

All India Catholic Union



REACHING OUT TO THE LAITY

*A handbook for grass root movement
in the parishes and dioceses of the
Catholic Church in India*

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All India Catholic Union held at Kolkata
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FOREWORD

This year, the 50th year of Second Vatican Council, is important in the history of the church, specially so in the life of the Laity in India. Today as never before there is a need to galvanize the common people if the Church has to be revitalized.

Pope Francis has called for a “poor church for the Poor.” His words surely offer hope for this age of turmoil and increasing chasm between the rich and the poor. We are certain that he will lead the Church to make a decisive intervention in world affairs in the cause of peace and of the poor.

His words have a special meaning for us in India.

The All India Catholic Union is a powerful catalyst of change in the Church and in the nation. The All India Catholic Union, pioneer and watchdog in the last century, has geared itself to meet the challenges of the future within the Church and in civil society with a dynamic and radical formation programme to train future leaders, utilizing new avenues of intervention and advocacy. This involves creative ecumenical and secular collaboration with other denominations, and other religious and social groups, along with innovative secular initiatives.

The AICU seeks collaboration with the Hierarchy and clergy, and with men and women religious through an empowered laity. AICU enables the making of a self confident Church, to strengthen India’s secular and socialist democracy.

This booklet gives information on the aims of AICU. It is also meant to resolve confusion within the church on what lies in the domain of the clergy, and what is within the sphere of Lay activity in the church. A comparison between the functions and activities of Laity Commissions and Pastoral Councils and those of the Laity-led Catholic Associations at the Parish and diocese level would help even the Clergy feel more confident and encourage the growth of Parish associations in the many dioceses in the country.

We trust Lay leaders and enlightened Clergy will use this booklet to strengthen the work of the People of Faith in collectively strengthening the Church in India.

Dr. John Dayal

Former National President
All India Catholic Union

ALL INDIA CATHOLIC UNION

Introduction:

In an Indian population of 1.2 billion there are about 2.5% Catholics. The All India Catholic Union is over 93 years old, making it one of the oldest Laity Organizations in all of Asia. It is recognized by the CBCI as the authentic voice of the Laity, and after the second Vatican Council, it has been vigorously working for the objectives for which it was formed as an apex body. With the prevailing conditions now in Gujarat and other parts of the country it is imperative that the AICU take the initiative of implementing its Aims and Objectives with a view to bring about awareness leading to unity and harmony among the Christians and people of all other faiths.



Aims and objectives:

1. To promote the interests of the Catholic Community at large so that they can be witnesses in India to the Good News of our Lord.
2. To ensure, for our community, the Fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution of India and in the Charter of the United Nations
3. To give Catholics a clear perspective of the challenges faced by the Country from terrorism, Cultural Nationalism and Fundamentalist forces which poses a threat to the Church, and, how to respond to them and empower youth to take up an effective leadership role in our society.
4. To rouse the civic, social and national consciousness of Catholics, to help them play an useful and effective part in the public life of the country and to make their full contribution to national unity and welfare.
5. To engage in Interfaith Dialogue with different sections of Indian Society.
6. To establish media cells in all States to work as an effective instrument to fight discrimination against minorities expose to injustices, and to safeguard human dignity.

7. To establish a Public Affairs cell (PR) to interact with Central and State Governments and other statutory bodies on issues pertaining to social justice and human rights.
8. To network with other organizations, on matters of common interest.
9. To establish Legal Aid and Counseling Cells in all States in India

Areas of Focus:

1. Its main concern is to promote unity and solidarity among the Catholics of India by building up effective Catholic Associations at the Diocesan and parish levels, through guidance and training programmes to achieve the aims and objectives of the Union. The Diocesan/Catholic Associations, in turn, would ensure that they spread their activities to the grass root level through their parish Units.
2. To build up close collaboration and cooperation at the all India level with the Catholic Bishops Conference of India (CBCI) and at the Diocesan level with the Bishop through its affiliated Catholic Association.
3. To be in dialogue with other Church hierarchical organizations such as the Syro Malankara Synod, Syro Malabar Synod and also with CPCI and the CRI with a view to work together, in the spirit of a participative Church. The Bishops are organized under CBCI, the religious are organized under CRI and all the Priests are organized under CPCI. Laity is organized under AICU; we are about 19 million Catholics in India of which the Dalits are 7 million. It is the aim of AICU to mobilize the laity into a powerful voice to work in solidarity with the CBCI, CRI and CPCI within the Church. This unity will strengthen the Church.
4. Interfaith Dialogue means constant interaction, creative and critical dialogue with people of different religions so that we can learn, change and grow. Previously we entered into dialogue and faced



them as in confrontation. Dialogue is not a debate. In dialogue each partner must listen to the other with an open mind in an attempt to understand each other as human beings sailing in the same boat towards a common destiny, and aiming at one important thing “Peace and Harmony”.

