

*UNION OF CATHOLIC APOSTOLATE*

# **GENERAL STATUTES**

Rome 2008

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# UNIONE DELL' APOSTOLATO CATTOLICO

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## TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE UNION OF CATHOLIC APOSTOLATE

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Alleluia, another occasion of joy that merits the heartfelt gratitude of every member and community of the Union of Catholic Apostolate!

The definitive approval of the General Statutes is an important historical moment for all of us. It is best described in the NEWSLETTER of the Union of Catholic Apostolate (UAC) of May, 2008, where we read the following: *“It is with great joy and a spirit of profound gratitude to God that we inform you of the definitive Approval of the General Statutes by the Pontifical Council for the Laity (PCL). The General Statutes of the Union of Catholic Apostolate (UAC) were approved in 2003 for a five year ‘ad experimentum’ period. Following an extensive process of consultation among the members of the UAC, the draft of the definitive text was studied, debated and approved by the Extraordinary General Assembly in May 2007 and the final amended draft was presented to the PCL for definitive approval. On May 2<sup>nd</sup> 2008 a letter arrived at the General Secretariat of the UAC communicating the definitive approval and attaching a letter with some small modifications and observations on the text.”*

The members of the General Coordination Council discussed these ‘modifications and observations’ during their annual meeting which took place from May 13<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> 2008, and they were incorporated into the text. Copies of this final text of the General Statutes were presented to the Pontifical Council for the Laity in September of 2008 and were placed in their archives.

On Friday November 7<sup>th</sup> 2008, the Decree of the definitive approval of the General Statutes of the UAC was presented by the President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, His Excellency Cardinal Stanisław Ryłko, in a simple ceremony which took place at the offices of the Pontifical Council, to a representative group of members of the Union: Fr. Friedrich Kretz, SAC, Rector General of the SAC and Ecclesiastical Assistant of the UAC, Fr. Jeremiah Murphy, SAC, General Secretary of the UAC, Sr. Serena Cambiagli, CSAC, General Superior of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Catholic Apostolate, Sr. Rita-Lore Wicklein, SAC, Vicar-General of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of the Catholic Apostolate, Mrs. Iole Capretti, member of the National Coordination Council, Italy and Ms. Marina Monacchi of the Quinta Dimensione Community, and in the presence of Mgr. Miguel

A. Delgado, Capoufficio of the PCL. The definitively approved General Statutes carry the date of October 28<sup>th</sup> 2008 which marks the transformation of the five year “*ad experimentum*” period into permanent and definitive approval. This is a great spiritual gift for all of us!

What significance has this development, this Ecclesiastical recognition, for the UAC today and in the future?

First of all, this recognition is not merely the end of a process. I recall a member saying with great sincerity after the approval “*ad experimentum*” of 2003: “So, the Holy See has spoken, that’s the end of the argument.” This is not and should not be a true interpretation of the weight and importance we give to this historical Church recognition. We are not celebrating the end of a process but are celebrating a gift of the Spirit, the real gift of a new beginning that calls all, invites all, to collaborate from the beginning in the spiritual-apostolic mission of the Church. We are called to be a “communion”, from the beginning, one that is open to new forms of evangelisation and that promotes and fosters collaboration among all the faithful (cf. General Statutes nos. 12 & 13). We celebrate a gift that ought to give every member a new hope and enthusiasm about our future role within the universal Church, a gift and impulse of the Spirit that is so precious that it “leaves us no choice” (cf. 2 Cor. 5:14). It gives us a new enthusiasm, an enthusiasm that I was privileged to experience in Sydney, Australia, this year at World Youth Day. On each day of the English-speaking “morning catecheses”, I was surprised to encounter enthusiastic youth of the Union of Catholic Apostolate from Australia, Belize, Canada, India, Ireland, South Africa and the USA. It was a great manifestation of enthusiasm for our responsibility within the Church.

Also of note is the consistent flow of news and developments from the General Secretariat. For example, in recent weeks we have all received some important documents of clarification on particular aspects of the UAC. On 2<sup>nd</sup> October, we received the document “The Spiritual Profile of the Union of Catholic Apostolate” a document rich in biblical references to the various spiritual and apostolic characteristics of the UAC. Then on the 30<sup>th</sup> October, we received the document “Regulations for the General Coordination Council of the Union of Catholic Apostolate”, a document of technical practicalities and provisions regarding the functioning of the General Coordination Council. Several other such documents of clarification and guidance are in preparation. We also note the relevance of the decision of the “Pallotti Institute”, in Rome, to dedicate its lecture series this year to the “Pauline Year”, an important contemporary decision of the Church. These lectures deal mainly with the use Vincent Pallotti made of the writings of St. Paul in his own writings. All of these initiatives keep reflection and renewal very much alive in our day to day living out of our charism which must be lived in a dynamic fidelity and not mere routine.

Secondly, this official recognition by the Church draws to a positive conclusion a commission given to us by the Second Vatican Council and by the

Extraordinary General Chapter of the Society of Catholic Apostolate in 1968/69. The Second Vatican Council called for all Institutes to return to the sources and to the spirit and aims of the Founder (cf. *Ecclesiae Sanctae* 12). This was a complex process for our Pallottine community as our story had to survive many crises of identity. Throughout our history there had always been a lively debate regarding the central focus and central authority of our charism, and also some tension and even division. With the canonical erection and the official recognition of the Holy See of the Union of Catholic Apostolate, I believe that our newly recognised “Public Association of the Faithful” now probably enjoys more unity than at any other time in our history.

When the Church assigned the task of the renewal of Consecrated Life to the Religious Institutes themselves, this was no easy task for these same Institutes. We can get some idea of the complexity of renewal by the response of the SAC Twelfth Extraordinary General Chapter. The response of the members of the Chapter was quite prophetic in that they did not get into a discussion of detailed theoretical renewal, instead they elaborated certain principles of priority and of renewal, and then called for an approach of concrete praxis that would eventually give authentic roots to our renewal. Their statement of intent is rather interesting. It reads: *“At the time of our Founder the government of the foundation in its entirety lay in the hands of Pallotti and of the first members of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate, a position the Society still holds. Whether this arrangement can and should be retained also in the future is a question which, in the present situation, need not be decided immediately. Hence the General Chapter gives the various provinces and regions the opportunity to experiment with different organisable and directional forms corresponding to their own situation, and at the proper time a final solution will have to be found”* (Twelfth Extraordinary General Chapter, Ch. 5, no. 14).

At first reading it would seem that the Chapter members wished to ignore the issue and to pass it on to others. However, as events turned out, their approach was prophetic because it gave rise to a creative multiplication of initiatives. This, in turn, led to an embracing of “coordination” and “collaboration” as apostolic tools of great spiritual and apostolic potential. The rest of the story is our concrete experience.

The future will generate new challenges and also new difficulties. However, it is better to see these as opportunities to which we apply the same spiritual collaboration, to reveal God’s will, not ours. The Cenacle is the life-giving spiritual source of this sacred collaboration where we all gather around Mary, Queen of Apostles to contemplate her great apostolic question – “How can this be?” (Luke 1,34). This is a question without any contamination of doubt. God’s way is near, and we reveal it by our perseverance. How can the UAC be, today and tomorrow? Let this be the ongoing question for each one of us, in every actual situation of our lives and of our apostolate.

Finally, it is our sincere desire to thank all of you for the cooperation and solidarity that we have celebrated together over the years. We pray that they may continue to flourish in the future. As always, we ask Mary, Queen of Apostles, to

intercede with her Son, Jesus, for the Church and especially for all members of the Union of Catholic Apostolate, that we will prove to be faithful stewards of the gifts we have received.

Fraternally in the Lord,  
+ Seamus Freeman, SAC  
President

Fr. Jeremiah Murphy, SAC  
General Secretary

21<sup>st</sup> November 2008  
Feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary



PONTIFICIUM CONSILIUM  
PRO LAICIS  
1563/08/S-61/A-74

## DECREE

The origins of the *Union of Catholic Apostolate* date back to the 9<sup>th</sup> of January, 1835, the date on which, by divine inspiration, St. Vincent Pallotti (1795-1850) decided to establish a foundation in which all the members of the People of God could participate together in the evangelical mission of the Church. St. Vincent Pallotti was motivated by a consciousness that all the baptized, in response to the “new commandment” of charity (cf. Jn 15: 12-15), are called to be actively engaged in working for the salvation of their neighbour as well as their own. He likewise held that personal apostolic initiatives would be more efficacious if carried out in a communal manner and directed towards the common mission of living and propagating the Gospel together.

Right from its very beginning, the *Union of Catholic Apostolate* has gathered together different communities of the faithful of every state, lay people, clergy and religious, all seeking to mould their vocations to the apostolic ideals of the Founder. Such a sharing of the same charism presupposes a necessary distinction and complementarity among the different states of life in the ecclesial communion.

As stated in article 1 of the General Statutes, “*The Union of Catholic Apostolate*, a gift of the Holy Spirit, is a communion of the faithful who, united with God and with one another in accordance with the charism of St. Vincent Pallotti, promote the co-responsibility of all the baptized to revive faith and rekindle charity in the Church and in the world, and to bring all to unity in Christ.”

Throughout its history the *Union of Catholic Apostolate* has received numerous demonstrations of esteem on the part of Church authority. With a rescript dated April 4<sup>th</sup>, 1835, the then Cardinal Vicar of Rome, Carlo Odescalchi, granted to the members of the newly established *Pious Union of the Catholic Apostolate* every blessing. Later, with a rescript dated July 11<sup>th</sup> of the same year, the association received “a thousand blessings” from Pope Gregory XVI. (cf. St. Vincent Pallotti, *Opere Complete*, IV, pp. 3, 9).

