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Statute of the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life

Art. 1

The Dicastery is competent in those matters pertinent to the Apostolic See for the promotion of life and the apostolate of the lay faithful, for the pastoral care of the young, the family and its mission, following God's plan and for the protection and support of human life. For these purposes, in accordance with the principles of collegiality, synodality and subsidiarity, the Dicastery maintains relations with the Episcopal Conferences, local Churches and other ecclesial bodies, promoting exchange between them and offering its collaboration to promote values and initiatives related to the aforementioned matters.

Art. 2

The Dicastery is presided over by the Prefect, assisted by a Secretary, who may be a layperson, and by at least two lay under-Secretaries, and a large number of Officials, both clerics and laypersons, selected as far as possible from the different regions of the world, in accordance with the current norms of the Roman Curia.

Art. 3

§1. The Dicastery has its own members, including lay faithful, men and women, single and married, engaged in different fields of activity and from different parts of the world, thus reflecting the universal character of the Church.

§2. It has its own Consultors.

§3. The Dicastery fully complies with all the norms established for the Roman Curia.

Art. 4

It promotes and organizes international conferences and other initiatives related to the apostolate of the laity, to

the young, to the institution of marriage and to the reality of the family and of life in the Church, both concerning the human and social conditions of the laity, youth, family institution and of human life in society.

Art. 5

The Dicastery is to animate and encourage the promotion of the vocation and mission of the lay faithful in the Church and in the world, as individuals, married or not, and also as members belonging to associations, movements and communities. It also promotes studies to contribute to the doctrinal examination of themes and issues regarding the lay faithful.

Art. 6

§1 It promotes in the lay faithful an awareness of co-responsibility, by virtue of Baptism, for the life and mission of the Church, according to the different charisms received for common edification, with particular attention to the special mission of the lay faithful in animating and improving the ordering of temporal affairs (see *LG*, 31).

§2. In the spirit of the pastoral constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, which invites us to adopt as our own “the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age”, promotes all the initiatives concerning the evangelizing action of the lay faithful in various sectors of temporal affairs, taking into account the competence that other bodies of the Roman Curia may have in these same subjects.

§3. It also promotes the participation of the lay faithful in catechetical instruction, in liturgical and sacramental life, in missionary activity, in works of mercy, charity and human and social promotion. It also supports and encourages its active and responsible presence in parish and diocesan life, and in the advisory organs of governance present in the Church on a universal and particular level.

§4. It evaluates the initiatives of the Episcopal Conferences that ask the Holy See, according to the needs of the particular Churches, for the institution of new ministries and ecclesiastical offices.

Art. 7

§1. Within the sphere of its competence, the Dicastery accompanies the life and development of the aggregations of the faithful and of lay movements; it then erects those of an international character and approves or recognizes statutes, without prejudice to the competence of the Secretariat of State; it also deals with possible administrative appeals relating to the matters under the jurisdiction of the Dicastery.

§2. Concerning the Secular Third Orders and the associations of consecrated life, it is occupied only with matters relating to their apostolic activity.

Art. 8

It expresses the particular concern of the Church for the young, promoting their agency in the midst of the challenges of today’s world. It supports the initiatives of the Holy Father in the field of youth ministry and is at the service of the Episcopal Conferences, of international youth movements and associations, promoting their collaboration and organizing meetings on an international level. An important aspect of its activity is the preparation of the *World Youth Days*.

Art. 9

The Dicastery works to deepen the reflection on the relationship between men and women in their respective specificity, reciprocity, complementarity and equal dignity. Valuing the feminine “genius”, it offers a contribution to ecclesial reflection on the identity and mission of women in the Church and in society, promoting their

participation.

Art. 10

§1. In the light of the papal Magisterium, it promotes the pastoral care of the family, protects its dignity and its wellbeing based on the sacrament of marriage, and fosters its rights and responsibility in the Church and in civil society, so that the family institution can always better fulfil its functions both in the ecclesial and in the social sphere.

§2. Discern the signs of the times to value opportunities in favour of the family, take on with trust and evangelical wisdom the challenges that relate to it, and apply in today's society and in history the plan of God for marriage and the family. In this sense it promotes international conferences and events, in particular the *World Meeting of Families*.

§3. It monitors the activity of Catholic institutes, associations, movements and organizations, national and international, whose purpose is to serve the good of the family.

Art. 11

§1. It is occupied with research on doctrine on the family and its dissemination through adequate catechesis; in particular, it promotes studies on the spirituality of marriage and the family, and their formative implications.

§2. It offers guidelines for training programs for engaged couples preparing for marriage, and for young married couples. It expresses the pastoral care of the Church also in relation to so-called "irregular" situations (cf. *AL*, 296-306).

§3. It also offers guidelines for pastoral programs that support families in the formation of young people in faith and in ecclesial and civil life, with special attention to the poor and marginalized, as well as to intergenerational dialogue.

§4. It promotes the openness of families to the adoption and fostering of children and to the care of the elderly, making itself present in civil institutions to support these practices.

Art. 12

It is directly linked to the "Pontifical John Paul II Theological Institute for Marriage and Family Sciences", both with headquarters and affiliated institutes, to promote a common direction in marriage, family and life studies.

Art. 13

§1. Supports and coordinates initiatives in favour of responsible procreation, as well as for the protection of human life from conception to its natural end, bearing in mind the needs of the person in the various stages of evolution.

§2. Promotes and encourages organizations and associations that help women and families to welcome and cherish the gift of life, especially in the case of difficult pregnancies, and to prevent abortion. It also supports programs and initiatives aimed at helping women who have had abortions.

Art. 14

On the basis of Catholic moral doctrine and the Magisterium of the Church, it studies and promotes formation regarding the main issues of biomedicine and the law relative to human life, and on the developing ideologies

pertaining to human life itself and the reality of humankind

Art. 15

The Pontifical Academy for Life is connected with this Dicastery, which in relation to the issues and issues referred to in Art. 13 and 14, benefits from its competence.

This Statute is approved *ad experimentum*. I order that it be promulgated through publication on *L'Osservatore Romano* and then published also in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, entering into force on 13 May 2018.
