



PONTIFICAL COMMITTEE FOR
INTERNATIONAL EUCHARISTIC CONGRESSES

STATUTE

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HISTORICAL NOTE

Eucharistic Congresses began during the second half of the 19th century in France. This was thanks to the incentive taken by a lay-woman Emilie Tamisier (1834 - 1910), who under the inspiration of St Peter Julian Eymard (1811-1868), called the «Apostle of the Eucharist», organised the first International Eucharistic Congress at Lille.

This undertaking, in which she was assisted by other lay persons, priests and bishops, received the blessing of Pope Leo XIII. The theme of this congress was: «The Eucharist saves the world». It was believed in fact that a renewal of faith in the presence of Christ in the Eucharist would provide the remedy for ignorance and religious indifference.

The first congresses were inspired by a lively faith in the real presence of the person of Jesus Christ in the sacrament of the Eucharist. As a consequence, Eucharistic worship was expressed particularly in solemn adoration and in grand processions intended to celebrate the triumph of the Eucharist. Following the decrees of Pope St Pius X on frequent

communion, *Sacra Tridantina Synodus* (1905), and on the communion of children, *Quam singularis* (1910), the preparation and celebration of congresses were occasions for fostering the frequent communion of adults and the first communion of children.

During the pontificate of Pius XI Eucharistic Congresses became international in that they began to be celebrated in turn in all the continents. They thus took on a missionary dimension and were focused on «re-evangelisation» (an expression used for the grass-roots preparation at the Congress of Manila in 1937).

Beginning with the 37th Congress celebrated at Munich in 1960 International Eucharistic Congresses came to be called *Statio Orbis*, with the celebration of the Eucharist seen as the centre and summit of all the various expressions and forms of Eucharistic devotion.

Later, the Second Vatican Council's Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* of 1963, the Instruction *Eucharisticum Mysterium* of 1967 (n. 67) and in a particular way the Roman

Ritual *De Sacra Communionem et de Cultu Mysterii Eucharistici extra Missam* of 1973 (nn. 109-112), explained the new image and pointed out the criteria to be observed in the preparation and celebration of Eucharistic Congresses, which from that time on gave attention to the problems of the contemporary world, to ecumenism and also, in their preparation, to inter-religious dialogue.

A permanent Committee was set up with the approval of Pope Leo XIII in 1881. It was accorded the title of «Pontifical Committee» by Pope John Paul II in 1986.

On 24 December 2009 the Holy Father approved the new Statute and ordered that they be effective immediately (Segreteria di Stato, Prot. n. 90-810/P; 7 gennaio 2010).

STATUTE

I. Name and Offices

Art. 1 The Pontifical Committee for International Eucharistic Congresses is instituted and erected by the Holy See and under its authority, with offices in Vatican City State.

II. Purpose and Means

Art. 2 The Pontifical Committee has for its purpose to make ever better known, loved and served our Lord Jesus Christ in his Eucharistic Mystery, the centre of the Church's life and of her mission for the salvation of the world.

Art. 3 For this purpose:

a) it sponsors and encourages the periodic celebration of International Eucharistic Congresses and is available to assist in the celebration of National Eucharistic Congresses;

b) it requests Episcopal Conferences¹ to appoint National Delegates who work in the preparation of the Congresses and who, wherever needed, constitute National Eucharistic Committees, with the approval and assistance of local ecclesiastical authorities;

c) it asks the National Delegates or the National Committees to supply documentation and information concerning the Eucharistic movement in their respective countries;

d) it is available to assist in encouraging and coordinating, in preparation for Eucharistic Congresses, the activity of groups of the faithful aimed at increasing devotion to the Eucharistic Mystery in all its aspects, from the celebration of the Eucharist to its worship *extra Missam*.

III. Composition and Areas of Competence

Art. 4 The Pontifical Committee is made up of:

a) the President, appointed by the Holy Father, who remains in office for five years and may be reappointed;

b) the other members, appointed by the Holy Father, who elect the Vice-President from among their own number.

Art. 5 The Pontifical Committee carries out its work through:

a) the Plenary Assembly;

b) the Presidential Council.

Art. 6 The Plenary Assembly is made up of:

a) the members of the Pontifical Committee;

b) the National Delegates;

c) other persons invited by the President in accordance with Article 10, h.

