

**CATHOLIC FRATERNITY**  
OF CHARISMATIC COVENANT COMMUNITIES  
AND FELLOWSHIPS



DECREE  
STATUTES  
RECOGNITION  
DECLARATIONS  
OF THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE LAITY  
OF THE HOLY SEE  
AND HISTORICAL DOCUMENTATION  
AS A PRIVATE ASSOCIATION  
OF THE CHRISTIAN FATHFUL  
OF PONTIFICAL RIGH

**THE STATUTES OF THE  
CATHOLIC FRATERNITY  
OF CHARISMATIC COVENANT COMMUNITIES AND FELLOWSHIPS**

**ARTICLE 1  
CONSTITUTION AND AIMS**

- 1.1** The "Catholic Fraternity of Charismatic Covenant Communities<sup>1</sup> and Fellowships" (hereafter known as the "Fraternity") is an international private association of members of the faithful having juridical personality in accordance with Canon 322 of the Code of Canon Law. The Fraternity recognizes its membership of the communion of the Catholic Church and its structure in accordance with Canons 298-300, 304-311, and 321-329. It is the desire of the Fraternity to identify itself with the salvific mission of the whole Church<sup>2</sup> in communion with the local bishop and with the Roman Pontiff. The principal means by which the Fraternity expresses its relationship with the Roman Pontiff is through a formal link with the Pontifical Council for the Laity.
- 1.2** The strengthening of ties between the Fraternity and the Holy See gives additional clarity to the Catholic identity of the Fraternity.
- 1.3** Through Baptism, Christians are incorporated into Christ and into the Church which is His Body.<sup>3</sup> In various places throughout the world, members of this one, holy catholic and apostolic Church have expressed their desire to support one another in following Christ and in responding to His call by forming covenant communities.<sup>4,5</sup> A covenant is a formal commitment to enter into relationship with members of a community and to participate in their lifestyle and mission. At the heart of such a commitment is the desire to grow in holiness and to be involved in apostolic work in service of the Church's mission.<sup>6</sup>
- 1.4** Communities desiring to be admitted to membership of the Fraternity must show that they are willing to uphold the aims of the Fraternity as outlined in the Statutes. These communities must also show evidence that they are:
- (a)** living a committed Christian lifestyle; and
  - (b)** in good standing with the local Church.
- 1.5** The Fraternity desires that its member communities be formed in such a way that they grow in holiness; in their communion with the Church and in their apostolic witness in the world.<sup>7</sup> The covenant communities<sup>8</sup> and fellowships<sup>9</sup> of the Fraternity endeavour to develop structures and

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1 The term "Charismatic Covenant Community" is used mainly in the English speaking world. In other contexts, the term most used simply "Charismatic Community" or "New communities".

2 Vatican Council II, DOGMATIC CONSTITUTION ON THE CHURCH 33.

3 Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, CHRISTIFIDELES LAICI 9.

4 CODE OF CANON LAW, Can. 299.

5 Vatican Council II, DECREE ON THE APOSTOLATE OF THE LAITY 11.

6 CODE OF CANON LAW, Can. 298.

7 Cardinal Eduardo Pironio, "THREE OBJECTIVES OF THE FORMATION OF THE LAITY", in "The Formation of the Laity", Published by the Pontifical Council For the Laity, 1987.

8 See Article 1.3.

9 "Fellowship" is a term that describes a constituted group of Catholics who live a covenant community lifestyle and maintain a bond of charity, prayer and witness with Christians or groups of Christians belonging to other confessions within a broader ecumenical community.

relationships which provide environments where those, who are drawn to Christ, may have their faith nurtured and consolidated within the Church;<sup>10</sup>

**1.6** The fundamental aims of the Fraternity are to:

- (a) share, encourage and consolidate the fruit of the Christian life that the Lord has brought about through his Spirit within member communities and fellowships;
- (b) promote all the riches of the spiritual heritage of the Church in the life of the Fraternity: faithful listening to the Word of God, participation in the liturgy (especially the sacramental life of the Church and in particular the Eucharist and Reconciliation), and practices of popular devotion;<sup>11</sup>
- (c) reaffirm and deepen an awareness of membership in and love for the Catholic Church, as well as the primary and essential bond of communion with it;
- (d) improve knowledge of Catholic doctrine and to guarantee its faithful observance, particularly in regard to constitutive ecclesiology, the centrality of the sacraments and devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints;
- (e) pay particular attention to important events in the Catholic world and reflect on suitable ways of participating and collaborating in such events;
- (f) encourage the sharing of the Fraternity's specific experiences of community life with other communities, associations and movements in the Catholic Church;
- (g) undertake specific initiatives related to the work of evangelization and Church renewal in accordance with the Code of Canon Law relating to the authority of the local Church;<sup>12</sup>
- (h) encourage the use of charisms, as given by the Spirit, for the upbuilding and renewal of the Church;<sup>13</sup>
- (i) both foster an authentic ecumenism in the hope of perfect unity and form member communities of the Fraternity in ecumenism in accordance with the teachings, orientations and norms of the Catholic Church;<sup>14</sup> and
- (j) encourage its member communities to participate in spiritual ecumenism<sup>15</sup> and other ecumenical activities, when circumstances permit, under the guidance of the local Church.<sup>16</sup> Ecumenical activities of an international nature will proceed only after consultation with the Pontifical Council for the Laity.