In a homily given at the church of San Salvatore in Onda in Rome on June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1986, His Holiness John Paul II underlined the key points of the charism received by St. Vincent Pallotti. Looking toward the future, the Roman Pontiff spoke to the faithful gathered for that solemn celebration, exhorting them: “continue to increase your commitment so that that which Vincent Pallotti prophetically announced, and which the Second Vatican Council authoritatively confirmed, may become a happy reality, and that all Christians become authentic apostles of Christ in the Church and in the world!” (Teachings of John Paul II, 9/1 [1986], p. 1899).

The Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, as well as the post-Conciliar Magisterium, has given special attention to associative forms of participation in the life of the Church, showing its deep esteem towards them. (cf. Decree on the apostolate of the laity, *Apostolicam actuositatem*, 18, 19 & 21;

Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Christifideles laici*, 29).

In this regard, at the beginning of the new millennium, John Paul II affirmed the importance of “the promotion of forms of association, whether of the more traditional kind or the newer ecclesial movements, which continue to give the Church a vitality that is God’s gift and a true ‘springtime of the Spirit’” (Apostolic Letter, *Novo Millennio ineunte*, 46).

Therefore,

The five year-period of the approval ‘ad experimentum’ of the General Statutes of the *Union of Catholic Apostolate* (cf. *Decree* of the Pontifical Council for the Laity of October 28<sup>th</sup> 2003) having elapsed;

Given the request submitted to this Dicastery by His Excellence Rev. Mgr. Séamus Freeman, S.A.C., Bishop of Ossory, and by Rev. Father Jeremiah Murphy, SAC, President and General Secretary respectively of the *Union of Catholic Apostolate*, seeking definitive approval of the above mentioned Statutes;

Pending the opportunity to definitively approve the General Statutes of the *Union of Catholic Apostolate*;

Having favourably accepted the modifications made to the General Statutes;

Given the provisions of articles 131-134 of the Apostolic Constitution *Pastor Bonus* regarding the Roman Curia and canon 312, § 1, 1 of the Code of Canon Law, the Pontifical Council for the Laity decrees:

1) the confirmation of the erection of the *Union of Catholic Apostolate* as an International Public Association of the Faithful, with juridic personality, in accord with the norms of canons 298-320 and 327-329 of the Code of Canon Law;

2) the definitive approval of its General Statutes, in the text which today has been duly authenticated and deposited in triplicate in the archives of this Dicastery.

Given at the Vatican, the twenty-eighth of October, 2008, feast of Saints Simon and Jude, Apostles.

+ *Josef Clemens*  
Secretary

*Stanisław Card. Ryłko*  
President



## ABBREVIATIONS AND SOURCES

<b>AA</b>	Vatican Council II, <i>Apostolicam Actuositatem</i> (Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity) <i>ACTA SAC Acta of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate</i>
<b>AG</b>	Vatican Council II, <i>Ad Gentes</i> (Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church)
<b>Art.</b>	Internal reference to numbers of these Statutes
<b>c./cc.</b>	Reference to numbers and paragraphs of the Code of Canon Law, 1983
<b>ChL</b>	John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation <i>Christifideles Laici</i> - The Vocation and Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World
<b>CIC</b>	Codex Juris Canonici, i.e., “Code of Canon Law”
<b>DH</b>	Vatican Council II, <i>Dignitatis Humanae</i> (Declaration on Religious Freedom)
<b>GS</b>	Vatican Council II, <i>Gaudium et Spes</i> (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World)
<b>LG</b>	Vatican Council II, <i>Lumen Gentium</i> (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church)
<b>Law SAC</b>	Law of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate, Rome, 1981
<b>No/nos</b>	number/numbers
<b>NA</b>	Vatican Council II, <i>Nostra Aetate</i> (Declaration of the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions)
<b>NMI</b>	John Paul II, Apostolic Letter “ <i>Novo millennio ineunte</i> ” at the close of the great Jubilee of the year 2000
<b>OCCC</b>	Opere Complete - (Vol. I-XIII), Rome, 1964-1997, Curia Generalizia; edited by Francesco Moccia, SAC. <i>OCCC</i> refers to the critical edition of the writings of St. Vincent Pallotti, Founder of the Union of Catholic Apostolate
<b>PO</b>	Vatican Council II, <i>Presbyterorum Ordinis</i> (Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests)
<b>Preamble</b>	Fundamental Document of the Union of the Catholic Apostolate confirmed and approved at a meeting of the following Institutes of the U.A.C., April 6-8, 1981: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Society of the Catholic Apostolate (Pallottine Priests and Brothers);</li><li>- Congregation of the Sisters of the Catholic Apostolate (Pallottine Sisters);</li><li>- Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of the Catholic Apostolate (Pallottine Missionary Sisters);</li><li>- Eucharistic Sisters of St. Vincent Pallotti;</li><li>- Sisters of St. Hildegard of the Catholic Apostolate;</li><li>- Sisters of St. Teresa of the Catholic Apostolate.</li></ul> These and other Institutes and Communities preface their particular law with the Preamble. The Preamble is a common declaration of Pallottine spirituality and apostolic principles.
<b>S.A.C.</b>	in this text refers only to the Society of the Catholic Apostolate
<b>SC</b>	Vatican Council II, <i>Sacrosanctum Concilium</i> (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy)
<b>U.A.C.</b>	Unio Apostolatus Catholicici, i.e., Union of Catholic Apostolate
<b>UR</b>	Vatican Council II, <i>Unitatis Redintegratio</i> (Decree on Ecumenism)
<b>VC</b>	John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation <i>Vita Consecrata</i> - Consecrated Life and its Mission in the Church and the World

## HISTORICAL PREMISE

### ST. VINCENT PALLOTTI FOUNDER OF THE UNION OF CATHOLIC APOSTOLATE

**1. [Life and Activities]** - Vincent Pallotti, son of Peter Paul and Maddalena de Rossi, was born in Rome on April 21<sup>st</sup> 1795. In his youth he was sustained and nourished by the religious spirit of his parents. Following his ordination to the priesthood on May 16<sup>th</sup>, 1818, because of his multiple and intense apostolic works, he formed friendships with clergy and laity committed to keeping faith alive in the people of Rome. His pastoral activity on so many fronts led him to urge collaboration among priests, religious and laity.

The city of Rome offered a vast range of options for his apostolic and priestly activities. His pastoral concerns embraced all aspects of ecclesial life: he was open to the poor and despised, the sick and the marginalised; he was attentive to the soldiers, workers, students, and prisoners; he was an untiring minister of reconciliation; he gave conferences to religious and preached popular missions in the parishes; he organised Christian formation for the youth, for adults, and for the clergy; he instituted and assisted orphanages; he promoted the Christian press, encouraged the missions, and was sensitive to the problems of the Christian East; he initiated the celebration of the Octave of the Epiphany to give witness to the unity and universality of the Church. Above all, he was preoccupied with the glory of God and the salvation of God's people. The motivating force of all this apostolate directed to the rekindling of faith was love, lived in its twofold dimension: spiritual and temporal.

In the life and apostolic activity of St. Vincent the dominant objective, the leaven that inspired all else, was his daily and continuous striving for holiness. Every moment of his life was aimed at God, the infinitely Holy. St. Vincent felt drawn to God, and thus he declared that God, Holiness in essence, with His own infinite Holiness, *"destroys all my wickedness, and when I am completely negated, there remains in me only God infinite sanctity, immense, eternal, incomprehensible"* (OCC X, 459).

He died in Rome, at San Salvatore in Onda, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January, 1850. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January, 1950, he was proclaimed "blessed" by Pope Pius XII. On the 20<sup>th</sup> of January, 1963, he was canonised by Pope Blessed John XXIII, who said of the Saint: "St. Vincent Pallotti is one of the more eminent figures of apostolic activity of the 19<sup>th</sup> century . . . He was not satisfied by ordinary ministry. He was an innovator of new ways whereby people could come to know and love God" (Acta SAC V, 367).

**2. [Spirituality]** - The dynamic principle on which the multi-faceted apostolic activities of St. Vincent Pallotti was founded was his personal faith experience. God gave him, as a gift of the Spirit, a profound experience of His infinite love and mercy. According to Vincent Pallotti, the most profound motivation of God's activity is infinite love. For this reason men and women, created in the image and likeness of God, reach the full understanding of the meaning of life when they continually exercise the love of God and love of neighbour (cf. 1 Jn 4,16).

This experience permits men and women to know Christ as the Apostle of the Eternal Father. All that Jesus achieved during his life on earth derives from his love of the Father and from his saving love of all people (cf. OCC III, 175ff). The secret of the apostolic efficacy of every Christian consists of the imitation of Christ's love for God the Father and for all people. For Vincent Pallotti, therefore, love is the driving motive for anyone who wishes to collaborate in the apostolate. The following of Christ and participation in His mission to save all people are inseparable. All people, since called to be his disciples have an apostolic obligation. (cf. OCC III, 142).

Mary, Queen of Apostles, is, “*after Jesus Christ, the most perfect model of true Catholic zeal and perfect charity, because she was so committed to the greater glory of God and the good of souls ... that she surpassed the Apostles in merit*” (OCCC I, 7). This title of Mary, *Queen of Apostles*, is for St. Vincent a symbol, a programme; Mary is the most efficacious example and the more perfect model for the apostolate of the faithful.