5. To set up media cells for communication network through email etc. The Church and the Laity needs to explore ways of integrating the mass Media into pastoral planning and activity. These media cells would have to monitor, analyze and understand developments in the country and know how and to respond to them i.e. media cells should be Proactive and Reactive. Through these cells the values of the kingdom should be communicated to others through press, radio, T.V., drama, music and song.
6. Public relations would mean to change public perceptions of the Catholics in the Country. This cell should have to handle all those organizations outside the Catholic Community such as the general media, TV, and other social communities and their organizations. Catholic Associations should give top priority to PR since the correct image and work of the organizations has to be projected with great care and forethought at all times. It would have to interact with Government, have lobbyists who can give them the correct messages regarding our aims and programmes, and to prevent unnecessary subversion of our cause by any wrong propaganda by other agencies.
7. The Catholic Community cannot work in isolation. Catholic Associations should therefore network with other Christian groups and other Organizations in Civil Society (NGOs), having similar aims, which are not inconsistent with the objectives of the Union.
8. Empowerment of youth. We are all aware that our youth is the future and strength of our society. In keeping with this dictum our programmes pay keen attention to our young people. Programmes

primarily focused on leadership, aimed to place youth in administrative services are organized. Courses in career guidance are conducted. We also create awareness of self-employment schemes for youth.

9. Catholic Associations should create awareness that Catholics should make their presence felt in Civic and Government bodies and endorse participation in civil and political life, which includes identifying and supporting good candidates for State elections, Municipal cooperation and Panchayat elections.

Other Areas of Work:

1. Each State has a Minority Commission Cell. It is important that we as a minority community should write and avail representation in Minority Commissions at the District levels. Catholic Associations should help Catholics grab initiatives from the various welfare schemes of the State and Central Government through a member of the Minorities Commission. Hence if a member in the Minority Commission is a Catholic it would be easier.
2. The Catholic Community should also lobby for and avail representation in the Minority Financial Corporation in each state. Very few of us know that Rs. 500 crores are available to help the minorities in self employment schemes and for pressing needs of the Minority Communities.
3. The Catholic Associations have the authority to call for any diocesan protest rallies especially at the times of crises such as serious atrocities against the minorities anywhere in the state or country.
4. The Catholic Associations can help the Parish Priest in counselling to solve local civic problems, problems within the community and also in other areas.
5. In case of natural or man made calamities Catholic Associations can organize, with the help of the Parish units, a drive either

within the community or to public, to collect materials and funds for the cause.

6. At the Diocesan level it can conduct an Employment Exchange, a Marriage Bureau, a Family Service Centre, Blood donors register etc.
7. It can have health camps for check up of eyes, cancer, diabetes etc, and raise funds for the same together with other NGOs such as Lions, Rotary etc.

Financial Assistance - Ways and Means: Each Catholic Association has to find, ways and means to collect funds because no organization can function without funds. Some of the means are:

Laity Sunday Collection: To collect from each Catholic Rs.2/-

Find out how many Catholics there are in each parish and ways and means to collect this amount.

Raffles, Christmas/Diwali Cards, Calendars, Stalls at Fancy Fete, Donations.

“Vision without action is merely a dream. A dream without vision is merely passing time.” but vision and action put together can certainly change the image of AICU/Catholic Association and that is just what we are trying to do today - but without your cooperation AICU/Catholic Association vision will remain a dream. When we speak of AICU/Catholic Association it should not just be about numbers, rather it should be, about convictions, attitudes and most important of all, commitment.

CBCI - Catholic Bishop's Conference of India

CRI - Conference of Religious India

CPCI - Catholic Priests Conference of India



CCBI - Conference of Catholic Bishops of India (Latin rite)

Role and Responsibilities of the Lay Faithful according to Vatican II

One of the fruits of Vatican II has been the acceptance of the fact that the laity is no longer to be considered as an appendage of the Church, but rather as an integral part of the People of God who form the Church. This insight can be viewed as a retrieval of the Patristic times, that is, the era of the Fathers of the Church from the post-Apostolic times to the 10th century A.D., when the laity participated and collaborated fully with the Hierarchy in the Church that is, the Popes and Bishops and Priests, in matters concerning the building up of the Church of Christ. There was a realisation that Christ has established the Eternal Covenant with the entire community of the „new People of God and not merely with only a particular section of this „new People of God.

The document of Vatican II that specifically deals with this aspect is the Dogmatic Constitution of the Church, or *Lumen Gentium* or *Light of the People*, as it is called, consisting of 8 chapters. The First Chapter treats of the reality of the Church as a mystery, a sacrament, that is, situated in the world, for the world and, in a sense, is the world. The Second Chapter, entitled: the “People of God” defines the identity of the Church. This identity is not spelt out in terms of a polarisation between the hierarchy, on the one hand, and the rest of the people on the other; but in terms of relationship between the holders of Church office and the laity, both of whom form the People of God. The basis of this understanding goes back to the Old Testament covenants which God made with His people as a community; and reached its culmination in the Definitive Covenant effected by Jesus Christ through His self-gift.