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<sup>10</sup> Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, CATECHESI TRADENDAE 24.

<sup>11</sup> Practices may include Adoration to the Blessed Sacrament, Pilgrimages, Way of the Cross, the Rosary etc.

<sup>12</sup> CODE OF CANON LAW, Can. 323 §2.

<sup>13</sup> Vatican Council II, THE DOGMATIC CONSTITUTION ON THE CHURCH, 12.

<sup>14</sup> Vatican Council II, DECREE ON ECUMENISM, 8.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> "ECUMENICAL COLLABORATION AT THE REGIONAL, NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVELS" Published by the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, 1975: [Especially Sections 3 and 7].

**ARTICLE 2**  
**IDENTITY OF THE CATHOLIC FRATERNITY**

- 2.1** The Fraternity is made up of Catholic communities and fellowships of the faithful who are vivified and enriched by gifts of the Spirit. The Fraternity identifies itself with the graces of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal and is a structure of service for the Renewal.

**ARTICLE 3**  
**MEMBERS**

- 3.1** Member communities of the Fraternity are Catholic communities and fellowships who:
- (a)** have the recognition and the approval of the Statutes of the Diocesan Ordinary;<sup>17</sup>
  - (b)** have declared themselves to be founders of the Fraternity by expressing their full acceptance of these statutes through a written ratification of the constitutive Act of the Fraternity by their legal representatives; or
  - (c)** have explicitly manifested their wish to belong to the Fraternity through a full acceptance of these Statutes and are accepted by the Executive of the Fraternity's Council with a two-thirds majority vote.
  - (d)** support financially the Catholic Fraternity by the payment of the yearly membership subscription, the amount of which is established by the Executive. In consideration of those communities who experience difficulty in making the yearly payment, they should write to the President on each occasion stating their difficulty and request consideration for a reduction in the yearly payment.

**3.2** Associate Membership:

In addition to member communities, the Catholic Fraternity also welcome the participation of associated member communities who are inspired by the spirit of the Fraternity.

"Associate Membership" is a response to the expressed desire of many communities who are often small in number and have built or seek to build fraternal relationship with member communities of the Catholic Fraternity. While sharing the aims and objectives of the Fraternity, these associate member communities are unable to make a commitment to enter into the full life of the Fraternity at this particular time.

Communities who are accepted as associate are invited to participate in the Catholic Fraternity in the following ways:

- (a)** Attendance at international general meetings, regional meetings, opportunities of formation and other events which are offered either by the Catholic Fraternity, the particular region of the Fraternity or by the member community/communities with whom they relate.
- (b)** Sharing in the fraternal and supportive relationships within the region or with the particular member community/communities.

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<sup>17</sup> CODE OF CANON LAW, Can. 299 §3.

- c) Receiving assistance to implement the spirit, aims and objectives of the Fraternity in their own communities.

The Fraternity asks that communities who are associate members of the Fraternity to honor and respect the spirit of the Fraternity as defined by the Holy See and the founding members in its goal of the integration of Catholic Communities into the life of the Church.

While associate members share in the graces of the Catholic Fraternity they do not share in the rights and obligations of the member community. Each associate community remains fully responsible for its own life and ministry and must work responsibly with its own bishop. The Catholic Fraternity does not take responsibility nor does it seek to have any governance over its associate members.

In order to become an associate member, a community must be recommended to the Executive by a regional member and accepted by two thirds majority vote of the Executive. A review of the status of Associate Members will be carried out at least every five years.

- 3.3 A community or fellowship excludes itself from the Fraternity by self excluding behaviour. This self-exclusion will be effected after it is recognized as such by a two-thirds majority vote of all the members of the Executive.

- 3.4 Any community not satisfying or having lost its requirements, shown under Articles 1.4, 1.5, 1.6 and 3.1 of these Statues, in default with its contributions to the Fraternity, is excluded from the Fraternity. The exclusion is decided by the Executive. Any community which is the subject of exclusion has a right to present its defence in writing to the Executive.

