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[TRANSLATION]

LAW OF RELIGIOUS ASSOCIATIONS AND PUBLIC WORSHIP

TITLE ONE
GENERAL PROVISIONS

ARTICLE 1. - The present law, founded on the historic principle of the Separation of the State and churches, as well as in the freedom of religious beliefs, regulates the dispositions of the Political Constitution of the United States of Mexico with reference to associations, churches, religious groups and public worship. Its norms are of the public order and of general observance in the entire Republic.

Religious convictions do not in any event exempt one from complying with the laws of the country. No one can allege religious motives to evade the responsibilities and obligations prescribed by law.

ARTICLES 2. - The Mexican State guarantees to each individual the following rights and freedoms in religious matters:

- a) To have or adopt the religious belief that pleases them most and to practice the worship activities or rituals of their preference.
- b) To not profess any religious beliefs, to abstain from practicing religious activities and rituals and to refrain from belonging to any religious association.
- c) To not be the object of discrimination, coercion or hostility because of their religious beliefs, nor to be obligated to make declarations about the same.

No one can allege religious motives to prevent anyone else from engaging in any work or activity, except in cases foreseen in this and the other applicable ordinances.

- d) No one will be required to provide personal services nor to contribute money or goods in kind for the support of any association, church or whatever other kind of religious group, nor to participate or contribute in the same way in rituals, ceremonies, festivals, services or activities of religious worship.
- e) No one can be the object of any judicial or administrative investigation because of their manifestation of religious ideas; and,
- f) To be able to associate together or meet peacefully for religious purposes.

ARTICLE 3. - The Mexican State is secular. As such it will exercise its authority over all religious manifestations, individual or collective, only in that which relates to the observance of the law, conserving public order and morality, and the guardianship of the rights of third parties. The State cannot establish any type of preference or privilege in favor of any religion. Neither can it do anything in favor of any church or religious group.

Official identification documents shall not mention the individual's religious beliefs.

ARTICLE 4. - Acts relating to the civil status of people are exclusively the province of the authorities under the terms established by law, and they will have the effect and validity given them by those laws.

The simple promise to tell the truth and to fulfill the obligations undertaken subjects he who makes such promise, in case of failure to fulfill the promise, to the sanctions which the law establishes for such purpose.

ARTICLE 5. - Judicial decisions which contravene the dispositions of this law will be null and void as a matter of law.

TITLE TWO CONCERNING RELIGIOUS ASSOCIATIONS

CHAPTER ONE

Of their nature, constitution and function

ARTICLE 6. - Churches and religious groups will have legal existence as religious associations once they obtain the corresponding constituting registration from the Secretariat of Government under the terms of this law.

Religious associations will be regulated internally by their own articles of association, which will contain the fundamental principles of their doctrine or body of religious beliefs and will set forth both their representatives as well as, in the appropriate situations, those of the internal entities and divisions that belong to said organization. Said entities and divisions may correspond to regional areas or to other forms of autonomous organization within the same associations, according to the manner they may deem appropriate to their structure and purposes, and these will possess equally legal existence under the terms of this law.

Religious associations are equal before the law in their rights and obligations.

ARTICLE 7. - The petitioners of the constituting registration of a religious association must establish that the church or religious group:

- I. Has been involved, preponderantly, in the observance, practice, propagation or instruction of a religious doctrine or of a body of religious beliefs;
- II. Has carried out religious activities in the Mexican Republic for at least 5 years, and has gained acceptance among the population, and has also established its domicile within the Republic;
- III. Has sufficient assets to fulfill its objectives.
- IV. Has articles of association in the terms of the second paragraph of Article 6; and
- V. Has complied, as appropriate, with the provisions of fractions I and II of Article 27 of the constitution.

An extract of the petition of registration to which this section refers will be published in the Official Record of the Federation.

ARTICLE 8. - Religious associations must:

- I. Agree to always conform to the constitution, to the laws which emanate from it and to the institutions of the country;
- II. Not pursue objectives that are for profit or preponderantly economic.