Art. 7 *A)* The Plenary Assembly is convened by the President every two years:

a) it examines and approves the report made by the President on the Pontifical Committee's activities;

b) it studies and evaluates the reports submitted by the National Delegates regarding National Eucharistic Congresses and other local Eucharistic events;

c) it deliberates on the motions and proposals made by the members and entrusts their execution to the Presidential Council;

d) it recommends to Episcopal Conferences the implementation of resolutions adopted at International Eucharistic Congresses;

e) it organizes participation in the International Eucharistic Congress.

B) The members of the Pontifical Committee may, by a majority vote, request the President to convene an extraordinary meeting.

Art. 8 The Presidential Council is made up of:

- a)* the President of the Pontifical Committee;
- b)* the Vice-President;
- c)* the members appointed by the Holy Father.

Art. 9 The Presidential Council is convened by the President at least once a year:

- a)* it examines proposals for the site of the Congress;
- b)* it deliberates on initiatives intended to further the work of the Pontifical Committee in conformity with the Statutes;
- c)* it examines issues related to the preparation of the Congresses;
- d)* after the site of the Congress has been decided by the Pope, it examines proposals for the Congress theme;
- e)* it examines the working document and the programme of the Congress prior to their publication.

Art. 10 The President of the Pontifical Committee:

- a)* convenes and presides over the Plenary Assembly and the Presidential Council;
- b)* provides for the execution of the decisions made by the Plenary Assembly and of the Presidential Council;
- c)* supervises preparations for the Congresses;
- d)* presents to the Presidential Council the various requests and proposals regarding the eventual site for the Congress, which are then submitted to the Holy Father for his consideration and decision;
- e)* submits to the Pope the theme and the programme for Congresses following their examination by the Presidential Council;
- f)* reports to the Pope on the Congress after it has taken place;
- g)* selects two or more Councillors from among the members of the Pontifical Committee;

h) is able to invite members of the Local Committee and other competent persons both to the Plenary Assembly and the Presidential Council;

i) represents the Pontifical Committee and acts in its name in canonical and civil matters.

Art. 11 The Vice-President:

- a)* works with the President, either directly or within the Presidential Council;
- b)* represents the President when the need arises.

Art. 12 The Councillors: work with the President.

Art. 13 The Secretariat is made up of the Officials of the Pontifical Committee and:

- a)* draws up and communicates, in agreement with the President, the agenda for the meetings of the Plenary Assembly and of the Presidential Council;
- b)* records the minutes of these meetings;
- c)* executes, in accordance with the directives of the President, the decisions taken at the meetings;
- d)* presents to the Plenary Assembly reports on the activities of the Pontifical Committee;
- e)* maintains contact with the National Delegates and the National Committees;
- f)* assists the Local Committee in such ways as may be necessary;
- g)* maintains and organizes the archives of the Pontifical Committee;
- h)* is at the disposal of the President for whatever missions he entrusts to it in accordance with the aims of the Pontifical Committee.

Art. 14 The permanent staff of the Pontifical Committee, which is dependent for retribution upon A.P.S.A and subject to the General Regulation of the Roman Curia, is determined in accordance with Article 9 of the same General Regulation of the Roman Curia.

IV. The Preparation and Celebration of International Eucharistic Congresses

Art. 15 Each Eucharistic Congress must be considered a *Statio Orbis* which, both in its catechetical preparation and its actual celebration, must clearly emphasize the central place of the Eucharist in the life of the Church and in her mission *pro mundi vita*.

International Eucharistic Congresses are celebrated if possible every four years, in a city chosen by the Holy Father and in accordance with his indications.

Art. 16 Once the site of the Congress has been chosen, the Diocesan Bishop establishes a Local Committee of which he is the President. The National Delegate or the President of the National Committee is a member by right of the Local Committee. From the outset the Local Committee cooperates closely with the Pontifical Committee.

Art. 17 The theme of the Congress, which must be approved by the Pope, shall be studied by a commission, chosen by common agreement, consisting of specialists in scripture, liturgy, theology, anthropology, pastoral theology and ecumenism.

Art. 18 A study commission sees to the drafting of a working document meant to promote theological reflection, spiritual renewal and the good of the particular Church. Before publication it is submits the text to the Pontifical Committee.

Duly translated into the main Congress languages, the document is then sent to National Delegates, if possible two years prior to the celebration of the Congress.

