

few times in church history where the Church in Rome has given permission for a particular Diocese to elect its own bishops without being appointed by the Pope. Bishops, independent of Rome have come about through both of these mechanisms.

Some other independent Catholic jurisdictions are the “Old Catholic Church” the “Liberal Catholic Church” The “Old Roman Catholic Church” the American Catholic Church” the “American Orthodox Church” the “United Reform Catholic Church International” and others.

### **What about women priests, married priests, celibacy, birth control, abortion, divorce, etc.?**

Each independent Catholic denomination establishes their own Code of Canon Law, and their own theological stand on these issues. As previously stated the various denominations move from very conservative to very liberal. You would have to check with each church group to find out what their stance is on these matters.

The **Catholic Apostolic Church of Antioch** ordains women to its priesthood, priests can be married, and celibacy is optional. We encourage people to make their own **informed** decisions about birth control, abortion, etc.

Our Communion and our Holy Orders are open to all humanity who reverently and sincerely approach our altars. We exclude no one. We recognize that Christ’s message was one of love and forgiveness. He excluded no one.

For more information about the possibility of the priesthood within our church or the location of our churches within our denomination please check out our website at **www.coasf.org** or **call us at our church office at (505) 983-9003.**

## **THE CATHOLIC APOSTOLIC CHURCH OF ANTIOCH AT SANTA FE**



### **What Is An Independent Catholic Church?**

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## **What Is An Independent Catholic Church?**

**THE PURPOSE** of this document is to answer some of the most common questions asked about the independent Catholic movement. Many people find their way to attending a church service in one of our many independent Catholic Churches and then ask “What is this? I never heard of anything like this before?” This is an attempt to answer these questions.

### **I have never seen anything like this before! Are you telling me that there is more than one Catholic Church?**

No. There is only one Catholic Church. However there are a fair number of Catholic “denominations”, of which the Roman Catholic Church is only one, of course overwhelmingly, the worlds largest. The **Catholic Apostolic Church of Antioch at Santa Fe** is an independent Catholic denomination of it’s own. We are **Not** under either the control or the government of the Church of Rome commonly called the Roman Catholic Church. We are an alternative Catholic Church with a worship service open to all humanity. Combined with other independent Catholic denominations we are referred to as part of the “Independent Catholic movement”.

### **I thought a denomination was a separate religion?**

A denomination is an organization – that is a group of people who gather to worship, pool funds, operate ministries, construct church buildings, establish non profit corporations, and do all the activities that people normally associate with the word “Church” including having similar religious or spiritual beliefs and practices.

Catholic denominations in general follow the traditions of sacramental worship and the preaching of the word as established in the early church before the church was split up into many denominations. The actual theologies, rites, and practices of independent Catholic churches vary from conservative to liberal. It is important not to confuse matters of faith with matters of church practices and governance.

## **The Pope is the head of the Roman Catholic Church. Who runs these independent denominations?**

Its own Bishops run each denomination. The Pope is a Bishop of the Roman Catholic Church. The word bishop comes from the Greek for: “Overseer”. The Pope has been elected by his fellow bishops to be in effect the CEO of the Roman Catholic Church. There are variances but in general, the bishop of an Independent Catholic Church is elected by a synod or governing council of bishops to be the Patriarch, Matriarch, Presiding Bishop, Archbishop, Prime Bishop or leader of the denomination with a variety of titles. This person in general is considered the CEO of the denomination.

### **Do independent Catholic Bishops have valid Apostolic Succession?**

Yes. Apostolic succession is a process that involves a priest being consecrated to the High and Holy Order of Bishop by the laying on of hands and the anointing with sacred Oil of Chrism by a validly consecrated bishop. The consecrating bishop must be able to trace his succession through an unbroken line of bishops back to the original church founded by Jesus the Christ and his Apostles. As a general rule there must be two validly consecrated co-consecrators in participation with the main consecrating bishop to insure the validity of the consecration. Once a person becomes a priest or a bishop they are ordained spiritually for their entire life. Over the thousands of years of church history there have been validly consecrated bishops from Catholic denomination including the Roman Catholic Church who have broken their affiliation and allegiance to a particular denomination. These bishops and denominations have been called schismatic. Those bishops who have left a denomination are still valid bishops and may continue to ordain priests and consecrate new bishops, thus the valid Apostolic Succession is carried on.

The major splits or schisms from the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church founded 2000 years ago were the Eastern Orthodox separation in 1054 and the later Anglican separation of 1534. There have been a