



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

STATUTES OF THE NEW DICASTERY FOR THE LAITY, FAMILY AND LIFE

Art. 1

The Dicastery for the Laity, Family, and Life is competent in matters that pertain to the Apostolic See regarding the promotion of life, the apostolate of the lay faithful, the pastoral care of the family and its mission according to God's plan and for the safeguard and support of human life.

Art. 2

§1. The Dicastery shall be presided over by a Prefect, who in turn is assisted by a Secretary, who may be a layperson, as well as by three lay Undersecretaries. It is to be staffed by an appropriate number of officials, clerics and lay people, chosen, in so far as possible, from different regions of the world, according to the Norms of the Roman Curia currently in force.

§2. The Dicastery is divided into three sections: one for the lay faithful, one for family, and one for life, each of which is to be presided over by an Under-Secretary.

Art. 3

§1. The Dicastery has its own members, among whom there are lay faithful, men and women, celibates and married couples, coming from different areas of expertise and from different parts of the world in such a way as to reflect the Church's universal character.

§2. The Dicastery arranges for its own Consultors.

§3. In all of its work, the Dicastery respects the Norms established for the Roman Curia.

Art. 4

The Dicastery promotes and organizes international conferences and other initiatives, whether they pertain to the apostolate of the laity, to the institution of marriage, and to the reality of the family and life in the ecclesial sphere, or pertain to the human and social state of the laity, of the institution of the family, and of human life in society at large.

Section for the lay faithful**Art. 5**

This Section has the duty to discern, encourage and promote the vocation and mission of the lay faithful in the Church and in the world, whether married or single, besides the members of associations, movements, and communities. Furthermore, this Section promotes studies that contribute to a deepening of the doctrinal understanding of the themes and issues regarding the lay faithful.

Art. 6

§1. This Section helps the lay faithful to become more aware of their shared responsibility, by virtue of their Baptism, for the life and mission of the Church, in accord with the various charisms received for the common task of building up the Church, with particular attention to the unique mission of the lay faithful to illuminate and perfect the order of temporal affairs (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, n. 31).

§2. In the spirit of the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 1, which invites the Church to make “the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the men of our time” Her own, this Section promotes all those initiatives which concern the laity’s task of evangelizing in the different areas of the temporal world, with due respect for the competency of the respective organs of the Roman Curia in these same matters.

§3. Furthermore, this Section promotes the participation of the lay faithful in catechetical instruction, in the Church’s liturgical and sacramental life, in missionary activity, in works of mercy, charity, and in human and social advancement. It supports and encourages all this through an active and responsible presence in consultative bodies of governance present in the Church at both her universal and particular levels.

§4. This Section evaluates the initiatives of Episcopal Conferences that apply to the Holy See, according to the needs of the particular Churches, to set up new ecclesiastical ministries and offices.

Art. 7

§1. This Section establishes the right to aggregate of the faithful and lay movements with an international character, approves them or recognizes their Statutes, with due regard for the competence of the Secretariat of State; it likewise treats possible administrative recourse pertaining to the scope of the Dicastery's competence.

§2. In regard to Third Secular Orders and associations of consecrated life, the Section only handles matters that pertain to their apostolic work.

Section for the Family

Art. 8

§1. This Section in light of the Papal Magisterium promotes the pastoral care of the family; it oversees its dignity and good rooted in the sacrament of marriage; it supports the rights and responsibilities of the family in the Church and in civil society, so that the institution of the family can better carry out its proper function in both the ecclesial and social setting.

§2. This Section discerns the signs of the times and considers the best way the family can face with confidence and Gospel wisdom the challenges that confront it, and to apply, at this moment in history and in today's society, God's plan for marriage and the family.

§3. It follows the work of the institutions, associations, movements, and other national and international Catholic organizations whose mission it is to serve the good of the family.

Art. 9

§1. It attends to a deepening of the teaching on the family and its dissemination through appropriate catechesis; in particular it promotes the study of the spirituality of marriage and family and their implications for formation.

§2. It offers guidelines for formation programmes designed to prepare engaged couples for marriage and assists newly married couples.

§3. It also offers guidelines for pastoral programmes that support the family in the faith-formation of young people and for their preparation for ecclesial and civil life, with special concern for the poor and the marginalized.

§4. It helps families to be open to the adoption and foster-care of children, to the care of the elderly, in cooperation with the civil institutions so that they support these methods.

Art. 10

This Section is directly linked to the Pontifical Institute of John Paul II for Studies on Marriage and the Family, both to the central headquarters and the affiliated institutions, to ensure a common syllabus in the study of marriage, family and life.

Section for Life

Art. 11

§1. This Section supports and coordinates initiatives that foster responsible procreation, as well as the protection of human life from conception until natural death, keeping in mind the needs of the person in the various phases of human development.

§2. This Section promotes and encourages organizations and associations that help women and families to accept and protect the gift of life, especially during difficult pregnancies, and to prevent recourse to abortion. It also supports programmes and initiatives aimed to help women who have had an abortion.

Art. 12

This Section will study and promote, on the basis of Catholic moral teaching and the Church's Magisterium, formation in the most important biomedical and legal questions regarding human life and the emerging ideologies regarding human life and the reality of the human being.

Art. 13

The Pontifical Academy for Life is connected with this Dicastery, which, by virtue of the issues and themes mentioned in Article 11, will avail itself of that section's competence.

The present Statutes are approved *ad experimentum*. I hereby decree that they be promulgated through their publication in *L'Osservatore Romano* and subsequently published in the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, coming into force on 1 September 2016. From that date forward, the respective function of the Pontifical Council for the Laity and the Pontifical Council for the Family will cease, as those dicasteries will be suppressed with the abrogation of Articles nn. 131-134 and nn. 139-141 of the Apostolic Constitution, *Pastor Bonus*.

Given in Rome, 4 June, 2016

FRANCIS
