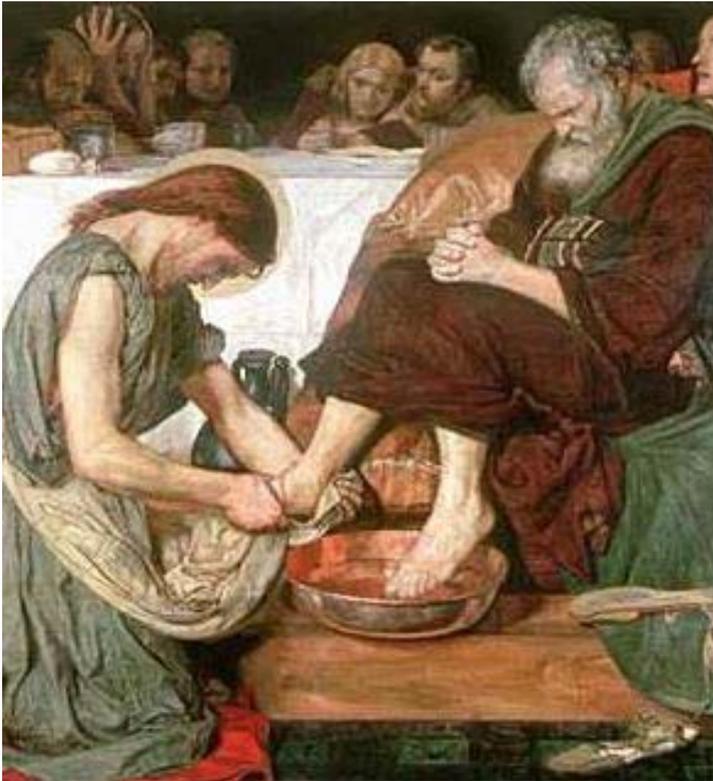


BROTHERS AND SERVERS



THE APOSTOLIC UNION OF THE CLERGY (AUC)

Why and How to Participate

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Let's do together

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LET'S DO IT TOGETHER



All of us look for true friends to help towards progress and to resolve different needs of life and ministry.

From the Apostolic Union of the Clergy (AUC), we wish to promote many groups of true friends and brothers. Now, we are happy to

share with you and to offer you these pages to nourish a friendly dialogue, a fraternal sharing, which will help us to come closer.

First of all, let us invite Jesus to accompany and help us in this journey of growth. He is the source, the Head, the Spouse, the model of our life and of our pastoral mission. Let us open our hearts to listen to His Word with which He calls us “*friends*”, *remain in my love* (Jn 15,14), leave everything and “*follow me*” (Cf. Mt 19,27), *you are one* (Jn. 17, 21), *go and make disciples* of all peoples (Mt. 28, 19 – 20), *pasture* my flock (Cf. Jn. 21, 15 - 17).

As shepherds, we are very important before God, the Church and our community. Many fruits of evangelization depend on our renewal. It serves therefore “to help ourselves” in this renewal of life and ministry, and “to help” other brothers; if we want to become true brothers, friends and servers of the Bishops, Priests and Deacons of our diocesan Presbyterate and for the priests of the entire world. These pages will help us all in this area. In this journey, we wish to invite you to understand and share the experience of communion and fraternal support that promote the Apostolic Union of Clergy (AUC).

We invite you, if you are already a member of the AUC, to fortify the life and service of AUC in the diocese. This instrument responds to the requests made in the international assembly of the AUC 2007 to produce a material of support for the five year plan (itinerary) towards the celebration of the 150 anniversary of the AUC (2012). Let us make a treasure of these

materials, elaborated from the AUC Statutes and of the lived experience, to promote, fortify and animate the members and their diocesan Union. These materials will help us to understand and participate in the AUC, in these 5 years and always.

We are also confident that this journey will help many groups of priests and many ordained ministers to be “brothers and servants” in their diocesan presbyterate and to do if they are willing, their participation in the Apostolic Union of Clergy.

Let us make this journey personally and with other companions: let us start analyzing *what is the Apostolic Union of Clergy and what does it offer us*; later, let us see how it helps us in the *evangelical following of the Good Shepherd*; then, let us deepen the *fraternal communion of the AUC*; in following, how we could be *Servers of the Pastors in the diocesan presbyterate and in the whole world*; in the end, let us see how to *participate in the AUC and how to organize the diocesan Union*, “to help and to be helped”. You may take one or two arguments in each of your meetings.



Let us share these experiences, reflections and steps, with the grace of God, which will be very useful for the betterment of our life and pastoral ministry, to have many fruits in the priestly groups, and to fortify the commitment and the experience of the members of the AUC. Besides, these steps will help to promote and to animate the AUC in our own diocese and elsewhere.

Therefore, let us start this journey, sharing them with our other brothers. We also invite you to undertake your experiences of this journey towards us and the national Direction of the AUC.

Let us go ahead, with Jesus, our Good Shepherd, our leader and bridegroom.

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1. WHAT IS IT, AND WHAT DOES IT OFFER US THE APOSTOLIC UNION OF THE CLERGY (AUC)



1.1 The AUC responds to our needs and concrete interests.

One frequent question that we could ask is what are the origins, actuality and utility of this association. How was it born? And how is it kept up-to-date? Truly, we would not wish to participate in something that is out-dated, or without the guarantee of renewal, or that which would not help us to respond to our interests and needs.

Jesus himself forms the apostolic community for the good of all and for the mission. Every pastor has his individual needs and values. On our own, little can be achieved. Only with concrete expressions of our sacramental fraternity could we help one another to grow in the diocesan presbyterate. Among us we could build, fortify and participate in the diocesan presbyterate like “a family of priests”, we can find support to grow as holy priests and to solve our difficulties (Cf DMVP 27).

A few diocesan brethren, in France, Germany and Italy, had **needs and interests** similar to ours. They united themselves to help overcome solitude, individualism, personal difficulties; discrimination and injustice; to share experiences and find support in their ministry; to go through a journey of spiritual growth; and to help their confreres. Moved by God, almost simultaneously, they organised themselves in small groups in their dioceses. In this way the Apostolic Union of Clergy (AUC) was born. In the successive years, although there were apparent and particular necessities in life and priestly ministry, the needs have almost been similar. The AUC has always sought with much success, to update its life and services to respond each time to the interests and needs of its members and of the diocesan clergy.

