

C H A P. L V.  
Ministers may convene, &c.

III. And be it enacted, That it shall and may be lawful for the ministers of the Roman catholic religion within this state, citizens thereof, exercising their ministerial functions agreeably to the rules and discipline of their church, and in whose favour the said declaration shall have been made, to convene at a place to be by them agreed on, within twelve months from the passing of this act, and then and there adopt such regulations for the management of their estates and temporalities, as shall seem fit and adviseable to a majority of the ministers so convened; and the said ministers, or a majority of them, so met, shall then and there choose, from their own body, certain persons, not less than three nor more than five, who shall assume the style, name and title, by which they are to be designated and known, and shall certify the same, under their hands and seals, within three months thereafter, to the clerk of the general court of the western shore, who is hereby authorized and required to record the same in the records of the laws of this state, at the expence of the said corporation, and thereupon the said persons, and their successors, shall be a body politic or corporate, by the name and description so assumed by them, for carrying into execution more effectually the regulations aforesaid, and the provisions of this act; which said body corporate shall immediately be seized and possessed, in as full and ample manner, and of the same estate, title and interest, in law and equity, of all such property then declared in manner aforesaid to be held by any person or persons, upon the trusts and to the uses herein before mentioned, or which thereafter shall be so declared to be held by any person or persons to the uses and upon the said trusts before the fourteenth day of August, seventeen hundred and seventy-six, or acquired since that period by exchange for property so held, as the person or persons making such declaration now hold and possess the same; and the said property, with the rents, issues, and profits thereof, shall from thenceforth be under the sole control and management of the said corporation or body politic, and their successors, subject nevertheless, at all times hereafter, to be taken into the valuation as other property liable to assessment.

How vacancies are to be filled, &c.

IV. And be it enacted, That all vacancies, occasioned by death, resignation, or other disqualification, of any person constituting the said corporation or body politic, shall be filled and supplied, from time to time, by other person or persons elected or appointed by the ministers of the Roman catholic religion within this state, citizens thereof, and acting agreeably to the rules and directions to be established at their first meeting to be held pursuant to this act, or by a majority of them present at such election or appointment; and it shall and may be lawful for the ministers aforesaid, qualified as aforesaid, to meet as often as may be necessary for their general interests and concerns, or to fill up vacancies occasioned by death, resignation, or other disqualification, of any persons constituting the corporation or body politic aforesaid; which said corporation or body politic, and their successors, shall be capable of suing and being sued, impleading and being impleaded, in any court of law and equity within this state, by their corporate name, in as full and effectual manner as any other person or persons, bodies politic or corporate, may sue or be sued, implead or be impleaded.

C H A P. L V I.

An ACT respecting the slaves of certain French subjects.

Passed December 23.

Preamble.

WHEREAS derangements in the government of France, and some of the French West-India islands, have induced several inhabitants of the said islands to take refuge in this state, with a part of their slaves: And whereas they have petitioned this general assembly to be enabled to retain the said slaves, and the laws of justice and hospitality requiring that men seeking an asylum for themselves and property, should not be refused the same; therefore,

Slaves of French subjects declared their property, &c.

II. Be it enacted, by the General Assembly of Maryland, That all slaves imported, or that may hereafter be imported, by, and the bona fide property of, French subjects, who have removed, or may remove, from any of the French islands into this state since the derangements in the French government, and previous to the establishment of peace in France, and tranquillity in the said islands,