



The Holy See

CHIROGRAPH OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS FOR THE INSTITUTION OF A PONTIFICAL COMMISSION FOR THE PROTECTION OF MINORS

The effective protection of minors and a commitment to ensure their human and spiritual development, in keeping with the dignity of the human person, are integral parts of the Gospel message that the Church and all members of the faithful are called to spread throughout the world. Many painful actions have caused a profound examination of conscience for the entire Church, leading us to request forgiveness from the victims and from our society for the harm that has been caused. This response to these actions is the firm beginning for initiatives of many different types, which are intended to repair the damage, to attain justice, and to prevent, by all means possible, the recurrence of similar incidents in the future.

For these reasons, and after having received the counsel of many cardinals and members of the college of bishops, together with other collaborators and experts in these matters, I decided to continue the work begun by my Predecessors by establishing a permanent Commission attached to the Holy See. The aim of the Commission is to promote the protection of the dignity of minors and vulnerable adults, using the forms and methods, consonant with the nature of the Church, which they consider most appropriate, as well as through their cooperation with individuals and groups pursuing these same objectives.

As I had the opportunity to highlight during an encounter with several victims of sexual abuse, I rely on the members of this Commission for the effective protection of minors and vulnerable adults, regardless of religion they profess, because they are the little ones on whom the Lord looks with love. To my collaborators in this work, I ask for all efforts possible to assist me in responding to these needs of these little ones.

The Commission's specific task is to propose to me the most opportune initiatives for protecting minors and vulnerable adults, in order that we may do everything possible to ensure that crimes

such as those which have occurred are no longer repeated in the Church. The Commission is to promote local responsibility in the particular Churches, uniting their efforts to those of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, for the protection of all children and vulnerable adults.

It is for all these reasons that I have instituted the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors.

All that is established with the present *Chirograph* has full and stable effect, anything to the contrary notwithstanding, even if deserving of special mention.

Given in Rome, at the Apostolic Palace, 22 March 2014, the second of my Pontificate.

FRANCISCUS PP

Statutes

Art. 1

NATURE AND COMPETENCE

§1. The Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors is an autonomous institution attached to the Holy See, with public juridic personality (can. 116*CIC*). The Commission is an advisory body at the service of the Holy Father.

§2. The protection of minors is of paramount importance. The purpose of the Commission is to propose initiatives to the Roman Pontiff, according to the procedures and determinations specified in these *Statutes*, for the purposes of promoting local responsibility in the particular Churches for the protection of all minors and vulnerable adults.

§3. Proposals submitted to the Holy Father by the Commission must be approved by a majority of two-thirds of the Members.

§4. In developing the proposals referred to in § 2, when the matter concerns the competence of other ecclesial bodies, the President of the Commission, assisted by the Secretary, shall consult promptly the offices responsible for the protection of minors in local churches, episcopal conferences, conferences of superiors of institutes of consecrated life and societies of apostolic life, as well as the dicastery of the Roman Curia competent in the matter. This consultation will be

shared in a transparent manner with the Commission Members.

§5. The Commission may require an account of the effectiveness of work carried out by the competent bodies mentioned in § 4.

§6. The legal seat of the Commission is in the Vatican City State.

Art. 2

COMPOSITION AND MEMBERS

§1. The Commission is composed of a maximum of eighteen members appointed by the Holy Father for a period of three years, which may be reconfirmed.

§2. Members are chosen from among persons of good and proven reputation and with recognized competence in the various fields of interest which are entrusted to the Commission.

§3. The President is appointed by the Roman Pontiff from among the members of the Commission for a period of three years and the term of office may be reconfirmed.

§4. The Secretary is appointed by the Roman Pontiff from among persons of recognized competence in the protection of minors for a period of three years, and the term of office may be reconfirmed. The Secretary is a member of the Commission *ex officio*.

