



## STATUTES

### ORATORY OF ST CHRISTOPHER MEDOWIE

*When Churches are built let great care be taken that they are suitable for the celebration of liturgical services and for the active participation of the faithful. (SC a. 124)*

#### 1. Background

##### 1.1. Simply put:

1.1.1. A rector has responsibility for the thing - in this case the Oratory

1.1.2. A chaplain has responsibility for people – in this case parishioners and users of the site

#### 2. PHYSICAL SITE

2.1. These statutes are applicable to St Christopher's Oratory Medowie (the Oratory)

2.2. The Oratory is situated on the campus of Catherine McAuley Catholic College Medowie (the College)

2.3. The Oratory is available to those involved in the ministries and activities operating on the Medowie site

2.4. The attached site map indicates the area of the Oratory

#### 3. PURPOSE

All church buildings, whatever their canonical description, function as the home of the church. The community of living stones who gather in their home in the presence of Christ, to celebrate the liturgy and to pray. The design of the church building facilitates the full, conscious and active participation of the faithful in all liturgical celebrations. These celebrations shape and empower the community to persevere – fully, consciously and actively – the mission of Christ both as disciples and as the church – the community of the faithful. (CS a. 2)

If the church – the community of the faithful – in Christ is a sacrament, a sign and instrument of communion with God and humanity, it can also be said that the Church building functions as a sacrament, standing as it does in the midst of all the buildings that comprise the neighbourhood. The Church building, that beautiful, sacred space that features the primary symbols that express the community's identity, reminds us that God is present in creation and in this neighbourhood. The beauty and space of the building functions firstly to still, and then to raise the human heart and mind to God. As home to the community of the faithful, the building functions as a welcoming, quiet, sanctuary for all people whatever their joys and sorrows, their griefs and anxieties.

As the house of God, the St. Christopher's Oratory is the home of God's people.

#### 4. OBJECTIVES

To be a welcoming, beautiful, sacred space for all where:

- 4.1. the public prayer and liturgical life of the St. Christopher's community is celebrated
- 4.2. personal prayer and reflection find a home
- 4.3. all users of the site can gather for shared prayer and reflection that contributes to the growth of meaningful relationships
- 4.4. worship is an authentic expression of the life and faith of the community and gradually introduces members to the vast treasury of Catholic worship
- 4.5. ecumenical and interfaith prayer expresses the diverse faith of the school community
- 4.6. the Word of God resounds
- 4.7. the joys and sorrows, the griefs and anxieties of the community are brought to God in the most appropriate ways
- 4.8. events that foster the life and faith of the community are hosted, including for example public lectures, meetings, and concerts.

#### 5. HISTORY (provided by a parishioner)

- 5.1. Up until 2021 the then current St Christopher's Catholic Church served a small but devout and friendly community of approximately forty parishioners
- 5.2. It is a much loved old wooden building standing on concrete piers which was built with the assistance of the local community in 1957. Originally it was planned to be built on a plot next to the Fire Station but this site was later exchanged for the current location on the opposite side of the road.
- 5.3. Until its opening, Mass had been held in the old Medowie Hall and prior to that at the Campbell family's house, which is now below the waters of the Grahamstown Dam.

#### 6. RECTOR of the Oratory

- 6.1. The Rector is appointed and installed by the diocesan bishop(CIC83 c. 557 §1)<sup>1</sup>
- 6.2. The Rector can be removed as per c. 563
- 6.3. Responsibilities of the Rector include:
  - 6.3.1.To be available to the community the Oratory serves
  - 6.3.2.To oversee the canonical and civil statutory requirements of the Oratory
  - 6.3.3.To ensure the processes for contact and communication processes for use of the Oratory are efficient and accommodate the needs of all site users and the broader community
  - 6.3.4.To develop a liturgical calendar in partnership with the various groups who use the Oratory
  - 6.3.5.To grant the required permissions to those celebrating the Eucharist, sacraments, and other sacred functions according to the norm of the law (c. 561)

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<sup>1</sup> See [http://www.vatican.va/archive/cod-iuris-canonici/eng/documents/cic\\_lib2-cann460-572\\_en.html#CHAPTER\\_VIII](http://www.vatican.va/archive/cod-iuris-canonici/eng/documents/cic_lib2-cann460-572_en.html#CHAPTER_VIII).