ARTICLE 9. - Religious groups will have the right, within the terms of this law and its implementation, to:

- I. Identify themselves through an exclusive designation;
- II. Organize themselves freely in their internal structures and adopt the articles or norms that govern their system of authority and functioning;
- III. Carry out activities of public religious worship which do not conflict with the norms and provisions of this and other applicable ordinances;
- IV. Carry out all types of juridical acts for the fulfillment of their objectives, provided they are legitimate and are not done for purposes of profit.
- V. Intervene for themselves or in association with individuals or legal entities in the organization, administration, support and functioning of associations of private assistance, educational facilities and health institutions, provided they do not constitute activities for profit, and subject themselves to this law as well as the laws which govern these matters;

- VI. Use exclusively, for religious purposes, property belonging to the nation according to such terms as may be established by the appropriate regulations; and
- VII. Take advantage of the other prerogatives that this law and other laws grant to them.

ARTICLE 10. - The activities regulated by this law and carried out on a regular basis by churches or religious groups without the constituting registration spoken of in Article 6, will be attributed to individuals or entities, as the case may be, and they will be subject to the obligations established in this ordinance. Such churches and groups will not have the rights outlined in fractions IV, V, VI and VII of Article Nine of this law and other applicable regulations.

Labor relations between religious associations and their employees will be subject to the provisions of the applicable labor legislation.

CHAPTER TWO

Concerning members, ministers of religion and representatives

ARTICLE 11. - For purposes of the registration referred to in this law, members of a religious association are those of legal age who possess that status, according to the articles of the association.

The representatives of religious associations ought to be of Mexican citizenship and of legal age and establish their status before the appropriate authorities.

ARTICLE 12. - For the purposes of this law, ministers of worship are defined as all those people of legal age on whom the religious associations to which they belong have conferred this status. The religious associations shall notify the Secretariat of Government of their decision in that regard. If the religious associations fail to give this notice, or in the case of churches or religious groups, ministers of religion will be deemed to be those who perform as their principal activity in them functions of direction, representation or organization of religious associations.

ARTICLE 13. - Those of Mexican citizenship can function in the ministry of any church. Foreigners may also function in the same way, provided they can prove their legal entry and stay in the country and their immigration status does not prohibit the carrying out of religious-type activities, within the terms of the General Law of Citizenship.

ARTICLE 14. - Mexican citizens who function in the ministry of any church have the right to vote within the guidelines of the applicable electoral legislation. Ministers of churches may not be candidates for elective offices, nor occupy high public positions, unless they formally, materially and definitively

withdraw from their ministry at least five years in the first case and three in the second one, prior to the day of the election in question or the acceptance of the position. For all other positions six months will suffice.

Neither can ministers of religion associate with any activity for political purposes nor proselytize in favor or against any candidate, party or political organization whatsoever.

The withdrawal of ministers of religion shall be communicated by the religious association or the withdrawing ministers, to the Secretariat of Government within thirty days after the date of withdrawal. In the case of resignation the minister can certify it, demonstrating that the document through which it was accomplished was received by a legal representative of the respective religious association.

For purposes of this article, the withdrawal or resignation will become effective on the date of the notice given to the Secretariat of Government.

ARTICLE 15. - The ministers of churches, their ancestors, descendants, brothers and sisters, spouses, as well as the religious associations to which they belong, are ineligible to inherit through wills from the people whom these ministers have directed or assisted spiritually and to whom they are not related within the fourth degree, pursuant to article 1325 of the Civil Code for the Federal District in Common Matters and for all the Republic in Federal Matters.

CHAPTER THREE

Regulations concerning property rights

ARTICLE 16. - Religious associations constituted in conformity to this law may possess property which is used to fulfill their purposes. Said property, consisting of all property which they own or administer under any title whatsoever, shall only be that which is indispensable to the purpose or purposes proposed in their declaration of purpose.

Religious associations and ministers of worship may not own or administer, by themselves or through another person, concessions for the operation of radio or television stations or any other type of telecommunication, nor own nor administer any kind of mass communication. Excluded from this prohibition are printed publications of a religious character.

Religious associations in liquidation may transfer their property, through whatever title, to other religious associations. In the event the liquidation is carried out as a result of the imposition of any of the sanctions provided for in Article 32 of this law, the property of religious associations that are liquidated shall pass to the public welfare. The Nation's property, that has been in possession of the

associations shall return, of course, to the public domain of the Nation.

ARTICLE 17. - The Secretariat of Government will determine whether the property sought to be acquired, possessed or administered, under whatever title, by religious associations qualifies as indispensable. For this purpose it will issue declarations of origin in the following cases:

- I. Whenever real estate is involved;
- II. In any case of inheritance, to determine whether a religious association can be an heir or legatee;
- III. When a religious association intends to act as trustee, except when the association itself is the only grantor; and
- IV. When real estate is involved in which associations of private aid, health or educational institutions are owners or trustees, and in whose constitution, administration or functioning, religious associations participate by themselves or in association with other persons.

