

# DECREE

## ON THE FORM OF ORDINARY GOVERNMENT AND THE ELIGIBILITY OF SECULARIZED RELIGIOUS MEN FOR ECCLESIASTICAL OFFICES AND BENEFICES.

Experiments in forms of government have given rise to a number of problems and questions especially in regard to the personal authority of the Superior.

Furthermore, it has seemed opportune, at this time, to re-examine the prohibitions of Can. 612 affecting secularized religious men.

After preliminary study by Consultors, the Members of this Sacred Congregation, in the Plenary Assembly held on September 21 and 25, 1971, weighed carefully the following questions:

1. — Whether, contrary to the prescriptions of Can. 516, an exclusive and collegial form of ordinary government may be admitted for a whole religious institute, for a province, or for individual houses, in such a way that the Superior, if there is one, is merely an executive.
2. — Whether Can. 612 may be suspended so as to permit religious men who have been properly dispensed from their vows to be eligible for or to hold ecclesiastical offices or benefices without the special permission of the Holy See.

After due consideration, the aforesaid Assembly unanimously adopted the following decisions:

Answer to question n. 1: *Negative*-According to the mind of Vatican Council II (Deer. *Perfectae caritatis*, n. 14) and the Pontifical Exhortation *Evangelica testificatio*, n. 25, Superiors must have personal au-

thority, without prejudice to the practice of legitimate consultation and to the limits placed by common or particular law.

Answer to question n. 2: *Affirmative.*

His Holiness Pope Paul VI, in the Audience granted to the Secretary of this Sacred Congregation for Religious and for Secular Institutes on November 18, 1971, approved the conclusions of the Plenary Assembly.

By this present decree, the Sacred Congregation promulgates the above decisions and declares them immediately effective without the executory clause. They remain in force until superseded by the revised Code of Canon Law.

Given at Rome, February 2, 1972.

**I. Card. Antoniutti**  
*Prefect*

† **Agustine Mayer, O.S.B.**  
*Secretary*

Bishops, pastors of parishes, and other priests of both branches of the clergy should keep in mind that the right and duty to exercise the apostolate is common to all the faithful, both clergy and laity, and that the laity also have their proper roles in building up the Church.

*(Apostolicam Actuositatem, no. 25)*