#### ARTICLE 4 ECCLESIAL RELATIONSHIPS

- 4.1 The Fraternity maintains relations of faithful listening, dialogue and collaboration with the Holy See, particularly the Pontifical Council for the Laity;
- 4.2 It is also called on to establish bonds of fraternal charity and collaboration with the International Council of Charismatic Renewal Services for the good of the charismatic renewal in the Catholic Church;

#### ARTICLE 5 ORGANIZATION

- 5.1 The Council of the Fraternity has the same number of members as there are communities and fellowships belonging to the Fraternity. Each community or fellowship will appoint or recall its own delegate to the Council in accordance with its own constitution. Delegates may bring with them another member of their community or fellowship to act as a non-voting consultant during Council meetings.<sup>18</sup> The Council will meet on a date and in a place decided by the Council meeting or proposed by the current President with a two-thirds majority approval of the other

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<sup>18</sup> The President of the Council may have at the meeting of the Council any support staff or advisors he considers necessary.

members of the Executive. The Council will meet at least every two years.

- 5.2** The Council has an Executive which may consist of up to 2 representatives from each of the five continents and representatives from other regions and realities within the Fraternity as may be determined by the Council.<sup>19</sup> Appointments to the Executive are made by members being nominated by their respective regions. The regional representative/s have a responsibility to be in ongoing dialogue with members of the region so that they may represent their views in any meetings of the Executive. Regional representatives also have a responsibility in the region to ensure good and regular communication between members of the Executive and Council for the ongoing development of relationships. Members of the Executive will serve for a three year term and cannot be re-elected for more than two consecutive terms. A quorum will consist of 50% of the members of the Executive plus 1.
- 5.3** The Council provides a means by which member communities and fellowships may formulate their ideas, plans and concerns and be involved in decision making, facilitating and implementing the living out of the aims and objectives of the Fraternity. The meetings of the Council will also create opportunities for "teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread and prayer".<sup>20</sup>
- 5.4** Meetings of the **Executive** will be called by its President and are to take place at least annually. Its tasks are to:
- (a) ensure respect and observance of these statutes by member communities of the Fraternity;
  - (b) accept or reject requests for admission to the Fraternity and also reflect on and define the ways in which other communities, who do not fulfill all the requirements for membership<sup>21</sup> may participate;
  - (c) on the basis of a simple majority vote, choose Office Bearers, viz. Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, from its own members for a three year term, with the stipulation that the same persons or delegate of the same community or fellowship cannot be re-elected for more than two consecutive terms. By virtue of their appointment they shall also function as Office Bearers of the Council;
  - (d) design and implement the Fraternity's plan of activities;<sup>22</sup> and
  - (e) develop the Fraternity's relationships with other organizations within the limits laid down in the aims of the Fraternity.
- 5.5** Election of the **President**

- (a) In accordance to Canon 119, §1 CJC, the President is elected by the absolute majority of the Members of the Council being present and with right to vote, from among members of the Catholic Fraternity. If no candidate obtains the absolute majority of votes in the first two ballots, in the third ballot the candidate that obtains the simple majority of

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<sup>19</sup> Every five to eight years, the Council should redefine the "regions and realities" and make decisions by the normal two-thirds majority.

<sup>20</sup> Acts 2:42.

<sup>21</sup> See Article 3.

<sup>22</sup> See Article 8.

votes, that is the one who obtains more votes, will be elected.

- b) If the person elected as President is a member of the Executive, he/she will have to be replaced by another representative of his/her Region.
- c) The President, when elected, begins the first period of his term of three years and is entitled to be re-elected again, but for no more than two terms.

**5.6** The duties of the **President** are to:

- (a) preside at all Council and Executive meetings of business;
- (b) act on behalf of the Executive and Council and, in particular, liaise with the Pontifical Council for the Laity;
- (c) instruct and supervise the other Office Bearers in the performance of their duties;
- (d) ensure that all aims, objectives and obligations of the Executive and Council are pursued in accordance with the spirit of the Statutes of the Fraternity;
- (e) maintain good order, peace and harmony at the meetings of the Fraternity;
- (f) Ensure that there is good and regular communication between members of the Executive and Council for the development of relationships;
- (g) establish a communications centre in a location which will enable him to effectively carry out his responsibilities and facilitate the flow of information within the Fraternity;<sup>23</sup> and
- (h) preside over election processes and prior to the election of a new President, together with the other Office Bearers, will consult with the Pontifical Council for the Laity and seek approval of nominees for the office of President.

**5.7** The **Vice-President** is to take an active role in assisting the President in all of his duties to the degree that the President requires. His duties are to;

- (a) attend all meetings of the Council and Executive; and
- (b) preside over the meetings at either the request of the President or in the event of the President's absence.

