

Canon Law C. 321-326 and C. 327-329

Moderators of lay associations are to ensure that the members receive due formation, so that they may carry out the apostolate which is proper to the laity.

Can. 329

Those who head lay associations, even those established by apostolic privilege, are to ensure that their associations cooperate with other associations of Christ's faithful, where this is expedient. They are to give their help freely to various Christian works, especially those in the same territory.

Can. 328

Lay members of Christ's faithful are to hold in high esteem associations established for the spiritual purposes mentioned in can. 298. They should especially esteem those associations whose aim is to animate the temporal order with the Christian spirit, and thus greatly foster an intimate union between faith and life.

Can. 327

§1 In the Church there are associations which are distinct from institutes of consecrated life and societies of apostolic life. In these associations, Christ's faithful, whether clerics or laity, or clerics and laity together, strive with a common effort to foster a more perfect life, or to promote public worship or Christian teaching. They may also devote themselves to other works of the apostolate, such as initiatives for evangelization, works of piety or charity, and those which animate the temporal order with the Christian spirit.

§2 Christ's faithful are to join especially those associations which have been established, praised or recommended by the competent ecclesiastical authority.

Can. 298

§1 A private association of Christ's faithful is extinguished in accordance with the norms of the statutes. It can also be suppressed by the competent authority if its activity gives rise to grave harm to ecclesiastical teaching or discipline, or is a scandal to the faithful.

Can. 326

§2 The fate of the goods of a private association which ceases to exist is to be determined in accordance with the statutes, without prejudice to acquired rights and to the wishes of donors.

§1 A private association of Christ's faithful is free to administer any goods it possesses, according to the provisions of the statutes, but the competent ecclesiastical authority has the right to ensure that the goods are applied to the purposes of the association.

Can. 325

§2 In accordance with can. 1301, the association is subject to the authority of the local Ordinary in whatever concerns the administration and distribution of goods which are donated or left to it for pious purposes.

§1 The Ordinary is the executor of all pious dispositions whether made mortis causa or inter vivos.

§2 By this right the Ordinary can and must ensure, even by making a visitation, that pious dispositions are fulfilled. Other executors are to render him an account when they have finished their task.

§3 Any clause contrary to this right of the Ordinary which is added to a last will, is to be regarded as non-existent.

Can. 1301

§1 A private association of Christ's faithful can freely designate for itself a moderator and officers, in accordance with the statutes.

Can. 324

§2 If a private association of Christ's faithful wishes to have a spiritual counselor, it can freely choose one for itself from among the priests who lawfully exercise a ministry in the diocese, but the priest requires the confirmation of the local Ordinary.

Christ's faithful direct and moderate private associations according to the provisions of the statutes.

Can. 321

§1 A private association of Christ's faithful can acquire juridical personality by a formal decree of the competent ecclesiastical authority mentioned in can. 312.

Can. 312

§2 No private association of Christ's faithful can acquire juridical personality unless its statutes are approved by the ecclesiastical authority mentioned in can. 312 §1. The approval of the statutes does not, however, change the private nature of the association.

Can. 322

§1 The authority which is competent to establish public associations is:

1° the Holy See, for universal and international associations

2° the Episcopal Conference in its own territory, for national associations which by their very establishment are intended for work throughout the whole nation;

3° the diocesan Bishop, each in his own territory, but not the diocesan Administrator, for diocesan associations, with the exception, however, of associations the right to whose establishment is reserved to others by apostolic privilege.

§2 The written consent of the diocesan Bishop is required for the valid establishment of an association or branch of an association in the diocese even though it is done in virtue of an apostolic privilege. Permission, however, which is given by the diocesan Bishop for the foundation of a house of a religious institute, is valid also for the establishment in the same house, or in a church attached to it, of an association which is proper to that institute.

§1 Although private associations of Christ's faithful enjoy their own autonomy in accordance with can. 321, they are subject to the supervision of ecclesiastical authority, in accordance with can. 305, and also to the governance of the same authority.

Can. 323

§2 It is also the responsibility of ecclesiastical authority, with due respect for the autonomy of private associations, to oversee and ensure that there is no dissipation of their forces, and that the exercise of their apostolate is directed to the common good.

Can. 305

§1 All associations of Christ's faithful are subject to the supervision of the competent ecclesiastical authority. This authority is to ensure that integrity of faith and morals is maintained in them and that abuses in ecclesiastical discipline do not creep in. The competent authority has therefore the duty and the right to visit these associations, in accordance with the law and the statutes. Associations are also subject to the governance of the same authority in accordance with the provisions of the canons which follow.

§2 Associations of every kind are subject to the supervision of the Holy See. Diocesan associations are subject to the supervision of the local Ordinary, as are other associations to the extent that they work in the diocese.