

Missionary Families of Christ

International Statutes

Preamble

We are a deeply privileged people, having been shown God's mercy and grace, accepted even in our sinfulness, and used as His instruments to proclaim Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit to the whole world.

We have been called to community, in order that we might help each other grow in holiness and live out our covenant, and in order that we might serve the Lord in fullness of gifts and in the strength of His Spirit.

We are committed to live for God and to help build His kingdom on earth, even as we look forward to being with Him eternally in heaven.

Statutes

1.0 Name, Nature and Purpose

1.1 The Association shall be called MISSIONARY FAMILIES OF CHRIST (MFC).

1.1.1 The Association may, in different countries and/or dioceses, use any other appropriate name approved by the Servant General.

1.2 MFC is a private association of Christ's faithful committed to the pursuit of holiness and the work of evangelization, family life renewal and work with the poor.

1.3 MFC is a missionary body, and the families and individuals that make up this association are to strive to be instruments of the Holy Spirit in renewing the face of the earth.

2.0 Vision and Mission

2.1 The family is God's work and MFC is called to defend and strengthen it. MFC is called to bring families back to the plan of God. It is called to bring the Lord's strength and light to those who are struggling to be truly Christian families in the modern world.

2.2 MFC works for Christian family renewal at various levels—the individual, the family, the larger community.

2.2.1 *Individual renewal.* MFC takes the basic message of Christianity and proclaims it anew so that those who hear it can make a renewed commitment to God in a way that will enable them to participate more fully with the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives and in the world.

- 2.2.2 *Family renewal.* As individuals renew their commitment to God, they also renew their commitment to their spouse and to their Christian family life. Gradually, the new life that they find in the Lord filters down to all their family relationships.
- 2.2.3 *Church renewal.* As individual families are renewed, they form a network of committed Christian families that not only support one another but also strengthen the local churches of which they are members.
 - 2.2.3.1 MFC is committed to work for Catholic re-evangelization first and foremost but looks to the ideal of Christian unity and will also serve the other Christian Churches whenever possible, in full respect and in conformity with the Catholic identity of the association.
 - 2.2.3.2 MFC is committed to building up vibrant Christian communities in the parishes and dioceses where its members congregate.
- 2.2.4 *Societal renewal.* MFC, in raising holy Christian men and women, likewise raises responsible members of society, who seek to apply their faith in the daily situations they encounter, being salt and light in the world.
- 2.3 MFC carries out its mission of renewal by focusing on three basic areas—evangelization and mission, family life renewal, and work with the poor.
 - 2.3.1 *Evangelization and mission.* MFC exists to evangelize. Every MFC member is expected to be an evangelizer and is to live an evangelistic lifestyle.
 - 2.3.1.1 MFC is a missionary community. It is committed to bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth, and in this regard, will field missionaries on an ongoing basis.
 - 2.3.2 *Family life renewal.* MFC’s work of evangelization, formation and support is situated in the context of vibrant Christian family living.
 - 2.3.2.1 MFC is committed to the defense and strengthening of families and of Christian family values.
 - 2.3.2.2 MFC places a particular emphasis on promoting and defending the Culture of Life.
 - 2.3.3 *Work with the poor.* MFC is committed to work for the liberation of the human person from the chains of personal and corporate sin, ignorance, poverty and injustice, through its work with the poor.
- 3.0 Our Core Values**
 - 3.1 Our Core Values describe who we are and what we are called to do in the world. They provide parameters and constant guideposts in our moving on in our life and mission.
 - 3.2 MFC has 7 Core Values.
 - 3.2.1 Centered on Christ.
 - 3.2.2 Evangelistic and missionary.

- 3.2.3 Focused on the family.
- 3.2.4 Being community.
- 3.2.5 Living a preferential option for the poor.
- 3.2.6 Exercising servant leadership.
- 3.2.7 Being a servant to the Church.

