

STATUTES OF THE APOSTOLIC UNION OF THE CLERGY

*REVISED BY THE INTERNATIONAL
ASSEMBLY OF OCTOBER 1976*

*and approved by the S. Congregation for the Clergy
on 1st of February 1977*

I. BASIC PRINCIPLES

1. The Apostolic Union groups together priests, Christ's ministers, who endeavour to help one another in the practice of their spiritual life and ministry (P. O. 13). Therefore its specific note is to foster priestly brotherhood as a help to apostolic life, i.e., a life of holiness and generosity to be pursued by mutual support in the 'presbyterium' (L. G. 28; P.O. 8).

2. In each local church the priests, united among themselves and with their bishop, the apostolic college and the Sovereign Pontiff, are a living sign of Christ, Head and Shepherd of the Church, at the service of God's people. Therefore they endeavor to be Christ-like in their spiritual and pastoral life. The Apostolic Union is meant to help them to live in this spirit and to foster it by aiding one another.

3. An active loyalty towards the Roman Pontiff, the bond of unity in the universal Church, and towards the episcopal body, is specially necessary to priests in order that they may be responsible and authentic collaborators of the order of bishops, both in the local and the universal church. Roman Pontifical and L. G. 28).

4. The diocesan priest is especially called to minister in a local church, whose first shepherd and sign of unity is the bishop. The members of the Apostolic Union will highly esteem the charism and ministry of the bishop and they will be eager to foster sacramental brotherhood and active collaboration with him and all priests (P. O. 8) in true and loyal dialogue based on mutual trust.

5. Sent to serve the people of God in the name of Christ, its Head, priests will be united with the people and they will make their needs their own; they will work together with lay people in apostolic service of the Church.

6. The Apostolic Union earnestly invites its members to live lives of pastoral charity according to these principles under the guidance of the Holy Spirit; to foster the same feelings that the

Heart of Jesus had towards his Father and towards men. They should also strive to imitate the Blessed Virgin Mary's humble fidelity and readiness to serve, in her union with Christ, Priests and Victim, in the work of redemption.

II. SPIRITUAL GUIDELINES

7. Members of the Apostolic Union wish to practise their pastoral charity in the spirit of the gospel beatitudes. They desire to attach themselves freely to Christ, and in Him, in spirit of union, ever to help one another.

8. In imitation of Christ, they will practise poverty. For example, they will keep careful personal accounts and show genuine hospitality to others. They will be ready to share what they have and willingly devote their time to others, showing due regard for each and every one. They will use things for the purpose for which they were intended.

9. The priests of the Apostolic Union will cherish their celibacy as a sign of, and incentive to, their complete attachment to Christ and their pastoral openness to others.

10. Obedience will be practised especially by accepting the directives of the diocesan authorities, particularly of the bishop, according to the mind of the Church.

11. Members of the A.U. will endeavour to nourish their spiritual life at the twofold table of the word of God and of the Eucharist, in union with all priest and for the service of men.

12. In this spirit they will faithfully pray the Liturgy of the Hours, when possible in common, give due time to mental prayer and the attentive reading of the word of God. According to their inclination and opportunity, they will make a review of life in the light of the gospel.

13. Since the Eucharist builds up and unites the Church they will celebrate it even when the faithful are not present, and find in it the Christ-given strength which they need for their apostolic mission. They will regard it as the centre of their priestly life and of the whole Church.

14. They will willingly spend time adoring and contemplating Christ present in his love in the Eucharist.

15. They will examine their conscience in the light of the gospel and frequently have recourse to the sacrament of reconciliation. They will give due importance to spiritual direction. Every year they will make a spiritual retreat.

16. Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Christ the Priest, will help them to lead their priestly life in a priest of filial trust.

17. Since brotherly charity and mutual help in the priestly life are the principal aim of our association, members will regularly take active part in the gatherings of the A. U., as well as in the various priestly meetings which concern them. Visiting their brother-priests, especially those most in need, will be a specially cherished form of this help.

18. Amid their pastoral duties they will set aside adequate time for study and needed relaxation.

19. Every year they will offer one Mass for the deceased members of the Union.

20. The national unions may define more precisely these guidelines for their members, especially as regards the frequency of the Union meetings. They may also devise a suitable method of self-examination on one's fidelity to all obligations.

III. SERVICES

21. In a spirit of brotherly charity and helpfulness, the A. U. offers its services, not only to the diocesan 'presbyterium', but also to the clergy at the national and even international level. Special attention should always be paid to the present-day needs and conditions of priests (P.O. 8).

22. It fosters especially the priest's interior life, and also the readiness to collaborate in common tasks in order faithfully to assist the hierarchy (L. G. 41; P.O. 13).

23. Above all it endeavours to promote and support its members' personal continued training.

24. Within the limits of its resources and opportunities, it promotes:

- spiritual retreats and recollection;
- priests' doctrinal, ascetical and pastoral updating;
- the training of promoters of priestly spirituality;
- the publication and spread of papers and other publications dealing with spiritual topics;
- help for priests in need (P.O. 18, 19; O.T. 22; Ch.D. 16).

25. It promotes and encourages the practice and experience of community life.

26. It offers its help to priestly, religious or secular institutes, as well as to lay associations which in a special manner show their concern for the life and ministry of priests.

IV. ORGANIZATION

27. The A. U. is a federation of local groups of priests, which unite in order to collaborate with the various organizations in the local church.

A. Local Organization

28. A local group of the A. U. is attached to a particular church, and it is at the service of the "presbyterium". It provides opportunities for prayer in common, mutual help and friendship.

29. Meetings take place regularly, as far as possible; they are times of prayer, sharing and reflection.

30. The group is organized according to its means, and it chooses for itself a moderator, who is to be helped by at least one of the members.

31. The moderator arranges for the meetings of the group and fosters good relations with the bishop, priests, deacons and lay people, especially those who hold responsible positions.

B. National Organization

32. In each nation the moderators of the local groups have regular gatherings and these constitute the national assembly. These meetings are held as often as convenient (every year or every three years); they are times of prayer, reflection and exchange.

33. The assembly is organized according to available means, and chooses a moderator, helped by councillors, to be at the service of the local groups.

The assembly considers the questions which concern the priests of its nation, and, if it appears useful, gives some precisions to the statutes of the Union.

34. The national moderator and councillors (who represent the various regions, ages and pastoral works) look into what is useful and relevant for the local groups. They help the erection of new groups.

They may propose plans for meetings and look for promoters in places and dioceses where groups do not yet exist.

35. The national moderator convokes the national assemblies and visits the local groups. He is responsible for the national publications of the Union, for relations with the Bishop's Conference and individual bishops, with priests, deacons and lay people who are involved in works at the national level.

(C. International Organization — Similar)