This **association** of priests, public and international, was born in 1862 and was approved by the Holy See on the 17th April, 1921. To help priests

respond faithfully to this vocation and mission, the Church in Vatican Council II has recommended to greatly appreciate and to diligently promote “priestly associations” that strengthens the fraternal communion and effectively helps to the sanctification of the priests (Cf. PO. 8). Among many associations in the dioceses, the Apostolic Union of the Clergy occupies a special place that has a precise purpose “to be helped and to help” in the sanctification of priests, with a diocesan spirituality.

After the Vatican Council II, the AUC has renewed its Statutes three times and is fully **actual** and organized according to the associative form promoted by the universal Church (Cf. PO, 8 and CIC, 278). It has received the approval of the new Statutes from the Congregation for the Clergy in 1998¹, with some modifications in 2007. The AUC updates according to the demands of its members and of the times.

The Apostolic Union of the Clergy (AUC) it is a very important choice in this journey of “to be helped and to help” the brothers of the diocesan clergy.

1.2 The Apostolic Union of the Clergy is:

- **Union:** since it associates with the diocesan ordained ministers² (Bishops, Priests, and Deacons) to promote mutual help among them.
- **Apostolic:** because it helps the ordained ministers to lead a life like that of the Apostles, rooted in Christ and consecrated for the mission (Cf. Statutes AUC, preamble).
- **Of the Clergy:** it serves the diocesan Bishops, Priests and Deacons, both individually and to the diocesan presbyterate, associations of the diocesan clergy and other priestly groups.

In short, (Statutes, 1)³. *the Apostolic Union of the Clergy is an association open to diocesan ordained ministers who are committed to help each other to realize fully the life according to the Spirit through the exercise of their ministry. Its characteristic aspect lies in the emphasis it places on the brotherhood arising from the Sacrament of Orders so as to foster among the clergy and in the Church a life of communion inspired by the model of the apostles which is rooted in the communion of the Trinity, and expressed through pastoral charity.*

¹ In these pages we will offer the principal elements of the Statutes of AUC.

² We shall utilize the same significance for the terms ordained Ministers or Pastors for Bishops, Priests and Deacons.

³ We shall use the Statutes to point out the Statutes of the International Confederation of Apostolic Union of the Clergy, 1998, with the modifications of 2007.

The AUC is defined as essentially “**diocesan**” association not only among its members, resources and services, but also in its organization and spirituality. For this, the AUC proposes to work in full communion with the Bishops and with the Episcopal Conference. The diocesan Unions are born, grow, are organized and offer their services, in conformity with the guidelines of the Bishops and the Statutes of the AUC. The National Directions and the International Direction of AUCs are organisms for the animation of the diocesan Unions.



1.3 Special contributions of the AUC.

How is the AUC helpful to the Pastors? How is the AUC helpful to the diocesan presbyterate?

The AUC helps us to live, in fraternal communion, our particular spirituality of diocesan clergy to be holy shepherds and to grow in human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral aspects. With our services, also, we help the ordained ministers, especially those of our diocesan presbyterate. It is an association “**to be helped and to help.**” **The AUC:**

- ✓ **Is a journey and aid to live a communitarian “apostolic life” and to help us grow as holy Pastors.**
- ✓ **Serves to promote and channel the fraternal help to the Pastors.**
- ✓ **Helps to build the diocesan Presbyterate.**
- ✓ **Accompanies the various expressions of communion between the ordained Ministers.**
- ✓ **Collaborates in the services for permanent formation of the Pastors.**
- ✓ **Helps to promote the integral well-being of the ordained Ministers.**
- ✓ **Animates the Institutions that are in service of the clergy.**
- ✓ **Helps to grow in quality and in number the diocesan clergy.**
- ✓ **Helps to love and to serve his Diocese better.**
- ✓ **Helps the Pastors to grow in universal missionary spirit and service.**

FOR OUR DIALOGUE:

- 1. In which ecclesial spheres are we finding support to resolve our difficulties and to grow as holy Pastors?***
- 2. What do find helpful in the AUC as fraternity of life and service?***

2. IT HELPS US IN THE EVANGELICAL FOLLOWING OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

Some people ask us about who are we as Pastors, what are we looking for, what is our mission. We are also trying to understand our journey, the style of life, and the services that we have to offer. We need “to be helped and to help”. Together we can help ourselves to live according to our identity as pastors and, give ourselves a hand, to live and grow with Jesus, like Him and for Him.



2.1 *Like the Apostles with Jesus.*

Like the Apostles, Jesus asks of us Pastors to love him more than the others and to complete with joy and fidelity the mission of **pasturing His flock, with Him, like Him and for Him** (Cf. Jn. 21, 15-17). Jesus continues to ask us “to leave everything and to follow him”, to be one (Cf. Jn. 17, 21), and to lay down our life (Cf. Jn. 10, 11) and to bring abundant fruit that will abide (Cf. Jn. 15, 16).

The “following of Christ” is a decisive walk of growth for us Pastors: to imitate Jesus who is poor, obedient and chaste, to assume his feelings, to fill us with his pastoral charity, that will help us to grow personally, bring us to the fullness of the Spirit; make us continually grow in union with God, to increase in charity and to be like Christ. Besides, it makes us free and effective as signs and ministers of the Lord in the community. He is our source and model forever. Element and “diocesan” expression proper of “pastors” is to **sanctify him in the following** and in the **personal configuration** with Christ Head, Shepherd and Bridegroom.

As the Apostles with Jesus, we could “help ourselves” and to help” collaborating with the action of the Spirit, to “follow Jesus” according to the grace received in the sacrament of the Order and the ecclesial mission that has been entrusted.

We can help us to live the “apostolic life”, with Him, like Him and for Him, in the concrete circumstances and conforming to the spirituality proper of our Diocese, with a radical following; “incarnate”, to be personal “signs” of the Good Shepherd in the particular Church and in our local community.



2.2 To be helped and to help in the following of Christ.

Jesus asks from **all the Pastors**:

- To live by Him, to live His life; to live in profound friendship and commitment to Him.
- To live as He lived, the pastoral charity, evangelical poverty, consecrated chastity and obedience for the Kingdom of Heaven.
- To configure ourselves progressively with Him, who is Shepherd, Head and Bridegroom.

In the AUC we propose “to help us” to follow Christ **totally with evangelical generosity**, according to our identity as Pastors and conforming to the grace of our particular Church. We look forward to the AUC that would help us to grow as holy pastors. We can live the AUC as a school of sanctity.

