



CATHOLIC DIOCESE
OF LEXINGTON

Roman Catholic Diocese of Lexington, KY

CATHOLIC APOSTOLATES OF THE FAITHFUL

July 2021

I. Introduction

In *Lumen Gentium* (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), the Second Vatican Council made it clear that everyone in the Church, both clergy and laity alike, is called to holiness (39). One way this call to holiness is expressed in the world is through the apostolate. Apostolate refers to all the faithful who, entrusted by God, by virtue of their Baptism and Confirmation, have the right and duty, individually or grouped in associations, to collaborate in the mission of evangelizing the world.

This document is directed to organized private associations of the faithful at the diocese level, herein referred to as Catholic Apostolates of the Faithful (although some measures also apply to public associations of the faithful). Specifically, the purpose of this document is to articulate the relationship between a Catholic Apostolate of the Faithful and the Catholic Diocese of Lexington. It is not exhaustive as it accompanies the Code of Canon Law (especially canons 298-329, CIC), the teaching authority of the Catholic Church and the local ordinary.

II. Forms of the Catholic Apostolate

A. Personal Apostolate - an apostolate of prayer and personal example that each Catholic has a mission to fulfill throughout the course of her/his life.

B. Organized Apostolate - an association of Catholics engaged in a specific aspect of the Church's ministry that is...

1. organized by clergy **or** lay faithful **or** both clergy and lay faithful;
2. public **or** private in character; and
3. operated within specific territories (internationally when established by the Holy See, nationally within the conference of the bishops, a diocese, or a parish).

III. Types of Organized Apostolate

A. Organized apostolate that arises from the institutional Church's formal ministerial activities at the parish level. Examples include prayer and liturgy groups, bible study groups, youth groups, etc.

B. Organized apostolate that is a public association of the faithful, which is erected by competent ecclesiastical authority (canon 301.§3, CIC).

1. In the decree that establishes such an association, the competent ecclesiastical authority must bestow a public juridic personality on the association and grant it a mission by which it formally acts in the name of the Church (canon 313, CIC).
2. Only the Holy See, a conference of bishops or a diocesan bishop has the authority to approve its statutes and erect a public association of the faithful (canon 312, 314, CIC.)
3. Only a public association of the faithful can receive a mission to teach Christian doctrine in the name of the Church, promote public worship or pursue a purpose which by nature is reserved to ecclesiastical authority (canon 30 §1, CIC.)
4. As a public association, the members act in the name of the Church when fulfilling the purpose of the apostolate.

C. Organized apostolate that is a private association of the faithful, which is an independent entity, distinct from the institutional Church that collaborates in the mission of the Catholic Church. A private association of the faithful may operate with or without the authorization of the competent authority.

D. The public and some private apostolates, which have the approval of a competent authority, have their own federal tax status and identity. In the Catholic Diocese of Lexington, examples of such apostolates include: Fr. Beiting Appalachian Mission Center, Centro de San Juan Diego, and the Kentucky Congolese Catholic Association.

II. Mission of a Catholic Apostolates of the Faithful (Private Association)

Catholic apostolates of the faithful, or organized private associations of the faithful at the diocesan level, exist to foster holiness, promote public worship and Christian teaching, evangelize, engage in acts of charity, and infuse the temporal order with the spirit of Christianity.

III. Recognition as a Catholic Apostolate of the Faithful (Private Association)

A. Catholic apostolates of the faithful operating within in the geographic boundaries of the Catholic Diocese of Lexington cannot assume the name Catholic without the expressed written consent and approval of the local Bishop (canon 216, CIC).

B. The Catholic Diocese of Lexington does not recognize Catholic apostolates of the faithful without having the statutes of that Catholic apostolate of the faithful first reviewed and accepted by a competent ecclesiastical authority.

IV. Requirements for Recognition as a Catholic Apostolate of the Faithful (Private Association)

A Catholic apostolate of the faithful must have:

- a name that aligns with the association's purpose and
- a set of statutes that...
 - define the purpose or social objective of the association;
 - delineate its governing structure;
 - articulate the conditions required for membership;
 - establish a code of conduct; and
 - provide for the ongoing formation of its members.

V. Ecclesial Oversight of Public and Private Associations of the Faithful

A. The purpose of ecclesial oversight by a competent ecclesiastical authority is to promote the common good, protect against the infringement of rights and duties, and provide a venue of vindication when necessary (canon 223, CIC).

B. Ecclesial oversight allows competent ecclesiastical authority to visit a Catholic apostolate of the faithful in accord with the norms of law and the statutes of that Catholic Apostolate of the faithful (canon 305.§1, CIC).

C. Ecclesiastical authority must respect the autonomy of a Catholic Apostolate of the faithful, but has the obligation to "take care that their energies are not dissipated and that the exercise of their apostolate is ordered toward the common good (canon 323.§2, CIC)." It also has the right "to be watchful that the goods are used for the purposes of the apostolate" (canon 325.§1, CIC.)

D. Due to the public nature of public associations of the faithful, the competent ecclesiastical authority who established said public association of the faithful, has direct supervision over it.

1. International Apostolates of the faithful are subject to the Holy See.
2. National Apostolates of the Faithful are subject to the Conference of the Bishops
3. Diocesan Apostolates of the Faithful are subject to the local ordinary.

E. Recognized and approved public and private associations of the faithful operating in the Catholic Diocese of Lexington are subject to the bishop of Lexington.

1. Because public and private associations of the faithful must have a common purpose congruent with the mission of the Church, the bishop has the obligation of vigilance over all in matters of faith, morals and ecclesiastical discipline.
2. The bishop has the duty and right to inspect the norms and statutes of public and private associations of the faithful.
3. For public associations of the faithful, the bishop has the right to confirm the election of the moderator, install a moderator presented or name a moderator in accord with the approved statutes; name the chaplain or ecclesiastical assistant (canon 317.§1, CIC); designate a trustee to temporarily direct the association (canon 318.§1, CIC); and remove the moderator for a just cause (canon 318.§2, CIC).
4. For public associations of the faithful, the bishop must approve any revision or change to the statutes of an association; direct and audit the administration of goods and reception of offerings and alms (canon 319, CIC); and suppress the association or otherwise declare it extinct in accord with law (canons 320, 120§, CIC).
5. A Catholic apostolate of the faithful, or organized private associations of the faithful, is obligated to submit an annual report to the chancery describing their activities, funding, and expenditures.