Requests for declarations of origin must be answered by the appropriate authority in a period of time not to exceed forty-five days; if this is not done they will be considered to be approved.

For the case mentioned in the previous paragraph, the Secretariat must, upon the petitioner's request, issue a written certification that the period has elapsed.

Religious associations must register all their real property with the Secretariat of Government, without prejudice to other obligations of this nature, contained in other laws.

ARTICLE 18. - Public officials and functionaries who participate in legal acts by virtue of which a religious association purports to acquire the ownership of real property shall require that the association present the document in which is shown the declaration of origin issued by the Secretariat of Government or the certification mentioned in the preceding article.

Public officials and functionaries who are involved in the legal acts heretofore mentioned must give notice to the Real Property Registry that the real estate in question will be dedicated to the purposes of the association, so that the registry can make the appropriate notation.

ARTICLE 19. - The persons and entities, as well as the properties that this law regulates, will be subject to the fiscal dispositions according to the terms of the laws that apply.

ARTICLE 20. - Religious associations shall appoint and register before the Secretariat of Social Development and the

National Council for Culture and Art, the representatives responsible for the chapels and of the property which constitutes artistic or historic monuments which are national property. The association shall be obligated to preserve the integrity of said property and care for its safeguard and restoration in accordance with the law.

The property belonging to the nation owned by religious associations, as well as the use that is made of them, will be subject to this law, to the General Law of National Properties and, as appropriate, to the Federal Law relating to Archaeological, Artistic and Historic Monuments and Areas, as well as other applicable laws and regulations.

TITLE THREE

RELATING TO RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES OF PUBLIC WORSHIP

ARTICLE 21. - Religious activities of public worship will normally take place in chapels. Only under extraordinary circumstances will religious associations be able to carry out such activities outside the chapels, under terms outlined in this law and in the other applicable ordinances.

Religious associations may, under extraordinary circumstances, transmit or disseminate activities of religious worship through mass communication in the nonprint media, with previous authorization from the Secretariat of Government. In no event shall the religious activities be transmitted during radio or television time reserved for the State.

In those cases mentioned in the previous paragraph, the organizers, sponsors, concessionaires or owners of the means of communication, will be responsible, in cooperation with the religious association in question, to fulfill the dispositions concerning activities of public worship of extraordinary character.

Meetings of a political nature may not take place in chapels.

ARTICLE 22. - Religious activities of public worship that religious associations propose to carry out under extraordinary circumstances outside the places of worship will require prior notice to the federal authorities, of the Federal District, or competent state or municipal offices, at least 15 days before the date on which they propose to celebrate it, the notice should indicate the place, date, exact time, as well as the reason they want to do it.

The authorities may prohibit the event mentioned in the notice, giving the reason and basis for their decision, but only for reasons of security, or for protection of health, moral, tranquility and public order, and protection of the rights of third parties.

ARTICLE 23. - The notice referred to in the previous article will not be required under the following circumstances:

- I. The movement of groups going to ordinary places of worship;
- II. The travel of persons between private homes with the purpose of carrying out religious commemorations;
- III. Events to be held in closed premises or in those to which the public will not have free access.

ARTICLE 24. - Whoever opens a chapel or place destined for public worship must give notice to the Secretariat of Government within a period of no more than thirty working days from the date of opening. Observance of this norm does not exempt the religious association from fulfilling the applicable dispositions for other matters.

TITLE FOUR

CONCERNING THE AUTHORITIES

ARTICLE 25. - The Federal Executive Authority, through the Secretariat of Government, is responsible for the application of this law. State and municipal authorities, as well as those of the Federal District, will be considered to be agents of the Federation with respect to the terms of this ordinance.

The federal, state and municipal authorities will not intervene in their capacity as authorities, in the internal affairs of the religious associations.

The authorities mentioned above may not attend in their official capacity any religious activity of public worship, nor any activity that may have similar motives or purposes. In the case of diplomatic activities, they will be limited to the fulfillment of the mission that has been accorded to them, within the terms of the applicable dispositions.

ARTICLE 26. - The Secretariat of Government will organize and maintain updated the registers of religious associations and of real property which, under whatever title, those associations own or administer.