3. **[Foundation]** - The experience of the God of love and mercy opened the eyes of St. Vincent Pallotti to the needs of the Church of his day and prompted him to respond. In the signs of the times he was able to read the will of God. His response to the inspiration he received on the 9<sup>th</sup> of January, 1835, was the foundation of the Union of Catholic Apostolate (cf. OCCC X, 198-199). The Holy Spirit blessed him with the intuition of a foundation in which the baptised participate in the mission of the Church. He realised that their success depends on the extent to which they unite for the realization of a common aim. Vincent Pallotti expressed this intuition in these words: “*The Catholic Apostolate, that is, universal since it is common to all classes of persons, consists in doing all that one must and can do for the greater glory of God and for one’s own salvation and that of one’s neighbour*” (OCCC III, 143).

The official date of the birth of the foundation of St. Vincent Pallotti is the 4<sup>th</sup> of April 1835. On that day, the Cardinal Vicar of Rome, Carlo Odescalchi, gave “*every blessing to the pious Union of Catholic Apostolate*” (cf. OCCC IV, 1-3). In May of 1835, Vincent Pallotti launched his first appeal to the people of Rome, in which he presented the idea and the aim of this “*Pious Association of the Catholic Apostolate,*” inviting priests, religious and lay faithful to participate (cf. OCCC IV, 119-141). On the 11<sup>th</sup> of July of the same year the approval of Pope Gregory XVI followed (cf. OCCC, IV 8-9). On the 25<sup>th</sup> of March 1838 the Union of Catholic Apostolate was erected as an association with public juridical personality in the Diocese of Rome, (cf. OCCC IV, 24-26), and existed in the universal Church constituted as a Union composed of communities and individuals and recognised by the Holy See (cf. *Law of the SAC*, Rome, 1980, 1,4,202-205; *Constitutions*, Rome 1980, 6c; *Unsere Lebensform*, Rome 1985, 6-7, 179c, 202, 223).

During the lifetime of the Founder, the Union of Catholic Apostolate experienced a constant, even if turbulent, development. The multiplicity of the members of the Union impelled Vincent Pallotti to think of diverse forms of belonging and of diverse organizational structures (cf. OCCC I, II). With his Union the Founder was not so much seeking to create new structures in the Church, but rather to revive the existing ones and to render their apostolate more effective (cf. OCCC III, 1-3). With untiring charity and wherever possible, he sought to work together with others in the apostolate, thus promoting unity. According to Vincent Pallotti, the unity of the Union was founded on the promise made to live charity and apostolic zeal. Therefore, the bond of the Union was, above all else, reciprocal love with a minimum of organization.

The Union of Catholic Apostolate, as constituted in that first group of lay faithful, religious and priests, experienced in the following years a more systematic and harmonious development which expressed itself in the Community of the Priests and Brothers, in the Communities of the Sisters, and in a vast Community of the lay faithful of every state of life and condition. Today, the Union of Catholic Apostolate substantially conserves the same features and remains open to all the members of the People of God. Throughout the world, the Union brings together those who are inspired by the apostolic ideals of the Founder: the members of the Institutes founded by St. Vincent Pallotti or which were founded subsequently at different times, as well as the growing number of lay faithful, committed as individuals, or organised in groups and communities. All form one spiritual family united by the same spirit and are dedicated to responding together to the modern challenges of the Universal Apostolate. On the 28<sup>th</sup> of October 2003 the Union of Catholic Apostolate received, from the Pontifical Council for the Laity, the institutional form of a “*public international association*” (Newsletter of the Pontifical Council for the Laity 8/2003, 13).

In order to bring to full realization the original vision of St. Vincent Pallotti and to render this vision relevant to the needs of our time, the Union of Catholic Apostolate is committed to living the General Statutes. Thus she intends to foster the unity of the entire Pallottine Foundation and to reveal its prophetic expression.

*UNION OF CATHOLIC APOSTOLATE*

# **GENERAL STATUTES**

Rome 2008

**PART I**

# NATURE, MISSION and SPIRITUALITY

## Chapter I NATURE

1. The Union of Catholic Apostolate a gift of the Holy Spirit, is a communion<sup>1</sup> of the faithful<sup>2</sup> who, united with God and with one another in accordance with the charism of St. Vincent Pallotti, promote the co-responsibility of all the baptized to revive faith and rekindle charity in the Church and in the world, and to bring all to unity in Christ<sup>3</sup>.
2. The origin, source and teacher of every apostolate for the members of the Union is Jesus Christ, Apostle of the Eternal Father (cf. Heb 3,1)<sup>4</sup>.
3. The Patroness of the Union is the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Apostles, exemplary model of the spiritual life and of apostolic zeal<sup>5</sup>.
4. The Spiritual Centre of the Union is at the Church of SS. Salvatore in Onda, Rome, where the remains of St. Vincent Pallotti repose.
5. The Rector General of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate, as successor of the Founder St. Vincent Pallotti in an unbroken line, is guarantor of faithfulness to the Pallottine charism.
6. In the Union, the multiple forms of personal vocation and the diversity of life styles, of commitment and of service are united by the founding charism, by a common spirit and mission and by the communion of the members, as expressed in these Statutes<sup>6</sup>, because “the particular manifestation of the Spirit granted to each one is to be used for the general good” (1 Cor 12, 7)<sup>7</sup>.
7. The equal dignity of the members of the Union is founded on their common likeness to the Creator and on the common priesthood of the People of God<sup>8</sup>. This is expressed in a plurality of vocations to the life of the lay faithful, to consecrated life and to the ordained ministry which are all so interrelated that each helps the other to be solicitous for continuous growth and to offer its own specific service<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The word *communio* (the Latin translation of the Greek *koinonia*), is used to denote the Church, whose faithful through their participation in the Holy Spirit (Jn 14,17), in the Gospel (Phil 1,5) and in the Body and Blood of Christ (1 Cor 10,16-17), are united with God and among themselves (Gal 3,28; 1 Jn 1,3-7).

The Union of Catholic Apostolate belongs to this universal entity which is both divine and human and is called to collaborate so that all persons are incorporated into it and thus attain the fullness of life (1 Cor 15,28; cf. SC 2; LG 7, 8, 13; UR 2).

<sup>2</sup> The formulation of these Statutes applies to both male and female unless otherwise specified by the context or the nature of the matter.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. “In the Union to Evangelize” (Final Document of the XVIIth. General Assembly SAC, 1992), no. 16; OOCC I, 1- 6; Preamble c, e-g; LG 7, 13.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. OOCC II, 5-9, 541; III, 139-143; Preamble j; AA 4.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. OOCC I, 6-7; III, 6 145; Preamble k; AA 4.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. OOCC IV, 143-145, 265; Preamble c, f-h.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Sir. 17,12 in the Vulgate translation; OOCC III, 142; IV, 451-452; LG 12; VC 74.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. GS 12, 29; LG 10.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. OOCC III, 156-157; LG 32; VC 31.

8. The Union of Catholic Apostolate is an International Public Association (cf. CIC, cc. 298-320 and 327-329)<sup>10</sup>, formed by the faithful of every state and vocation, erected by the Holy See and regulated in accordance with the norms of the Code of Canon Law and the articles of these Statutes.
9. The seat of the Union is located in the Generalate House of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate in Rome.
10. These Statutes contain general norms for the life and the activity of the entire Union, without prejudice to the internal regulations of the communities of the Union (cf. arts. 34-37 & 40), subject to the provisions of art. 73.
11. The Rector General of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate is, *ipso iure*, (the) Ecclesiastical Assistant of the Union, according to CIC, c. 317 §1.  
In the event that he is elected President of the General Coordination Council of the Union, the General Council of the Society of Catholic Apostolate proposes a candidate for this duty to the Pontifical Council for the Laity.  
The Ecclesiastical Assistant, taking account of the proposals of the National Coordination Council and with the consent of the General Coordination Council, nominates a person who, in close collaboration with him and the National Coordination Council, has responsibility for ensuring the initial and on-going Pallottine formation of the members of the Union in that territory.

## Chapter 2 MISSION

12. The Union of Catholic Apostolate participates in the mission of the Church to reawaken faith and an awareness of the vocation to the apostolate, to rekindle charity among all the members of the People of God, so that they be ever more united in a commitment to spread charity and so that there be, as soon as possible, one flock under one Shepherd (cf. Jn 10, 16)<sup>11</sup>. Therefore, the Union, in communion with the competent Pastors, promotes collaboration among all the faithful in openness to new forms of evangelization<sup>12</sup>.
13. To accomplish this mission, the Union as a spiritual and apostolic association, open to all the members of the People of God, to lay faithful, clerics and consecrated persons<sup>13</sup>, sets itself to bring to light and revive the charisms of each one. The Union wishes to live the mystery of the Church as an apostolic communion of all the faithful in their innate dignity<sup>14</sup>.
14. The Union, among all Catholics, wishes to<sup>15</sup>
  - a) revive faith, hope and charity which were received as spiritual gifts in baptism;
  - b) foster personal holiness and that of others<sup>16</sup>;

<sup>10</sup> Cf. OOCC IV, 124, 131, 137, 144, 321, 326-327, 349; V, 236-237; LG 12, AA 3.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. OOCC IV, 1-2, 168; Preamble b-c; AA 1-2.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. OOCC IV, 334, 345; Preamble d; AA 23, 27.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. OOCC IV, 124; Preamble g; LG 12-13 ; PO 6, 8-9.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. GS 29-32, 40; ChL 8.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. OOCC I, 231; III, 156-157; IV, 8; VII, 2-3.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. OOCC IV, 138, 143, 231, 349; LG 32, 39-42.

- c) foster awareness of the mission entrusted to them by God and support them in their readiness and ability to carry out the apostolate together;
- d) render accessible the apostolic spirituality which is our inheritance;
- e) strengthen a commitment to the *ad gentes* missions.