This People of God is called to engage itself in the Liturgy, which is the public worship performed by the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, that is, by Jesus as the Head, the hierarchy and the lay faithful as the members of the Mystical Body, thus actively involving the entire Body of Christ. The acclamations, responses to the greetings of the celebrant and ministers and to the prayers of litany, antiphons, Psalms accompanied by the appropriate body postures are the responsibilities



of the lay faithful during the liturgical celebration of the Holy Eucharist. The lay faithful form the choir for the liturgical function singing according to the nature of each part and thus help the congregation pray more meaningful and intensely.

Both lay men and women may be commissioned to serve at the altar and to assist the priest and the deacon, and to read passages from the Holy Scripture other than that of the Gospel, to read or to announce the intentions in the Prayer of the Faithful, recite the Responsorial Psalm between the readings, and to prepare the faithful for the reception of the sacraments. The bringing of the gifts to the altar at the Offertory by the lay faithful makes the Mass meaningful, as they, through these gifts, help concretise the spiritual offering which they make of themselves. Other responsibilities which could be undertaken by the lay faithful men and women include those who carry the Missal, the Cross, the candles, the bread, the wine, the water and the thurible, and take up collections in the Church. They can also act as commentators to give explanations and directions to the people as as to facilitate their understanding, as ushers who meet people at the door of the church, conduct them to their places, and marshall them if they are in processions.

In case there is no priest to celebrate Mass on a Sunday or a Holy Day of obligation, a Bible Service can be conducted, presided over by a lay person, if permitted by the local Bishop. This service has the same structure as that of the Liturgy of the Word at Mass, that is, the Letters and the Gospel of the day s Mass. The homily can be preached by the lay person presiding it as indicated by the Bishop or the Parish Priest. The service should terminate with the “Prayer of the Faithful” and the Lord s Prayer.

The designation assigned to the members of the Mystical Body of Christ, that is, *People of God* is not a mere designation, but calls for the performance of duties and responsibilities in their individual capacities as the Church is missionary by its very nature. The People of God in Christ are called to share in the three-fold mission of Christ as King, Priest and Prophet. The People of God have within them two types of priesthood: the Ministerial Priesthood, that is, the priestly

office exercised by the officially Ordained Priest and the Common Priesthood of the rest of the people of God. The Ministerial Priest has the duty to nourish the faithful primarily by consecrating the Body and Blood of Christ, and guiding and shepherding them to grow in the matters of faith.

The *Common Priesthood* of the People of God was already foretold in the Old Testament in God's declaration in the wilderness to the Israelites and fulfilled in the New Testament: *You shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples... but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation* (Ex 19,5-6; 2Pet 2,5.9). It consists of the spiritual worship and sacrifice by the offering of all their works, prayers and apostolic undertakings, family and married life, daily work, relaxation of the mind and body accomplished in the Spirit, and the hardships of life, to God through Jesus Christ.

As a part of sharing in the *Kingly Ministry of Christ*, every baptised member of the People of God is exhorted to participate in the administration of the temporal goods and their management in the world, not just for the personal materialistic growth, but for the development of the whole human race in harmony with the teachings and the life of Christ, the ultimate King. This is in keeping with the spirit that the Church is in the world, for the world and in a sense, the world. The laity are encouraged to engage in politics at all levels, both national as well as international with a view to bring about the all-round fulfilment of the Kingdom of God. This is a specific mission assigned primarily to the laity, as the religious cannot take part these two activities. There is no attitude of *fuga mundi* or *flight from the world*. This kingly ministry then leads to the Prophetic Mission of the People of God.

Every baptised member of the Church is called to share in the *Prophetic Office* of Christ by living a life of witness in the world. But there is also another very important part in the sharing of this prophetic office of Christ by the People of God and that is, they are called to share the gifts that individuals have been endowed with by the Holy Spirit, such as preaching or/and teaching. The Second Vatican Council has opened the avenues of theological and Scriptural studies to all the

People of God; in other words, it is no longer restricted only for those training to participate in the ministerial priesthood, but also to the lay faithful. This will help them to share their gifts of the Holy Spirit more correctly and profoundly with the entire Church for their faith building in Christ. There is no conflict between the institutional dimension of the People of God and its charismatic aspect. *The understanding of the “theologian” as articulated by the Second Vatican Council can equally apply to the clerical, the lay and the religious; its identity is to be seen as rooted in the charismatic dimension of the Church.*

The apostolate of the pastors will obtain its full effect when, following in the footsteps of men and women who assisted Paul in the proclamation of the Gospel (Acts 18,18-26; Rom 16,3), lay men and women of a genuinely apostolic spirit supply the needs of their brothers and are a source of consolation both to the pastor and to the rest of the faithful (1Cor 16,17-18). Nourished by the liturgical life of their community, they engage themselves in a) drawing men and women towards the Church who had been perhaps very far away from it; b) ardently cooperate in the spread of the Word of God, particularly by catechetical instruction and c) by their expert assistance they increase the efficacy of the care of souls as well as of the administration of the goods of the Church. The lay faithful are asked to be always ready on the invitation of their bishop to make their own contribution to diocesan undertakings.