4.0 Membership

- 4.1 Membership in MFC is open to any heterosexual Catholic couple, whose marriage is canonically valid, and to other Catholic individuals. Such individuals may be children, youth, single persons, widows, widowers and separated or divorced provided they are not civilly remarried.
 - 4.1.1 Though a Catholic community, MFC is open to membership by non-Catholic Christians, who can join as associate members. Associate members can participate fully in the non-sacramental life and mission of MFC and must recognize and defer to the Catholic nature of the community. Non-Catholic associates, though remaining faithful to their Church, have to accept, respect, and defer to the principles and teachings of the Catholic Church on marriage, human sexuality and the family.
 - 4.1.2 MFC also looks to providing pastoral care for those who in one way or another cannot avail of regular membership, such as those in irregular unions.
- 4.2 Other forms of membership may be authorized by the Servant General, such as for clerics and the consecrated, or for auxiliaries and affiliates.
- 4.3 Those who want to join MFC go through a seminar called a Christian Life Seminar (CLS) for adults, or a Youth Camp for young adults. The CLS and Youth Camp are integrated courses leading to a renewed understanding of God’s call to Christians, to a personal response of accepting Jesus as Savior and Lord, and to receiving a renewed outpouring of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Young children also join MFC through a Kids Camp.
 - 4.3.1 After the CLS or Youth Camp, those who finish are considered underway members, and after the Covenant Recollection (CR) are invited to join MFC as full members, demonstrating their commitment by accepting the MFC covenant.
- 4.4 Membership may be terminated by the leadership for any of the following reasons:
 - 4.4.1 Serious unrepented wrongdoing.
 - 4.4.2 Gross unfaithfulness to the covenant of MFC.
 - 4.4.3 Public opposition to MFC teachings and culture, as well as official Church teachings.
 - 4.4.4 Ongoing disruption of good order in the community.
 - 4.4.5 Any other act that would seriously undermine the life and mission of MFC.

4.5 The Servant General may notify rules to ensure due process and right of appeal.

4.6 Any member may voluntarily leave MFC at any time and for any reason.

5.0 Corporate Life and Formation

5.1 The Community of MFC consists of several Sections according to the state of life of the members. Thus, we have Kids, Youth, Singles, Young Couples, Couples, Handmaids and Servants.

5.2 Those who become members of MFC are made part of a small cell group called a household. The household members meet regularly for mutual support and encouragement in the Christian life.

5.2.1 The household meetings, normally held in the homes of the group members on rotation basis, would normally involve some time for prayers, a time for sharing or discussion, and finally some time for fellowship.

5.3 All members undergo continuing formation both in the Christian life and in the life and mission of MFC.

5.4 Members of MFC are related to one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. As such, their relationship is not to be functional but should reflect the intimacy of Christian love, caring and sharing.

6.0 Organization

6.1 The household is the basic cell grouping in MFC. It is in the household where members share their lives more intimately and support one another in their spiritual growth.

6.2 Households form a unit, units form a chapter, chapters make up an area. All these form a pyramidal structure of pastoral care and governance.

6.3 The pastoral groupings basically conform to territorial areas.

6.4 MFC may establish itself as a foundation or corporation or formal association, in accordance with local and/or national laws, for purposes of conducting transactions as a juridical entity, under any appropriate name. Such juridical personality however does not supersede the more basic reality that MFC is a spiritual movement and a Christian community with its own organization, government and patterns of life.

7.0 Servant Leadership and Governance

7.1 There are many levels of leadership in MFC. Whatever the level, it is to be a servant leadership, following the example of Jesus.

7.1.1 All servant leaders take responsibility for the life and mission of the body. As such, all servant leaders must work as a cohesive team, relating with loyalty as brothers to one another, always acting in charity.

7.2 All decisions of the community are made by the designated servant leader responsible for governance in communion with those servant leaders who are to assist him with governance.

