

other persons whatsoever, in all and singular actions, matters and demands whatsoever; and that it shall and may be lawful for them, and their successors for ever hereafter, to have a common seal for their use, and in their affairs and business, and the same, at the will and pleasure of them and their successors, to change, alter, break and make anew, from time to time, as they shall think best, and shall, in general, have and exercise all such rights, franchises, privileges and immunities, as by law are incident and necessary to corporations of this kind, and which may be necessary to the corporation herein and hereby constituted and erected, to enable them duly and fully in the law to execute all things touching and concerning the design and intent of their said incorporation, for the benefit, succour and relief, of the poor, indigent and helpless.

C H A P. LIV.

XI. Be it further enacted, That should any sect, or religious denomination, having a church or house of worship within the said town or precincts, be without a preacher, pastor, priest or minister, resident within the said town, or the precincts thereof, then and in that case the said sect, order or denomination, may choose from their own body a layman, who, upon complying with the provisions and regulations of this incorporation, entitling a minister, preacher or priest, to admission as members thereof, shall be held and considered as a member of this incorporation.

A layman may act in certain cases, &c.

C H A P. LV.

An ACT for securing certain estates and property for the support and uses of ministers of the Roman catholic religion.

Passed December 23.

WHEREAS it has been represented to this general assembly, that certain property, real, personal and mixed, or the rents and profits thereof, have been heretofore applied to the use, support and maintenance, of ministers of the Roman catholic religion, although the said property hath been held and possessed by certain individuals, as the legal proprietors thereof, but under a confidential or implied trust, that the said property, and the rents and profits thereof, should be faithfully applied to the use, support or maintenance, of ministers of the Roman catholic religion: And whereas by the declaration of rights, all gifts, sales or devises, for the support, use, or benefit of, any minister or preacher of the gospel, as such, or of any religious sect or denomination, without the leave of the legislature, are declared to be void: And whereas it is highly reasonable and just to grant unto ministers of the Roman catholic religion, who are citizens of this state, that legislative aid, without which they will be destitute of that protection and security to their property to which they are entitled equally with every other sect or denomination of christians;

Preamble.

II. Be it therefore enacted, by the General Assembly of Maryland, That every legal proprietor or possessor of any property, real, personal or mixed, held and possessed on or before the fourteenth day of August, seventeen hundred and seventy-six, under a confidential trust that the same, or the rents or profits thereof, should be applied to the use, support or maintenance, of ministers of the Roman catholic religion, and every legal proprietor or possessor of any property, real, personal or mixed, acquired since the fourteenth day of August, seventeen hundred and seventy-six, by exchange for property held under a confidential trust as aforesaid, before the said fourteenth day of August, seventeen hundred and seventy-six, may have full power and authority, at any time hereafter, to execute an instrument of writing, declaring the purposes for which the said property hath been or is held in confidential trust, which said declaration, so to be made, shall be signed by the party making the same, in presence of two witnesses, and acknowledged in the same manner as deeds are directed by law to be acknowledged; and on the said declaration shall be endorsed the affidavit of the party, that the property comprehended in such declaration was really and *bonâ fide* held for pious purposes, or acquired as aforesaid, in manner and for the purposes aforesaid; and the same affidavit shall be recorded, with the same declaration, within six months after the execution thereof.

Legal proprietors may execute an instrument of writing, &c.

III. And