In keeping with this mission of the entire Body of Christ, it is from the midst of the People of God that the hierarchy is chosen or elected in order to proclaim and communicate the correct teachings derived from Christ through the Apostolic age. And thus we have the Pope and the college of Bishops who form the magisterium, that is, the Official Teaching of the Office of the Church, the Diocesan Bishops for the local governance and transmission of correct faith, and the priests in the parishes who actually implement these teachings to the lay people of God. So there is no concept of *we* versus *you* or *we* versus *they*.

EXTRACT FROM THE CODE OF CANON LAW

THE OBLIGATIONS AND RIGHTS OF ALL CHRIST'S FAITHFUL

Can.208 Flowing from their rebirth in Christ, there is a genuine equality of dignity and action among all of Christ's faithful. Because of this equality they all contribute, each according to his or her own condition and office, to the building up of the Body of Christ.

Can.209 (1) Christ's faithful are bound to preserve their communion with the Church at all times, even in their external actions.

(2) They are to carry out with great diligence their responsibilities towards both the universal Church and the particular Church to which by law they belong.

Can.210 All Christ's faithful, each according to his or her own condition, must make a wholehearted effort to lead a holy life, and to promote the growth of the Church and its continual sanctification.

Can.211 All Christ's faithful have the obligation and the right to strive so that the divine message of salvation may more and more reach all people of all times and all places.

Can.212 (1) Christ's faithful, conscious of their own responsibility are bound to show Christian obedience to what the sacred Pastors, who represent Christ, declare as teachers of the faith and prescribe as rulers of the Church.

(2) Christ's faithful are at liberty to make known their needs, especially their spiritual needs, and their wishes to the pastors of the Church.

(3) They have the right, indeed at times the duty, in keeping with their knowledge, competence and position, to manifest to the sacred Pastor their views on matters which concern the good of the Church. They have the right also to make their views known to others of Christ's faithful, but in doing so they must always respect the integrity of faith and morals, show due reverence to the Pastors and take into account both the common good and the dignity of individuals.

Can.213 Christ's faithful have the right to be assisted by their Pastors from the spiritual riches of the Church, especially by the word of God and the sacraments.

Can.214 Christ's faithful have the right to worship God according to the provisions of their own rite approved by the lawful Pastors of the Church; they also have the right to follow their own form of spiritual life, provided it is in accord with Church teaching.

Can.215 Christ's faithful may freely establish and direct associations which serve charitable or pious purposes or which foster the Christian vocation in the world, and they may hold meetings to pursue these purposes by common effort.

Can.216 Since they share the Church's mission, all Christ's faithful have the right to promote and support apostolic action, by their own initiative, undertaken according to their state and condition. No initiative, however, can lay claim to the title 'catholic' without the consent of the competent ecclesiastical authority.

Can.217 Since Christ's faithful are called by baptism to lead a life in harmony with the gospel teaching, they have the right to a Christian education, which genuinely teaches them to strive for the maturity of the human person and at the same time to know and live the mystery of salvation.

Can.218 Those who are engaged in fields of sacred study have a just freedom to research matters in which they are expert and to express themselves prudently concerning them, with due allegiance to the magisterium of the Church.

Can.219 All Christ's faithful have the right to immunity from any kind of coercion in choosing a state in life.

Can.220 No one may unlawfully harm the good reputation which a person enjoys, or violate the right of every person to protect his or her privacy.

Can.221 (1) Christ's faithful may lawfully vindicate and defend the rights they enjoy in the Church, before the competent ecclesiastical forum in accordance with the law.

(2) If any members of Christ's faithful are summoned to trial by competent authority, they have the right to be judged according to the provisions of the law, to be applied with equity.

(3) Christ's faithful have the right that no canonical penalties be inflicted upon them except in accordance with the law.

Can.222 (1) Christ's faithful have the obligation to provide for the needs of the Church, so that the Church has available to it those things which are necessary for divine worship, for apostolic and charitable work and for the worthy support of its ministers.

(2) They are also obliged to promote social justice and, mindful of the Lord's precept, to help the poor from their own resources.

Can.223 (1) In exercising their rights, Christ's faithful, both individually and in associations, must take account of the common good of the Church, as well as the rights of others and their own duties to others.

(2) Ecclesiastical authority is entitled to regulate, in view of the common good, the exercise of rights which are proper to Christ's faithful.

Can.224 Lay members of Christ's faithful have the duties and rights enumerated in the canons of this title, in addition to those duties and rights which are common to all Christ's faithful and those stated in other canons.

Can.225 (1) Since lay people, like all Christ's faithful, are deputed to the apostolate by baptism and confirmation, they are bound by the general obligation and they have the right, whether as individuals or in associations, to strive so that the divine message of salvation may be known and accepted by all people throughout the world. This obligation is all the more insistent in circumstances in which only through them are people able to hear the Gospel and to know Christ.