6.3.6. The obligation to ensure that, under the authority of the local ordinary and observing the legitimate statutes and acquired rights, sacred functions are celebrated worthily in the church according to the liturgical norms and precepts of the canons, that obligations are fulfilled faithfully, that goods are administered diligently, that the maintenance and beauty of sacred furnishings and buildings are provided for, and that nothing whatever occurs which is in any way unfitting to the holiness of the place and the reverence due to a house of God (c. 562)

## 7. ACCESS TO ORATORY

### 7.1. During school hours:

7.1.1. The rector and college principal are to develop a process and agree to it in writing

7.1.2. This agreement may be changed by agreement between the rector and college principal

7.1.3. The agreement is to be in writing, signed by both parties, and attached to these statutes

7.2. Outside of school hours access is the rector's responsibility

7.3. The Oratory is not a public place of worship and as such requires the Rectors agreement for the buildings use. This agreement will not normally be withheld. Agreement is to be assumed when it relates to the annual usage calendars.

## 8. USES OF THE ORATORY

8.1. All usage of the Oratory is to respect its nature as a sacred space designed to inspire hearts and minds to experience and worship God

8.2. For the celebration of prayers and liturgies that mark the normal rhythm of the liturgical year and Catholic life as noted in item 8 below.

8.3. The school and other Catholic Agencies on the site may use the Oratory for a variety of gatherings including:

8.3.1. Prayer and worship, both individual and communal, including class, stage, staff, parent and other groupings as reflects the life of the community.

8.3.2. Ecumenical and interfaith prayer

8.3.3. Other occasions as appropriate such public lectures, meetings, gatherings, and concerts.

8.4. The wider community may use the Oratory for the same uses listed in 7.3. If during school hours the consent of the principal must first be obtained

8.5. Significant forms of worship will be prepared collaboratively using processes that are informed and shaped by

- a rich appreciation of the breadth and depth of Catholic prayer and worship
- sound liturgical principles
- respect for the collective wisdom
- pastoral sensitivity to the assembly who will gather

8.6. Ideally the Rector/Chaplain will be included in the preparation of worship, and where there is an issue of orthodoxy, will have the final word.

8.7. One of the rooms within the Oratory may be a suitable venue for Spiritual Direction. This term is only to be used in relation to Spiritual Direction provided by a trained and appropriately recognised Spiritual Director.

9. LITURGY AND PRAYER - What is allowed in the oratory

9.1. The nature of worship as a faith response to the human experience of and encounter with God is to be respected.

9.2. Worship and the liturgical calendar are to respect the diverse nature of the community, and at the same time, foster the full, conscious and active participation of members of the community.

9.3. Worship and the liturgical calendar will be characterised by a rich diversity and include the following as appropriate and timely for the life and mission of the entire community:

9.3.1. the celebration of mass on weekends and those dates in the ordo that are usually celebrated with mass including, but not limited to:

- January 1: Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God
- Easter Sunday. There is no provision for the celebration of the Triduum in an Oratory. (Missal p. 329 a. 3) – The bishop dispenses this provision for the Oratory of St Christopher's
- August 8: Feast of St Mary of the Cross Mackillop
- August 15: Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- Sunday prior to or on September 15: Diocesan Feast Perpetual Day of Remembrance
- November 1: All Saints Day
- November 2: All Souls Day
- December 25: Christmas

9.3.2. Sacraments:

- Mass
- Sacraments of Initiation
- Sacrament of Penance, including Penitential Services which may be referred to as healing liturgies
- Marriages – Catholic and non-Catholic in accord with the *Order of Marriage*.

