

Code of Canon Law (Codex Iuris Canonici)

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TITLE V.

ASSOCIATIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITHFUL (Cann. 298 - 329)

CHAPTER I.

COMMON NORMS

Can. 298 §1. In the Church there are associations distinct from institutes of consecrated life and societies of apostolic life; in these associations the Christian faithful, whether clerics, lay persons, or clerics and lay persons together, strive in a common endeavor to foster a more perfect life, to promote public worship or Christian doctrine, or to exercise other works of the apostolate such as initiatives of evangelization, works of piety or charity, and those which animate the temporal order with a Christian spirit.

§2. The Christian faithful are to join especially those associations which competent ecclesiastical authority has erected, praised, or commended.

Can. 299 §1. By means of a private agreement made among themselves, the Christian faithful are free to establish associations to pursue the purposes mentioned in ⇒ can. 298, §1, without prejudice to the prescript of ⇒ can. 301, §1.

§2. Even if ecclesiastical authority praises or commends them, associations of this type are called private associations.

§3. No private association of the Christian faithful is recognized in the Church unless competent authority reviews its statutes.

Can. 300 No association is to assume the name Catholic without the consent of competent ecclesiastical authority according to the norm of ⇒ can. 312.

Can. 301 §1. It is for the competent ecclesiastical authority alone to erect associations of the Christian faithful which propose to hand on Christian doctrine in the name of the Church or to promote public worship, or which intend other purposes whose pursuit is of its nature reserved to the same ecclesiastical authority.

§2. Competent ecclesiastical authority, if it has judged it expedient, can also erect associations of the Christian faithful to pursue directly or indirectly other spiritual purposes whose accomplishment has not been sufficiently provided for through the initiatives of private persons.

§3. Associations of the Christian faithful which are erected by competent ecclesiastical authority are called public associations.

Can. 302 Those associations of the Christian faithful are called clerical which are under the direction of clerics, assume the exercise of sacred orders, and are recognized as such by competent authority.

Can. 303 Associations whose members share in the spirit of some religious institute while in secular life, lead an apostolic life, and strive for Christian perfection under the higher direction of the same institute are called third orders or some other appropriate name.

Can. 304 §1. All public or private associations of the Christian faithful, by whatever title or name they are called, are to have their own statutes which define the purpose or social objective of the association, its seat,

government, and conditions required for membership and which determine the manner of its acting, attentive, however, to the necessity or advantage of time and place.

§2. They are to choose a title or name for themselves adapted to the usage of time and place, selected above all with regard to their intended purpose.

Can. 305 §1. All associations of the Christian faithful are subject to the vigilance of competent ecclesiastical authority which is to take care that the integrity of faith and morals is preserved in them and is to watch so that abuse does not creep into ecclesiastical discipline. This authority therefore has the duty and right to inspect them according to the norm of law and the statutes. These associations are also subject to the governance of this same authority according to the prescripts of the canons which follow.

§2. Associations of any kind are subject to the vigilance of the Holy See; diocesan associations and other associations to the extent that they work in the diocese are subject to the vigilance of the local ordinary.

Can. 306 In order for a person to possess the rights and privileges of an association and the indulgences and other spiritual favors granted to the same association, it is necessary and sufficient that the person has been validly received into it and has not been legitimately dismissed from it according to the prescripts of law and the proper statutes of the association.

Can. 307 §1. The reception of members is to be done according to the norm of law and the statutes of each association.

§2. The same person can be enrolled in several associations.

§3. Members of religious institutes can join associations according to the norm of their proper law with the consent of their superior.

Can. 308 No one legitimately enrolled is to be dismissed from an association except for a just cause according to the norm of law and the statutes.

Can. 309 According to the norm of law and the statutes, legitimately established associations have the right to issue particular norms respecting the association itself, to hold meetings, and to designate moderators, officials, other officers, and administrators of goods.

Can. 310 A private association which has not been established as a juridic person cannot, as such, be a subject of obligations and rights. Nevertheless, the members of the Christian faithful associated together in it can jointly contract obligations and can acquire and possess rights and goods as co-owners and co-possessioners; they are able to exercise these rights and obligations through an agent or a proxy.

Can. 311 Members of institutes of consecrated life who preside over or assist associations in some way united to their institute are to take care that these associations give assistance to the works of the apostolate which already exist in a diocese, especially cooperating, under the direction of the local ordinary, with associations which are ordered to the exercise of the apostolate in the diocese.

CHAPTER II.