Art. 3

THE PLENARY ASSEMBLY

§1. The Commission is convened in Plenary Assembly twice each year. On the request of two thirds of the Members, and with the consent of the President, an extraordinary Plenary Assembly can be convened. For a Plenary Assembly to be validly convened, the presence of at least two thirds of the members is required. On the same conditions, a Plenary Assembly may also meet by videoconference.

§2. During the Plenary Assembly, the Members act collegially under the direction of the President.

§3. The Members elect from within their midst, by an absolute majority of votes, two members to serve on the Agenda Committee for the next Plenary Assembly, together with the President and the Secretary. The Agenda Committee continues its work until the Minutes of the Assembly are completed.

§4. The Agenda Committee guides the proceedings of the Plenary Assembly, in particular:

- a) determining the Agenda;
- b) ensuring that the necessary documentation is submitted to the Members at least two weeks before the scheduled meeting;
- c) ensuring preparation of the Minutes of the meetings and storing them in the archives of the Commission.

Art. 4

PERSONNEL

§1. The President is responsible for ensuring the proper functioning of the Commission, within the framework of its competencies, and for directing its meetings.

§2. The role of the Secretary is to assist the President in carrying out his responsibilities, to act in the name of the Commission in ordinary affairs and to direct the Commission's office. The Secretary also promotes the collaboration of the Commission with the offices responsible for the protection of minors in the particular Churches, episcopal conferences, conferences of superiors of institutes of consecrated life and societies of apostolic life, and the dicasteries and other institutions of the Roman Curia.

§3. The officials working in the Commission's office assist the President, coordinated by the Secretary. One staff member has particular responsibility for the administration of material resources and in the preparation of the budget, accounting, and financial records of the Commission, in accordance with the norms established for the Holy See.

§4. The Secretary is a Prelate Superior, according to art. 3 of the *Regolamento Generale della Curia Romana*.

§5. For the hiring and employment of the personnel, the norms contained in the *Regolamento Generale della Curia Romana* and *Regolamento della Commissione indipendente di valutazione per le assunzioni di personale laico presso la Sede Apostolica* are to be observed, together with any eventual changes and additions.

Art. 5

WORKING GROUPS

§1. The Commission's "working groups" prepare the initiatives mentioned in art. 1, § 2 and submit them for approval by the Commission Members. Each working group is constituted to examine a specific theme thoroughly and to present specific proposals to the Plenary Assembly.

§2. The drafts prepared by the working groups, in accord with § 1, are made available to the Members through electronic means for their observations. The responsibility of each working group ceases with submission of its proposals to the Plenary Assembly, except when there is need for further study.

§3. The President, after consultation with the Members of the Commission, appoints a Member as the Moderator of each working group.

§4. The Moderator of each working group submits to the Commission a list of at least three names to be designated as collaborators of the group. These collaborators are chosen from among persons of good and proven reputation, with recognized expertise in the subject being studied by the working group as part of its work.

§5. The collaborators in § 4 who are not Commission Members carry out the tasks entrusted to them without becoming members of the Commission and without acquiring any right or function within the same.

Art. 6

GENERAL NORMS

§1. The Pontifical Commission, including its office and the working groups, shall be provided with adequate human and material resources, corresponding to its assigned institutional functions.

§2. The Commission operates in accord with the norms of its *Statutes*, the dispositions of universal canon law and the *Regolamento generale della Curia Romana*.

§3. The Members, staff and collaborators of the working groups are bound to observe professional confidentiality with regard to the reports or information which may come to their knowledge in the course of their duties and functions.

§4. The languages employed by the Commission are Italian, Spanish and English.

§5. The archives of the Commission are kept within the Vatican City State.

§6. The norms of these present Statutes shall be observed *ad experimentum* for a period of three years, at which time the Commission is to present any modifications for the permanent Statutes to

be approved by the Supreme Pontiff.

From the Vatican, 21 April 2015

Cardinal Pietro Parolin
Secretary of State

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