**15.** The Union, with all Christians,<sup>17</sup> wishes to:

- a) implore God's blessing on the work of evangelization through prayer, sacrifice and good works<sup>18</sup>;
- b) help all persons to open themselves to the light of faith and to the saving power of Christ;
- c) vigorously support the growth of an ever deeper unity;
- d) prepare and enable as many (persons) as possible to be ready and capable of working together as messengers of the Gospel at the service of Infinite Love;
- e) bring the Christian message of salvation to all those who have not yet heard it<sup>19</sup>;
- f) provide the resources necessary for the apostolic activities.

**16.** The Union, together with all persons of good will, living images of Charity in itself, (cf. Gen 1, 26)<sup>20</sup>, wishes to:

- a) participate reciprocally in charity – love;
- b) protect the values of human life and of the family<sup>21</sup>;
- c) help others in their needs<sup>22</sup>;
- d) commit itself to justice, solidarity, peace and the protection of creation<sup>23</sup>;
- e) encourage inter-religious dialogue<sup>24</sup>;
- f) promote the implementation of the preferential option for the poor and the excluded<sup>25</sup>, in combating the causes of poverty.

### Chapter 3 SPIRITUALITY

**17.** Charity lived as described by the Apostle Paul (cf. 1 Cor 13, 4-7; 2 Cor 5, 14), “forms the substantial constituent” of the Union<sup>26</sup>; therefore “all must be constantly animated by an authentic spirit of the most perfect love”<sup>27</sup>.

**18.** The Union is inserted into the dynamic process of the merciful love of the Holy Trinity: God gives himself to humankind and to all creatures in order to reconcile all things to himself and all things among themselves, thus bringing all of humanity and the entire creation to salvation and perfection in Christ (cf. Eph 1, 10; Col 1, 20). Like St. Vincent Pallotti the

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. OOCC I, 4-5; IV, 304; AA 27, 30; UR 2-12; AG 41.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. OOCC IV, 32, 119-141, 145-160, 262-265; V, 235-237; X, 198-199; Preamble e.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. OOCC I, 19-31; III, 176-177.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. OOCC IV, 308-311; NA 2-3; LG 36; AA 27.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. AA 27.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. AG 12; GS 27; UR 12.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. OOCC III, 54; IV, 319; GS 76-77, 82; LG 36.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. OOCC II, 541; IV, 126; AG 11; GS 92.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. AA 8.

<sup>26</sup> OOCC III, 137-138.

<sup>27</sup> OOCC I, 106.



members of the Union wholeheartedly allow themselves to be permeated by God's infinite love (cf. Mk 12, 30), they give themselves to a life of service and to fulfilling His will which is revealed to them above all through the Sacred Scriptures, the teaching of the Church and the signs of the times<sup>28</sup>.

- 19.** The specific spirituality of the Union is the following of Christ, Apostle of the Eternal Father. In faith and in charity the members of the Union are determined to remain united with the crucified and risen Christ ever present among them (cf. Mt 18, 20); they strive to imitate his love for the Father and for all persons, seeking to live his life-style and apostolate as perfectly as possible<sup>29</sup>.
- 20.** The members of the Union in communion with Mary, Queen of Apostles, commit themselves to prepare the way to Christ in the hearts of persons. Like the Apostles in the Cenacle they unite with her in prayer asking for the strength of the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 1,13-14)<sup>30</sup>, to enable them to receive and to give the love that renews all things (cf. Ps 104, 30)<sup>31</sup>.
- 21.** St. Vincent Pallotti founded the Union to serve the Church, which continues the mission of Christ on earth and is a sign and instrument of the universal unity that God will bring to completion. Therefore, the members of the Union are committed to remaining in communion with the Pope and the Bishops<sup>32</sup>.
- 22.** The members live a unity that is founded on evangelical love and, wherever they are they form groups that have an apostolic spirit and are open to collaboration among themselves and with all persons (cf. Jn 13,34-35; 15,12; 17,21)<sup>33</sup>.
- 23.** The members of the Union, in order to deepen and preserve communion with God and with each other<sup>34</sup> in following Jesus Christ as St. Vincent Pallotti did:
  - a) study, meditate on and share Sacred Scripture as their source of inspiration<sup>35</sup>;
  - b) make the celebration of the Eucharist the centre of their lives<sup>36</sup>;
  - c) are assiduous in personal and community prayer<sup>37</sup>;
  - d) share reciprocally their experiences of life and of faith<sup>38</sup>;
  - e) live forgiveness and reconciliation as a pathway to permanent conversion<sup>39</sup>.
- 24.** The members of the Union, aware that all persons are called to holiness and to the apostolate and that there are a multiplicity of ways and of degrees in responding to the call of God<sup>40</sup>, ask, through prayer, for the strength to<sup>41</sup>:

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<sup>28</sup> Cf. Preamble a-b, f.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. OOCC III, 34-39, 142-143; IV, 126-129; Preamble j; AA 1-3.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. OOCC X, 86-87.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. OOCC I, 90, 95; II, 163-164; III, 97-98; IV, 22, 43; LG 59.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. OOCC I, 1, 4-6, 17, 43, 45-46, 56; III, 17, 134-135, 185-186, 197-198; IV, 408; Preamble f.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. OOCC II, 290; III, 135-136, 142-143, 151-154; IV, 110, 131-132, 171-176, 414-415; Preamble c.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. ChL 18-20.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. OOCC II, 73, 82, 347; III, 438; X, 552-553.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. OOCC II, 66-67; III, 99; AA 3; SC 26.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. OOCC I, 196-198.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. OOCC IX, 288.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. OOCC III, 236; IV, 286-287, 402.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. OOCC III, 142-143; IV, 145-160; AG 10, 12; AA 1.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. UR 8.

- a) live the spirituality of communion<sup>42</sup>;
- b) be open to dialogue<sup>43</sup>;
- c) collaborate together with all persons of good will<sup>44</sup>;
- d) trust that God knows how to turn all things to good even when our efforts seem to fail;
- e) live in faith the trials and hardships of daily life and so associate themselves with the paschal mystery of Christ<sup>45</sup>.

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<sup>42</sup> Cf. NMI no. 43.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. UR 2-4.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Preamble e; GS 30; UR 12; NA 3.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. C.I.C, c. 839 §1.

## PART II MEMBERS

### Chapter 1 PRINCIPLES OF MEMBERSHIP

- 25.** The members of the Union, animated by the charism of St. Vincent Pallotti consciously commit themselves to the universal apostolate of the Church<sup>46</sup> in every place, with all appropriate means and in collaboration with all people of good will<sup>47</sup>.
- 26.** To be a member of the Union one is required:
- a) to live out one's baptism as a spiritual and apostolic vocation in conformity with the principles of the Catholic faith<sup>48</sup>;
  - b) to commit oneself untiringly to fostering faith, charity, a spirit of communion and of collaboration in the service of the Local Church according to one's life situation;
  - c) to be acquainted with the person and the work of St. Vincent Pallotti and to be guided by his spirituality;
  - d) to correspond to the spirit that animates the Union (cf. arts. 17-24, 41-45);
  - e) to participate in the life and the apostolate of the Union according to one's state in life and one's possibilities;
  - f) to be eighteen years of age;
  - g) to be formally admitted (to the Union) and therefore to have received a mandate to fulfil the charism of the Union which the Church has made her own.
- The National Coordination Councils will provide gradual formation programmes for those persons who are younger than eighteen years of age, in preparation for formal membership of the Union of Catholic Apostolate.
- 27.** One can be a member of the Union in one of two ways: as an individual member (cf. arts. 31-33) or as a member of a community of the Union (cf. arts. 34-37)<sup>49</sup>.
- 28.** Admission to the Union requires an appropriate formation in accordance with the provisions of these Statutes (cf. arts. 41-45).
- 29.** All the members of the Union participate in the annual renewal of the Act of Apostolic Commitment (cf. art. 32) on the date designated by the National Coordination Council.
- 30.** The following persons may participate as collaborators of the spirit, the life or in the initiatives of the Union, in accordance with the norms of the Catholic Church:
- a) Christians (cf. arts. 53-54);
  - b) believers of other religions (cf. art. 55);
  - c) other persons of good will (cf. art. 56).

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<sup>46</sup> Cf. OCCC IV, 144-157, 264-281 (1836), 348-350 (1837), 429, 432-444 (1838); III, 139-143, 210.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. OCCC III, 139-150; IV, 144, 430-431; X, 198-199; LG 13-15, AA 23.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. CIC, c. 316.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. OCCC IV, 265-266; Preamble g.

## **Chapter 2**

### **INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS**

- 31.** Individual members are those persons formally admitted to the Union by the competent National Coordination Council and who are not members of a community of the Union.
- 32.** Formal admission to the Union implies a specific act of commitment to the universal apostolate of the Union (cf. art. 25)<sup>50</sup>, the contents of which are specified by the General Coordination Council.  
The admission is registered in a National archive and is communicated to the General Coordination Council<sup>51</sup>.
- 33.** The individual members collaborate with the nearest Local Coordination Council in order to participate in the life and apostolate of the Union, to grow in their spiritual life and for personal formation. In the pursuit of these objectives they may also associate with each other.

