

International Public Association



DECREE

In conformity with the request of the Pious Union of the **Militia of the Immaculate** for erection as an international public Association, submitted to the Pontifical Council for the Laity by letter dated 29 August 1996 (Prot. N.79/96) from the Procurator General of the Order of Friars Minor Conventual, on the petition of the Minister General of the same Order;

Bearing in mind the long and meritorious history associated with the **Militia of the Immaculate**, founded on 16 October 1917, and whose founder, Fr. Maximilian M. Kolbe, OFM CONV., was later declared a saint and martyr by His Holiness John Paul II (10 October 1982). Erected as a Pious Union on 2 January 1922 by the Vicariate of Rome, the **Militia of the Immaculate** has received the particular attention and special interest of the Supreme Pontiffs. Among the examples of this attention and interest are the Brief of Pius XI (18 December 1926), which grants indulgences and privileges, and the subsequent Brief of the same Pontiff *Die XVIII mensis Decembris* (23 April 1927), by which the **Militia of the Immaculate** is raised to a Primary Pious Union. On 8 November 1975, the Pontifical Council for the Laity approved its General Statutes and this approbation was renewed on 20 December 1980 *ad experimentum usque ad accommodationem novo Codici juris canonici*;

Having noted with appreciation the subsequent updating of the Statutes to bring them in line with the new canonical legislation; Considering that the **Militia of the Immaculate** is present today on five continents and in 46 nations, with many canonically erected offices, 27 National Centers and various works of Christian formation and spreading the Gospel, already reaching a total membership that nears four million;

Welcoming with gratitude the definition given by the same Fr. Kolbe to the **Militia of the Immaculate**: “*A global vision of Catholic life under a new form, consisting in the bond with the Immaculate, our universal Mediatrix before Jesus*” (*Kolbe’s Writings 1220*);

Valuing greatly the scope of the **Militia of the Immaculate**, “*universal like its mission*”, according to what is proposed in the new statutory texts:

“1~...collaborate in the conversion of all, so that “through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, Queen of the Apostles, all peoples might be led as soon as possible to awareness of the truth” (*AG 42*), to observance of the law of God and union with the Church, “so that with the help of the Mother of God they may be one” (*OK 30; MC 33*)”;

“2~...collaborate in the sanctification of all persons and each person in particular, after the example of the Immaculate, in Whom the Church ‘joyfully contemplates, as in a faultless image, what she, as a whole, wishes and hopes to be’ (*SC 103*)”; and in that way

“3~...obtain the greatest glory for the Most Holy and Undivided Trinity” (cf *LG 69*);

Noting that the **Militia of the Immaculate** is still under the “*altius moderamen*” of the Minister General of the Franciscan Order of the Friars Minor Conventual and that it has among its most avid supporters and enthusiastic members not a few Most Eminent Cardinals, Most Excellent Bishops and other prelates;

Having closely examined the new General Statutes elaborated by the International Administration of the **Militia of the Immaculate**;

after ample consultation:

THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE LAITY DECREES

the erection of the **Militia of the Immaculate** as an *International Public Association*, in accordance with can. 312, 1, 1~ et seq. of the Code of Canon Law, approving at the same time its General Statutes in conformity with the original text presented and filed in the Archives of the Dicastery.

Stanislaw Rylko
Secretary

J. Francis Stafford
Secretary President

Vatican City
16 October 1997
80th Anniversary of Foundation