and around the state of Virginia, United States of America to:

1. Create opportunities for Tamil catholic families and their visiting parents to take a meaningful part in the liturgies and services in Tamil language.
2. Have meaningful celebrations of Catholic Christian feasts and festivals in Tamil language following the Tamil culture. These festivals include but not limited to:
 - i. **New Year** in the month of January
 - ii. **Thai Pongal** (also known as Tamil Harvest Festival) in the month of January.

- iii. **Season of Lent and Easter** (Ash Wednesday, Easter Sunday)
 - iv. **'Vanakka Matha' Festival** in the month of May
 - v. **St. Antony's Festival** in the month of June
 - vi. **Velankanni Arockia Matha Festival** in the month of September (Association's Annual Festival)
 - vii. **Our Lady of the Rosary** in the month of October
 - viii. **All Saints and all Souls Day** in the month of November
 - ix. **Season of Advent and Christmas** in the month of December
 - x. And any other festivals for celebration as deemed by the Association.
3. Promote Tamil cultural and spiritual values among the Tamil Catholics (Tamil Apostolate).
 4. Help our youth understand and carry out their roles as Tamil Catholics in mainstream American society.
 5. Provide our members with opportunities to develop leadership qualities.
 6. Assure the participation and involvement of the children in the liturgical and other activities of the Association.
 7. Teach Tamil catechism and scriptures to the children and others who like to learn.
 8. Assist deserving Catholics, institutions, and charities in India and elsewhere.

Section 2.2 - Incorporation

This is a Virginia nonstock Corporation pursuant to Chapter 10 of Title 13.1 of the Code of the State of Virginia.

ARTICLE III – DEFINITIONS

3.1 In this Bylaw and all other Bylaws of **Velankanni Arockia Matha Tamil Catholic Association, Inc.**, unless otherwise specified or required:

- a) "Tamil Catholics of Virginia" or "Virginia Tamil Catholic Association" refers to **Velankanni Arockia Matha Tamil Catholic Association, Inc.**;
- b) "**Bylaws**" means any Bylaw of the Association from time to time in force and effect;
- c) "**Member**" means adult member of the Association without arrears of membership dues;
- d) "**Director**" means the member elected as director of the Association's Board;
- e) "**Board**" means the Board of Directors;
- f) Words importing the singular number only shall include the plural and vice versa; words importing masculine gender shall include the feminine and neuter genders;
- g) The Board of Directors shall be the final arbiter in the interpretation of any clause of this Constitution and of any Bylaws thereunder. In doing so, the advice of the legal and procedural committees may be obtained;
- h) The **First Board** means the board with which the Association is constituted. The Second Board means the Board which follows the First Board.
- i) "Property" or "Premises" or "Building" means any property, premises, ground, space owned, leased or rented by the Association.

ARTICLE IV

Section 4.1 - Eligibility for Membership

1. Any Tamil Catholic/Tamil Catholic Family living in and around the state of Virginia, United States of America shall be eligible for membership.

Section 4.2 - Lifetime Membership

1. Eligibility

Any Tamil Catholic/Tamil Catholic family living in and around the state of Virginia, United States of America may apply for lifetime membership by meeting the following conditions:

- a. Submission of a completed membership application.
- b. Payment of the one-time lifetime membership fee \$500 (Five hundred US Dollars) and as determined by the Board of Directors.
- c. Approval from the Board of Directors.

2. Lifetime Membership Fee

The lifetime membership fee shall be set and periodically reviewed by the Board of Directors. The fee may be adjusted by a majority vote of the Board, provided changes are communicated to the new prospective members before payment.

3. Benefits

Lifetime members shall receive the following benefits:

- a. All rights and privileges of regular membership, including voting rights (if applicable).
- b. Acknowledgment on the organization's website, newsletters, or annual reports.
- c. Invitations to exclusive events or recognition programs.
- d. No need to pay annual membership dues for the duration of 15 (fifteen) years from the date of becoming lifetime member.

4. Non-Transferability

Lifetime membership is personal to the individual or family and cannot be transferred or assigned to another party.

5. Duration and Termination

- a. Lifetime membership shall remain active for 15(fifteen) years from the date of becoming lifetime member.
- b. Lifetime membership may be terminated under the following circumstances:
 - i. Voluntary resignation by the member.
 - ii. Expulsion by the organization due to violation of its policies, unethical behavior, or actions detrimental to the mission of the organization, as determined by the Board of Directors.
 - iii. Dissolution of the nonprofit organization.