ARTICLE 27. - The Secretariat of Government may establish covenants of collaboration or coordination with state authorities with respect to the provisions of this law.

State and municipal authorities shall receive notices concerning the celebration of extraordinary activities of public worship within the terms of this law and its regulations. They should also inform the Secretariat of Government of the exercise of their powers in accordance with the provisions of this law, its regulations and, as applicable, the applicable covenant.

ARTICLE 28. - The Secretariat of Government is empowered to resolve conflicts that may arise between religious associations, according to the following procedures:

- I. The religious association which feels its legal interests have been affected will present its complaint before the Secretariat of Government;
- II. The Secretariat will accept the complaint and will forward a summons to the other religious association with the requirement that they answer it within the period of the following ten working days, from the date of notification, and it will be summoned to a meeting of negotiation, which will take place within the thirty days following that date on which the complaint was presented;
- III. In the negotiating session, the Secretariat will exhort the parties to reach a conciliatory solution to the controversy and, in the event this is not possible, the Secretariat will be named as arbiter of limited power; and
- IV. If the parties opt for arbitration, the process will be followed in accordance with the terms previously communicated to the parties; if arbitration is rejected they will be left within their rights to pursue their dispute before the competent Courts, under the terms of Article 104, Section I, Paragraph A of the Political Constitution of the United States of Mexico.

The procedure foreseen in this article is not a prerequisite to access to the courts.

TITLE FIVE

CONCERNING INFRACTIONS AND SANCTIONS AND THE RECOURSE OF REVIEW

CHAPTER ONE

Concerning infractions and sanctions

ARTICLE 29. - The following constitute infractions to this law, as committed by religious associations or ministers of worship:

- I. To associate together for political ends, as well as carrying out proselyting or propaganda of whatever kind in favor or against any candidate, party or political organization whatsoever;
- II. Belittle the symbols of the country or in any way try to persuade others to reject them;
- III. When religious associations acquire, own or administer, personally or through others, property and rights that are not strictly indispensable for its purposes, as well as concessions of whatever nature;

- IV. Promote conduct contrary to the health or physical integrity of individuals;
- V. Use physical violence or moral pressure, through aggression or threats, in order to achieve or carry out their objectives;
- VI. Claiming to be a religious association while lacking the constituting registration granted by the Secretariat of Government;
- VII. Using the property acquired by the associations, under whatever title, for a different purpose than that provided in the corresponding declaration of origin;
- VIII. Diverting the purposes of the associations in such a way that they lose or gravely impair their religious nature;
- IX. Converting a religious function into a political meeting;
- X. Opposing the laws of the country or its institutions in public meetings;
- XI. Performing or permitting acts that jeopardize the integrity, safeguard, and preservation of property that comprises the cultural heritage of the nation, and that is being used by churches, religious organizations or associations, as well as failing to take the actions that are necessary to preserve the integrity and value of such property; and
- XII. Others established by this law and other applicable ordinances.

ARTICLE 30. - The application of the sanctions provided by this law will be subjected to the following procedures:

- I. The sanctioning organization will be a commission formed according to criteria established by the Regulations and will reach its decisions by majority vote;
- II. The authority will notify the interested party of the acts that are considered in violation of the law, notifying him that within fifteen days following the notification he should appear before the above-mentioned commission to plead that which his interests indicate and to offer proof thereof;
- III. Once the time referred to in the previous paragraph has passed, whether or not the interested party has appeared, said commission will dictate the corresponding resolution. In the event that the interested party has appeared, the resolution ought to analyze the allegations and the evidence offered.

ARTICLE 31. - The infractions of this law will be punished taking into consideration the following circumstances:

- I. The nature and gravity of the mistake or infraction;
- II. The possible alteration of social tranquility and the public order that may arise from the infraction;
- III. The economic situation and the level of education of the offending party; and
- IV. Whether there have been repeated offenses.

ARTICLE 32. - Against the violators of this law there may be imposed one or several of the following sanctions, depending on evaluation made by the competent authority of the factors contained in the preceding article:

- I. Warning;
- II. A fine equivalent of up to twenty thousand days of the current minimum wage in the Federal District;
- III. Temporary or permanent closure of a building devoted to public worship;
- IV. Temporary suspension of the rights of the religious association within the national territory, or just in one State, municipality or locality; and
- V. Cancellation of the registration as a religious association.

The imposition of said sanctions will be the province of the Secretariat of Government, according to the terms of Article 30.