PUBLIC ASSOCIATIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITHFUL

Can. 312 §1. The authority competent to erect public associations is:

1/ the Holy See for universal and international associations;

2/ the conference of bishops in its own territory for national associations, that is, those which from their founding are directed toward activity throughout the whole nation;

3/ the diocesan bishop in his own territory, but not a diocesan administrator, for diocesan associations, except, however, for those associations whose right of erection has been reserved to others by apostolic privilege.

§2. Written consent of the diocesan bishop is required for the valid erection of an association or section of an association in a diocese even if it is done by virtue of apostolic privilege. Nevertheless, the consent given by a diocesan bishop for the erection of a house of a religious institute is also valid for the erection in the same house or church attached to it of an association which is proper to that institute.

Can. 313 Through the same decree by which the competent ecclesiastical authority according to the norm of ⇒ can. 312 erects it, a public association and even a confederation of public associations is constituted a juridic person and, to the extent it is required, receives a mission for the purposes which it proposes to pursue in the name of the Church.

Can. 314 The statutes of each public association and their revision or change need the approval of the ecclesiastical authority competent to erect the association according to the norm of ⇒ can. 312, §1.

Can. 315 Public associations are able on their own initiative to undertake endeavors in keeping with their own character. These endeavors are governed according to the norm of the statutes, though under the higher direction of the ecclesiastical authority mentioned in ⇒ can. 312, §1.

Can. 316 §1. A person who has publicly rejected the Catholic faith, has defected from ecclesiastical communion, or has been punished by an imposed or declared excommunication cannot be received validly into public associations.

§2. Those enrolled legitimately who fall into the situation mentioned in §1, after being warned, are to be dismissed from the association, with due regard for its statutes and without prejudice to the right of recourse to the ecclesiastical authority mentioned in ⇒ can. 312, §1.

Can. 317 §1. Unless the statutes provide otherwise, it is for the ecclesiastical authority mentioned in ⇒ can. 312, §1 to confirm the moderator of a public association elected by the public association itself, install the one presented, or appoint the moderator in his own right. The same ecclesiastical authority also appoints the chaplain or ecclesiastical assistant, after having heard the major officials of the association, when it is expedient.

§2. The norm stated in §1 is also valid for associations which members of religious institutes erect outside their own churches or houses in virtue of apostolic privilege. In associations which members of religious institutes erect in their own church or house, however, the nomination or confirmation of the moderator and chaplain pertains to the superior of the institute, according to the norm of the statutes.

§3. In associations which are not clerical, lay persons are able to exercise the function of moderator. A chaplain or ecclesiastical assistant is not to assume that function unless the statutes provide otherwise.

§4. Those who exercise leadership in political parties are not to be moderators in public associations of the Christian faithful which are ordered directly to the exercise of the apostolate.

Can. 318 §1. In special circumstances and where grave reasons require it, the ecclesiastical authority mentioned in ⇒ Can. 312, §1 can designate a trustee who is to direct the association for a time in its name.

§2. The person who appointed or confirmed the moderator of a public association can remove the moderator for a just cause, after the person has heard, however, the moderator and the major officials of the association according to the norm of the statutes. The person who appointed a chaplain can remove him according to the norm of ⇒ cann. 192-195.

Can. 319 §1. Unless other provision has been made, a legitimately erected public association administers the goods which it possesses according to the norm of the statutes under the higher direction of the ecclesiastical authority mentioned in ⇒ can. 312, §1, to which it must render an account of administration each year.

§2. It must also render to the same authority a faithful account of the expenditure of the offerings and alms which it has collected.

Can. 320 §1. Only the Holy See can suppress associations it has erected.

§2. For grave causes, a conference of bishops can suppress associations it has erected. A diocesan bishop can suppress associations he has erected and also associations which members of religious institutes have erected through apostolic indult with the consent of the diocesan bishop.

§3. The competent authority is not to suppress a public association unless the authority has heard its moderator and other major officials.

CHAPTER IV.

SPECIAL NORMS FOR ASSOCIATIONS OF THE LAITY

Can. 327 Lay members of the Christian faithful are to hold in esteem associations established for the spiritual purposes mentioned in ⇒ can. 298, especially those which propose to animate the temporal order with the Christian spirit and in this way greatly foster an intimate union between faith and life.

Can. 328 Those who preside over associations of the laity, even those which have been erected by virtue of apostolic privilege, are to take care that their associations cooperate with other associations of the Christian faithful where it is expedient and willingly assist various Christian works, especially those in the same territory.

Can. 329 Moderators of associations of the laity are to take care that the members of the association are duly formed to exercise the apostolate proper to the laity.

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