We propose therefore, the Members of AUC to live some **particular applications**:

- To help us live the evangelical roots expressed particularly in the “*evangelical counsels*” proposed by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount (Statutes, 15).
- To live the Gospel, so that we can effectively communicate it to the People of God. Letting ourselves be formed by the Word of God, celebrating everyday the Liturgy of the Hours, as much as possible in common. Let us devote ourselves to daily meditation, preferably nourishing it with the readings of the Liturgy of the Hours and the Mass (Statutes, 11).
- Consider the Eucharistic celebration as the centre of our lives and of that of the Church. To encounter in the daily celebration our highest realization and the support for our pastoral charity above

all in the daily celebration Eucharist (Statutes, 12).

- To develop a spirit of contemplation by setting aside daily a certain amount of time, to listen, to open their hearts, to adore as much as possible before the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist. (Statutes, 13).
- To review our lives through a frequent practice of the examination of conscience. To receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation as often as an opportunity to catch up with God's plans. We attach great importance to spiritual direction and the practice of the virtue of penance and look for a suitable time for annual retreats.

To help the other brothers in this “following” of Jesus, the AUC proposes to us to offer **services** that require a special generosity:

- To work in communion with the Bishop at the service of the ordained ministers (Statutes, 23).
- To help to reach a deeper understanding of the Sacrament of Orders, for better appreciate the different ministries and the wealth of the communion in the building of the Church (Statutes, 24).
- To foster the ongoing formation – human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral - of the clergy of the respective diocese and, if requested, the task of animation (Statutes, 25).
- To encourage the necessity of spending an extended amount of time in daily prayer (Statutes, 29).
- To promote an adequate utilization of the sacrament of Reconciliation (Statutes, 29).
- To make oneself available for spiritual direction to the confreres and those who are discerning their program of life (Statutes 29).
- To animate or, if it is necessary, to promote retreats, spiritual exercises and encounters for updating the formation, persuading and inviting those who may tend to neglect them (Statutes, 29).
- By recommending and disseminating publications and periodicals on the spirituality of the clergy (Statutes, 29).

FOR OUR DIALOGUE:

1. Which **resources** are helping us more in the evangelical “following” of Jesus?
2. Which of these **particular applications of the AUC** seems to be more interesting? Why?
3. Of the **services that the AUC offers** to the confreres in the area of “following”, which of these seem to be particularly useful in the diocesan Presbyterate?

3. FRATERNAL COMMUNION IN THE APOSTOLIC UNION OF THE CLERGY.



3.1 Brothers in the diocesan Presbyterate.

Every pastor desires to be appreciated and find good brothers both in the diocesan presbyterate and in the local community. We would like to be brothers and friends of everybody.

With this fraternal communion we respond to Jesus who in the Church calls love reciprocally as He has loved us and to become “one” (Cf. Jn 17, 11); to live the intimacy of sacramental fraternity (Cf. PO. 8) established among us by the sacrament holy Orders.

Among us pastors, the strength of the sacrament of the Order is that “each priest is united by special bonds of apostolic charity, ministry, and brotherhood with other members of the presbyterate” (PO 8). We are twice brothers. The priest is, in fact, introduced into the Order of the Presbyterate by constituting the unity that makes him a true family in which the bonds are not from flesh or blood but from the grace of the Order itself (DMVP, 25).

The diocesan presbyterate:

- Is an essential expression of the particular Church and of its spirituality.
- Is a privileged place in which the priest should be able to find the specific means of sanctification and evangelization and be helped to overcome his limits and weakness that are part of the human nature that is especially felt in today’s context (DMVP, 27).
- Is a basic diocesan expression of our intimate sacramental fraternity. This fraternal communion in the diocesan presbytery, therefore, is a need, a gift and a responsibility.

- To form the Presbyterate as “a family of priests”, therefore, it is a right and a duty.

In and through the fraternal communion the pastors are able “to sanctify themselves”: to unite with Jesus who is present in the confreres, to love more, and pattern themselves with Christ who is their brother, friend and Shepherd. This fraternal communion is the fundamental way to become effective ministers of communion. This communion and fraternal help in the pastoral and diocesan collaboration among us are possible and fruitful, for the world believes (Jn 17). Therefore, the diocesan element and expression proper of pastors is **to sanctify by living the fraternal communion** and the fraternal help in the diocesan presbytery.

Pastoral charity urges us to live this fraternal communion in the diocesan Presbytery:

- With the Bishop: through a communion of being a son, brother, friend and sincere collaborator.
- With the brother Priests and Deacons: through communion and the fraternal help that build the diocesan presbytery as family of priests (Cf. PO 8, LG 28, CD 28, PDV 74, DMVP 27).



Pastoral charity urges us also to live a relationship as brothers and pastors with lay faithful, with the members of the Consecrated Life and with the other members of the community (Cf. PO 9), by living the communion with them and promoting their participation in evangelization.

3.2 To be helped and to help to live the sacramental fraternity.

If we have in the Diocese has within it the diocesan Presbyterate, the Vicars forane, the diocesan Committee of clergy, other priestly groups, etc. will it be still useful to promote the Apostolic Union among the diocesan priests? How would it profit the Presbyterate to have a group of the AUC?

To appreciate the specific contribution of the AUC in this field of fraternal communion, let us reflect on what **God asks of all Pastors:** to live the sacramental communion of prayer, of pastoral ministry and of pastoral charity (Cf. PO. 8). To live the fraternal communion in the diocesan Presbyterate and to help it to grow with different expressions of community life among the pastors.

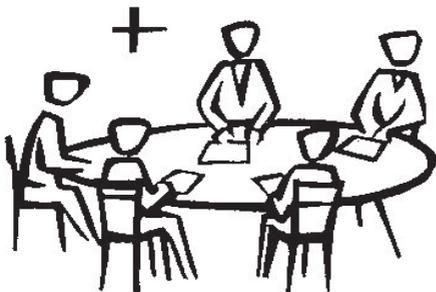
We shall see, things that are specify of the **AUC** in the fraternal **communion among its Members:**

- The Apostolic Union of the Clergy (AUC) seeks to live the intimate sacramental fraternity and to promote the communion and the fraternal help among the ordained ministers.
- The characteristic aspect of the AUC lies in the emphasis it places on the brotherhood arising from the Sacrament of Orders so as to foster among the clergy and in the Church a life of communion inspired by the model of the Apostles with Christ, which is rooted in the communion of the Trinity, and expressed through pastoral charity (Statutes, 1).
- To develop the pastoral charity, the members of the Apostolic Union of the Clergy unite themselves fully to Christ and to his Church by supporting each other and all their confreres, so that their life of communion expresses itself in a true sacramental and pastoral fraternity (Statutes, 8).
- The AUC group helps to build the diocesan presbyterate and lives the communion and collaboration with the confreres of the diocese and the whole world.
- We can live the AUC in the forane vicariates, in the groups of priestly fraternity and in other forms of fraternal communion within the diocesan clergy.