Art. 19 The National Delegates, with the approval and cooperation of the ecclesiastical authorities, are responsible for the pastoral preparation of the

faithful in their respective countries and for ensuring a fitting participation in the Congress.

Art. 20 In the preparation of the Congress emphasis is to be given to the importance of:

a) an intensive catechesis on the Eucharist as the Paschal Mystery of Christ, who is truly, really and substantially present in the sacred Species and alive and at work in the Church, his Body;

b) a more active and conscious participation in the Liturgy, aimed at fostering a religious hearing of the Word of God, self-oblation and a fraternal sense of community;

c) a careful choice of initiatives and a diligent carrying out of social works so that the Eucharistic table will be a sign of solidarity and sharing with the poor, and the proclamation of a more just and fraternal world in expectation of the Lord's coming.²

Art. 21 The different stages of this preparation are to be determined for each particular Church by the competent authorities, within the context of their own pastoral planning.

Art. 22 In the year preceding the International Eucharistic Congress, should they consider it appropriate, the particular Churches may organize Congresses as a way of orienting the People of God towards this event of the universal Church.

Art. 23 For the actual celebration of the Eucharist Congress the criteria to be followed are those set out in the *Ordo de Communionem et de Cultu Mysterii Eucharistici extra Missam*, n. 112:

a) the celebration of the Eucharist must be the centre and summit of all the various manifestations and forms of piety;

b) the celebrations of the Word of God, the catechetical sessions and the plenary meetings must all be directed

towards a deeper understanding of the proposed theme and a clearer explanation of its practical aspects, with a view to putting them concretely into effect;

c) a fitting programme of gatherings should be arranged for prayer and prolonged adoration before the Blessed Sacrament exposed in specific churches particularly suitable for this pious exercise;

d) the procession with the Blessed Sacrament through the streets of the city, accompanied by hymns and prayers, is to take place in accordance with the norms for Eucharistic processions (nn. 101-108), with due consideration for the social and religious situation in that locale.³

Art. 24 During the celebration of the Congress the effective Presidency is assumed by the Pope's Special Envoy or Legate.

Art. 25 Participation in the Congress is to be facilitated for those groups of the faithful from the different nations who took active part in its preparation.

Special sections are to be organized for celebrations, prayers, lectures, seminars and cultural events in various languages.

To this end, the National Delegates shall meet at least a year previous to the Congress, at the invitation of the Local Committee and the Pontifical Committee.

Art. 26 The official announcement of the site chosen for the Eucharistic Congress is made by the Pope or by his Legate on the occasion of the *Statio Orbis*.

Art. 27 The Secretary of the Local Committee shall compile the acts of the Congress. A copy of these, together with other relevant materials (printed or audiovisual), is to be forwarded to the Secretariat of the Pontifical Committee for its archives.

Art. 28 An official Report on the International Eucharistic Congress will

be made by the President of the Pontifical Committee in a circular letter to the Episcopal Conferences.

V. After the Congress

Art. 29 To ensure that the Eucharist becomes the «source and summit» of the Church's life and mission, the Pontifical Committee is available to cooperate with the Local Committee and with the competent Liturgical and Pastoral Offices of the various Episcopal Conferences in helping to make the celebration of each Eucharistic Congress bear fruit.

VI. Finances

Art. 30 The expenses relative to the preparation and celebration of the Congress are borne by the Local Committee.

Art. 31 Free donations or grants made by Episcopal Conferences, or by other groups or individuals, will go to increase the fund which has been established at the Pontifical Committee. This fund is used to subsidize the participation of National Delegates from poorer countries at the statutory acts of the Pontifical Committee and at International Eucharistic Congresses.

1. All references to the Episcopal Conferences are applicable also to the Eastern Synodal Patriarchates.
2. Cf. Instruction *Eucharisticum Mysterium* (1967); *Institutio generalis Missalis Romani* (1969); Roman Ritual *De Communione et de Cultu Mysterii Eucharistici extra Missam* (1973); Encyclical Letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (2003); Instruction *Redemptionis Sacramentum* (2004); Apostolic Letter *Mane Nobiscum Domine* (2004); Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis* (2007).
3. Roman Ritual *De Communione et de Cultu Mysterii Eucharistici extra Missam* (1973), editio typica.