



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

Bishops Commission for Canon Law

Bishop Brian Finnigan (Chairman)
Bishop Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM Conv
Bishop Robert McGuckin
Archbishop Philip Wilson

GUIDELINES FOR APPROVING ASSOCIATIONS OF THE FAITHFUL COMING INTO A DIOCESE

Public associations of Christ's faithful are erected by competent ecclesiastical authority: the Holy See, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, or, in his own diocese, the diocesan Bishop. Neither a diocesan Administrator nor an auxiliary bishop is competent to erect a public association (c. 312 §1).

Private associations exist by private agreement among Christ's faithful H(c.299). Private associations have no formal recognition in the Church unless their statutes have been reviewed by the competent ecclesiastical authority.

All associations are subject to supervision in relation to matters of liturgy, the coordination of the apostolate and the teaching of the faith (c.305 §1). All associations, not only diocesan associations, are subject to supervision of the local Ordinary to the extent that they work in the diocese (c.305 §2).

If the Bishop is to coordinate the apostolate in the diocese he should know what are the aims and works of each group. Even groups that have been approved at an international level require the Bishop's approval. Diocesan pastoral care is within the competence of the local Bishop (c. 383).

From time to time a number of groups come to a diocese. Some of these groups may have the status of a Public Association of the Faithful in another Australian diocese or in a diocese of a particular Church in another country; others may be private associations. Even though a group may have recognition in an overseas Diocese or a Diocese in Australia, it does not automatically have approval in other dioceses. In other words, acceptance by one bishop does not give them approval for ministry in another diocese without the approval of the diocesan bishop of the latter diocese.

Before giving approval for visits or temporary stays of such groups, it is necessary to view any ecclesiastical approvals they might have and their statutes. A bishop who gives an approval for an association in his diocese, in fact, gives approval in perpetuity.

Necessary state clearances and other probity checks need to be given consideration.

The Bishop will choose whether to give or withhold approval of the group's making an appeal for money.

Even though the Bishop might give approval to a group for a temporary visit, it would seem advisable that the local Parish Priest should also approve of their presence in the Parish.

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