(2) They have also, according to the condition of each, the special obligation to permeate and perfect the temporal order of things with the spirit of the Gospel. In this way, particularly in conducting secular business and exercising secular functions, they are to give witness to Christ.

Can.226 (1) Those who are married are bound by the special obligation, in accordance with their own vocation, to strive for the building up of the people of God through their marriage and family.

(2) Because they gave life to their children, parents have the most serious obligation and the right to educate them. It is therefore primarily the responsibility of Christian parents to ensure the Christian education of their children in accordance with the teaching of the Church.

Can.227 To lay members of Christ's faithful belongs the rights to have acknowledged as theirs that freedom in secular affairs which is common to all citizens. In using this freedom, however, they are to ensure that actions are permeated with the spirit of the Gospel, and they are to heed the teaching of the Church proposed by the magisterium, but they must be on guard, in questions of opinion, against proposing their own view as the teaching of the Church.

Can.228 (1) Lay people who are found to be suitable are capable of being admitted by the sacred Pastors to those ecclesiastical offices and functions which, in accordance with the provisions of law, they can discharge.

(2) Lay people who are outstanding in the requisite knowledge, prudence and integrity, are capable of being experts or advisors, even in councils in accordance with the law, in order to provide assistance to the Pastors of the Church.

Can.229 (1) Lay people have the duty and the right to acquire the knowledge of Christian teaching which is appropriate to each one's capacity and condition, so that they may be able to live according to this teaching, to proclaim it and if necessary to defend it, and may be capable of playing their part in the exercise of the apostolate.

(2) They also have the right to acquire that fuller knowledge of the sacred sciences which is taught in ecclesiastical universities or faculties or in institutes of religious sciences, attending lectures there and acquiring academic degrees.

(3) Likewise, assuming that the provisions concerning the requisite suitability have been observed, they are capable of receiving from the lawful ecclesiastical authority a mandate to teach the sacred sciences.

Can.230 (1) Lay men whose age and talents meet the requirements prescribed by decree of the Episcopal conference; can be given the stable ministry of lector and of acolyte, through the prescribed liturgical rite. This conferral of ministry does not, however, give them a right to sustenance or remuneration from the Church.

(2) Lay people can receive a temporary assignment to the role of lector in liturgical actions. Likewise, all lay people can exercise the roles of commentator, cantor or other such, in accordance with the law

(3) Where the needs of the Church require and ministers are not available, lay people, even though they are not lectors or acolytes, can supply certain of their functions, that is, exercise the ministry of the word, preside over liturgical prayers, confer baptism and distribute Holy Communion, in accordance with the provisions of the law.

Can.231 (1) Lay people whose are pledged to the special service of the Church, whether permanently or for a time, have a duty to acquire the appropriate formation which their role demands, so that they may conscientiously, earnestly and diligently fulfill this role.

(2) Without prejudice to the provisions of can.230 (1), they have the right to a worthy remuneration befitting their condition, whereby, with due regard also to the provisions of the civil law, they can becomingly provide for their own needs and the needs of their families,. Likewise, they have the right to have their insurance, social security and medical benefits duly safeguarded.

PUBLIC ASSOCIATIONS OF CHRIST'S FAITHFUL

Can.312 (1) the authority which is competent to establish public associations is:

- 1: the Holy See, for universal and international associations;
- 2: the Episcopal Conference in its own territory, for national associations which by their very establishment are intended for work throughout the whole nation;
- 3: the diocesan Bishop, each in his own territory, but not the diocesan Administrator, for diocesan associations, with the exception, however, of associations the right to whose establishment is reserved to others by apostolic privilege.

(2) The written consent of the diocesan Bishop is required for the valid establishment of an association or branch of an association in the diocese, even though it is done in virtue of an apostolic privilege. Permission, however, which is given by the diocesan Bishop for the foundation of a house of a religious institute, is valid also for the establishment in the same house, or in a church attaché to it, of an association which is proper to that institute

Can.313 A public association or a confederation of public associations is constituted a juridical person by the very decree by which it is established by the authority competent in accordance with can.312. Moreover, in so far as is required, it thereby receives its mission to pursue, in the name of the Church, those ends which it proposes for itself.

Can.314 The statutes of any public association require the approval of the authority which, in accordance with can.312 (1), is competent to establish the associations; this approval is also required for a revision of, or a change in, the statutes.

Can.315 Public associations can, on their own initiative, undertake projects which are appropriate to their character, and they are governed by the statutes, but under the overall direction of the ecclesiastical authority mentioned in can.312 (1).

Can. 316 (1) A person who has publicly rejected the catholic faith, or has defected from ecclesiastical communion, or upon whom an excommunication has been imposed or declared, cannot validly be received into public associations.

(2) Those who have been lawfully enrolled but who fall into one of the categories mentioned in (1), having been previously warned, are to be dismissed, in accordance with the statutes of the association, without prejudice to their right of recourse to the ecclesiastical authority mentioned in can.312(1).

