

OMCC STATUTE: PROCESS, APPROVAL, EVOLUTION

Chapter 2

*To obtain all these things, the most important and therefore worthy of special attention are the Christian laity: namely, those who have been incorporated into Christ and live in the world. For it is up to them, imbued with the spirit of Christ, to be a leaven working on the temporal order from within, to dispose it always in accordance with Christ.
(Ad Gentes, 15)*

The initiative of pursuing the official approval by the Holy See¹

Germany took office as the OMCC seat on 30th May 1998, in Rome, during the I Vatican World Congress of Ecclesial Movements. Since then, the subject of canonical recognition came up several times, both from within the Movement and from the Pontifical Council for the Laity. One example: at our GET meeting in Vienna, two priests from former communist countries (Rumania and Croatia) told us that when talking to the diocesan hierarchy or parish priests the question would arise if Cursillo had canonical recognition.

A letter sent to Cardinal Stafford asking his help in clarifying our status with the Pontifical Council for the Laity (PCL) got an immediate answer: he would be very happy to assist in any possible way, and he would send a letter of encouragement for the OMCC meeting in Tampa, Florida, in 1988, on the subject. At that meeting the subject was brought up and very passionately discussed. It was decided not to ask for recognition for the Cursillo Movement as a whole, but for the OMCC – the body which took on responsibility for the Movement at worldwide level.

The Cardinal Stafford was invited to preside at Holy Eucharist during a meeting with the GET team in Rome, on 3rd December 1999. At that meeting, the Cardinal urged us to apply for canonical recognition, as he

¹ The content of this chapter is a summary of the text included in the folder given to the participants of the Canonical Recognition Promulgation ceremony (Pontifical Council for the Laity, Rome, 11.06.2004).

felt that having pastoral recognition by late Holy Fathers and many bishops around the world, it would be very desirable to also have this official affiliation with the Hierarchy in Rome. He also mentioned that we were quite unique among the movements for not having thought of this recognition, and that the Pope was very much in favour of the ecclesial movements.

The Internal Regulations approved at the IV World Encounter in Caracas, in 1988, were left with Prof. Guzmán Carriquiry, under-secretary of the PCL, who agreed that these would be a good basis for the Statute but needed to be brought into the proper canonical form.

It is worth mentioning that, in March 2000, the OMCC-EC President, Mrs. Frances Ruppert, received a letter from Eduardo Bonnín stating as follows: *“I found the meeting you had with Prof. Carriquiry (and Cardinal Stafford), about Cursillos becoming properly affiliated to the Council for the Laity, quite interesting. I have always been of the opinion that this would prove most beneficial. Actually, the late Cardinal Pironio, a few years ago described this possibility as quite advisable. I honestly think that this would not in the least diminish the fidelity to the foundational charism nor hinder the method or condition of our freedom.”*

An OMCC meeting was called for 28th July 2000, in Rome, coinciding with the III World Ultreya. At that meeting the question of the canonical recognition was the main subject. A very lively discussion took place, and the Presidents of the four International Groups voted that the process of preparing the Statutes should begin.

It was also decided to take the opportunity to have another meeting with Prof. Guzmán Carriquiry, attended by Mario Gonzales, from Venezuela, Fr. Martin Bialas and Frances Ruppert.

The preparation of the Statutes began by consulting two canon lawyers, Prof. Gianfranco Ghirlanda SJ, Dean of the faculty of canon law at the Gregorian University in Rome, and Rev. Dr. Joseph Ammer of Regensburg, Germany, who worked several years as a canonist in the curia in Rome.

There have been several canonical changes and correction by Prof. Ghirlanda SJ, but not deviating from our Internal Regulations. Minor proposed changes touching on Cursillo policy were discussed in our team meetings and voted on. After a second revision by Prof. Ghirlanda SJ, we sent the draft, in February 2001, to the International Groups asking for their comments.

In general, there was consent, except for minor changes by the International Groups, which were considered. There were however, from the beginning, strong concerns from the USA, particularly from Louis Robbio, US English co-ordinator, and Tom Sarg, the administrator of

the US Cursillo Movement. Louis had already brought a position paper against it to the Tampa meeting. They both seem to fear interference from the diocesan bishops. Several points have been adjusted to accommodate their concerns – for instance in No. 6 of the Preamble – giving a stronger weight to the National Secretariats.

The resulting draft of the Statutes was presented at the OMCC Meeting, held on 18th– 21st October 2001, in Berlin. The proposed alterations were worked into the document and the revised text was sent again to the four International Groups and the new OMCC team.

In March 2002, the Italian Version of the Statutes was sent to the Pontifical Council for the Laity asking for canonical recognition, and in February 2003 we received a letter from Mons. Stanislaw Rylko, Secretary of the PCL, asking for further alterations to the Statutes.

After a revision of the Statutes, based on the paper from the PCL, by P. Martin Bialas, CP, Frances Ruppert and Father José Beraldo, an appointment with the PCL was set. On 30th April, the Brazilian OMCC Team, together with members of the International Groups, as well as Fr. Martin Bialas CP and Frances Ruppert, had a meeting with the Council and presented the revised document.

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