6. Refund Policy

The lifetime membership fee is non-refundable under any circumstance, including resignation or termination of membership.

7. Record-Keeping

The organization shall maintain accurate records of all lifetime members, including the date of membership initiation and any relevant correspondence.

Section 4.3 – Registration and Fees

1. All eligible families or individuals shall submit a written application for the registration of membership.
2. The Annual membership fee shall be fifty dollars (\$50) for a family or thirty dollars (\$30) for an individual, payable at the time of registration and must be renewed year after year with an appropriate membership fee.
3. The membership fee paid is not refundable.

Section 4.4 - Honorary Membership

1. All Tamil catholic priests and nuns who reside in and around the state of Virginia, United States of America may be granted honorary membership in the Association.
2. Nomination for honorary membership shall be made by the Board and approved by a two-thirds majority of the general body.
3. Honorary members except for the Spiritual Advisor shall have all rights and privileges of regular members but no duties or voting privileges.

Section 4.5 - Cessation of Membership

1. Any member desiring to resign from the Association shall submit one's resignation in writing to the Association, who shall present it to the Board for action.
2. Any member whose activities are not considered to be in the best interest of the Association, or any member who does not adhere to the code of conducts of the Association, as provided in *ARTICLE II – PURPOSES AND OBJECTIVES* section of this Bylaw document, may be expelled by a two-thirds majority of members present and voting in a General Body meeting based on the recommendations of the Board.

Section 4.6 - Voting Eligibility

1. All registered members constitute the general body of the association.
2. A registered family who paid the membership fee will have two votes in the general body and all elections in the association. A registered individual who paid the membership fee will have one vote in the general body and all elections in the association.
3. Only one adult member from a registered family can serve on the Board at a time.

ARTICLE V

Section 5.1 – The Board of the Association

1. The Board shall be the legislative body of the Association which is responsible for the overall conduct, direction, and stability of the Association.
2. The Board shall be composed of Four General Directors, and the Spiritual Advisor.
3. For the First Board the term of the Board of Directors is THREE (3) years. The Second Board and thereafter, the term of the Board of Directors shall be TWO (2) years.
4. The Board shall have the power to reprimand, or suspend a member for disorderly behavior, and, with the concurrence of two-thirds of General Body, expel a member for conduct injurious to the Association or its purposes as provided in *ARTICLE II – PURPOSES AND OBJECTIVE* section of this Bylaw document.
5. Each elected member of the Board and the Spiritual Advisor shall have one vote.

6. The Spiritual Advisor, a Roman Catholic Tamil Priest, shall ensure the spiritual growth of the total community. He shall coordinate with the Board to mediate and integrate community members and fulfill community members' pastoral needs whenever and wherever possible.
7. The Board is not entitled to any form of compensation or benefits. The Board's pre-approved ordinary and necessary expenses related to the operation of the association may be reimbursed.

Section 5.2 - Meetings

5.2.1 Meeting Mode

- a) All meetings will be held in person or via electronic video conference.
- b) All official communications will be done by email.

5.2.2 Annual General Body Meeting:

- a) The Annual General Body Meeting shall be held on a suitable day toward the end of each calendar year.
- b) Every member shall be notified by the Secretary in writing of the date, time and purpose of the meeting at the advice of the President or majority of the Board.
- c) Notification of the meeting shall be sent with complete details to all the members not less than thirty days and not more than sixty days prior to the date of the meeting.
- d) Notice emailed to the email addresses on record on file with the Secretary shall constitute notification.

5.2.3 Special Meetings of the General Body

- a) Special meetings shall be held for any purpose(s) concerning the Association.
- b) The Secretary shall call a special meeting upon a resolution of the Board or upon receipt of a petition to the Secretary for a meeting signed by not less than one-third of the members.
- c) All members of the Association shall be notified of each special meeting explaining the reason(s) for the meeting.
- d) Notice must be sent to all members not less than fifteen days prior to the date of the special meeting; The notice must contain full details including the date and time.

5.2.4 Meetings of the Board

- a) The Board shall hold at least three meetings in a year and more as it becomes necessary.
- b) At least one meeting of the Board of Directors shall be held before the Annual General Body meeting.
- c) The Board shall meet at the call of the President or by a majority of the Board.
- d) The agenda shall be prepared by the President, and the Secretary shall send the details including the date and time at least one week before the meeting.

