# MOTU PROPRIO OF POPE PAUL VI

## "APOSTOLATUS PERAGENDI"

Restructuring of the Consilium de Laicis, in which it takes the name

# PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE LAITY

Different forms of the apostolate or "varieties of service" (cf. 1 Cor. 12, 5) that help to build up the Mystical Body of Christ, which is the Church, belong by full right also to the laity. The Second Vatican Ecumenical Council has taught this in our times, setting forth the traditional teaching on this matter in a new light. For the laity "live in the world, that is, in all and in each of the secular professions and occupations. They live in the ordinary conditions of life in the family and in society, from which the web of their existence is woven. They are called there by God so that by exercising their proper role and being led by the spirit of the Gospel they can work for the sanctification of the world from within, in the manner of leaven. In this way they can make Christ known to others, especially by the testimony of a life resplendent in faith, hope and charity" (Dogmatic Constitution Lumen Gentium, 31).

The present time clearly calls for a more earnest and more widespread apostolate on the part of the laity; indeed, "an indication of this manifold and pressing need is the evident work of the Holy Spirit in making the laity today ever more conscious of their own responsibility and inspiring them everywhere to serve Christ and the Church" (Decree Apostolicam Actuositatem, 1).

In response to these circumstances and to the exhortation of the Council (cf. ibid., 26) the Consilium de Laicis was set up in the Roman Curla by the Motu Proprio Catholicam Christi Ecclesiam

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of 6 January 1967. It must be remembered however that this Consilium was set up experimentally and temporarily so that practice and experience might suggest suitable changes (cf. AAS 59, 1967, p. 28).

We acknowledge that this Consilium has diligently fulfilled the tasks confided to it, by fostering, methodically organizing and coordinating the apostolate of the laity on the naional level and throughout the Church, by assisting the hierarchy and the laity with advice, by engaging in studies in this area, and by undertaking other initiatives.

The reasons for which this Council was set up have greatly increased, and the questions to be faced and resolved in this field of the Catholic apostolate have become much more serious and widespread. The experience obtained in these years has also supplied useful knowledge. We have therefore decided to give this institution of the Roman Curla, which can be counted among the outstanding fruits of the Second Vatican Council, a new, definite and higher form.

Hence, after mature consideration of the whole question and having sought the opinion of experts we decree and determine the following:

1

The Consilium de Laicis will henceforth be called the "Pontifical Council for the Laity".

II

This Council is headed and directed by a Cardinal President, who is assisted by a Presidential Committee composed of three Cardinals resident in Rome and the Secretary of the Council.

The Presidential Committee meets every two months and as often as the Cardinal President decides, in order to deal with more important questions.

The Cardinal President is assisted by a Secretary and an Undersecretary. It is the task of all the above-mentioned, according to the norm of law, to perform everything that requires the power of Order and jurisdiction.

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The members of this Pontifical Council are mostly lay people, selected from different parts of the world, and involved in different forms of the apostolate of the laity, with a suitable proportion between men and women. Among the members are also some Bishops and priests.

Unless particular circumstances sugest otherwise, the members are convoked once a year to a meeting with the Presidential Committee, under the chairmanship of the Cardinal President, assisted by the Secretary.

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The Council is assisted by Consultors distinguished for uprightness, knowledge and prudence. They shall be chosen so as to ensure a majority of lay people and a suitable proportion between men and women. The Secretarles of the Sacred Congregations for Bishops, for the Eastern Churches, for the Clergy, for Religious and Secular Institutes, and for the Evangelization of Peoples, and the Secretary of the Pontifical Commission Justice and Peace are added ex officio. It is recommended that one or more of the Consultors should be chosen from women bound to the consecrated life.

The Consultors form a group which is called the Consulta. Its purpose is to study in depth all questions to be decided by the Members of the Council and to perform faithfully the tasks entrusted to it by the Superiors.

The Consultors can be convoked all together or in smaller groups for some specific task, or for individual consultation.

The competence of the Pontifical Council for the Laity covers the apostolate of the lalty in the Church and the discipline of the laity as such.

In particular, the Pontifical Council has the tasks of:

1, encouraging the laity to participate in the Church's life and mission, both—and this is the principal way—as members of associations for the apostolate and as individual Christians;

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- 2. evaluating, guiding, and, if necessary, fostering initiatives regarding the apostolate of lay people in the various spheres of society, with due regard for the competence of other bodies of the Roman Curla in this matter:
  - 3. dealing with all questions concerning:
- international and national organizations of the lay apostolate, with due regard for the competence of the Secretariat of State or Papal Secretariat;
- Catholic societies for the promotion of the apostolate and the spiritual life and activity of the laity, without interference in the rights of the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples regarding societies fostering missionary cooperation exclusively;
- plous associations (i.e. arch-confraternities, confraternities, pious unions, sodalities of all kinds), in consultation with the Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes whenever it is a case of an association erected by a Religious Family or a Secular Institute;
- lay Third Orders, with regard only to questions concerning the activity of their apostolate, and thus without interference in the competence of the Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes for other questions;
- associations of both clerics and lay people, with due regard for the competence of the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy in the matter of the observance of the general laws of the Church (cf. the norms of the Apostolic Signatura);
- 4. fostering on its own initiative active participation by the laity in such fields as catechetics, liturgy, the sacraments, and education, in collaboration with the various Departments of the Roman Curia dealing with these matters;
- seeing that the Church's laws regarding the laity are strictly observed, and examining by administrative means disputes involving lay people;
- 6. in agreement with the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy, dealing with questions concerning Pastoral Councils, whether on the parish or diocesan level, in order to encourage lay people to take part in joint pastoral action.

#### VI

The Committee for the Family is attached to the Pontifical Council for the Laity, while keeping its own form and identity.

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The Cardinal President of the Pontifical Council for the Lalty presides over this Committee and in this matter he is assisted in a special way by the Secretary of the same Council.

The Cardinal shall give to one of the Officials of the Council for the Laity the charge of maintaining the ordinary contacts with the Committee for the Family.

We order that all that we have decreed by this Motu Proprio shall be regarded as established and ratifled any disposition to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given in Rome, at Saint Peter's, on the tenth day of December in the year 1976, the fourteenth of our Pontificate.

PAULUS PP.VI