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## Statute of the Pontifical Academy for Life

The Statute of the Pontifical Academy for Life, signed by the Holy Father on 18 October, was published today, and will come into effect on 1 January 2017. The following is a working translation of the text.

### Part I

#### Nature and Aims

##### Article 1 – Introduction

§1 – The Pontifical Academy for Life, which has its seat in Vatican City State, was instituted by the Supreme Pontiff St. John Paul II by the Motu Proprio *Vitae Mysterium* of 11 February 1994.

The aim of the Pontifical Academy for Life is the defence and promotion of the value of human life and the dignity of the person.

§2 – The specific task of the Academy is to:

a) *study* questions and issues connected with the promotion and defence of human life from an interdisciplinary perspective;

b) *educate* in a culture of life – in relation to those aspects that belong to its specific range of competence – through suitable initiatives, always in full respect of the Magisterium of the Church;

c) *inform* the authorities of the Church, the various institutions of the biomedical sciences, social-healthcare organisations, the mass media and the civil community in general about the most relevant results of its study and research activities in a clear and prompt manner (cf. *Vitae Mysterium*, 4).

§3 – The Academy has a task of a prevalently scientific nature, directed towards the promotion and defence of human life (cf. *Vitae Misterium*, 4). In particular, it studies the various aspects that relate to the care of the dignity of the human person at the different ages of existence, mutual respect between genders and generations, the defence of the dignity of each single human being, the promotion of a quality of human life that integrates material and spiritual value, with a view to an authentic “human ecology”, which may help to recover the original balance of Creation between the human person and the entire universe (cf. *Chirograph*, 15 August 2016).

§4 – In carrying out the activity provided for in this Statute, the Pontifical Academy for Life cooperates with the Dicasteries of the Roman Curia, primarily the Secretary of State and the Dicastery for the Laity, the Family and Life, in relation to their respective competences and in a spirit of collaboration.

§5 – In order to promote and disseminate the culture of life, the Academy maintains close contacts with university Institutions, scientific Societies and research centres that pursue the various themes connected with life.

## Part II

### Organisation

#### Article 2 – The Structure of the Academy

The Pontifical Academy for Life is made up of a Presidency and a Central Office, and the Members, who are also called Academicians.

#### Article 3 – The Presidency

The Presidency is made up of the President, the Chancellor and the Governing Council. The direction and running of the ordinary and extraordinary activities of the Academy are the responsibility of the President, together with the Chancellor, assisted by the Governing Council. The Ecclesiastical Advisor also belongs to the Presidency.

##### §1 – *The President*

- a) The President is appointed by the Supreme Pontiff, remains in office for the period indicated in the letter of appointment, and can be reconfirmed in office.
- b) The President officially represents the Pontifical Academy, directs it in all its activities and is answerable on its behalf to the Holy Father; he convenes and chairs the Governing Council; establishes the agenda and implements the resolutions of the Governing Council. The President convenes and presides over the sessions of the Academy and may invoke the extraordinary collaboration of individual Members.

##### §2 – The Chancellor

- a) The Chancellor, appointed by the Supreme Pontiff for the period indicated in the letter of appointment, can be reconfirmed in office.
- b) The Chancellor can represent the Pontifical Academy for Life on behalf of the President, and collaborates with him in the direction and running of the activities of the Academy.

##### §3 – The Governing Council

a) The Governing Council of the Pontifical Academy for Life is composed of the President, a possible Vice President, the Chancellor and six Councillors appointed by the Supreme Pontiff, of whom four are chosen from among the Ordinary Members of the Academy, the fifth is proposed by the Dicastery for the Laity, the Family and Life, and the sixth is the President of the Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family. Each Councillor remains in office for five years and can be reconfirmed in office. The Ecclesiastical Advisor, if appointed, also belongs to the Governing Council (cf. § 4 of this Article).

b) The Governing Council meets in ordinary session at least twice a year to deliberate on the general orientations of the ordinary activities of the Academy and to address special questions connected with the life of the Academy.

c) The Governing Council can meet in extraordinary session to examine grave questions that cannot be postponed. At such sessions all the members of the Governing Council who are present have the right to vote.

d) The Governing Council chooses and appoints the Corresponding Members of the Pontifical Academy for Life, as referred to in Art .5, § 3 of these Statutes, also assessing external proposals, and approves the programmes of study of the General Assemblies and the educational activities, contributing to the general direction of the annual programmes.

#### §4 – The Ecclesiastical Advisor

a) The Ecclesiastical Advisor is appointed by the Supreme Pontiff for a five-year period of office that can be reconfirmed. This office may remain vacant when the office of President or that of Chancellor is held by an Ecclesiastic.

b) The Ecclesiastical Advisor has the task of ensuring that the declarations of the Pontifical Academy for Life are in conformity with Catholic doctrine according to the teachings of the Magisterium of the Church. In addition, he is entrusted with maintaining relations with the Ecclesiastical Superiors.

#### Article 4 – The Central Office

a) The Central Office of the Pontifical Academy for Life has its seat in the Vatican. It is the executive organ of the Presidency for the overall organisation, implementation and coordination of the activities of the Academy. The Central Office performs its functions in accordance with the directives of the President and the Chancellor.

b) In order to perform its activities in a more effective way, the Central Office is organised into two sections: the scientific section and the technical-administrative section or Secretariat.

##### §1 The scientific section

The scientific section attends to the activities of the Academy in relation to study and research on the basis of the aims set out in the Statutes and the specific tasks of the Pontifical Academy for Life (cf. Article 1).

To this end, the section is organised in three areas: study, formation and information.

