

GENERAL SYNOD
AMENDING CANON NO. 40

(Of religious communities, Of the titles of such as are to be ordained deacons or priests, Of ministers exercising their ministry, Of the licensing of ministers under seal)

Religious Communities

1. After Section D of the Canons, insert—

“Section DA

Religious Communities

DA 1 Of religious communities

1. (1) A religious community in the Church of England is a community of persons—

- (a) which has a particular vocation in the service of the Gospel,
- (b) whose members seek to frame and fashion their lives in accordance with a rule or other pattern of life that is particular to members of that community, and
- (c) which is declared by the House of Bishops to be a religious community in the Church of England.

(2) A reference in this Canon, or in any of the other Canons, to a religious community is a reference to a religious community in the Church of England.

2. A religious community may include among its members persons who are not members of the Church of England.

3. (1) The House of Bishops may not make a declaration under paragraph 1(1)(c) in the case of a community unless it is satisfied that the community meets such conditions as the House shall specify in regulations.

- (2) The regulations may, in particular, specify conditions relating to—

- (a) governance;
- (b) financial affairs;
- (c) safeguarding children and vulnerable adults;
- (d) the making of vows or promises;
- (e) the minimum number of members required for a community to be eligible for a declaration under paragraph 1(1)(c).

(3) The conditions which may be specified in the regulations under sub-paragraph (2)(a) include conditions as to the procedure which a community must follow in order to amend its constitution or other governing document.

(4) In paragraph (2)(c)—

“child” means a person aged under 18, and
“vulnerable adult” has the same meaning as in the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016.

4. The House of Bishops may, for some grave cause, revoke a declaration made under paragraph 1(1)(c).

5. The House of Bishops shall compile, maintain and publish a list of religious communities.

6. The House of Bishops may by regulations make further provision about religious communities.

7. (1) The House of Bishops may by regulations amend or revoke regulations made under this Canon.

(2) Regulations under this Canon may confer a discretion.

(3) Regulations under this Canon shall be laid before the General Synod and shall not come into operation unless and until they have been approved by the Synod.

(4) Where the Business Committee of the General Synod determines that regulations under this Canon do not need to be debated by the Synod then, unless notice is given by a member of the Synod in accordance with its Standing Orders that the member wishes the regulations to be debated, the regulations shall for the purposes of paragraph (3) be deemed to have been approved by the Synod.

8. (1) The House of Bishops may issue guidance on religious communities.

(2) Every member of a religious community, and every person exercising functions in relation to a religious community, shall have regard to such guidance as is issued under this paragraph.

(3) The House of Bishops may amend or revoke guidance issued under this paragraph.”

2. (1) In Canon C 5 (titles of such as are to be ordained deacons or priests), in paragraph 2—

(a) omit paragraph (e), and

(b) in the full-out words at the end, for “, school or house of a religious order or community” substitute “or school”.

(2) After that paragraph, insert—

“2A. A bishop may also admit into holy orders any person who is a member of a religious community.”

3. In Canon C 8 (ministers exercising their ministry), in paragraph 4, after “and Canon B 41” insert “or as a member of a religious community licensed in accordance with that Measure”.
4. In Canon C 12 (the licensing of ministers under seal), in paragraph 1, for sub-paragraph (b) substitute—
 - “(b) of a licence to perform some particular office, or
 - (c) of a licence to serve for the purposes of or in connection with a mission initiative endorsed by a bishop’s mission order, or
 - (d) of a licence to perform offices and services for the furtherance of the work and mission of a religious community.”