## **Chapter 3**

### **MEMBERS OF A COMMUNITY OF THE UNION**

- 34.** The communities of the Union are those founded by St. Vincent Pallotti (cf. art. 35) or those which were subsequently admitted to it (cf. arts. 36-37).
- 35.** The following communities were founded by St. Vincent Pallotti in the Union and for it:  
- the Society of the Catholic Apostolate,  
- the Congregation of the Sisters of the Catholic Apostolate,  
- and the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of the Catholic Apostolate.  
The members of these communities, which are integral parts of the Union, are responsible for ensuring the unity and apostolic effectiveness of the entire Union<sup>51</sup>.
- 36.** There are other communities which were formed later and specifically characterized by the Pallottine charism and they were subsequently admitted to the Union according to the existing norms for the life of the Union at that time.  
The members of these communities dedicate themselves either totally to the fulfilment of the tasks of the Union or as their state of life and circumstances permits<sup>52</sup>.
- 37.** Communities which are born of Pallottine inspiration or which subsequently identify themselves with the spirit and the mission of St. Vincent Pallotti, may be admitted<sup>53</sup> to the Union by the General Coordination Council if they are of pontifical right or International in nature (cf. art. 78f), and by the National Coordination Councils in all other cases (cf. art. 72). The Pontifical Council for the Laity is to be informed of the admission (cf. arts. 72 & 78f). Admission to the Union does not modify the juridical nature of the community (cf. CIC, cc. 215, 298-329, 573-746), however, its members participate in the apostolate of the Union.

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<sup>50</sup> Cf. OOCC II, 303-304 footnote 1.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Preamble i.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Preamble g.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. OOCC III, 102; V, 359; VII, 23-24; IX, 357-370; Preamble g.

- 38.** The persons who join a community of the Union (cf. art. 34), in the manner prescribed by the regulations of the community itself, are admitted *a iure* to the Union<sup>54</sup>.
- 39.** Only those persons who satisfy the conditions required for membership (of the Union) may be admitted to a community of the Union (cf. art. 26).  
The communities of the Union are to inform the National Coordination Councils of the admission of new members.
- 40.** In the Union all the communities are autonomous and their members are subject to their own regulations, in accordance with the provisions of these Statutes (cf. art. 10)<sup>55</sup>.

#### **Chapter 4 FORMATION**

- 41.** The nature of the life and the apostolate of the Union require comprehensive initial and on-going formation for all the members because they participate in the mission of Jesus in the Church and in the world.  
Given the mission of the Union (cf. arts. 12-16), the ability of members to collaborate with God and with all persons of good will is to be considered a priority.
- 42.** Each member, in order to live fully their vocation in the Union and to better serve the Church and all of humanity, is responsible for personal formation (cf. art. 48a) and is obliged to avail of all the opportunities offered for this objective within or outside of the Union.
- 43.** The task of providing initial and on-going formation for its own members lies primarily with the communities of the Union.  
The communities avail of all the opportunities offered for formation within or outside of the Union.
- 44.** The General Coordination Council establishes the fundamental common principles of formation<sup>56</sup> for the entire Union, establishes guide-lines for it and defines its objectives<sup>57</sup>.
- 45.** The National Coordination Councils are entrusted with the following responsibilities for formation, within their area of jurisdiction:
- a) the implementation of the fundamental principles of formation established by the General Coordination Council;
  - b) the formulation of methodological guide-lines, and of programmes of initial and on-going formation;
  - c) responsibility for the initial and on-going formation of the individual members in collaboration with the Local Coordination Councils (cf. art. 71c).

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<sup>54</sup> Cf. OOCC I, 3; Preamble g.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Preamble h.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. AA 30-32.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Preamble h.

## Chapter 5 RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS

- 46.** The charism of the Union, the ecclesial expression of the original charism entrusted to St. Vincent Pallotti, is simultaneously – like the Church herself<sup>58</sup> - a visible and invisible entity. Those persons who, moved by the love of Christ, join the family of the Union, associate themselves with it both personally and spiritually and become part of its visible structure. Following on from this, each member enjoys:
- a) the fundamental right to participate personally in the common responsibility for the Union;
  - b) the fundamental obligation to actively integrate oneself in all community expressions of life and of apostolate of the Union, according to one's state and circumstances of life.
- 47.** In the Union, all the members enjoy the same rights and obligations, unless otherwise determined by these Statutes.
- 48.** Generally the obligations of the members are simultaneously their rights, and at the same time they are the obligations and the rights of the Union itself<sup>59</sup>. First and foremost this means that each member has the obligation to:
- a) be responsible for the development of their human, spiritual and professional abilities in order to respond, in the Union, to the apostolic challenges of the Church (cf. art. 42);
  - b) be actively united to their own community and/or to the Local Coordination Council;
  - c) foster, according to one's possibilities, the apostolic vocation of all persons;
  - d) support the apostolic activities of the Union and of the Local Church, in their own state and circumstances of life;
  - e) commit themselves to the spreading of the Union;
  - f) be ready to assume unselfishly (cf. Phil 2,4; 1 Cor 13,5)<sup>60</sup> positions of responsibility in the Union and in the Local Church;
  - g) collaborate in the acquisition of the material goods necessary for the apostolate of the Union (cf. art. 101);
  - h) participate in the annual renewal of the Act of Commitment to the universal apostolate of the Union (cf. art. 29).
- 49.** All the members participate in the spiritual benefits of the Union<sup>61</sup>.

## Chapter 6 DEPARTURE FROM THE UNION

- 50.** Individual members (cf. art. 31), members of a community of the Union (cf. art. 38) and these same communities (cf. art. 34) cease to be part of the Union by voluntary resignation<sup>62</sup> or by the decision of the competent authority<sup>63</sup>.

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<sup>58</sup> LG 4, 8, 15.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. CIC, cc. 208-223.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. OOCC IV, 149, 398, 436.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. OOCC III, 220; IV, 157-158; V, 257-258; CIC cc. 306, 1170.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. CIC, cc. 304 §1, 684-685, 688, 691-693, 726-728, 730, 742, 744.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. arts. 74 & 78f; CIC, cc. 306, 308, 316 §1, 320 §1, 326 §1, 689 §§ 1-2, 694-703, 729, 742, 746.

With the exit of a community from the Union the membership of all its members in the Union is also terminated.

The General Coordination Council establishes the procedural norms for exiting from the Union.

- 51.** Exclusion from the Union must be preceded by at least one warning with a formal invitation to desist from the attitude in dispute.

Civil authority does not have any competence in the matter of exiting from the Union.

The cases of exclusion are always subject to all rights of defence and of appeal to the competent higher authority of the Union, or, in accordance with the norms of Canon Law, to the competent ecclesiastical authorities.

- 52.** Individual members, members of a community of the Union and communities themselves which have exited from the Union, may be re-admitted to membership if they request it and if the requisites (for membership) prescribed in these Statutes, are present (cf. arts. 26, 32, 37 & 38).

**PART III**  
**COLLABORATORS OF THE UNION**

- 53.** Catholic faithful who, while not assuming particular commitments in the Union, want to share, in some manner, in its spirit and participate in its initiatives, may be collaborators of the Union.
- 54.** Non-Catholic Christians, who are attracted by the Union, may also be its collaborators, sharing its spirit and working for its objectives in so far as the diversity of their faith permits. The Union, in its relationships with Christians of other Churches and of ecclesial communities, and in all its ecumenical activities, will act according to the norms of the Catholic Church on ecumenical dialogue.
- 55.** Believers of non-Christian religions who share the spiritual identity of the Union or any of its distinctive characteristics, or who feel drawn by it and who live according to its spirit in some manner, may also be its collaborators.  
The Union, in its relationships with non-Christian believers, will act according to the norms of the Catholic Church on inter-religious dialogue.
- 56.** Persons of good will who do not have a religious faith but who value the Union for its spirituality, or for any of its characteristics and who wish, as far as is possible for them, to share its objectives, may also be its collaborators.  
The Union, in its relationships with such persons, will act according to the norms of the Catholic Church on collaboration in the promotion of human and Christian values with persons of good will.
- 57.** The National Coordination Council establishes, in its Regulations, the manner of every form of collaboration (cf. art. 71i).



**PART IV**  
**ORGANIZATION OF THE UNION**

**Chapter 1**  
**STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS**

- 58.** The Union is an “auxiliary corps of the Church”<sup>64</sup>, which, in its activities, takes into account the needs of the Local Churches and integrates itself in different socio-cultural contexts by means of an open and flexible structure<sup>65</sup>.
- 59.** The entities at the service of the Union are the Local Coordination Councils (cf. arts. 60-64), the National Coordination Councils (cf. arts. 65-76), the General Coordination Council with its General Secretariat (cf. arts. 77-90, 97-99), the General Assembly (cf. arts. 91-96) and the General Congress (cf. art. 100).

**Chapter 2**  
**LOCAL COORDINATION COUNCILS**

- 60.** The Local Coordination Councils<sup>66</sup> are centres which animate gatherings, prayer, formation and collaboration in order to sustain the spirituality common to the members and to foster diverse apostolic initiatives.
- 61.** As indicated in the previous article, the Local Coordination Councils, in communion with the Pastors of the Local Church and supported by the National Coordination Council have, first of all, the task of:
- a) leading to unity all the Pallottine entities present in a given territory or pastoral context, in order to fulfil the mission of the Union, respecting and appreciating, for mutual enrichment, the singularity of the communities which are part of it;
  - b) being Cenacles, open to the Holy Spirit and to the signs of the times, in a continuous discernment of the local apostolic priorities<sup>67</sup>;
  - c) providing for, in cooperation with the National Coordination Council (cf. art. 71c), the specific formation of the individual members (cf. art. 33) and supporting the on-going formation of all the members;
  - d) helping the Local Church by accompanying and animating its apostolic initiatives<sup>68</sup>;
  - e) using all possible and necessary means in order to fulfil the universal apostolate;
  - f) making the Union known to all persons and inviting them to share the experience of life in the Union;
  - g) proposing, in cooperation with the National Coordination Council, initiatives in order to facilitate the full integration of the individual members who are not associated with each other (cf. art. 33), into the life and apostolate of the Union.