##### §2 The technical-administrative section or Secretariat

The technical-administrative section attends to the secretarial and administrative activities of the Academy.

#### Article 5 – The Members or Academicians

The Pontifical Academy for Life is made up of the Ordinary Members, the Corresponding Members, the

Honorary Members and the Young Researcher Members. The appointment of a Member to the Academy requires ascertained willingness to collaborate with the Academy in a spirit of service, solely for the fulfilment of his specific tasks.

#### §1 – Ordinary Members

The Ordinary Members may number up to a maximum of seventy. They are appointed by the Holy Father after hearing the opinions of the Governing Council for a five-year period of office, on the basis of their academic qualifications, proven professional integrity and expertise, and faithful service to the defence and promotion of the right to life of every human person.

Upon the termination of their five-year period of office, ordinary Members may be reconfirmed for subsequent mandates, up to the age of eighty.

#### §2 – The Honorary Members

Some Academicians are appointed by the Holy Father as Honorary Members, linked in a particular way to the life and activity of the Academy.

#### §3 – The Corresponding Members

The Corresponding Members are chosen and appointed for a five-year period of office by the Governing Council on the basis of their professional integrity and expertise, and their acknowledged commitment to the promotion and defence of human life.

At the end of their five-year period of office, corresponding Members can be reconfirmed for a maximum of two further mandates.

#### §4 – Young Researcher Members

The Young Researcher Members come from disciplines associated with the areas of research of interest to the Academy, with a maximum age of 35, selected and appointed by the Governing Council for a five-year period, renewable for one further mandate.

#### §5 – Indications and Rules regarding Members

a) The Academicians are chosen, without any religious discrimination, from amongst ecclesiastical, religious and lay personalities of various nationalities who are experts in the disciplines pertaining to human life (medicine, the biological sciences, theology, philosophy, anthropology, law, sociology, etc.).

b) The new Academicians undertake to promote and defend the principles regarding the value of life and the dignity of the human person interpreted in conformity with the Magisterium of the Church.

c) The Academicians are required to take part in the General Assemblies, in which they present scientific communications, notes and memoranda, debate, vote and have the right to propose appointments and subjects for study and research to the Governing Council.

d) In the case of inability to take part in the works of the General Assembly, the Academicians must adequately justify their absence.

In the case of unjustified absence on more than two occasions during a five-year mandate, the Academician *ipso facto* ceases to be a Member of the Academy.

e) The position of Academician can be revoked, following the procedure stipulated by the Regulations of the Academy, in the event of a public and deliberate action or declaration that is clearly contrary to the aforementioned principles, or gravely offensive to the dignity and credibility of the Catholic Church and the Academy itself.

f) Institutional political positions in the person's own country or abroad are not compatible with appointment to or exercise of the office of Member of the Pontifical Academy for Life. Thus, should a Member of the Academy accept such a position he or she is suspended from his or her academic functions, and he or she cannot publicly use the title of Member of the Academy until this institutional office has come to an end.

### Part III

#### Scientific activity and operational instruments

##### Article 6 – Description of ordinary activities

The scientific and interdisciplinary activity of the Pontifical Academy for Life shall maintain a close connection with the bodies and institutions through which the Church is present in the world of the biomedical sciences, of health, and of healthcare organisations, also offering its collaboration to medical doctors and researchers (including those who are non-Catholics and non-Christians) who recognise that the dignity of man and the inviolability of human life from conception to natural death, as enunciated by the Magisterium of the Church, is the essential moral foundation of the science and art of medicine.

To achieve the aims of its Statutes (cf. Art. 1), the Pontifical Academy for Life:

- a) organises a General Assembly every year in which all the Members take part;
- b) convenes and coordinates the activity of work groups of a national and international character;
- c) studies the legislation in force in the various countries of the world, the directions of international health-care policy, and the principal currents of thought that bear upon the contemporary culture of life;
- d) publishes the results of its study and research and disseminates its cultural and operational proposals through publications and other instruments of mass communication;
- e) organises national and international meetings on bioethical questions and issues of great interest;
- f) organises initiatives that involve formation in bioethics, takes part in them, and offers its own contribution;
- g) participates with its representatives in the most important scientific, biomedical, juridical, political, philosophical, anthropological, charitable-welfare, moral and pastoral (etc.) initiatives pertaining to the aims of the Academy itself.

### Part IV

#### Financial Instruments

##### Article 7 – Financial resources

As an Institution supported by the Holy See, the Pontifical Academy for Life every year presents a budget for its ordinary and extraordinary activities to the Administration of the Patrimony of the Apostolic See, in accordance with current legislation.

#### §1 – The Foundation *Vitae Mysterium*

Resources provided by the Foundation *Vitae Mysterium* are primarily destined for the support of the ordinary or extraordinary activities of the Academy. In the case of sufficient availability of financial resources, a part of these resources can also be allocated to the funding of study grants and other initiatives for formation in bioethics, in particular for people from developing countries, or in regions where the culture of life is most in need of support.

#### Part V

#### Final Provisions

#### Article 8 – Regulations

In order to ensure the effective implementation of these Statutes, the President and the Chancellor, after hearing the opinions of the Governing Council, will submit the Regulations of the Pontifical Academy for Life to the Cardinal Secretary of State for his approval.

These Regulations shall contain, in addition to a list of positions and job descriptions of the Central Office, supplementary provisions relating to the structure and the working of the Academy.

This Statute is approved for five years. I order its promulgation through publication in the daily “L’Osservatore Romano” and subsequently in the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, entering into force on 1 January 2017.

From the Vatican, 18 October 2016.

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