In this field of the **fraternal communion**, the AUC proposes some specific **services to the confreres:**

- By supporting and helping those confreres who face crises, distressing situations, or economic difficulties (Statutes, 30).
- By maintaining open relations to serve all the diocesan ordained ministers (Bishops, Priests and Deacons).
- To appreciate, to stimulate and to promote the new forms of communion (groups dedicated to prayer, reflection, exchange, friendship and the sharing of common life) which respond to the needs of many diocesan ministers (Statutes, 28).
- By promoting mutual hospitality, and opening themselves to new ways of communion as the Holy Spirit prompts them, also with the ministers of other Christian Confessions (Statutes, 30).
- By cultivating ecclesial communion, both at the diocesan level by developing an atmosphere of mutual familiarity among the brethren and of trust and obedience to the bishop, and at the universal level with their fidelity to the Holy Father (Statutes, 3) and communion of service to the whole Church.
- To better value the ministerial diversities and communal riches in the building up of the Church (Statutes, 24) and to foster a spirit of communion and fraternity (Statutes, 30).



In short, God calls **all Pastors** to live the sacramental fraternity, but He has also given the gift of special sensibility to **some** to become brothers and servants of others. The personal sanctification and the service to the clergy need these “signs” and “servants.”

The Apostolic Union of the Clergy, with many “Brothers and Servants”, does a very important service to the confreres; it proposes to live the diocesan presbyterate by putting itself fully into its service, with the elements of the spirituality of its own particular Church; besides it tries to be fully in communion with the universal Church, especially in its teaching

concerning the clergy. In AUC we unite ourselves “to be helped” to live the fraternal communion and “to help” other brothers to live it in the diocesan presbyterate and at all levels.

3.3 How does AUC live, and what do the groups do?

In the diocesan presbyterate there are many priestly groups with different purpose. Some of them function for pastoral work; others share experiences, reflections, friendship, retreats etc. There are some who look for fraternal communion and spiritual support.

The AUC proposes to live in groups or cenacle (Cf. Mt. 26, 20), in the diocesan Presbyterate and to its services (Cf. Preamble and Statutes, 28). The AUC thus becomes a home and school of communion, which helps us to live in the particular Church the spirituality of communion.

In the AUC the groups try to serve its brothers and the presbyterate. Every group of the AUC tries to be a fraternity of life and a team of service in the diocesan presbyterate. The AUC offers a basic providential space to love and grow in this fraternal communion and in the service to the brothers in the diocesan presbytery and elsewhere.

The members of **AUC groups**:

1. Periodically gather for experiencing the fraternal charity, to reflect on life and to receive support and stimulus for the apostolic activity (Cf. Preamble and Statutes, 28).
2. They favour communion, solidarity, friendship and living together. They are ready to accept others, promote hospitality, positive recognition and sharing.
3. They share in prayer (with parts of the liturgy of the Hours and at times in the Eucharist). They grow in friendship, spiritually and edify one another.
4. Promote dialogue. They share in reflection and encourage each others in studies.
5. Revive the pastoral charity and help one another in the ministry. They lend concrete service to the confreres who are in need.

In their meetings, the group generally makes steps of welcome, community prayer, (sharing the Word, evangelical review of life, spiritual edification); exchange of pastoral experiences, shares important themes; makes commitment for life of the group, serves the brothers in the Presbyterate, and shares a fraternal agape. The frequency of the meetings depends on the interest of its members and their availability. To facilitate continuous sharing and frequent meetings, it is better that the groups are small, among friends and dear ones.

3.4 Why participate in an AUC Group?

A Group of AUC is stable with periodic meetings:

- ✓ It helps us to have a space of enduring communion where we live the radical form of communion in the ordained ministry. God asks of us to live in unity and to help one another.
- ✓ It is a privileged means to help ourselves in personal sanctification, for fraternal help in other fields (Cf. Mt. 26, 20).
- ✓ It gives us the space to grow humanly, spiritually, intellectually and pastorally.
- ✓ United we can help better other ordained ministers and can help in the building up of the “diocesan presbyterate.”
- ✓ It allows us to use the “right of association” consecrated by the Church (Cf. CIC 312-320) and the ecclesial recommendation to highly appreciate and diligently promote the “priestly associations” (Cf. PO 8).
- ✓ It promotes mutual help in our pastoral ministry.
- ✓ It helps that our community life becomes a testimony. The group of the AUC becomes “sign” of apostolic life and “servant” of the clergy in and outside the diocese.

FOR OUR DIALOGUE:

- 1. Which resources are more helpful to build and strengthen the diocesan Presbyterate as “family of Priests”?***
- 2. For Priests and for the diocesan Presbyterate, which proposals of the AUC are useful for fraternal communion? Why?***

4. *SERVANTS OF PASTORS* *IN THE DIOCESAN PRESBYTERATE* *AND IN THE WHOLE WORLD.*

All of us are hard pressed with so many things and we need more time and more hands to do our work. Besides, so many brothers seek and need collaboration in their pastoral activities. But, it seems like they have more need of something that would help them overcome activism, separation, monotony which doesn't allow them to live and grow. How could we succeed in being more fruitful in ministry? And be sanctified through every ministry and activity?



4.1 To sanctify ourselves through the pastoral ministry.

God has given us the pastoral charity, he has made us his “ministers”, and he has given us concrete mission in the Diocese to exercise the ministry in various dimensions: prophetic ministry, liturgical, of charity, of management of the community and the universal mission. Among all the pastoral actions, the Pastoral of the Clergy, pasturing of pastors, as part of evangelization and of our ministry is our priority; it becomes a particular expression of pastoral charity and

intimate sacramental fraternity. We have in it a greater pastoral ministry to practice in our particular Church and to all the people (Cf PO 10, Rmi 67).

In the exercise of our pastoral ministry we have the principal source, adequate nourishment and tools for our personal and community sanctification (Cf PO 13), but it is not the number of activities and ministry but the quality of exercise of ministry that bears fruit for ourselves and for others.