When the sanction imposed is the permanent closure of a local national property designated for regular worship, the Secretariat of Social Development, after receiving an opinion from the Government, will determine the fate of the real estate within the terms of the law concerning this matter.

CHAPTER TWO

Concerning the recourse of review

ARTICLE 33. - In opposition to the acts or resolutions dictated by the authorities in fulfillment of this law there may be interposed the recourse of review, of which the Secretariat of Government will be apprised. The document invoking the recourse of review must be presented to the appropriate office or before the authority who issues the act or resolution in question, within twenty working days following the day the concerned party was notified of the act or resolution to be reviewed. In this last case, the authority ought to remit, to the Secretariat mentioned, within the period of no more than ten working days, the document through which the party concerned submits the

request for review and the evidence that, in his case, he may offer as proof and that is within the control of said authority.

Only the people who have a legal interest in the matter may file for the review foreseen in this law.

ARTICLE 34. - The authority will examine the request for review and if he discovers that it was presented inappropriately, he will dismiss it on its face.

If the request for review is vague or irregular, the requester will be required, within the next ten days of the notification of the requirement to clarify his request for review, with the warning that in case the requester does not present the clarification, it will be considered that the request was not made.

The resolution that is issued of the request for review can revoke, modify or confirm the resolution or act reviewed.

ARTICLE 35. - In the agreement that allows the request for review, the suspension of the effects of the act alleged will be allowed, provided it be requested by the requester of the review and the nature of the act permits it, except that if with the granting of the suspension there continues prejudice to the social interest, dispositions of the public order will be invoked or the request for review will be left without substance.

When the order of suspension might cause harm or prejudice to third parties, the amount of the guarantee that the requester ought to grant to bring about restitution of the damages and to indemnify the prejudice caused will be determined, in case he does not receive a favorable resolution in the review.

ARTICLE 36. - For the purposes of this title, in the absence of an express disposition and within measures that will not contravene this law, the Federal Code of Civil Procedures will be applied as a supplementary measure.

T R A N S I T O R Y P R O V I S I O N S

ARTICLE ONE. - This law will become effective on the day following its publication in the Official Record of the Federation.

ARTICLE TWO. - The following laws and decrees are hereby repealed: The Statutory Law of Article 130 of the Federal Constitution, published in the Official Record of the Federation on 18 January 1927; the Law that Implements the Seventh Paragraph of Article 130 of the Constitution, relative to the number of priests who may be active in the Federal District or Territory, published in the Official Record of the Federation on 30 December 1931; the Law that Reformed the Penal Code for the Federal District and Territory, concerning crimes of common jurisdiction and for the entire Republic concerning crimes against the Federation, published in the Official Record of the Federation on

2 July 1926; as well as the Decree that establishes the period within which requests can be presented to take charge of chapels which are withdrawn from worship, published in the Official Record of the Federation on 31 December 1931.

ARTICLE THREE. - Hereby repealed are the dispositions of the Law of Nationalization of Properties, implementing Paragraph II of Article 27 of the Constitution, published in the Official Record of the Federation on 31 December 1940, as well as the provisions contained in the other ordinances, when they conflict with this law.

ARTICLE FOUR. - The nationalization actions and proceedings that are pending at the time that this law comes into effect will continue to be processed in accordance with the applicable dispositions of the Law of Nationalization of Property, implemented by Paragraph II of Article 27 of the Constitution, published in the Official Record of the Federation on 31 December 1940.

ARTICLE FIVE. - While their immigration status is reviewed, foreigners who, when this law enters into effect, are legally residing in this country, may act as ministers of worship, provided the churches and other religious groups recognize them as such, when they present their request for registration before the Secretariat of Government, or the interested ministers give notice of that circumstance to that same Secretariat.

ARTICLE SIX. - Real estate which is property of the nation which is presently used for religious purposes by the churches and other religious groups will continue to be used for such purposes, provided the aforesaid churches and religious groups request and obtain during a period not to exceed a year from the date this law comes into effect, the corresponding registration as a religious association.

ARTICLE SEVEN. - With the request for registration, the churches and religious groups will present a declaration of the real estate that they claim as their patrimony as religious associations.

The Secretariat of Government, in a period not to exceed six months from the date of the enabling registration of a religious association, will issue a general declaration of origin, if they have complied with the requirements of the law. All real estate that the religious associations desire to acquire subsequent to the enabling registration will require a declaration of origin as established in Article 17 of this ordinance.