Can. 317 (1) Unless the statutes provide otherwise, it belongs to the ecclesiastical authority mentioned in can.312(1) to conform the moderator of a public association on election, or to appoint the moderator on presentation, or by his own right to appoint the moderator. The same

authority appoints the chaplain or ecclesiastical assistant, after consulting the senior officials of the association, wherever this is expedient.

(2) The norm of (1) is also valid for associations which members of religious institutes, by apostolic privilege, establish outside their own churches or houses. In associations which members of religious institutes establish in their own church or house, the appointment or confirmation of the moderator and chaplain belongs to the Superior of the institute, in accordance with the statutes.

(3) The laity can be moderators of associations which are not clerical. The chaplain or ecclesiastical assistant is not to be the moderator, unless the statutes provide otherwise.

(4) Those who hold an office of direction in political parties are not to be moderators in public associations of the faithful† which are directly ordered to the exercise of the apostolate.

Can. 318 (1) In special circumstances, when serious reasons so require, the ecclesiastical authority mentioned in can.312(1) can appoint a commissioner to direct the association in his name for the time being.

(2) The moderator of a public association may be removed for a just reason, by the person who made the appointment or the confirmation, but the Moderator himself and the senior officials of the association must be consulted, in accordance with the statutes. The chaplain can, however, be removed by the person who appointed him, in accordance with can. 192- 195.

Can. 319 (1) Unless otherwise provided, a lawfully established public association administers the goods it possesses, in accordance with the statutes , and under the overall direction of the ecclesiastical authority mentioned in can.312(1). It must give a yearly account to this authority.

(2) The association must also faithfully account to the same authority for the disbursement of contributions and alms which it has collected.

Can. 320 (1) Associations established by the Holy See can be suppressed only by the Holy See.

(2) For grave reasons, associations established by the Episcopal Conference can be suppressed by it. The diocesan Bishop can suppress those he has established, and also those which members of religious institutes have established by apostolic indult with the consent of the diocesan Bishop.

(3) A public association is not to be suppressed by the competent authority unless the moderator and other senior officials have been consulted.

PRIVATE ASSOCIATIONS OF CHRIST'S FAITHFUL

Can.321 Christ's faithful direct and moderate private associations according to the provisions of the statutes.

Can. 322 (1) A private association of Christ's faithful can acquire juridical personality by a formal decree of the competent ecclesiastical authority mentioned in can.312.

(2) No private association of Christ's faithful can acquire juridical personality unless its statutes are approved by the ecclesiastical authority mentioned in can.312 (1).

Can. 323 (1) Although private associations of Christ's faithful enjoy their own authority in accordance with can.321, they are subject to the supervision of ecclesiastical authority, in accordance with can.305, and also to the governance of the same authority.

(2) It is also the responsibility of ecclesiastical authority, with due respect for the autonomy of private associations, to oversee and ensure that there is no dissipation of their forces, and that the exercise of their apostolate is directed to the common good.

Can. 324 (1) A private associations of Christ's faithful can freely designate for itself a moderator and officers, in accordance with the statutes.

(2) If a private associations of Christ's faithful wishes to have a spiritual counselor, it can freely choose one for itself from among the priests who lawfully exercise a ministry in the diocese, but the priest requires the confirmation of the local Ordinary.

Can. 325 (1) A private associations of Christ's faithful is free to administer any goods it possesses, according to the provisions of the statutes, but the competent ecclesiastical authority has the right to ensure that the goods are applied to the purposes of the association.

(2) In accordance with can.1301, the association is subject to the authority of the local Ordinary in whatever concerns the administration and distribution of goods which are donated or left to it for pious purposes.

Can. 326 (1) A private associations of Christ's faithful is extinguished in accordance with the norms of the statutes. It can also be suppressed by the competent authority if its activity gives rise to grave harm to ecclesiastical teaching or discipline, or is a scandal to the faithful.

(2) The fate of the goods of a private association which ceases to exist is to be determined in accordance with the statutes, without prejudice to acquired rights and to the wishes of donors.

Can.511 In each diocese, in so far as pastoral circumstances suggest, a pastoral council is to be established. Its function under the authority of the Bishop, is to study and weigh those matters which concern the pastoral works in the diocese, and to propose practical conclusions concerning them.

Can. 512 (1) A pastoral council is composed of members of Christ's faithful who are in full communion with the catholic Church: clerics, members of institutes of consecrated life, and especially lay people. They are designated in the matter determined by the diocesan Bishop.

(2) The members of Christ's faithful assigned to the pastoral council are to be selected in such a way that he council truly reflects the entire portion of the people of God which constitutes the diocese, taking account of the different regions of the diocese, of social conditions and professions and of the part played in the apostolate by the members, whether individually or in association with others.

(3) Only those members of Christ's faithful who are outstanding in firm faith, high moral standards and prudence are to be assigned to the pastoral council.