Every ministry and activity could unite us with God, nurture our pastoral charity and make us in the image of Christ who is Priest, Head and Bridegroom.

Sanctification in the exercise of the pastoral ministry needs:

- To practice the ministry in an authentic way, with pastoral charity and in the Spirit of Christ, to sanctify us and to sanctify others (Cf. PO 13).
- To be “Disciples”, so that we realize our ministry as “Pastors”.
- To serve as faithful “bridegrooms” to the community, sacrificing the life for the Church in the mission that has been entrusted to us (Cf. DMVP 12, 13).
- To practice the ministry in ecclesial communion. Participating in the mission of Jesus in our Church united, in obedience and collaboration with the Bishop, with the co-responsibility of the diocesan Presbyterate, and in communion with other missionaries.
- To cooperate, starting from the local Church, to evangelize all the people (Mt. 28, 20), since any priestly ministry partakes in the same universal mission commanded by Christ to the Apostles (PO 10; RMI 67; DMVP 14). This universal vocation is, therefore, essential for the life and mission of the particular Church... The spiritual life of the priests has to be imbued with and animated by, a deep missionary spirit (Cf. PDV 32). This universal missionary dimension is essential part of our diocesan spirituality (Cf. DMVP 18).

4.2 “Brothers and Servants” of the Pastors

Fundamental priority of evangelization in the Church today is to help the sanctification of the clergy while exercising his ministry. It is particularly better to do this in community, in front of the individualism and other pastoral necessities of the ordained Ministers.

In the particular Church, the diocesan Presbyterate, family of the priests, has a special mission of service toward all the members: to develop fraternal communion, to promote the ongoing formation, and to offer the services to support the life and the ministry of all the pastors. In this Pastoral aspect of the clergy, all of us are called to contribute for the good of everybody. All will receive support for life and ministry, thus grow as holy pastor.

Some, with an official mission, take on special responsibility to promote and to animate these Pastoral of the pastors: Bishop, diocesan Delegate for the Clergy, Committee of the Clergy, Episcopal Vicars, etc. Others, for pastoral charity and by some special gift received by God, unite themselves with the group of the AUC, take personal initiative to be permanent servers

*AUC
in America*



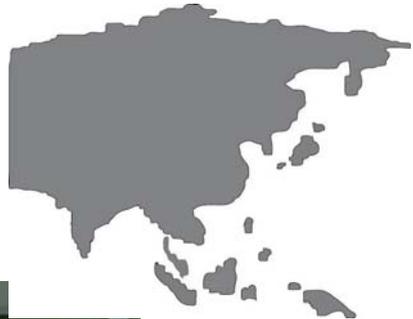


AUC in Africa





*AUC
in
Asia*





*AUC
in
Europe*



of the confreres, in communion and collaboration with the diocesan pastoral of the clergy.

God asks of **all** the pastors in the Church:

- To be good Disciples and Pastors.
- To give the life in the ministry, with Jesus, like Him and for Him (pastoral charity), in ecclesial communion.
- To sanctify themselves by the exercise of pastoral ministry.
- To be good Brothers and Servants to their confreres, Bishops, Priests and Deacons.



Let us see therefore, what is specific or particular of AUC in its **service to its members:**

- To help us to be faithful “disciples.”
- To appreciate our ordained ministers (Statutes, 4).
- To live the pastoral charity, entrusting ourselves to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, nourishing ourselves in the same sentiments of Christ towards his Father and the people, and assimilating the humble and generous faith of Mary (Statutes, 7, 27).
- Living the sacrament of the Orders by means of the spirituality, of the particular Church in which one is incarnated, convinced that in the affiliation and dedication to the proper diocesan community, we find the source to comprehend ones own life and ministry (Cf. Statutes, 5).
- To realize the fullness of life according to the Spirit (sanctification) through the exercise one’s proper ministry (Statutes, 1), inserting it in the diocesan pastoral plan.
- To collaborate in our pastoral activities, according to the possibilities.
- To live profoundly the evangelical generosity, ecumenical dimension and the universal missionary spirit (Statutes, 6).

In the AUC **we try to fraternally help other brothers** to better realize their pastoral ministry (Cf. PO 12, 13), for these we propose ourselves the following special **services**:

- To serve the bishop, the priests and deacons, collaborating in the pastoral of the clergy (diocesan pastoral plan of the clergy).
- To visit the confreres, especially those in greater need of presence, support and friendship as privileged means of expressing the spirit of the association (Statutes 18).
- To collaborate with the Institutions and Associations which expressly take to heart the life and ministry of the Bishops, Priests and Deacons (Cf. Statutes 30).
- To participate creatively in all forms of pastoral endeavour and to promote both the quality and number of vocations to the ordained ministry (Statutes, 27).
- To animate us and offer to the Bishop a service even outside the diocese, especially in mission territories, in the dioceses that are in need of clergy and, if necessary, to work for the formation in the seminaries (Statutes, 26).
- To assume a new sensibility towards the work for the unity of Christians, the communion of pastors, and the proclamation of the Gospel to all the people (Statutes, 6).
- To share in the efforts and the hopes of the world, promoting and developing a responsible participation of the laity in the common and unique mission of Christ, as they too are protagonists of the new evangelization (Statutes, 4).

The AUC has a special right to be if its members, individual and collectively, they are the “signs” of apostolic life and “servants” of the Shepherds. Therefore, the AUC offers communion and support to all the groups. It actively collaborates in the diocesan pastoral plan of the clergy, and it makes concrete services for the brothers of the diocesan presbyterate and for the clergy of the world. Particularly, the AUC justifies her being if inside we help us to sanctify ourselves in the exercise of the pastoral ministry and continues to help in this field to the brothers.

FOR OUR DIALOGUE:

1. *Which resources help us more to sanctify us in the exercise of our ministry?*
2. *Which steps take in the Presbyterate to be better “servants” to one another?*
3. *Which are the AUC services that favour more the life and ministry of the brothers?*

5. LET US PARTICIPATE IN THE APOSTOLIC UNION OF THE CLERGY (AUC).

When the AUC is better understood, the brothers say: if the AUC is useful to me, I would like to participate. But how can we receive the services? How to serve the brothers together with the others? Which concrete steps does it suit us to work with other friends who are interested? We wish to live the fraternal communion to serve our brother pastors. We wish to use the AUC to the best, which is a gift of God.