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<sup>64</sup> OOCC I, 6.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Preamble f.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. AA 10.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. OOCC I, 18-19.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. OOCC III, 2, 9.

- 62.** The Local Coordination Councils are formed by representatives of the communities of the Union (cf. arts. 34-37) and of the individual members (cf. art. 31), in accordance with the criteria established by the competent National Coordination Council. Representatives of the collaborators may participate in the meetings of the Councils (cf. art. 30) as experts or as observers but without voting rights (cf. arts. 26g & 71i).  
Before decisions are taken regarding the collaborators their opinion is sought in the form that is most appropriate.
- 63.** The National Coordination Council establishes the criteria for the internal organization of the Local Coordination Councils.
- 64.** The communities of the Union and the groupings of individual members (cf. art. 33), present in a given territory or in a pastoral context, fulfil the tasks set out in articles 60 and 61, until the Local Coordination Councils are instituted.

### **Chapter 3**

#### **NATIONAL COORDINATION COUNCILS**

- 65.** Every National Coordination Council<sup>69</sup> has jurisdiction for the territory of the respective Episcopal Conference.
- 66.** In accordance with the norms contained in their own Regulations, the National Coordination Councils are formed by representatives of the communities of the Union and of representatives of the Local Coordination Councils.  
Representatives of the communities founded by St. Vincent Pallotti (cf. art. 35) elected or nominated according to the norms of their internal regulations, if they are present in a given territory, are *a iure* members of the National Coordination Councils.  
The establishment of a National Coordination Council and every new composition of it require the approval of the General Coordination Council.
- 67.** The members of every National Coordination Council elect from within the Council a President and a Vice-President who acts in his/her stead. Their mandate is for three years and they may be re-elected consecutively only for a second three year term.  
The election of the President and of the Vice-President must be confirmed by the General Coordination Council.
- 68.** It is the duty of the President to:
- a) convoke and chair the meetings of the National Coordination Council;
  - b) promote the Union within the territory of the Episcopal Conference, represent the Union and act in its name in accordance with the mandate received from the President of the General Coordination Council (cf. art. 84);
  - c) consolidate the relationship with the General Coordination Council and maintain good relations with the Pastors of the Church.

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<sup>69</sup> Cf. OCCC I, 4, 388; IV, 160-164, 444-445; V, 47-48, 260-261.

- 69.** The members of the National Coordination Councils meet at least once a year to share experiences of life and of faith, and to promote the spirituality and common apostolic initiatives of the Union.
- 70.** Regarding the tasks entrusted to each National Coordination Council all its members have equal responsibility and equal rights, subject to the provisions of art. 68.  
The National Coordination Council takes decisions according to the provisions of art. 75 and in conformity with art. 88 §§1-3, unless their regulations prescribe otherwise.  
Representatives of the collaborators may participate in the meetings of the National Coordination Council as experts or observers but without voting rights.  
Before decisions are taken regarding the collaborators their opinion is sought in the form that is most appropriate.
- 71.** The National Coordination Councils, in communion with the Local Church, in addition to the tasks set out in arts. 60 & 61, have the task of:
- a) finding the most appropriate ways of making the Union known in the Church by inviting persons to share the experience of life in the Union;
  - b) fostering collaboration, the sharing of experiences of life and communication between the communities of the Union and its individual members, and also with the General Secretariat and the other Councils<sup>70</sup>;
  - c) facilitating opportunities for, and offering resources for the initial and on-going formation of the members of the Union, according to the criteria established by the General Coordination Council (cf. arts. 44-45) and in collaboration with the Local Coordination Councils;
  - d) being at the service of the various entities of the Union, facilitating the establishment of Local Coordination Councils and supporting their commitment in the apostolate;
  - e) seeking the financial resources to ensure the realization of the aims of the Union within the territory of the National Episcopal Conference and in the entire world;
  - f) constituting for the Union, with the consensus of the General Coordination Council, legal entities in conformity with the civil legislation of the country in which it operates (cf. art. 106), and making provision for the regulation of their activities in order that they not be in conflict with the norms of Canon Law and of these Statutes (cf. art. 105 §2);
  - g) appointing the National Bursar who, under the supervision and guidance of the General Bursar, can administer the material goods, which have been entrusted in use and in administration by the President, within the territory of the Episcopal Conference;
  - h) appointing a Secretary and constituting under his/her direction and according to the needs of the National Coordination Council, a Secretariat which attends to the preparation of the work of the Council, the implementation of its decisions and ensures its operational continuity;
  - i) regulating the relationship with the collaborators of the Union in accordance with Ecclesiastical norms (cf. arts. 30 & 53-56).
- 72.** The National Coordination Councils formally admit the individual members and the communities to the Union in accordance with the norms of these Statutes and the criteria established by the General Coordination Council (cf. arts. 31-32 & 37).  
The consent of the General Coordination Council is required for the admission of a community and it is to be informed of the incorporation.

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<sup>70</sup> Cf. Preamble c.

- 73.** To be admitted to the Union, the communities must:
- a) satisfy in their statutes the conditions required for membership of the Union, including being in harmony with the spirit and the mission of the Union (cf. art. 26a-f);
  - b) inform the Local Ordinary of the request for admission.
- 74.** It appertains to the National Coordination Councils to accept the resignation of individual members and of communities from the Union or to revoke membership of it, in accordance with these Statutes and the criteria established by the General Coordination Council (cf. arts. 50-51).
- 75.** Each National Coordination Council formulates its regulations in accordance with these Statutes and taking account of, the specific reality of the country in which it is based, and requests its approval by the General Coordination Council.  
The regulations must also establish:
- a) the *quorum* and the other conditions necessary for elections and for decisions that are binding (cf. art. 70 §2);
  - b) the norms for the constitution of the Local Coordination Councils, and their activities, as well as the norms governing the relationship between them and with the National Coordination Council;
  - c) that for important decisions that cannot be postponed to the next meeting of the National Coordination Council the President can consult its members on it and, if necessary, request their vote on it by fax and/or letter.
- 76.** The constitution of Regional Coordination Councils and supranational Councils instead of National Councils or together with them is permitted for particular socio-cultural contexts or for linguistic areas or for extensive National territories (cf. art. 58). The constitution of such councils must be approved by the General Coordination Council.

#### **Chapter 4**

#### **GENERAL COORDINATION COUNCIL**

- 77.** The General Coordination Council<sup>71</sup>, which has its Headquarters in Rome, is the coordinating body of the entire Union, it formulates its own regulations.
- 78.** The General Coordination Council conscious of the plurality of vocations and of the ecclesial experiences of the members and engaging in spiritual discernment, attentively studies the needs of the universal Church and the actuality of the world, in order to:
- a) be a reference point of communion for the entire Union and ensure its internal unity:
    - in gathering and sharing information regarding the developments, the experiences, the initiatives and the innovations, or, the suggestions from within (the Union);
    - in committing itself to revitalizing the common Pallottine spirituality among all the members<sup>72</sup>;
    - in promoting meetings for the members from different expressions (of the Union);
    - by formulating the fundamental unifying principles of formation (cf. art. 44);

<sup>71</sup> Cf. OOCC III, 4, 19-20, 56-58; IV, 160-166, 444-445; Preamble, h.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. OOCC IV 393, 399.

- b) increase the apostolic effectiveness of the Union:
  - in keeping alive its willingness to serve the Church and humanity;
  - by encouraging and guiding the collaboration between the communities and the individual members who are working in a given area or in specific projects<sup>73</sup>;
- c) stimulate and support the activities of the Local Coordination Councils;
- d) officially recognize the constitution of the National Coordination Councils, approve their regulations (cf. art. 75) and confirm the election of the President and Vice-President (cf. art. 67);
- e) formulate criteria for the admission of communities to the Union;
- f) admit to the Union, Institutes of Consecrated Life of Pontifical Right, Societies of Apostolic Life of Pontifical Right and International associations of the faithful, accept their resignation or revoke their membership in accordance with articles 37 and 50§1, and in every instance inform the Pontifical Council for the Laity;
- g) designate the members of the General Secretariat (cf. art. 98 §1);
- h) designate three members and their substitutes to the General Assembly (cf. art. 92d);
- i) convoke the General Assembly, prepare the order of business, the agenda and the procedure to be followed for the election of the ten members of the General Coordination Council and their substitutes, all of these are to be approved by the General Assembly;
- j) convoke the General Congress, prepare its order of business and its agenda (cf. art. 100);
- k) designate, in accordance with its Regulations, the General Bursar and the International Finance Commission which assists him/her (cf. art. 111);
- l) formulate criteria for the administration of all the material goods of the Union and supervise this administration (cf. art. 112);
- m) approve the budget prepared by the General Bursar (cf. art. 113 §2), the acts of extraordinary administration of the goods of the Union (cf. art. 109 §2) and the annual financial report prepared by the Bursar to be presented to the Pontifical Council for the Laity (cf. art. 113 §3).

**79.** The General Coordination Council has power of decision only on the matters provided for by these Statutes. All other of its resolutions are subject to acceptance by the other bodies of the Union and by those responsible for the communities of the Union.

**80.** The General Coordination Council is composed of thirteen persons, of which:

- a) three *ex officio* members:
  - the Rector General of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate;
  - the Superior General of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Catholic Apostolate;
  - the Superior General of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of the Catholic Apostolate;
- b) ten elected members, representatives of the Union and elected for three years by the General Assembly (cf. art. 93), in accordance with the procedures formulated by the General Coordination Council and approved by the General Assembly (cf. art. 78i).

**81.** All the members of the General Coordination Council have the same responsibility and equal rights, while respecting arts. 83-85.

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<sup>73</sup> Cf. Preamble d.

