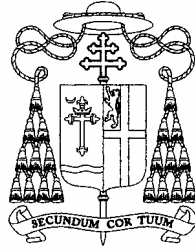


RAIMUNDUS LEO

Divina Miseratione et



Apostolicæ Sedis Gratia

ARCHIEPISCOPUS SANCTI LUDOVICI

DECREE

Having received the petition of Ecclesia Domestica, an association of the faithful for Catholic home-schooling parents in the Archdiocese of Saint Louis, for recognition as a public association of the faithful of the Archdiocese of Saint Louis;

Having ascertained that the seat of Ecclesia Domestica is at 670 South Laclede Station Road in the City of Saint Louis, within the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Saint Louis;

Having studied the Statutes of Ecclesia Domestica and found them to be fully in accord with the teaching and discipline of the Church, and especially the norms which govern associations of the faithful, in general (cf. cann. 298; 300-301; and 304-309), and public associations of the faithful, in particular (cf. cann. 312-320), and having given approbation to the Statutes;

Recognizing the duty of the Archbishop of Saint Louis to encourage and support parents as the first educators of their children and to safeguard their right to choose the form of schooling of their children (cf. cann. 793, §1; 794-795; and 797);

Taking account that it is most fitting that an association of the faithful which promotes the teaching of the faith and sacred worship should be erected as a public association of the faithful (cf. can. 301, §§1 and 3);

Having made certain that the members of Ecclesia Domestica know, understand and desire to comply fully with all of the norms pertaining to public associations of the faithful;

And having consulted the Reverend Philip J. Bene, priest of the Archdiocese of Saint Louis, who serves Ecclesia Domestica in the capacity of chaplain or ecclesiastical assistant (cf. can. 317, §1);

Hereby erects Ecclesia Domestica as a public association of the faithful in the Archdiocese of Saint Louis, constitutes it a juridic person in the Church, and gives to it the mission of promoting Catholic home schooling in the Archdiocese of Saint Louis.

Given at the seat of the Archdiocesan Curia on the twenty-sixth day of July in the Year of the Lord 2006.

L.S.

+ Raymond Leo Burke
Archbishop of Saint Louis

Rev. Msgr. Jerome D. Billing
Chancellor

ECCLESIA DOMESTICA

The Domestic Church

*A Roman Catholic homeschool public association of the faithful
in the Archdiocese of Saint Louis*

PURPOSE

The purpose of Ecclesia Domestica is to support Catholic homeschooling parents in their most grave obligation and right to educate their children, and, in particular, to ensure the Christian education of their children according to the doctrine handed on by the Church (cf. *Code of Canon Law*, cann. 226, §2, 304, §§1-2, *Familiaris consortio* 21, *Gravissimum educationis* 3, *Lumen gentium* 11).

The name Ecclesia Domestica draws its inspiration from the following words of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, which tell us that “In our own time, in a world often alien and even hostile to faith, believing families are of primary importance as centers of living, radiant faith. For this reason the Second Vatican Council, using an ancient expression, calls the family the *Ecclesia domestica*. It is in the bosom of the family that parents are ‘by word and example . . . the first heralds of the faith with regard to their children. They should encourage them in the vocation which is proper to each child, fostering with special care any religious vocation.’ It is here that the father of the family, the mother, children, and all members of the family exercise the *priesthood of the baptized* in a privileged way ‘by the reception of the sacraments, prayer and thanksgiving, the witness of a holy life, and self-denial and active charity.’ Thus the home is the first school of Christian life and ‘a school for human enrichment.’ Here one learns endurance and the joy of work, fraternal love, generous - even repeated - forgiveness, and above all divine worship in prayer and the offering of one's life” (1656-1657).