- 7.3 Servant leaders at the level of Chapter Servants and above are considered Seniors.
- 7.4 The Servant General (SG) acts as keeper of the charism and exercises overall leadership and governance of the life and mission of the worldwide community.
 - 7.4.1 To provide personal pastoral cover, the Servant General has a priest as Spiritual Director. In addition, other seniors provide fraternal correction as needed.
 - 7.4.2 The founder, Francisco A. Padilla, is the first Servant General.
 - 7.4.3 The founder serves as Servant General until he dies or voluntarily steps down for reasons of health or incapacity.
- 7.5 The Servant General appoints individuals who will assist him in the leadership and governance of MFC. The Servant General would normally undertake a process of consultation with other seniors prior to appointments.
 - 7.5.1 The Servant General appoints an International Body of Counselors (IBC), whose members assist him with wisdom, understanding, direction and discernment in establishing worldwide policies and making other decisions.
 - 7.5.2 The Servant General is assisted in governing the worldwide community by Servant Councils in the different countries (or by Country Servants), by Area Councils in the territorial subdivisions of a country (or by Area Servants), and Chapter Servants within a particular area.
 - 7.5.3 The Servant General may also appoint other seniors to whom he would delegate authority to govern.
 - 7.5.4 Servant leaders are chosen on the basis of capability, pastoral experience and growth in holiness and discipleship. Servant leaders are not chosen merely on the basis of seniority in MFC membership, experience or leadership in other religious organizations, or leadership in secular organizations.
 - 7.5.5 Servant leaders may be removed if it becomes obvious that they are no longer able to carry out their responsibilities effectively. Such removal is done with due and just process, including the right to appeal, for which the Servant General may notify rules.
- 7.6 When the founder dies or has voluntarily stepped down as Servant General, a successor as Servant General will be elected by a minimum seventy percent (70%) vote of all those physically present in an Electoral College, the eligible members of which are: (1) all members of the IBC, (2) all Coordinators down to the level of Country Coordinator, (3) all Country Servants of countries with at least 300 MFC members, (4) members of the Servant Council of the Philippines, (5) heads of the different Sections of the Community in the Philippines, and (6) spouses of all the above. Persons who are listed more than once will have only one vote.

- 7.6.1 In the event no candidate secures the required 70% after six ballots, the required majority may be reduced to 60% for the next three ballots and thereafter to 51%.
- 7.6.2 The founder has the option of appointing the Servant General to succeed him, in which case there is no election. On the other hand, the founder also has the other option of designating a list of candidates that can be voted on by the Electoral College per statute 7.6, in which case no further nominations will be entertained.
 - 7.6.2.1 Subsequent Servant Generals have no such options as in statute 7.6.2.
- 7.6.3 The Servant General is a male member of any nationality.
 - 7.6.3.1 If the elected Servant General does not live in the Philippines, which functions as the center of the worldwide work of MFC, he may continue to live where he is (outside the Philippines) but will have to visit the Philippines, which is the center of the worldwide MFC community, at least twice a year.
- 7.6.4 A Servant General so elected will have a term of seven (7) years, subject to a second term of another seven years if re-elected. He is ineligible for a third successive term. However, he may be elected again after having been out of office for at least three (3) years. Thereafter, the two successive terms and hiatus of three years apply.
- 7.6.5 The Servant General can be removed for any of the reasons cited in statute 4.4.
 - 7.6.5.1 70% of the members of those listed in statute 7.6 may make a written request to the Philippine Country Servant to remove the Servant General. The Philippine Country Servant will then, within 60 days, call for an extraordinary meeting of the IBC to consider the same. The IBC voting unanimously may remove the Servant General and call for fresh elections or may reject the request.
- 7.6.6 When a Servant General dies or voluntarily steps down or his term of seven years ends, the process of election in statute 7.6 is followed.
 - 7.6.6.1 For logistical reasons and to ensure smooth transition of leadership, elections may be held not more than 9 months prior to the end of the term of the incumbent Servant General and must be completed not later than 6 months after the death or resignation of a Servant General.
- 7.6.7 The members of the IBC, under the chairmanship of the Philippines Country Servant, formulate the guidelines for such elections, unless there are existing guidelines approved by the Servant General.
 - 7.6.7.1 The Philippines Country Servant functions as overseer of the worldwide MFC community during the transition election period. As such, he oversees day-to-day life and mission, as well as the election of the Servant General. He may not make any significant changes in the life, mission and culture of the community. Further, he cannot make any appointment of any senior that is subject to the Servant General's approval.

7.7 The Servant General appoints his own International Body of Counselors (IBC) and chooses two among them to be his general assistants.

8.0 Finances

8.1 The work of MFC is generally financed through the voluntary contributions of its members.

8.1.1 Other means of raising funds may be utilized upon the approval of the respective Servant Councils of the different countries.

8.1.2 MFC worldwide operates on the principle of one body, one fund. Funds are generally handled autonomously by the different countries and areas. However, the Servant General oversees the judicious use of funds worldwide and may exercise his discretion to allocate funds for mission work anywhere. Similarly, Servant Councils (or in their absence, Country Servants) may exercise their discretion to allocate their country funds from one area to another area or mission.