- 82.** The President and the Vice President are elected from among the members of the Council. The term of office is three years and they may be re-elected consecutively for one more term only.  
The election of the President must be confirmed by the Pontifical Council for the Laity, which, for just cause, can also remove the President from office (cf. CIC, cc. 317, §1 & 318, §2).  
If the President defaults for any reason, the Vice President takes his/her place in office until the expiration of the triennium.  
The out-going President, or, if necessary, the Vice President, is responsible for the ordinary administration (of the Union) until the election of the new President is confirmed by the Pontifical Council for the Laity, and has a right to vote only if he/she is an elected member of the new Council.
- 83.** The person who assumes the presidency of the General Coordination Council is simultaneously the President of the entire Union and, as such, is its only Legal Representative. Specifically he/she has the task of:
- a) convoking and chairing the meetings of the Council;
  - b) representing the Council;
  - c) chairing the General Assembly and the General Congress;
  - d) making juridical transactions in the name of the entire Union.
- 84.** The President, with the consent of the General Coordination Council, can authorize persons to carry out the legal transactions provided for by Ecclesiastical or civil legislation.
- 85.** The President, with the consent of the General Coordination Council, entrusts to the juridic persons at the national level, and if necessary at the local level, the material goods of the Union which are present in the respective area of competence, in use and in administration, in part or in whole (cf. arts. 106-107).
- 86.** The General Coordination Council meets in ordinary session at least once a year. The date, the duration and the place of the meeting are established in the preceding meeting.  
The President arranges the meeting and prepares the agenda based on the proposals presented by the members of the Council, by the Presidents of the National Coordination Councils and on the relevant current topics in the life of the Union as indicated by the General Secretariat. The agenda is approved by the Council itself at the beginning of the session.
- 87.** The President may convoke an extraordinary meeting of the General Coordination Council if circumstances make it necessary or if at least seven of its members request it.
- 88.** The General Coordination Council can deliberate validly when two thirds of its members, that is nine persons, are present.  
For elections and decisions that are binding on the entire Union two thirds of the votes of the members of the Council, that is, nine votes in favour, are required, this is to ensure that such acts express the unity of the Union as widely as possible.  
For other matters an absolute majority of the votes of the persons entitled to vote, that is seven votes in favour, is required.

If the Rector General of the Society of the Catholic Apostolate, by virtue of his responsibility for the Pallottine charism, declares that he cannot approve a motion and indicates the reasons for this, resolution on it is suspended.

The matter may be discussed anew in the General Coordination Council after an adequate time of reflection and discernment.

If agreement is not reached in this manner, the mediation of the Pontifical Council for the Laity may be sought.

89. For important decisions that cannot be postponed, the President may request the vote, by fax and/or letter, of the members of the General Coordination Council, having previously consulted them.
90. Before decisions are taken regarding the collaborators their opinion is sought in the form that is most appropriate.

## **Chapter 5**

### **GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

91. The General Assembly is the highest body of consultation and decision making in the Union. It can be ordinary or extraordinary; it is convoked by the General Coordination Council (cf. art. 78i) and is chaired by its President (cf. art. 83c).  
The General Assembly approves, as presented by the General Coordination Council, the procedural norms to regulate it and the Assembly proceedings, the order of business and the agenda (cf. art. 78i).
92. The following participate in the General Assembly with a deliberative vote:
  - a) the members of the General Coordination Council (cf. art. 80) or, if unable, their substitutes (cf. art. 93 §2);
  - b) the General Secretary of the Union;
  - c) the Presidents of the National Coordination Councils or, if unable, the Vice Presidents (cf. art. 67);
  - d) the members or, if unable, their substitutes, designated by the General Coordination Council according to the criteria established by the General Assembly (itself) (cf. art. 78h)<sup>74</sup>.
93. The General Assembly discusses and decides on matters relating to the internal life and apostolate of the Union, including the revision of the General Statutes (cf. art. 115).  
The ordinary General Assembly elects the ten members of the General Coordination Council and their substitutes (cf. art. 80b).
94. The General Assembly can deliberate validly with the presence of two thirds of its members (cf. art. 92).  
For elections and decisions that are binding on the entire Union two thirds of the votes of the members of the General Assembly are required (cf. art. 92). Following two inconclusive votes an absolute majority<sup>75</sup> of the votes of the members is sufficient (cf. art. 92).

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<sup>74</sup> Cf. OOCC IV, 162-166.

<sup>75</sup> An absolute majority is understood as half plus one of all the members with a deliberative vote in the General Assembly.

A vote in the elections, to be valid, must be free, secret, certain, absolute and determined (CIC, c. 172).

For decisions on other matters an absolute majority of the votes of the members of the General Assembly is required (cf. art. 92).

The prescriptions of art. 88 §§ 4-6, are also applicable to the General Assembly.

The decisions taken by the General Assembly must be communicated to the parties concerned in a verifiable manner, and when the approval of the Pontifical Council for the Laity is not necessary (cf. art. 115), they take effect from the term established by the Assembly.

95. The ordinary General Assembly is convoked every three years.  
An extraordinary General Assembly may be convoked when circumstances render it necessary or when requested by an absolute majority of the National Coordination Councils.
96. The General Assembly establishes the date in which the newly-elected General Coordination Council, which takes office immediately, elects its President. The prescriptions of art. 82 §4 are valid until the election is confirmed by the Pontifical Council for the Laity.

## **Chapter 6 GENERAL SECRETARIAT**

97. The General Secretariat of the Union, with Headquarters in Rome and under the direction of the General Secretary, is a permanent and auxiliary structure of the General Coordination Council; it ensures the operational continuity of the meetings of the Council and guarantees the ordinary administration of the Union. It has its own Regulations which are approved by the Council itself.
98. The General Coordination Council, in its Regulations, establishes the tasks of the General Secretariat, the procedure to be followed in the designation of the General Secretary and of the members of the Secretariat, as well as the duration of their mandate.  
In accordance with the Regulations of the General Coordination Council, the General Secretary also acts as Secretary of the Council, directs and coordinates the work of the General Secretariat and ensures its permanent operation.
99. The General Secretariat, in collaboration with and in the name of the President, deals with the matters that cannot be postponed and takes decisions on the urgent matters that cannot be deferred to the next meeting of the Council.  
The positions taken by and the decisions of the General Secretariat must be ratified by the General Coordination Council (cf. art. 89).

## **Chapter 7 GENERAL CONGRESS**

100. A General Congress<sup>76</sup> is convoked at least once every six years, for reflection, an exchange of opinions, experiences and proposals, and for a more effective fostering of the universal

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<sup>76</sup> Cf. AA 32.



apostolate. Participation in the Congress is open to representatives of the members and of the collaborators of the Union (cf. arts. 27 & 30)<sup>77</sup>, according to the criteria established by the General Coordination Council.

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<sup>77</sup> Cf. AA 32; UR 4, 8-9.

## **Chapter 8**

### **THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE MATERIAL GOODS OF THE UNION**

- 101.** The Union of Catholic Apostolate, as an ecclesiastical juridic person, is capable of acquiring, retaining, administering and alienating temporal goods, in accordance with the norms of the Code of Canon Law and of these Statutes.  
The only criterion for the acquisition and administration of the material goods of the Union is to provide for the apostolic needs<sup>78</sup>.
- 102.** The Union may acquire temporal goods, in the manner permitted by the law, mainly from:
- a) donations;
  - b) offerings;
  - c) contributions of the members.
- 103.** In the Union, both the communities and the individual members (cf. art. 27), maintain full autonomy concerning ownership of goods and their administration, in accordance with the Code of Canon Law and their own internal regulations.
- 104.** The Union of Catholic Apostolate, as an International public association (cf. art. 8) is the owner of all the temporal goods acquired for it, at local, National or International level.
- 105.** The material goods of the Union of Catholic Apostolate are ecclesiastical goods and, at every level of the Union, are administered according to Canon Law and their own statutes (cf. CIC, c. 1257 §1 in conjunction with cc. 1258-1310).  
The Regulations of the civil juridic persons of the Union must agree with Canon Law and these Statutes.
- 106.** The National Coordination Councils designate Bursars who are legal representatives of the juridic persons constituted in accordance with the civil legislation of each country (cf. art. 85); they are entrusted with the administration and use of the material goods of the Union in the territory of an Episcopal Conference by the President of the General Coordination Council.
- 107.** The material goods of the Union within the area of a Local Coordination Council, which are entrusted in administration and use by the President of the General Coordination Council with the consent of the National Coordination Council, are administered by designated Bursars who are legal representatives of the juridic persons constituted in accordance with the civil legislation of the country.
- 108.** Each National Coordination Council transfers an annual contribution to the General Coordination Council for its service in favour of the entire Union.
- 109.** To the ordinary administration belong:
- a) the maintenance, restoration, improvements to and development of the profitability of the stable patrimony;
  - b) all activities necessary for the effective use of the freely disposable property.

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<sup>78</sup> Cf. OCCC IV, 155.

To the extraordinary administration belong, for example, extraordinary alienations, borrowing, underwriting of loans, the acquisition of goods and of special furnishings.