Ecclesia Domestica is a diocesan association of the faithful and, therefore, a public juridic person in the Church (can. 313). It follows those norms of the *Code of Canon Law* common to all associations of the faithful (cann. 298-311 and 327-329), and, in particular, those pertaining to public associations of the faithful (cann. 312-320). Because Ecclesia Domestica proposes to hand on the Catholic faith and its practice through the support of homeschooling families, it is erected by the Archbishop of Saint Louis and is, therefore, a public association of the faithful (can. 301, §1).

OBJECTIVES

Promotion of Catholic homeschooling

Ecclesia Domestica promotes homeschooling by parents as a most efficacious means of exercising their right to educate their children and fulfill their most serious obligation for the Catholic education of their children. Ecclesia Domestica is inspired, in particular, by the words of *Gravissimum educationis*, the Decree on Christian Education of the Second Vatican

Ecumenical Council: “Since parents have given children their life, they are bound by the most serious obligation to educate their offspring and therefore must be recognized as the primary and principal educators. This role in education is so important that only with difficulty can it be supplied where it is lacking. Parents are the ones who must create a family atmosphere animated by love and respect for God and man, in which the well-rounded personal and social education of children is fostered. Hence the family is the first school of the social virtues that every society needs. It is particularly in the Christian family, enriched by the grace and office of the sacrament of matrimony, that children should be taught from their early years to have a knowledge of God according to the faith received in Baptism, to worship Him, and to love their neighbor. Here, too, they find their first experience of a wholesome human society and of the Church. Finally, it is through the family that they are gradually led to a companionship with their fellowmen and with the people of God. Let parents, then, recognize the inestimable importance a truly Christian family has for the life and progress of God's own people” (3, 1).

Ecclesia Domestica sponsors such activities as faith formation opportunities, field trips and social events, homeschool workshops, a newsletter, and a presence on the internet.

Support and sponsorship of homeschool cooperatives

Ecclesia Domestica recognizes the fact that parents of homeschoolers sometimes desire to provide cooperative educational opportunities for their children which help such parents to fulfill more easily their most serious personal obligation and right to educate their children.

For this reason, Ecclesia Domestica supports parents who choose to form independently organized and operated Catholic homeschool co-ops in the Archdiocese of Saint Louis, especially in parish settings, co-ops which are self-directed and whose existence depends upon those directly participating in them. Ecclesia Domestica also supports and even sponsors such homeschool co-ops, but respects the right of individual parental participants to opt not to become members of Ecclesia Domestica.

As a diocesan public association of the faithful, Ecclesia Domestica adheres to the norms of universal and particular Church law.

Encouragement of parents in sacramental preparation

The Church teaches that parents and pastors of souls, especially pastors of parishes, are to take care that the faithful are properly instructed to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation and come to it at the appropriate time (cf. can. 890). The Church also teaches that it is primarily the duty of parents and those who take the place of parents, as well as the duty of pastors, to take care that children who have reached the use of reason are prepared properly and, after they have made sacramental confession, are refreshed with the Most Holy Eucharist as soon as possible (cf. can. 914). For this reason, Ecclesia Domestica especially encourages parents in carrying out their responsibility for the sacramental preparation of their children, under the guidance and direction of their pastors.

Relationship with the Archdiocese

The members of Ecclesia Domestica are faithful of the Archdiocese of Saint Louis and Ecclesia Domestica has been canonically erected by the Archbishop of Saint Louis as a public association of the faithful. While Ecclesia Domestica, like all associations of the faithful, both public and private, is subject to the vigilance of the Holy See and the Archdiocese of Saint Louis, it is a free association and, therefore, not a part of the Archdiocesan Curia (cf. cann. 305, §§1-2, 315).

Because of its nature and purpose, Ecclesia Domestica places itself at the service of Archbishop of Saint Louis in providing input regarding the relationship of the Archbishop of Saint Louis with homeschooling families.

Relationship with other associations of the faithful

In a spirit of mutual respect, the members of Ecclesia Domestica, and, in particular, its moderator and advisory council, strive to cooperate with other associations of the faithful, both public and private, especially those which promote Catholic homeschooling (cf. can. 328).

