



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC LETTER
IN THE FORM OF "MOTU PROPRIO"

LATINA LINGUA

OF THE SUPREME PONTIFF
BENEDICT XVI

ESTABLISHING
THE PONTIFICAL ACADEMY FOR LATIN

1. The Latin language has always been held in very high esteem by the Catholic Church and by the Roman Pontiffs. They have assiduously encouraged the knowledge and dissemination of Latin, adopting it as the Church's language, capable of passing on the Gospel message throughout the world. This is authoritatively stated by the Apostolic Constitution *Veterum Sapientia* of my Predecessor, Blessed John XXIII.

Indeed the Church has spoken and prayed in the languages of all peoples since Pentecost. Nevertheless, the Christian communities of the early centuries made frequent use of Greek and Latin, languages of universal communication in the world in which they lived and through which the newness of Christ's word encountered the heritage of the Roman-Hellenistic culture.

After the fall of the Roman Empire of the West, the Church of Rome not only continued to use Latin but, in a certain way, made herself its custodian and champion in both the theological and liturgical sectors as well as in formation and in the transmission of knowledge.

2. In our time too, knowledge of the Latin language and culture is proving to be more necessary than ever for the study of the sources, which, among others, numerous ecclesiastical disciplines draw from, such as, for example, theology, liturgy, patristics and canon law, as the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council teaches (cf. Decree *Optatam Totius*, n. 13).

In addition, precisely in order to highlight the Church's universal character, the liturgical books of

the Roman Rite, the most important documents of the Papal Magisterium and the most solemn official Acts of the Roman Pontiffs are written in this language in their authentic form.

3. Yet in today's culture, the danger of an increasingly superficial knowledge of Latin may be noted in the context of the widespread weakening of humanistic studies. This is also a risk in the context of the philosophical and theological studies of future priests. Moreover in our own world, in which science and technology play such an important role, there is a renewed interest in the Latin culture and language and not only on those continents whose culture is rooted in the Greco-Roman heritage. This attention seems all the more meaningful since it not only involves academic and institutional sectors but also concerns young people and scholars from very different nations and traditions.

4. It therefore appears urgently necessary to support the commitment to a greater knowledge and more competent use of Latin, both in the ecclesial context and in the broader world of culture. In order to give relevance and resonance to this undertaking the use of didactic methods in keeping with the new conditions and the promotion of a network of relations between academic institutions and scholars is particularly appropriate so as to make the most of the rich and multiform patrimony of the Latin civilization.

To contribute to attaining these goals following in the footsteps of my venerable Predecessors, today, with this *Motu Proprio*, I establish the Pontifical Academy for Latin, under the [Pontifical Council for Culture](#). It is governed by a President assisted by a Secretary, who are appointed by me, and by an Academic Council.

The [Latinitas Foundation](#), erected by Paul VI with the Chirograph *Romani Sermonis* of 30 June 1976 is hereby replaced.

I order that this Apostolic Letter in the form of a *Motu Proprio*, with which I approve the attached Statutes *ad experimentum*, for five years, be published in *L'Osservatore Romano*.

Given at St Peter's in Rome on 10 November 2012, the Memorial of St Leo the Great, the eighth year of my Pontificate.

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Article 1

The Pontifical Academy for Latin, with headquarters in Vatican City State, is established for the promotion and appreciation of the Latin language and culture. The Academy is linked to the Pontifical Council for Culture on which it depends.

Article 2

§1. The aims of the Academy are:

- a) to encourage the knowledge and study of Latin — language and literature, classical and patristic, Medieval and humanistic — in particular at the Catholic institutions for formation at which both seminarians and priests are trained and taught;
- b) to promote the use of Latin in various contexts, both as a written and as a spoken language.

§2. To achieve the said aims the Academy intends:

- a) to publish and to organize meetings, study congresses and exhibitions;
- b) to set up and support courses, seminars and other training projects in coordination with the Pontifical Institute for Advanced Latin Studies;
- c) to teach the young generations a knowledge of Latin, also through the modern means of communication;
- d) to organize exhibitions, shows and competitions;
- e) to plan other activities and initiatives necessary for attaining the goals of the institution.

Article 3

The Pontifical Academy for Latin consists of the President, the Secretary, the Academic Council and Members, who are also known as Academicians.

Article 4

§1. The President of the Academy is appointed by the Supreme Pontiff for a five-year term. The office of the President may be extended for a second five-year term.

§2. It is the task of the President:

- a) to represent the Academy legally before any judicial or administrative authority, of either the Church or the State;
- b) to convoke and to chair the Academic Council and the Assembly of Members;
- c) to take part as a Member in the meetings of the Coordinating Council of the Pontifical Academies and to maintain relations with the Pontifical Council for Culture.
- d) supervise the Academy's work
- e) take care of the ordinary administration with the assistance of the Secretary, and in matters of extraordinary administration with the advice of the Academic Council and of the Pontifical Council for Culture.

Article 5

§1. The Secretary is appointed by the Supreme Pontiff for a five-year term and may be extended for a second five-year term.

§2. The President delegates the Secretary to replace him in the case of absence or impediment.

Article 6

§1. The Academic Council consists of the President, the Secretary and five Councillors. The Councillors are elected by the Assembly of Academics for a five-year term that may be extended.

§2. The Academic Council, which is chaired by the President of the Academy, deliberates on the more important matters that concern the Academy. It approves the agenda in view of the Assembly of Members that is to be held at least once a year. The Council is convoked by the President at least once a year and, in addition, whenever it is requested by at least three Councillors.

Article 7

The President, with the consent of the Council, may appoint an Archivist, with the duties of librarian, and a Treasurer.

Article 8

§1. The Academy consists of no more than 50 Ordinary Members known as Academicians, who are scholars and connoisseurs of Latin, language and literature. They are appointed by the

Secretary of State. When they reach the age of 80, the Ordinary Members become “emeritus”.

§2. Ordinary Academicians take part in the Assembly of the Academy convoked by the President. Academicians emeritus may take part in the Assembly but are not entitled to vote.

§3. The President of the Academy, having heard the opinion of the Council, may appoint as well as Ordinary Academicians other Members, known as Correspondents.

Article 9

The patrimony of the superseded Fondazione *Latinitas* and its activities, including the redaction and publication of the Review *Latinitas*, are transferred to the Pontifical Academy for Latin.

Article 10

Although not expressly prescribed, reference is made to the norms of the Code of Canon Law in force and to the laws of Vatican City State.

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