- 110.** In accordance with CIC, c. 1292 §2, the valid alienation of goods, the value of which exceeds the maximum amount established by the Holy See, requires the permission of the Pontifical Council for the Laity.
- 111.** The General Coordination Council designates, for a three year term, the General Bursar and the members of the International Finance Commission, in accordance with what is established in its Regulations (cf. art. 78k).
- 112.** The General Coordination Council, with the cooperation of the General Bursar and the International Finance Commission, supports and supervises the activities of all the Bursars of the Union (cf. art. 78 l).
- 113.** The General Bursar, with the cooperation of the International Finance Commission, is also responsible for the administration of the material goods of the Union which have not been entrusted to the civil juridic persons at National and local levels (cf. art. 85).  
The General Bursar, with the approval of the annual budget by the General Coordination Council, is authorized in his area of competence to validly and legitimately effect all the transactions of ordinary and extraordinary administration.  
Moreover, he prepares annually the account of the entire administration of the material goods of the Union which will be presented to the Pontifical Council for the Laity (CIC, c. 319).
- 114.** The administration of material goods at a National or local level, entrusted to civil juridic persons (cf. art. 85), is the responsibility of the Bursar designated by the competent National or Local Coordination Council, in accordance with the provisions of art. 112.  
The national and local Bursars prepare an annual account of the administration of the material goods, for respectively, the General Coordination Council and the National Coordination Council.

**PART V**  
**REVISION OF THE STATUTES**

- 115.** Amendments to these Statutes may only be made by the General Assembly with a majority of two thirds of the members with a deliberative vote (cf. art. 92) having first sought and received the advice of the National Coordination Councils.  
The General Coordination Council establishes the procedure for such consultation.  
Every amendment to the Statutes must be approved by the Pontifical Council for the Laity (CIC, c. 314).

## APPENDIX

### ***Consignment of the Decree of Erection of the Union of Catholic Apostolate and the approval of the General Statutes, Vatican City, November 14, 2003***

#### **1. Address of the President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, His Excellency Archbishop Stanisław Ryłko**

First of all, I would like to extend a cordial welcome to Rev. Séamus Freeman, SAC, President of the General Coordination Council of the *Union of Catholic Apostolate* as well as to all of you, members of the Pallottine family here present.

The consignment of the decree of erection of an international association of the faithful and the approval of its statutes constitutes a most important moment in both the life of every ecclesial association and in that of the Pontifical Council for the Laity. With this act, the Apostolic See certifies the ecclesial authenticity of an association of the faithful that has as its aim the sanctification of its members and the edification of the Church. At the same time the faithful see their right to associate in order to promote a more perfect Christian life and to exercise their evangelisation activity in the entire world, confirmed by the Holy See.

I know full well that as spiritual sons and daughters of St. Vincent Pallotti, you hold dear the passage from the Gospel of St. John (Jn 15:1-17) we have just heard. With these words pronounced during the long discourse our Lord had with his apostles in the Cenacle in Jerusalem shortly before his Passion, Jesus entrusted the supreme law of love to his disciples for all times. In fact, the Lord is the first to bring to completion the “new commandment”, giving his life for all of us on the Cross.

By virtue of the vocation which we have received in the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation, as Christians we are called not only to become friends of God but also to introduce the persons whom we contact in our families, at work, in our neighbourhoods, etc., to such friendship with the Lord.

These sentiments forcefully re-echo in the life of Vincent Pallotti, a holy Roman priest who was a tireless apostle of the merciful love of God. Strengthened by his experience of divine love, with pastoral vigilance, St. Vincent Pallotti committed himself to developing a union of laity, priests and religious in a common search for holiness and the diffusion of the Gospel. He worked with great zeal to see that every Christian became conscious of the call to become a disciple, and at the same time, an apostle of Christ.

It is a great joy for the Pontifical Council for the Laity to grant the *Union of Catholic Apostolate* the institutional form most fitting to the charism St. Vincent Pallotti received, a form that permits the collaboration of all the components of the Church in bringing to completion the common project of progressing continually on the path of holiness and of making God known and loved.

The nearly two hundred years of the history of your association has brought copious fruits of holiness and apostolic endeavour to the Church. With today’s act, the Holy See intends to express a new manifestation of trust in the *Union of Catholic Apostolate* that could, at the same time, be a spur to your commitment to the Church of the future.

The decree of erection of the *Union of Catholic Apostolate* bears the date October 28<sup>th</sup> 2003, the day on which the Church celebrates the feast of Saints Simon and Jude Thaddeus, apostles. The General Statutes that will guide the life of the association are approved *ad experimentum* for an initial period of five years. Following this period, with the experience you will have acquired, you may ask the Dicastery for definitive approbation.

January 20<sup>th</sup> of last year marked the fortieth anniversary of the canonisation of St. Vincent Pallotti. While we give thanks to the Lord for the gift of this saint to His Church, we entrust ourselves to the intercession of your founder, whose mortal remains may be venerated under the main altar of the Church of San Salvatore in Onda, near Ponte Sisto, a short distance from here.

I am certain that in your on-going journey, you will never lack the support of the Virgin Mary, Queen of Apostles, the most perfect model for the apostolate of all the faithful. May God bless you.

## **2. Address of the President of the General Coordination Council of the Union of Catholic Apostolate, Fr. Séamus Freeman, SAC**

Your Excellency,  
President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity,  
Collaborators of Your Excellency  
Brothers and Sisters of the Union of Catholic Apostolate

The first word that comes from the depth of my heart on this day is Thanks!

First of all we give thanks to God, to the Holy See and to His Eminence Cardinal James Francis Stafford who followed our request with interest. He has been called to fulfil a new service in the Church and we wish him a serene and fruitful work.

Above all, wholeheartedly we thank His Excellency, Archbishop Stanisław Ryłko, for having followed with patience and interest the procedure of our Statutes. Thank you for your suggestions and, in particular, for the dialogue the Pontifical Council for the Laity established with us.

We also offer our very best wishes on the occasion of your appointment as President of this Pontifical Council for the Laity.

Thanks in particular to Fr. Miguel Delgado Galindo for his opportune advice and his deep interest in St Vincent Pallotti.

Today is a day of great joy for the Union of Catholic Apostolate, a long-awaited day since the entire Pallottine foundation chose to return to the foundational sources to rediscover, by means of a critical review of our history, the authentic roots of our charism.

Today, with this Decree and these Statutes, the mission and the aspirations that inspired St Vincent on the 9<sup>th</sup> January 1835 become officially part of the Church's current life and is now part of the "*spiritual patrimony of the entire Church*".

St Vincent Pallotti in his vision hoped for a general mobilization of evangelisation; he ardently wished that all Christians be authentic apostles, all, and everywhere, always and with all possible means, in order to realize Jesus Christ's apostolate for the "*greater glory of God and the eternal salvation of our neighbour*".

Let us listen to his words which are still so relevant. He foresaw "... *a pious Union perpetually in the Church of Jesus Christ as an evangelical trumpet, calling all, inviting all, rekindling zeal and charity in all the faithful of every state, situation and condition, in order that all, ...according to the various needs of the Church of Jesus Christ ... without any self-interest or ambition, availing of every temporal means, or at least by means of prayer, would effectively and constantly cooperate in all evangelical undertakings, and in the growth, defence and propagation of charity and of the catholic faith*" (cf. OCCC I, 4-5).

The soul, the motor and the "*essential constituent*" (OCCC III, 137-138) of all apostolic workers and of their endeavours and initiatives had to be "*the true spirit of the most perfect love*" (OCCC I, 106) - love according to chapter 13 of the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians. In fact, Pallotti writes: "*in those hearts where charity is not well formed, Jesus Christ is not to be found*" (OCCC I, 121).

St Vincent presented not only a new operative model. Rather, he saw the Church as a "*house and school of communion*". However, the theological and juridical guidelines of such a way of being Church were not clearly formulated until the time of the Second Vatican Council. Vincent Pallotti, his companions and the Pallottine family committed themselves to the realization of the

charism through the years, but a series of historical-ecclesial events restricted or hindered its implementation. The memory, however, was never lost and there were numerous initiatives to recover its fullness.

Today's approval of the Statutes, *ad experimentum* for five years, on the one hand gifts the Pallottine family with the revival, acknowledgement and full appropriation of the Founder's heritage. It is therefore a point of arrival. On the other hand, like all gifts from God, it marks the beginning of an arduous challenge, that is, to give fullness of life to the articles that compose the General Statutes. As of today the Pallottine family is beginning a time of work, experience and also sacrifice. We have to make wise use of this time.

We are aware that the Union is no longer an option. It is the fullness of the charism, the primary and fundamental expression of the charismatic project of St Vincent. We are now called to "*promote collaboration among all the faithful to an openness to new forms of evangelisation*" (Statutes, art. 12). Anyone who acts according to the ideals and the spirituality of St Vincent Pallotti must feel and act as an apostle, be in communion and collaborate with deep faith with all those who live, work or are inspired by the Founder, not only in new experiences but also in the initiatives that already exist.

"*You must be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect*" (Mt 5:48): Jesus exhorts us and shows us God's way of growth without limit. For St Vincent too: "*All those who are or will be in the pious Union... in order to live ever more the **most perfect imitation** of the life of Jesus Christ... it is necessary that throughout their whole life they earnestly attend, **with all possible fervour**, to the practice of all the virtues. The distinctive characteristic of the virtues is that of **constant ongoing progress**, of **continual growth** in holiness and evangelical perfection*" (cf. OCCC II, 57).

"*Most perfect imitation, all possible fervour, most perfect practice, always going forward and continually growing*": all these are expressions that demand of the family of St Vincent Pallotti not to stay still or take for granted the *talents* received from God. We must make the best use of them for ourselves and, in the name of the precept of charity, for our brothers, our sisters, our neighbours.

We are here today, representing ten countries, in the name of members of the Union of Catholic Apostolate from more than forty countries. With a grateful heart we welcome and accept the Decree of erection and the Statutes approved by the Church. We are happy and keen to put our charism at the service of the Church and her priorities with ever greater commitment,

We ask Mary, Queen of Apostles, our Founder St Vincent Pallotti and the blessed Pallottine martyrs to bless our efforts and to assist us in the challenges that await us.



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