To fully participate in the AUC we have to be attached to it as “Members.” There are also other forms of friendship and collaboration that are important to favour these ideals of communion and service of the clergy.



5.1 Member of the AUC or Friend and collaborator.

When someone thinks about the AUC, the question that comes to mind is what are the advantages that one can receive. Sure in the AUC too one can receive good services, sharing with friends, conduct

interesting programs, etc. But the pastoral charity and the sacramental fraternity bring us to the AUC, not so much to receive, but to grow together and to serve the others. Let us think more of what we can share with other Members of the AUC, with the brothers of the diocesan presbyterate and with the clergy of the world. Let us participate not for receiving, but to do good to the brothers, without expecting any reward, only for the good of others and for the glory of God; so that our service may also motivate them to do good to the other brothers in the presbytery and those in the world, that need that help.

In the AUC “Members” are:

- ✓ Those who wish to live the apostolic life in a community, promote the communion and fraternal help and those who wish to live in holiness through the pastoral ministry.
- ✓ Those who wish to profit from the Apostolic Union of Clergy as a helping hand and walk along towards their growth and personal sanctification in various aspects (human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral).
- ✓ Those who wish to unite themselves with other brothers, in groups or other similar forms of fraternal communion, to serve the clergy of their own presbytery and their neighbourhood.

The responsibilities of the “member” of the AUC are:

1. To live “as the Apostles with Jesus” (Apostolic Life, Statutes, 8 - 23).
2. To share with the other confreres of the group to grow in human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral aspects (Statutes, Preamble n. 28).
3. To demonstrate their membership to the association by taking active part in the clergy meetings of their dioceses as well as in other meetings of the AUC (Cf Statutes, 17).
4. To serve the cobrothers. Visits to confreres, especially those in greater need of company, support, and friendship, will be a privileged means of expressing the spirit of the association. (Statutes, 18, 23 - 30).
5. To pay the yearly membership fees, as determined by each National Directives. (Statutes, 22) and support the International Union as well (Statutes, 72), in a spirit of solidarity, sharing and participation in the purposes and services of the Union.
6. Every year, to offer a Mass where particular remembrance will be made of the living and deceased brothers of the AUC. (Statutes, 21).

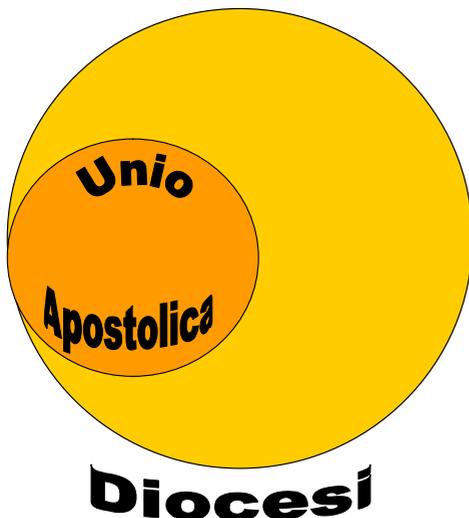
A “friend and collaborator” of the AUC:

- Appreciates the spirit that the members of AUC live to serve its Brothers.

- Lives in friendship with other AUC members or with some AUC group.
- Participates in meetings and services of the AUC.
- Affectively and effectively, supports the AUC services for the clergy.

There are other brothers that receive the diocesan, national or international services of the AUC. They are the “**beneficiaries**” of our services. We will gladly continue to share our experiences, reflections and services.

5.2 To organize our AUC group and the diocesan Union.



Special **steps** that we may take to systematize the life and the services of the **AUC in the Diocese**.

- After receiving the information and motivations on the AUC, let’s unite with other brothers and share the spirit of the AUC and realize its goals.
- Let us dedicate a meeting to study the Statutes of the AUC (in this booklet most of the articles is presented) and we share on the utility that will help us to live the AUC and its steps that will systematize the work.
- Let us ask the approval of the diocesan Bishop to institute (if it has not been erected yet) the Apostolic Union of the Clergy in the Diocese. We look forward to live the “diocesan” spirit of the AUC and try to find a father, brother and friend figure in the Bishop.
- Later, we may make a personal **adhesion** to the Apostolic Union of the Clergy, (AUC) (Statutes, 41), with a formula as following:

I,..... , before God, declare that I know the Statutes of the Apostolic Union of the Clergy (AUC) and freely join it to live “like the Apostles with Jesus”, in fraternal communion and with particular pastoral charity, at the service of my Bishop, my Presbytery’s confreres, the Deacons, of my Diocese and of the universal Church.

- Let us form in the Diocese one or more groups of the AUC. Together they form the Diocesan Union of the AUC.
- Let us inform the national President of the AUC (or the international Direction, if there is no national direction) about our adhesion and activities. All the diocesan Unions form a chain of prayer and fraternal solidarity. And thus we form the International Confederation of the Apostolic Union of the Clergy.
- Something very important: with enthusiasm, let us live the AUC, “**to be helped and to help**” and to better everyday in being “**brothers and Servants**” in our diocesan presbyterate and for the clergy of the whole world.
- Let us use the national and international services of the AUC: Communications, publications, visits for animation and other services for the clergy.
- Let us participate in the regional and national activities of the AUC.

FOR OUR DIALOGUE:

1. *Which “commitments of the Members of AUC” are more important? Why?*
2. *Which concrete steps can be taken to form a new AUC group in the Presbyterate?*

6. THE DIOCESAN UNION, "TO BE HELPED AND TO HELP" IN THE PRESBITERATE.

Pastors want to evangelically “follow” Jesus, to live “the intimate sacramental fraternity” and “to sanctify in the exercise of our ministry” for the diocese and for all the people. Let us then be like “Shepherds” with the spirituality of our Diocese.

The primary interest of all the priests is to love and serve God in our Diocese and all the people; to be holy priests with Christ, to be like Him and live for Him; “to be helped and to help” the Confreres in the fraternal communion of the diocesan Presbytery; practicing our pastoral ministry in a sanctifying way. This journey is a daily exercise for all the pastors.

The AUC has a “diocesan” spirit in all its members, their life, spirituality, organization and services. It tries to help us to live fully the membership with devotion to its particular Church, to help grow in the Presbytery as “Family of Priests”, to fully live the fraternal communion and the service to the brothers, to live and to help to live the spirituality proper of the diocesan clergy.