**5.8** The duties of the **Secretary**<sup>24</sup> are to:

- (a) attend all meetings of the Council and Executive;
- (b) keep all minutes of the meeting; and

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<sup>23</sup> See Article 9.

<sup>24</sup> Some of the Secretary's duties may be delegated by the President and the Secretary to other members of the Executive or to the Recording Minutes Secretary.

(c) be responsible for the distribution of the minutes.

**5.9** The duties of the **Treasurer** are to:

- (a) attend all meetings of the Council and Executive;
- (b) overview the regular financial contribution by the Member Communities;
- (d) prepare and submit the budget proposal and the yearly balance sheet to the Executive for approval.

#### ARTICLE 6 **THE SPIRITUAL ADVISER**

**6.1** The Fraternity will have an Ecclesiastic Spiritual Adviser for the liturgical, doctrinal and pastoral oversight of its activities. He will be appointed by the Pontifical Council for the Laity from a list of three candidates proposed by the Executive of the Fraternity. His term in office will be three years and this can be renewed for a further two consecutive terms. He will take part in the Executive and Council meetings and in other activities where his presence is deemed helpful and necessary by the President of the Executive.

#### ARTICLE 7 **POWERS**

**7.1** The Fraternity has no power of governance over its member communities and it will therefore be careful to avoid interfering in their internal life.

While the Fraternity has no juridical authority over its member communities or fellowships nor juridical responsibility for their individual activities, it has a pastoral and spiritual responsibility to encourage the development of its member communities and fellowships in their Catholic identity and to foster the spirit and bonds of Catholic communion between them.

The Fraternity does not restrict the relationships that each community or fellowship may set up with other organizations according to its own needs and interests while they remain within the aims of the Fraternity.

Lastly, the Fraternity represents only itself and not each individual community or fellowship in the pursuit of its specific statutory aims.

#### ARTICLE 8 **ACTIVITIES**

- 8.1** In pursuit of its aims, the Fraternity can carry out the following and other similar activities :<sup>25</sup>
- (a)** promote meetings, journeys and exchanges that can help strengthen fraternal bonds;
  - (b)** plan and organise congresses, seminars and various types of meetings for study, prayer and the the exchange and sharing of experiences of Christian and community life;
  - (c)** represent the interests of the Fraternity in accordance with the powers, tasks and limitations laid down by the Council of the Fraternity<sup>26</sup> and
  - d)** coordinate any other activity in which some or all of the individual communities or fellowships may desire to be involved and which are directed to a sharing of material goods or spiritual resources.

#### **ARTICLE 9 TEMPORAL GOODS**

- 9.1** The President of the Executive of the Fraternity's Council will be responsible for implementing the provisions approved by the Executive with the technical and administrative assistance of a communications centre. Member communities and fellowships will contribute to the cost of establishing and maintaining the centre. Any commonly held temporal goods acquired to facilitate the achievement of the Fraternity's aims are to be administered by the President and/or office bearers of the Executive in accordance with the guidelines that will be established by the Executive from time to time.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Individual and groups of communities and fellowships may initiate separate activities which are in harmony with the aims and objectives of the Fraternity.

<sup>26</sup> In the case of a recommendation being received from the Council which the Executive does not implement, the recommendation will be returned to the Council for further dialogue.

<sup>27</sup> CODE OF CANON LAW, Can. 325.

**ARTICLE 10**  
**STATUTE CHANGES**

- 10.1** If any member community wants to make a change to the Statutes, it must be submitted to the President, in writing, three months prior to the Executive Meeting. The motion for change is then submitted to the following Council Meeting for discussion and voting.
- 10.2** The Statutes of the Fraternity can only be changed by the Council Member Communities and Fellowships<sup>28-29</sup> a coming to consensus agreement about the change.

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<sup>28</sup> CODE OF CANON LAW, Can 1193

<sup>29</sup> Consensus agreement is arrived at when two-thirds or more of the Council representing the Fraternity's communities and fellowships agree to the proposed modification. The other members of the Fraternity, for the sake of unity, allow the modification to the Statutes to occur. However, their objections, reservations or doubts concerning the modification are to be recorded by the Council.

**ARTICLE 11**  
**DISSOLUTION**

- 11.1** The Fraternity's status as a private association may be extinguished by the Holy See either at the request of the Council of the Fraternity<sup>30</sup> or by a decree of the Holy see in accordance with Canon 326. Upon dissolution of the Fraternity, its Council's Executive, in consultation with the Pontifical Council for the Laity, will ensure that any temporal goods held in common will be used to support another lay association with similar aims to that of the Fraternity.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Any consideration of the dissolution of the Fraternity will be done at an extraordinary meeting of the Council and will require a two-thirds majority vote for a resolution.

<sup>31</sup> CODE OF CANON LAW, Can. 326.



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