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BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIEGE
PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHLIS

BOLLETTINO

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N. 180503d

Thursday 03.05.2018

Press Release of the Congregation for Catholic Education on the presentation of the Instruction on “Studies in Canon Law in the light of the reform of cases regarding the nullity of marriage”

In the light of the Motu Proprio *Mitis Iudex Dominus Iesus* and *Mitis et Misericors*, on the reform of canonical procedures for the causes of declaration of nullity of marriage, on 29 April 2018 the Congregation for Catholic Education, in its competence over the academic Institutions for Ecclesiastical Studies, and following approval by the Holy Father Francis, emanated a new Instruction intended to promote differentiated preparation, especially academic, for the various figures called upon to work in the ecclesiastical Tribunals, or who are involved in marriage and family counselling which requires adequate preparation in canon law.

While the ordinary path for the formation of future canonists, consistent with the Apostolic Constitution *Veritatis gaudium*, remains the licentiate in Canon Law, the Instruction requires that institutions of canon law also offer a diploma in Marriage and Procedural Law, especially for those who have obtained for just cause, from the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura, dispensation from the academic degree. For other workers in the ecclesiastical Tribunal, for whom the law does not require an academic degree, an academic path is also offered, which provides for a minimum preparation for Consultants in Marriage and Family pastoral consultants.

In addition, the new legislation emphasizes the necessary requirements that ensure the quality of existing institutions or those that will be erected or approved in the future. Among the innovations of the Instruction there is also the possibility of establishing “Departments of Canon Law” in the Faculties of Theology, the possibility of establishing chairs in canon law in the Faculties of Law of Catholic Universities, and the promotion of studies in canon law in the first cycle in a Faculty of Theology where the aforementioned discipline must be taught by a permanent teacher. In this regard the Instruction is intended to support and deepen the juridical culture of the Church.

Academic institutions will be required to comply with the new legislation from the beginning of the academic year 2019 to 2020.

Rome, 3 May 2018