We have also spoken in the preceding meetings, on the essential forms of communion of life and ministry and on the proposal of the AUC “to be helped” in the AUC groups and “to help” the brothers from the group of AUC. This group of AUC (at least 5 members), or other groups existing of AUC in the diocese, constitute **the diocesan Union** (AUC). Let us reflect on the life, organization, services and the responsibilities of the Members and of the Servers and the relationships with the diocesan pastoral plan of the clergy.

6.1 *The diocesan Union:*

- Is rooted in the particular Church (Statutes, 39).
- Can be constituted with a minimum of five members (Statutes, 40).
- Is validly constituted, if erect and approved by the bishop, and legally admitted (Statutes, 40, 48).

- Can be integrated by a local group or several local groups, however, belonging to the same Union (Statutes, 42).
- Structures according to its reality (Statutes, 43).
- Is at the service of all the clergy (Statutes, 39).
- Lives in communion with its Bishop (Statutes, 39).
- Established itself in assembly, it chooses a Director, who will be assisted by at least one member, and a Treasurer, for the service of the Union. They constitute the diocesan Directorate, which is elected every three years or according to the customs of each diocese, and they cannot be in office for more than twelve years (Statutes, 43).
- The diocesan Director is to be approved by his own Ordinary, and the National President is to be notified of his appointment (Statutes, 43).
- Unites with other diocesan Unions of the nation, it forms the national Union (national Federation) (Statutes, 35). It unites itself to the AUC International Confederation (Statutes, 33).
- Receives and supports the services of the national Union of the AUC (Statutes, 54).
- The National Directorate regulates the procedure for the closing of a Diocesan Union; particular attention will be given to the management of the properties and the archives, in view of its possible reopening. The person who signs the deed of closing will notify the National and International Directorates. The National Directory also regulates the dismissal of a member. (Also Statutes, 47).

The diocesan Union (AUC) offers us a basic concrete space in the particular Church, for the growth and the service, offering us fraternal communion, helping us in life and doing the best to serve the Confreres of the presbytery and of the whole world.

6.2 Participation and Commitments:

One becomes the **member of the Diocesan Union:**

- Accepting, through the personal adhesion, the purposes and form of life laid down in the Statutes of the AUC (Statutes, 41).
- By following the procedures indicated by the National Directory of AUC (Statutes, 41).

The diocesan Director:

- Is elected from the diocesan assembly of the AUC (Statutes, 43).
- Is approved by his own bishop (Statutes, 43).
- Communicates his nomination to the national Direction of the AUC (Statutes, 44), or to the international Direction, (if there is no national one).
- Promotes the group meetings (Statutes, 44).
- Maintains relations with the bishop, the priests, the deacons and the laity, especially those in position of responsibility (Statutes, 44).
- Maintains contacts with the national Direction or with other levels, according to the subdivisions of the organizations in each country (Statutes, 44).



6.3 *Complementarity between the diocesan Pastoral of the Clergy and the diocesan Pastoral of the Clergy.*

It is very useful to understand the complementary and mutual support among the life, organization and services of the Apostolic Union of the Clergy (AUC) and the Diocesan Pastoral of the Clergy. We can analyze it with reference to the organization and services of the diocesan Committee of the clergy (CDC) and of the diocesan Union (AUC).

- Concerning their **nature**, both are fully ecclesial: the CDC, erected by the diocesan bishop, is a diocesan “pastoral organ” to complete the official mission of service to the clergy. The diocesan Union (UAC), with pontifical approval is an “association” erected by the diocesan bishop, belongs to an international association, public, clerical, that live and work in small groups of life and service.
- Concerning the specific **purpose** they are different and complementary: the CDC as official institutional service, promotes and coordinates officially the pastoral activities of the clergy for all the ordained ministers in the diocese; the AUC is an association of priestly life and service to the confreres: its Members are committed to help each other, to reach the fullness of life in the Spirit (to be holy pastors), through the exercise of ministry (Cf Statutes, 1); so the AUC in every diocese invites its members to

live a life of communion, as the Apostles with Jesus. The diocesan spirituality commits the members to serve other ordained ministers in the diocesan presbytery and in the world. The complementarity is found in the service to the clergy: the AUC is at the service of the diocesan clergy (in the diocesan, national and international level), above all in the diocesan presbyteries, the Members help to grow integrally and unite them with their own initiative, to serve the brothers in the diocesan presbytery and to the clergy of the world.

- Concerning its **Members** too we find the differences, yet it is complementary: the CDC is composed from the Vicar or Delegate of diocesan Clergy and for the other members approved by the bishop; the diocesan Union, instead, is formed by free choice and by making the personal adhesion, of those who need, or for the interested to live in one of the AUC groups, which constitutes the diocesan Union (at least of five members), in which diocesan Director, elected by the Union needs approval of the bishop.
- Concerning the **organization**: the CDC works together with the diocesan presbyterate and the diocesan Delegate acts intimately united to the diocesan bishop; the diocesan Union lives and works, above all, in the diocesan level; nominates its diocesan Director; has its periodic meetings of AUC groups. These diocesan Unions are united in the national Federation and in the international Confederation.

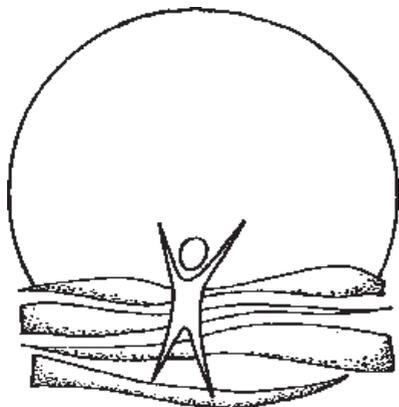
In conclusion, the diocesan Union (AUC) tries to live in full diocesan **communion**, to the **service** of the diocesan presbytery, actively participating in the services of the diocesan Pastoral of the Clergy and **collaborating**, from its own initiative, with humble service to the confreres. It collaborates gladly with the Bishop and with the diocesan Commission of clergy and in any other service required of him.