8.1.3 MFC in the different countries should look to supporting the worldwide work with their funds as they are able. A contribution to the International Mission Fund of at least 10% of the annual receipts is encouraged.

8.2 MFC members are encouraged to also contribute generously to the material and financial needs of their parish.

9.0 MFC as a Servant to the Catholic Church

9.1 MFC seeks to be a servant to and lay arm of the Catholic Church in the work of evangelization and family life renewal.

9.2 MFC will live out its life and mission in communion with the bishops.

9.2.1 MFC looks to having a Spiritual Adviser appointed by the bishop for the MFC group within his diocese. Such Spiritual Adviser may be the bishop himself, or at his option, a priest or religious appointed by him. MFC also looks to having a Spiritual Adviser for the MFC group within a parish.

9.2.2 MFC looks to the bishops, in their role as shepherds, to help provide for the spiritual formation of its members.

9.3 MFC is committed to the work of renewing and strengthening Catholics within the Church.

9.4 MFC will conform to, support and defend orthodox Church doctrines and stands on issues.

9.4.1 MFC is committed to rise in defense of the Catholic Church against the forces that seek to destroy or weaken her.

9.4.2 MFC will be open to and will pursue ecumenical relationships in accordance with the posture of the local Church hierarchy. MFC will also be open to inter-religious dialogue, under the guidance of the Church hierarchy.

10.0 The Worldwide Community of MFC

- 10.1 The work of MFC may be established in any country throughout the world.
 - 10.1.1 While MFC is established as an international, canonical, private association of Christ's faithful, it submits these statutes to the local Ordinaries and National Episcopal Conferences for recognition at Diocesan and National levels. Pending such recognition, communities established in different countries are affiliated to MFC Philippines.
 - 10.1.2 The different MFC communities throughout the world form part of the one worldwide MFC community.
- 10.2 The Philippines functions as the center for the work of MFC throughout the world, it being the country of its historical founding.
- 10.3 Communities within the worldwide MFC community have the same Vision & Mission, Covenant and Core Values. They adopt the same basic formation, pastoral structures of support (households), and patterns of life. Alternative formulations that are within the precepts of the MFC vision and mission can be allowed upon the approval of the Servant General.
 - 10.3.1 A MFC community in a particular country and/or diocese can formulate its own statutes as the need arises. Such statutes should be in line with and not contradictory in any way to these International Statutes. Such individual country-specific and/or diocesan-specific statutes should have the approval of the Servant General.
- 10.4 A MFC community within a particular country will decide on its own specific plans and strategies with which to carry out the MFC vision and mission, but always in line with MFC's worldwide direction and thrusts.
 - 10.4.1 MFC communities in the different countries should look to local cultural adaptation, without compromising the essentials of the MFC life, mission, culture and values.
- 10.5 Being one worldwide community, the work and well-being of every MFC community is a matter of concern for all others. All MFC communities should be open to extending support and cooperation to other MFC communities in other countries.
 - 10.5.1 MFC communities should be open to sharing their resources with other MFC communities. This would include human pastoral resources, finances, teachings, effective programs and strategies, etc.
 - 10.5.2 MFC communities in the different countries should take initiative in pursuing the MFC vision and mission, and should work towards being self-sufficient, self-reliant and self-supporting as to the required human, financial and logistical resources.
- 10.6 An International Core of Seniors (ICS) is established in order to further the worldwide mission of MFC and to strengthen the fraternal bonds among its top leaders, especially those of different nationalities, and to encourage

frequent exchanges of best practices and help in maximizing the pursuit of our life and mission.

11.0 Miscellaneous

11.1 Rules and Ordinances under these Statutes may be approved by the Servant General in consultation with the IBC.

11.2 As the supreme guardian of the charism, the power to interpret these statutes and all rules thereunder shall vest in the Servant General.

12.0 Amendments

12.1 Amendments to these statutes may be made by the founder, in consultation with the IBC.

12.2 After the founder, amendments may be proposed by any senior, and are adopted upon the approval of the Servant General, with the concurrence by majority vote of the IBC.

12.3 All amendments will require the approval of the Holy See for continuance of recognition of MFC as an International Private Association under Canon 299(3).

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