

1970

Motu Proprio

**Apostolicae Caritatis**

*Paul VI*

19 March 1970

Prompted by apostolic charity, Holy Mother Church has been accustomed to devote [473] care and attention to providing her children with that assistance, especially of a spiritual nature, which the particular circumstances of persons, situations and times demand.

The field in which she exercises her beneficial activity has been immeasurably [474] extended in this modern age in which travel of every kind has been facilitated by the marvelous advance of technology, and mutual relations between citizens and nations and human encounters have greatly increased. Hence pastoral care must have as its object, not only those who live within established boundaries of parishes, associations, and other such juridical entities, but also those who, by choice or necessity, leave their fixed abode. A study must also be made on scientific lines, in consultation with others, on what the causes and consequences of these phenomena are, and an examination made of how travellers of this kind can be helped towards natural and supernatural development, and also from what dangers they must be safeguarded. The Church must, therefore, inspire worthwhile projects, support them and co-ordinate them, so that she can give as much help to them as possible. At the same time she must make known her mind on social, economic, cultural and other problems which often give rise to these migrations.

In fact the Roman Pontiffs, Our Predecessors did their utmost to resolve these [475] problems with the help of Bishops' Conferences, some International Organisations, individual Christians and Christian Association. It is sufficient to mention the work of Pius XII. When mass migrations had greatly increased, after the Second World War, he wisely issued the Apostolic Constitution "Exsul Familia"<sup>1</sup> in 1952, and this We adapted to present-day conditions.<sup>2</sup> He also established at the Sacred Consistorial Congregation, now called: for the Bishops, the Higher Council for Emigrants<sup>3</sup> and the International General Secretariat for the Direction of the Apostleship of the Sea, for the welfare of those whose work is on ships at sea.<sup>4</sup> Finally, mindful of new needs, in 1958, he entrusted the Consistorial Congregation with the task of giving spiritual care to the faithful who render their services or work in airports or on airplanes, and even to air passengers: the administration thus established was called "The Work of the Apostleship of the Air."

Later, the Second Vatican Council itself showed special concern for those who [476] travel, such as "a vast number of migrants, exiles and refugees, seafarers, air travellers, nomads".<sup>5</sup>

Following this lead, which was in full accord with our own mind. We set up at the [477]

same Sacred Congregation, in 1965, the International Secretariat for the Apostolate of Nomads, to give spiritual help to people without a fixed place of abode and others in analogous circumstances such as those who travel about employed in circuses or on seasonal work.

Just recently the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy has had an Office added to it [478] with the duty of providing religious aid to those who travel on vocation or pilgrimages, for health, education, sport recreation and other similar reasons:

An enormous number of people are involved in this complex reality which [479] commonly goes under the name of “tourism” and in the social field produces an unusual and unique phenomenon.<sup>6</sup>

To provide better for the spiritual welfare of those who live away from home, it now [480] seems expedient that these activities be usefully and effectively coordinated and placed under one direction. We have therefore, decided to set up the Pontifical Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrant and Itinerant People attached to the Sacred Congregation for the Bishops. It will embrace the above mentioned works: the care of emigrants, the Apostleship of the Sea, the Apostleship of the Air, the Apostolate of Nomads, and assistance for tourists whose pastoral care had been assigned to the competence of the Congregation for the Clergy<sup>7</sup> by the Apostolic Constitution “Regimini Ecclesiae Universae.”

The Commission shall be organized as follows: [481]

1. The Office of President shall be held by the Cardinal Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for Bishops. He shall have a Pro-President of Episcopal rank to represent him, as well as a Secretary. Other members, of the Commission are as follows: the Substitute of the Secretariate of State or Papal Secretariate, the Secretary of the Council for the Public Affairs of the Church, the Secretaries of the Sacred Congregation for the Bishops, for the Clergy, for Religious and Secular Institutes, for the Evangelization of Peoples, that is to say the Propagation of the Faith, for Catholic Education, and the Secretaries of the Council of the Laity and the Pontifical Commission “Justice and Peace;” and also five diocesan bishops who will be nominated by us. The Cardinal Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Bishops, the Substitute of the Secretariate of Commission for the duration of their own Office; the membership of the others expires after five years, but the Holy See, on Completion of the five years, may extend their term of Office.

2. Although, as has been said above, the Commission depends on the Sacred [482] Congregation for the Bishops, it enjoys a certain autonomy in carrying out its functions. It is the first duty of the Commission to deal with the pastoral care of people who are itinerant for the reasons stated. This is to be done in collaboration with the National Episcopal Conferences which, according to the needs and circumstances of their respective regions, will earnestly strive to carry out the practical application.

3. To the above established number of members there will be added each for a five [483] year term, people, selected from among the clergy and laity, who are recommended

for their special experience of those matters pertaining to migrations.

4. Whereas by this Letter the rights conceded to the aforesaid five separate organisms lapse, it will be for us to give this new Commission such powers as are considered necessary and appropriate. A special “Ordo servandus” will describe more accurately the relationships between the Sacred Congregation for the Bishops and the Commission which we hereby establish. [484]

As a consequence of these provisions We confidently hope that from this Commission, to which are entrusted new and exceptional forms of apostolate, will arise many and important pastoral benefits, and that the maternal solicitude of the Church, perceiving the signs and needs of the times, will so much the more be brought into light and become a gently persuasive testimony of the Church to men. [485]

We direct that this letter take effect from the day on which it is given. [486]

We order that what we have decreed in this letter which We have issued in the form of “Motu Proprio,” be regarded as established and ratified, notwithstanding any measure to the contrary. [487]

Given, at Rome, at St. Peter’s the nineteenth day of March, the Feast of St. Joseph, Spouse of Our Lady, in the year 1970, the seventh of Our Pontificate.

### ***Pope Paul VI***

<sup>1</sup> AAS 44 (1952), pp. 649 ss.

<sup>2</sup> Litt. Apost. Pastoralis migratorum cura, motu proprio datae; *ibid.*, 61, 1969, pp. 692 ss.

<sup>3</sup> AAS 44 (1952), pp. 692 ss.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 695.

<sup>5</sup> Decr. *Christus Dominus*, 18; *cfr. Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>6</sup> *Codex normarum, seu Directorium Generale, de ministerio pastoralis in utilitatem eorumdem peregrinatorum obuendo anno MCMLIX editus est*; AAS, 61 (1969), pp. 631 ss.

<sup>7</sup> 69, 10; AAS, 59 (1957), p. 910.

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Source: *Motu Proprio Instituting the Pontifical Commission on the Care of Migrants Apostolicae Caritatis* (Paul VI). *On the Move*, 1 (1971): 9-13