Can. 513 (1) The pastoral council is appointed for a determinate period, in accordance with the provisions of the statutes drawn up by the Bishop.

(2) When the see is vacant, the pastoral council lapses.

Can. 514 (1) The pastoral council has only a consultative vote. It is for the diocesan Bishop alone to convene it, according to the needs of the apostolate, and to preside over it. He alone has the right to make public the matters dealt with in the council.

(2) It is to be convened at least once a year.

CANONS RELATED TO THE EMPOWERMENT OF THE LAITY

Can.228 (1) Lay people who are found to be suitable are capable of being admitted by the sacred Pastors to those ecclesiastical offices and functions which, in accordance with the provisions of law, they can discharge.

(2) Lay people who are outstanding in the requisite knowledge, prudence and integrity, are capable of being experts or advisors, even in councils in accordance with the law, in order to provide assistance to the Pastors of the Church.

Can. 492 (1) In each diocese a finance committee is to be established, presided over by the diocesan Bishop or his delegate. It is to be composed of at least three of the faithful†, expert in financial affairs and civil law, of outstanding integrity, and appointed by the Bishop.

(2) The members of the finance committee are appointed for five years, but when this period has expired they may be appointed for further terms of five years.

(3) Persons related to the Bishop up to the fourth degree of consanguinity or affinity are excluded from the finance committee.

Can. 494 (1) In each diocese a financial administrator is to be appointed by the Bishop, after consulting the college of consultors and the finance committee. The financial administrator is to be expert in financial matters and of truly outstanding integrity

(2) The financial administrator is to be appointed for five years, but when this period has expired, may be appointed for further terms of five years. While in office he or she is not to be removed except for a grave reason, to be estimated by the Bishop after consulting the college of consultors and the finance committee.

(3) It is the responsibility of the financial administrator, under the authority of the Bishop, to administer the goods of the diocese in accordance with the plan of the finance committee, and to make those payments from diocesan funds which the Bishop or his delegates have lawfully authorised.

(4) At the end of the year the financial administrator must give the finance committee an account of income and expenditure.

Can.524 The diocesan Bishop is to confer a vacant parish on the one whom, after consideration of all the circumstances, he judges suitable for the parochial care of that parish, without any preference of persons. In order to assess suitability, he is to consult the vicar forane, conduct suitable enquiries and, if it is appropriate, seek the view of some priests and lay members of Christ's faithful.

Can. 377(3) Unless it has been lawfully prescribed otherwise, for the appointment of a diocesan Bishop or a coadjutor Bishop, a ternus, as it is called, is to be proposed to the Apostolic See. In the preparation of this list, it is the responsibility of the papal Legate to seek individually the suggestions of the Metropolitan and of the Suffragans of the province to which the diocese in or with which it is joined in some grouping, as well as the suggestions of the Episcopal Conference. The papal Legate is, moreover, to hear the views of some members of the college of consultors and of the cathedral chapter. If he judges it expedient, he is also to seek individually, and in secret, the opinions of other clerics, both secular and religious, and of lay persons of outstanding wisdom. He is then to send these suggestions, together with his own opinion, to the Apostolic See.

Can. 537 In each parish there is to be finance committee to help the parish priest in the administration of the goods of the parish, without prejudice to can.532. It is ruled by the universal law and by the norms laid down by the diocesan Bishop, and it is comprised of members of the faithful† selected according to these norms.

Difference between a Catholic Association

S.No.	Particulars	AICU - Catholic Association
10	Activities	<p>AICU is a socio political movement and works towards unity and harmony among Christians and people of other faiths. AICU's ecumenism activities involve working with all non Catholic Christian denominations and groups in addressing national and local socio-economic and political issues, in advocacy and concerns of the entire Christian community in the country.</p> <p>AICU also involves itself in inter religious dialogue in the promotion of mutual harmony, understanding and communal peace.</p> <p>Among important functions is AICU's representation with Government/government departments on any legislation or other matters which affects the Catholics.</p> <p>Sensitising Catholics about any political trends such as fundamentalism which pose a threat to the Church, and, advises the Catholics on how to respond.</p> <p>It makes the Catholics aware of their responsibilities so that they play a more effective role in public life.</p>
11	Funds	<p>Funds are raised according to need. Accounts are audited. AICU has a Corpus fund, interest of which sustains, for the most part, the routine meetings and activities of the organisation. Fund raising is taken up periodically to augment the corpus or for any other specific programme requirement by the members.</p>

Laity Commission and Pastoral Council

<i>Laity Commission</i>	<i>Pastoral Council</i>
Limited / Selective Lay members can be nominated	Limited / Selective Lay members can be nominated
<p>Limited and controlled by Clergy. Projected as parallel body to avoid formation of independent Lay Organisation</p> <p>One of its main tasks is for assisting the bishops in animating the laity. Uses Small Christian Communities as a basis for increasing participation of the laity</p>	<p>Their main purpose is to assist the Parish Priest in the parish pastoral duties. It is an advisory body, decisions not necessarily implemented.</p>
Offices of CBCI may not represent.	Outreach of Pastoral Council does not include representation to Govt, civic & political bodies.