SEAT

The seat of Ecclesia Domestica is Curé of Ars Parish; 670 South Laclede Station Road; Saint Louis, Missouri 63119-4910.

GOVERNANCE AND CONDITIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

Membership

Membership in the association is free and open to all Catholics who homeschool their children or who seek to support Catholic homeschooling.

Conditions for membership

Members must be adult Catholics in good standing (can. 316, §1), and they must be either homeschooling parents or adults supportive of Catholic homeschooling. Members are admitted into the association by completing the membership form of the association.

Conditions for dismissal

A member may be dismissed from the association if the advisory council determines that a member's attitudes and behaviors are no longer coherent with the purpose of the association or no longer in keeping with the Catholic faith and also practice (can. 316, §2).

Moderator and Advisory Council

Ecclesia Domestica is governed by a moderator who is part of a five-member advisory council.

The moderator shall be an advisory council member selected by a simple majority vote of the advisory council. The moderator must receive confirmation from the Archbishop in order to

serve as moderator (can. 317, §1). The moderator serves a two-year term, and is subject to removal in accordance with the norms of canon 318, §1. The moderator may not exercise leadership in a political party (cf. can. 317, §4). The moderator is to see to the proper formation of the members of Ecclesia Domestica who exercise the apostolate (can. 329).

At its inception, the moderator and two other members of the advisory council shall serve two-year terms, and two members shall serve a one-year term. Each year, the members of the association elect new council members to replace those whose terms expire that year. Newly elected council members shall serve two-year terms.

Any moderator or council member completing a term of service must observe a one-year sabbatical from service on the council, after which he or she is free to be elected to a new term.

Meetings

The moderator will schedule an annual meeting of the general membership for the primary purpose of conducting the election of new council members. The norms of canon 119 shall apply to elections and other collegial affairs of Ecclesia Domestica. This meeting will also serve as one of four quarterly meetings to conduct association business. These four meetings will be open to all members. Meeting agendas will be distributed in advance, and meeting minutes will be recorded and published.

Additional open meetings may be called by the moderator as needed to conduct business of the association. Matters discussed at any meeting will be decided by a simple majority vote of members in attendance. Prior to a meeting, the moderator may consult the general membership.

Chaplain

Ecclesia Domestica has as its chaplain a priest of the Archdiocese of Saint Louis, who is appointed by the Archbishop of Saint Louis, after the Archbishop has received the consultation of the Advisory Council (can. 317, §1). The Chaplain assists the association in fulfilling its purpose and in promoting the spiritual well-being of its members.

Administration of temporal goods

Ecclesia Domestica administers the goods it possesses, in accordance with the statutes, and under the over-all direction of the Archbishop of Saint Louis (can. 319). Ecclesia Domestica is to have a budget and must give a yearly account to him (can. 319, §1). Ecclesia Domestica must also faithfully account to him for the disbursement of contributions which it has collected (can. 319, §2).

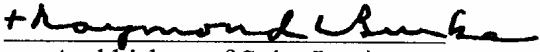
Extinction and suppression of Ecclesia Domestica

For grave reasons, the Archbishop can suppress Ecclesia Domestica (can. 320, §2). However, he is not to do so unless the moderator and other senior officials have been consulted (can. 320, §3).

Ecclesia Domestica ceases to exist if it is lawfully suppressed by the Archbishop of Saint Louis. If even a single member of Ecclesia Domestica survives, and it has not, according to the statutes, ceased to exist, the exercise of all its rights devolves upon that member (can. 120, §§1 and 2).

In virtue of Canon 314, I approve the above-stated statutes of Ecclesia Domestica, a public association of the faithful, constituting Ecclesia Domestica a public juridic person in the Church.

Given at Saint Louis, on the twenty-sixth day of July in the Year of Our Lord 2006, Memorial of Saints Joachim and Ann.


Archbishop of Saint Louis


Chancellor