9.3.3. Other rites of the Church including

- Liturgy of the Word
- The Prayer of the Church
- Exposition and Benediction

9.3.4. Funerals including for non-Catholic persons in accord with the *Order of Christian Funerals*. Unless notorious

9.3.5. A variety of prayer experiences including

- prayer associated with pilgrimages, retreats and reflection days ...
- devotions e.g. Stations of the Cross, novenas,
- angelus
- any form of prayer, meditation, reflection, that would assist people

- 9.4. When the official liturgy of the Church is celebrated the official texts, as contained in the relevant ritual books, are to be used.
- 9.5. Texts for prayers, rituals and liturgies that are not found in the liturgical books may be composed by members of the community. Such prayers seek to articulate the faith of the Church in ways that capture the imagination of the gathered community. They should also seek to introduce the community to the patterns and rituals of Catholic prayer and liturgy.
- 9.6. Lay people, with the appropriate gifts, may exercise the ministry of Leadership at prayers and liturgies that do not require an ordained minister
- 9.7. The Rector may assist in identifying members of the community who have gifts for a range of liturgical ministries and provide encouragement and mentoring as appropriate, particularly for Lay Leaders of Liturgy
- 9.8. The liturgical calendar will be well advertised via a variety of existing and new platforms that engage the parish, all site users, the wider community and the diocesan community
- 9.9. The Diocesan Liturgy Office and Council, and the Catholic Schools Office RE and Spirituality Team are available to support the community in developing its liturgical life.

#### 10. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARISH AND ORATORY:

- 10.1. Record keeping
  - 10.1.1. Sacraments are to be recorded in the parish of Raymond Terrace
  - 10.1.2. The parish of Raymond Terrace is responsible for sending all notifications and record storage and retention
- 10.2. The parish priest may celebrate Mass once a month and at other times in discussion with the Rector
- 10.3. Sacramental preparation
  - 10.3.1. Parishioners, Rector/Chaplain and Parish Priest will collaborate on preparation and choice of celebration
  - 10.3.2. Site staff, students, and their families may choose to have the celebration of the sacraments in the Oratory with the Rector or Chaplain
- 10.4. Parishioners are encouraged to engage in Christ's mission by supporting the educational initiatives of all users of the site.

#### 11. FINANCES

- 11.1. Given that the MCCF will continue to provide for the clergy's (chaplain/rector) sustentation there is to be a first collection at any Mass where this would normally take place.
- 11.2. This first collection is to be banked as part of the parish collections in which the oratory is situated
- 11.3. The maintenance and upkeep, both recurrent and long term, of the oratory is the responsibility of the site users
- 11.4. To support this responsibility a second collection is also to be taken up
- 11.5. This collection is to be banked so as to contribute to the upkeep of the building and support of programs etc. for the worshippers

11.6. Parishioners of Raymond Terrace parish may elect to give their second collection contribution directly to the parish

11.7. Both collections are to be accounted for separately and an annual report presented

## 12. PUBLIC JURIDIC PERSON

12.1. The oratory is not a public juridic person

12.2. The oratory belongs to the public juridic person of the diocese and is under the authority of the bishop.

## 13. FACULTIES

13.1. Rector does not have diocesan faculties

## 14. CHANGES TO STATUTES

14.1. By approval of the bishop,

14.2. After a recommendation from any concerned party or by his own decision

14.3. After hearing Presbyteral Council, members of the community, and rector

## 15. DISPUTES

15.1. The diocesan procedures are to be utilised in dispute resolution

15.2. If a dispute is unable to resolved by dialogue it maybe escalated

15.2.1. To the Chancellor

15.2.2. Then to the Vicar General

15.2.3. And only then to the Bishop – who is the final arbitrator

## 16. CLOSURE OF THE ORATORY

16.1. At the decision of the bishop.



Most Reverend William Wright  
**Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle**



Reverend Matthew Muller  
**Chancellor and Canonical Advisor**