FOR OUR DIALOGUE:

1. *In what the AUC “diocesan” spirit favours the growth of the diocesan clergy? Why?*
2. *By which concrete services should the AUC collaborate in the Presbytery and in the Diocese?*

7. WE PROPOSE YOU:

7.1 *An amazing journey:*



1. In this five-year plan, we propose to all the members of the AUC, to work together for the growth of life, organization and services of the AUC. We shall put all our efforts to grow in quality and in number.
2. The priority is to strengthen and to increase the diocesan Unions.
3. We have taken a few important and easy **itinerary for the five-year plan**, with special contents and activities:

- I. **Why and how to be member of the AUC. Diocesan Union (First step).**
- II. **Personal renewal of our ministry and life (Second step).**
- III. **The diocesan spirituality of the diocesan ordained ministers (Third step).**
- IV. **The AUC as a service to the Church today (Fourth step, in preparation to the celebration of the 150 anniversary of the AUC, 2012).**

In the international assembly (2007) we had proposed other important **tasks to the diocesan Unions:**

- To apply in every step the materials of animation sent by the international Direction.
- To revive in every member of the AUC the task to live and to serve according to the AUC Statutes.
- To strengthen the life and services of the AUC groups, intensifying

their frequent meetings, life, prayer, evangelical revision of life, sharing of the Word, friendship, reflections, sacramental fraternity, support among the members of the group and towards other confreres in the diocesan presbytery.

- To make oneself known in the diocesan presbytery, with testimony and word, the life and services of the AUC.
- To strengthen fraternity and collaboration with the Bishop.
- To promote the universal missionary spirit among the members of the group.
- To promote vocations to the ordained ministry.

7.2 WE INVITE YOU

- To be “*member*” and “*promoter*” of the Apostolic Union of the Clergy, if the AUC responds to your priorities and interests, particularly “to help” others and help in the diocesan presbytery.

We adhere to the AUC:

- To answer to the special love of God and the particular gifts that has been given us to be “brothers and servers” of the confreres;
 - To help the brothers in their needs, and to share their journey with them;
 - For ourselves: we unite in groups to make a continuous journey of renewal and fidelity of communion and of service that helps us to grow as holy pastors.
- We invite you to be “*Friend and Collaborator*” of the AUC, if you so wish to receive services of the AUC and to share its spirit of brotherhood.
 - To everybody, we invite to unite with us as “*brothers*” in the *diocesan Presbytery and with the other Pastors of the world.*

We share experiences, reflections, material, and initiatives in favour of the diocesan clergy. You can ask us for the Bulletin of the AUC, materials for meetings of the Clergy, material for the formation as animators in the pastoral aspects of the Clergy, visits of animation and other services.

We exchange experiences, reflections, proposals, required for the journey that we have done with the elements proposed in these pages. Thank you in anticipation, for your testimony and sharing with us and with others.

This material that we are sharing is the first step. Let us know when you will have completed the first step and tell us your experiences in group of the AUC and the journey undertaken. With pleasure we will propose you a new material for the next step.

FOR OUR DIALOGUE:

- 1. Which of these four steps that are proposed in the itinerary of the five year plan will be very useful? Why?***
- 2. Which concrete steps do you propose for strengthening your group?***

The members of the AUC may make an **adhesion** to the Apostolic Union of the Clergy with a formula as follows:

PERSONAL ADHESION

To the Apostolic Union of the Clergy

I,..... , before God, declare that I know the Statutes of the Apostolic Union of the Clergy (AUC) and freely join it to live “like the Apostles with Jesus”, in fraternal communion and with particular pastoral charity, at the service of my Bishop, my Presbytery’s confreres, the Deacons, from my Diocese and from the universal Church.

Full name

Address.....

Diocese..... Nation

Date Sign

*In the Apostolic Union, **we pray everyday for the confreres.** We suggest the following prayers, but you could use other prayers as you prefer.*

PRAYER OF THE SHEPHERDS

O Jesus our Friend,
we thank you for having called us and consecrated us
as the shepherds of your Church.

Enlighten and strengthen us with your Spirit
that we may be, like the Apostles,
your special disciples and friends,
good brothers and servants
of the bishop, presbyters and deacons
and good pastors in our community,
in our diocese and to all people.

O Mother of the Church, pray for us.

O Holy Apostles, pray for us. Amen.

PRAYER OF THE ORDAINED MINISTERS

Oh! God, our Father,
we thank you because you called us to the ordained ministry.
Revive in us, for the merits of your Son Jesus,
the spirit of contemplation,
The pastoral charity and the sacramental fraternity
for the growth of your Church that is in (. . .)

The founders of this particular Church,
its saints, its ministers
and all those who have served in its history
may become our model and our help.

Oh! Benevolent and merciful Father, help us all:
bishop, presbyters and deacons,
together with the consecrated and the laity,
to live in communion with the universal Church,
may we walk in the Spirit,
to live and to testify your Love.

Oh! Jesus, Shepherd of the shepherds,
help us to collaborate so that the entire Church
enriches itself with numerous and holy ordained ministers.

Oh! Mother and Virgin Mary,
intercede for us
so that the Holy Spirit may mould our
hearts
like that of your Son,
to live, with delight and faithfulness,
the ministry that is entrusted to us.
Amen.



PRAYER FOR THE APOSTOLIC UNION

O Jesus our Lord,
in spite of our unworthiness
you have chosen us for your holy ministry;
animated by a fervent love,
we ask you for perseverance in our good intentions;
that we may incorporate always more
the spirit of obedience, chastity, and humility every day;
the spirit of mortification, poverty, pastoral zeal,
profound piety, and specially the spirit of charity,
that you may grow in us and each one of us may be able to say,
“*It is not I who live; but it is Christ who lives in me.*”

O Clement, O Pious, O Virgin Mary:
help us, so that we the bishops, the presbyters and the deacons
may form a perfect Apostolic Union. Amen.

INDEXES AND ABBREVIATIONS

DCE	Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter <i>Deus Caritas Est</i>
DMLP	Congregation for the Clergy, <i>Directory for the Ministry and the Life of the Presbyteries</i>
LG	Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution <i>Lumen Gentium</i>
NMI	John Paul II, Apostolic Letter <i>Novo Millennio Ineunte</i>
OT	Vatican Council II Decree <i>Optatam Totius</i>
PDV	John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation <i>Pastores Dabo Vobis</i>
PGr	John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation <i>Pastores Gregis</i>
PO	Vatican Council II, Decree <i>Presbyterorum Ordinis</i>
RMi	John Paul II, Encyclical Letter <i>Redemptionis Missio</i>
	Statutes of the Apostolic Union of the Clergy



From each Nation in the international AUC Assembly



The elected Servers for the international AUC animation

APOSTOLIC UNION OF THE CLERGY



With great pleasure, we invite you to share shall share experiences, reflections, help materials and initiatives in favour of the diocesan clergy. You may ask for the Bulletin AUC, materials for meetings of the clergy, materials for the formation as Animators in the pastoral of Clergy, animation visits and other services.

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