5.2.5 QUORUM

- a) The Members present at any properly announced meeting shall constitute a quorum at such meeting.
- b) Two thirds of the majority of members constitute a quorum to convene a meeting and to pass any resolutions.

Section 5.3 - Election of Board of Directors

1. Excepting the First Board, at the regular Board meeting held either in January or February of even year, the Board will form a Nominating Committee. The committee will call for nominations for the election of the Board by written notice from members in good standing as mentioned in Section 4.5 - Voting Eligibility in this Bylaws document.
2. The nominations shall be proposed by a non-family member and seconded by another, and the nominations should bear the signed consent of the nominee, and it shall reach the Secretary within fifteen (15) days of the date of the notice.
3. Nominees desirous of withdrawing should do so in writing to the Nomination Committee within a week from the last date specified for receipt of nominations.
4. The nomination committee shall list all the nominees and hold an election by secret ballot before the General body meeting.
5. The voting shall be in person or by mail (at the members' request). The request shall be made at least 15 days before the election.
6. If there is only one nomination for an office, the nominee shall be declared as elected.
7. The Spiritual Advisor shall be nominated and approved by the Board.

Section 5.4 - Duties of the Board of Directors

A) The President

The President shall:

- Be the Chief Executive Officer of the Association.
- Direct the Secretary to call for the Board meetings.
- Be the person to communicate officially with other organizations, agencies, and individuals outside the Association.
- Maintain effective communication with all members of the Association.
- Exercise all other functions as the Chief Executive of the Association.
- Work closely with the Spiritual Advisor on the spiritual welfare of the Association and its members.
- Identify and finalize Tamil Priests for the monthly and other festival masses in consultation with the Board of Directors and Spiritual Advisor.

B) The Vice President

The Vice President shall:

- Perform all the duties of the President in case the President is absent.
- Assist in discharging of the duties of the President.
- Carry out other responsibilities assigned by the President and the Board as and when required.
- Fill the vacancy if the office of the President should become vacant between elections, for the remainder of the term.
- Be the Lead of all liturgical activities of the Association.
- Plan and schedule liturgical activities of the Association in consultation with the Board of Directors and Spiritual Advisor.
- Maintain the liturgical books, song books and other vestments needed for the smooth functioning of the liturgical activities of the Association.

C) The General Secretary

The General Secretary shall:

- Be the recording and correspondence officer for the Association.
- Keep minutes of meetings and proceedings, prepare correspondence, maintain records, and update membership lists.
- Convene Board meetings and present reports at these meetings.
- Prepare, prior to each meeting, an order of business for the use of the presiding officer.
- Be the custodian of the records of the Association, except the Treasurer's book.

D) The Treasurer

- Be the Chief Financial Officer of the Association
- Collect all the money due to the Association.
- Maintain day-to-day accounts of the Association, including bank accounts.
- Make disbursements of money with the President's written approval of up to One Hundred Dollars (\$100). Any amount exceeding One Hundred Dollars (\$100) shall have written approval of a two-thirds majority of the Board.
- Keep an accurate record of all receipts and disbursements.
- Present financial reports to the Board.
- Make financial reports available to all appropriate auditors.
- Submit annual financial reports, duly audited by a Certified Public Accountant to the Board for the annual general body meetings.
- File all tax forms in compliance with the Internal Revenue Service regulations.
- Bill members for their dues and receive the payment of the same, maintain a ledger of each member's account and provide receipts for money received.
- Any purchase of more than Two Hundred and Fifty Dollars (\$250) for the association shall be determined from at least 3 vendor quotes. The selection of the vendor shall be based on the best value which benefits the association.

F) The Spiritual Advisor

The Spiritual Advisor shall:

- Provide guidance and inputs about new announcements and practices from the Holy See/Vatican/Holy Father.
- Ensure that our devotions are in line with the Beliefs and the Dogmas of the Roman Catholic Church.
- Provide guidance to the liturgy team in planning and organizing spiritual events.
- Attend the Board meetings whenever possible upon invitation from the Board.

ARTICLE VI. PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

Section 6.1 - PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY:

The rules contained in the current edition of Robert's Rules of order Newly Revised shall govern the **Velankanni Arockia Matha Tamil Catholic Association, Inc.** in all cases to which they are applicable and

in which they are not inconsistent with these bylaws and any special rules of order the **Velankanni Arockia Matha Tamil Catholic Association, Inc.** may adopt.