



# The Holy See

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**CHIROGRAPH**  
of the Holy Father  
reforming the  
**PONTIFICAL ECCLESIASTICAL ACADEMY**

The Petrine ministry, in its service to the entire Church, has always demonstrated fraternal concern for the local Churches and their Pastors, so that they can experience the communion of truth and grace which the Lord established as the foundation of his Church.

In the constant effort to bring the closeness of the Pope to peoples and Churches, the Papal Representatives sent to different nations and territories are a point of reference. They are the custodians of that solicitude which moves from the centre to the peripheries, to make them sharers in the Church's missionary outreach, and then to lead them back to that centre with their needs, reflections and aspirations. Even at times when the shadows of evil appear to infuse every action with confusion and distrust, they remain "the vigilant and lucid eye of the Successor of Peter for the Church and the world" (FRANCIS, *Address to Participants in the Meeting of Papal Representatives*, 17 September 2016). Called to make felt the presence of the Bishop of Rome, the "perpetual and visible principle and foundation of the unity both of the Bishops and of the whole company of the faithful" (SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, 23), they carry out, in the countries to which they are sent, a pastoral activity that reflects their priestly spirit, their human qualities and their professional abilities.

In addition to this activity, both priestly and evangelical, placed at the service of individual Churches, the mission entrusted to the Pope's diplomats includes representing him before public authorities. This aspect of their work manifests the effective exercise of that innate and independent right of legation that is also an element of the Petrine office and whose exercise is to be respected by the rules of international law that are basic to the life of the community of nations (cf. *CODE OF CANON LAW*, can. 362). In our time, it is clear that this service is no longer limited to those countries where the presence of the Church has long been grounded in the preaching of the Gospel, but is also carried out in places where it is a new and growing community, or in international forums where, through its representatives, the See of Peter closely follows debates, evaluates arguments and, in the light of its specific ethical and religious dimension, proposes an

appraisal of the great issues involving the present and future of the human family.

To carry out their work effectively, diplomats must be constantly committed to a programme of solid and ongoing formation. It is not enough for them merely to acquire theoretical knowledge, but it is necessary to develop an approach to work and a lifestyle that can enable them to understand the deeper dynamics of international relations and to be respected for their approach to the aspirations and difficulties that an increasingly synodal Church must face. Only through careful observation of constantly changing realities and the practice of sound discernment is it possible to judge the significance of events and to propose concrete responses. In this regard, qualities such as closeness, attentive listening, witness, a fraternal approach and dialogue are fundamental. Those qualities must be combined with humility and meekness, so that priests, and papal diplomats in particular, can exercise the gift of the priesthood received in the image of Christ the Good Shepherd (cf. *Mt* 11:28-30; *Jn* 10:11-18).

All this requires, in our day, a preparation better suited to the needs of the times for those carefully selected priests who, coming from various dioceses throughout the world and already trained in the sacred sciences and having had an initial experience of pastoral activity, are preparing to pursue their priestly mission in the diplomatic service of the Holy See. It is not simply a matter of providing a high level of academic and scientific education, but of ensuring that their activity will be ecclesial, necessarily called to engage with the reality of our world, “especially in a time like our own, marked as it is by rapid, constant and far-reaching changes in the fields of science and technology” (Apostolic Constitution *Veritatis Gaudium*, Forward, 5).

For three hundred years, this particular task has been carried out by the *Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy*, an institution that, overcoming the vicissitudes of history, has come to be recognized as “the diplomatic school of the Holy See,” training generations of priests who have placed their vocation at the service of the Petrine ministry by serving in the Papal Representations and the Secretariat of State. In order that the Academy may better carry out the purposes for which it was established, and following the example of my Predecessors of venerable memory, I have decided to update its structure and to approve, *in forma specifica*, the new Statutes that are an integral part of this act.

Wherefore, I establish the *Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy* as an Institute *ad instar Facultatis* for the study of Diplomatic Sciences, thus expanding the number of analogous Institutions provided for by the Apostolic Constitution *Veritatis Gaudium* (cf. *Special Norms*, 70).

Endowed with public juridical personality (cf. *Veritatis Gaudium*, Art. 62 § 3), the Academy will be governed by the common or particular norms of canon law applicable to it, and by other dispositions given by the Holy See for its institutions of higher education (cf. *ibid.*, *Special Norms*, Art. 1 § 1).

By the authority of the Holy See (cf. *Veritatis Gaudium*, Arts. 2 and 6; *Special Norms*, Art. 1) it will confer the academic degrees of the second and third cycle in Diplomatic Sciences.

The Academy will carry out its work in the most advanced forms currently required for training and research in the particular discipline of Diplomatic Sciences, which include studies in the disciplines of law, history, politics and economics, as well as languages used in international relations and relevant areas of study. In this renewal, care shall be taken to ensure that the programmes of instruction have a close connection with the ecclesiastical disciplines, the praxis of the Roman Curia, the needs of the local Churches and, more broadly, with the work of evangelization, the Church's activity and its relationship with culture and human society (cf. *ibid.*, Art. 85; *Special Norms*, Art. 4). These are, in fact, additional constituent elements of the diplomatic activity of the Apostolic See and of its ability to operate, to mediate, to overcome barriers and thus to develop concrete paths of dialogue and negotiation for guaranteeing peace and freedom of religion for all believers, and order among nations.

Furthermore, I decree that, by reason of its nature as an academic institution designated for the specific training of papal diplomats and for the purposes of its education and research programmes, the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy is, to all intents and purposes, an integral part of the Secretariat of State, within which it operates and to which it is specially attached (cf. Apostolic Constitution *Praedicate Evangelium*, Art. 52 § 2).

The provisions of this Chirograph are given immediate, full and stable force, notwithstanding any dispositions to the contrary, even those worthy of special mention.

*Given in Rome, at Saint Peter's, on 25 March, Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord, in the year 2025, the thirteenth of my Pontificate.*

FRANCIS