Difference between a Catholic Association

S.No.	Particulars	<i>AICU - Catholic Association</i>
1	Setup & Features	<p><i>All India Catholic Union (AICU) is the apex Laity organization recognized by the CBCI to represent independently the socio-political, economic and religious interests of the Catholics across India. Its activities conform to the guidelines laid out in Canon Law.</i></p> <p><i>AICU is a National Organisation. It is a federation of affiliated Catholic Associations/ Sabhas across India.</i></p> <p>The Catholic Association (C.A.) is an affiliated unit of AICU and has the approval of the diocesan Bishop, as per the statutes of Canon Law.</p>
2	Entity	AICU is a legal entity registered with the Office of the Registrar of Societies, Tamil Nadu, according to T.N. Societies Registration Act 1975, Reg. No. 74/1966. Tax returns are filed regularly with the Income Tax Authorities.
3	Constitution & Statutes	It has a well defined constitution and is a democratic organisation.
4	Juris - diction	Covers the entire Country
5	Govt. recognition	Is a registered society. Is recognised as a charitable organisation by the Income tax Authorities. Donations to AICU are eligible for tax concession under section 80G of I.T. Act since social work, such as disaster management, rehabilitation etc across all communities in the country, is being carried out whenever required.
6	Office Bearers	The office bearers of AICU and the Catholic Associations are always lay people. The principal office bearers are elected by the members through secret ballot, for a fixed term as per the constitution.

Laity Commission and Pastoral Council

<i>Laity Commission</i>	<i>Pastoral Council</i>
<p>The Laity Commission of CBCI is an office of CBCI.</p> <p>Some Dioceses have also set up Laity commissions governed by CBCI or by Diocesan Bishops</p>	<p>The Parish Priest convenes the Council at the Parish Level. Pastoral Council can also be convened at diocesan level</p> <p>It is managed by the parish/ dioceses.</p>
Not a legal entity	Not a legal entity
Rules and regulations not defined to enable it to function democratically	Rules / regulations are not clearly articulated. Some Pastoral Councils have a defined constitution. Some Parishes have democratic setup, although with limited powers.
Parish / Diocese / National limited as per requirement	Parish only
CBCI is recognised but offices of CBCI are not recognised by Government.	Does not get recognition from government bodies.
Bishops are members of the CBCI Laity Commission. Members of the Diocesan Laity commissions are not elected but nominated by Bishops.	Members are mostly nominated. In some parishes members are elected by vote in their respective wards and chairperson is elected by voting amongst members.

Difference between a Catholic Association

<i>S.No.</i>	<i>Particulars</i>	<i>AICU - Catholic Association</i>
7	Member-ship	All Catholic Lay people can enroll as members. Religious can also enroll.
8	Purpose / Role	<p>Independent body with freedom to work for the Church in the area of socio,economic, political matters which affect the Catholics of India. It is an instrument of civil society. It promotes major inter-ventions in national polity. A few examples are:</p> <p>Independent body with freedom to work for the Church in the area of socio,economic, political matters which affect the Catholics of India. It is an instrument of civil society. It promotes major inter-ventions in national polity. A few examples are:</p> <p>A) Represented the Catholics in the fight for Dalit Christians being given the same constitutional rights as the Hindus.</p> <p>B) Demanded justice for women in the antiquated Christian personal law in regard to marriage, divorce, inheritance adoption etc.</p> <p>C) Demanded freedom of faith and took up matters regarding hate campaigns and economic marginalisation of communities across India.</p>
9	Repre-sentation to Govt., Civic, Political etc	Represented on minorities commission. AICU has taken up cases in the Supreme Court on matters that marginalise the minorities etc. It is also deeply involved with civil society in general on other major issues such as enlightening the electorate on how to choose a suitable candidate for a responsible Government etc.

Laity Commission and Pastoral Council

<i>Laity Commission</i>	<i>Patoral Council</i>
<p>Mostly Religious It promotes awareness amongst laity & religious about dignity and equality. It promotes empowering laity for evangelization. Uses Small Christian Communities as a basis for increasing participation of the laity. It uses SCCs for developing leadership amongst laity.</p> <p>In some states, Diocesan level Laity Commissions have been set up to attend to the needs of various Church organizations viz. SVP, Legion of Mary etc.</p>	<p>Mostly Religious. Activities are consultative in nature. Main purpose is to assist the Parish Priest in the parish pastoral duties as per the instructions of the Parish priest who is responsible for their actions. Their duties include organising celebrations for major feasts etc and other parish activities. On request of parish priest they collect feedback from the parishioners, production of parish bulletin also carried out by them.</p>
<p>Only through the CBCI / diocesan Bishop</p>	<p>Limited availability from the Parish coffer</p>

***While the comparison concludes here, we are open to further inclusions if necessitated by members of AICU/ Laity Commission/Pastoral Council.**

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