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Apostolic Letter in the form of a “Motu Proprio” of the Supreme Pontiff Francis on the amendment of canons 435 §1 and 506 §1 of the Code of Canons of the Oriental Churches

LITTERAE APOSTOLICAE MOTU PROPRIO DATAE

Ab initio
Quibus can. 435 §1 et can. 506 §1
Codicis Canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium mutantur

Ever since the earliest times of the Church, some of the faithful have felt called to consecrate their life to the service of God and their brethren in a special way, bearing witness before the community of their detachment from the world through what would then become the profession of the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty and obedience.

Individual experiences were followed, first in the East and then in the West, by those of fraternal communal life, defined by the prescriptions of a Rule and submission to the Superior.

“Thus it has come about”, says Vatican Council II, “that, as if on a tree which has grown in the field of the Lord, various forms of solidarity and community life, as well as various religious families, have branched out in a marvellous and multiple way from this divinely given seed. Such a multiple and miraculous growth augments both the progress of the members of these various religious families themselves and the welfare of the entire Body of Christ” (Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, 43).

The Church welcomes the various forms of consecrated life as a manifestation of the richness of the gifts of the Holy Spirit; ecclesiastical authority, especially the Pastors of the particular Churches, interprets the counsels, regulates their practice and, on their basis, constitutes stable forms of life, avoiding that “communities may be needlessly brought into being which are useless or which lack sufficient resources” (Decree *Perfectae caritatis*, 19).

It is the responsibility of the Apostolic See both to accompany the Pastors in the process of discernment leading to the ecclesial recognition of a new Institute, or a new society of eparchial law, and the final judgment to test the

authenticity of the inspiring purpose.

After amending the Code of Canon Law, from this perspective I also order the amendment of canons 435 §1 and 506 §1 of the CCEO, which are replaced by the following texts, respectively:

Can. 435 §1 - Episcopi eparchialis est erigere monasterium sui iuris praevia licentia scripto data intra fines territorii Ecclesiae patriarchalis Patriarchae aut in ceteris casibus Sedis Apostolicae.

Can. 506 §1 - Episcopus eparchialis erigere potest tantum congregationes; sed eas ne erigat nisi praevia licentia scripto data Sedis Apostolicae et insuper intra fines territorii Ecclesiae patriarchalis nisi consulto Patriarcha.

I order that what has been deliberated in this Apostolic Letter in the form of a Motu proprio shall have firm and stable force, notwithstanding anything to the contrary, even if worthy of special mention, and that it shall be promulgated by publication in *L'Osservatore Romano*, coming into force on 8 December 2020, and then published in the official commentary of the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*.

Given at Saint John Lateran, on 21 November 2020, memorial of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the eighth of my Pontificate.

FRANCIS
