

Most Reverend David Laurin Ricken, D.D., J.C.L.



By the Grace of God and the Authority of the Apostolic See  
Bishop of Green Bay

## DECREE

The Apostolate of the Laity is ever to be fostered in the life and mission of the Church. The Christian faithful have the right to form associations by agreement among themselves to foster the following of Christ and for works of the apostolate (cf. cc. 298§1 and 299, §1). To ensure the integrity of faith and morals and the following of ecclesiastical discipline, all associations of the faithful are subject to the supervision of the competent ecclesiastical authority, and associations must have the permission of that same authority to call themselves Catholic (cf. cc. 300 and 305, §1). To provide for a means for lay associations to seek permission to call themselves Catholic, I hereby establish and promulgate as particular law in the Diocese of Green Bay, the following *Process to Become a Recognized Lay Catholic Organization*.

Given at the Chancery on August 15, 2011.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David L. Ricken".

Most Reverend David L. Ricken, D.D., J.C.L.  
Bishop of Green Bay

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John F. Doerflinger".

Chancellor

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**PROCESS TO BECOME A RECOGNIZED  
CATHOLIC LAY ORGANIZATION BY  
THE DIOCESE OF GREEN BAY**

**A. INTRODUCTION:**

The apostolate of the laity is indispensable to the life and mission of the Church to spread the kingdom of God, to make all sharers in Christ's gift of redemption and salvation, and to bring the entire world into the right relationship with Christ. The right and duty of lay people to be engaged in the apostolate flows from their union with Christ in baptism and confirmation. They are encouraged to take their own initiative to engage in the apostolate, and if they wish their organization to use the title "Catholic", or be recognized as "Catholic", they must first seek approval. (cf. Vatican II, Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People, 1-3, 24)

The Diocese of Green Bay, as part of our commitment to providing services to lay organizations who wish to be recognized as "Catholic", and to lay organizations who share or teach the faith to members of the Diocese, its parishes and schools, has established this policy and procedure to assist such organizations with their application to obtain the necessary approval to use the title "Catholic" or to be recognized as "Catholic".

Some lay organizations may already have received official recognition as Catholic organizations. These may include national or international organizations, public associations of the faithful, recognized, or established private associations of the faithful, or organizations that are already listed in the *Official Catholic Directory*. Such organizations would not require additional recognition as Catholic by the Bishop of Green Bay. For them to be included in the Wisconsin Pastoral Handbook under the Diocese of Green Bay or listed on the diocesan website, see the applicable requirements below under B-3.

**B. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A RECOGNIZED CATHOLIC LAY ORGANIZATION?**

1.) Diocesan Recognition Means:

- The lay organization is committed to communicating in word and action the teachings and traditions of the Catholic faith, as interpreted by the Bishop of Green Bay.
- The lay organization follows Church law, civil law, and generally acceptable fiscal and management procedures.
- The lay organization will further and assist the Diocesan mission to evangelize by supporting the mission, vision and core values statements.

- The lay organization meets basic liability insurance policies of the Diocese of Green Bay and its agents. (See attachments for specific details and forms).
- The lay organization is fully compliant with all Safe Environment Policies of the Diocese of Green Bay.
- The Organization is recognized as a Catholic Lay Organization, but is not a Diocesan Program and is independent from the Diocese.

2.) The basic liability insurance requirements of the organization may be met in one of two ways. The organization may be automatically covered under the Diocesan insurance policy if it can answer yes to ALL of the following 5 questions:

1. Does the Diocese, Parish, or School have full control over the organization and its functions?
2. Do any organizational funds or fees associated with the organization flow through the Diocese, Parish, or School accounts?
3. Does the organization permit functions or events to be open to all Diocesan, Parish or School members?
4. Is the function of the organization to facilitate learning; raise revenue for the Diocese, Parish, or School; or provide a social service on behalf of the Diocese, Parish, or School?
5. Is the leader of the organization a Diocesan, Parish or School volunteer or employee?

If an organization cannot answer yes to all of the five questions above, the organization must provide the Diocese with copies of the proper insurance or sign a Hold Harmless/Indemnity Agreement. See attachments for specific details and forms.

3.) The organizations that have already been recognized as Catholic may be listed in the *Wisconsin Pastoral Handbook* under the Diocese of Green Bay or on the Diocese of Green Bay Website if they:

- The lay organization follows Church law, civil law, and generally acceptable fiscal and management procedures.
- Meet basic liability insurance requirements or sign a Hold Harmless/Indemnity agreement.
- Are fully compliant with Safe Environment Policies.

4.) Recognized Lay Organizations may:

- May use the title, "Catholic", in literature and mailings. However, such recognition does not entail affiliation with the Diocese of Green Bay.
- Announce in flyers, brochures, mailings, or advertisements that they are a Recognized Catholic Lay Organization by the Diocese of Green Bay.
- Have the lay organization name with contact information listed in the Wisconsin Pastoral Directory of the Diocese of Green Bay.
- Be listed on the Diocese of Green Bay Website as a Recognized Catholic Lay Organization.

- Use parish property with the approval of the Pastor/Parish Director or Administrator. This includes distributing materials, posting items on parish bulletin boards, making announcements after Mass, and conducting meetings.
- Insurance liability issues/concerns may require additional steps before utilization.

5) Steps a group must take to become a Recognized Catholic Lay Organization:

- Submit an application to the Diocesan Chancellor.
- Authorize the Diocese of Green Bay or its agents to undertake any and all investigations it deems appropriate in connection with this application.
- All application materials requested must be received a minimum of ninety days before any planned mailings, promotions, or advertisements of an event by the lay organization.
- An appropriate liaison, who is normally a Diocesan staff representative, will be appointed by the Diocese in consultation with each group.
- If the Organization is an association of the faithful, their statutes are to be reviewed by the Bishop of Green Bay.

### **C. APPLICATION PROCESS:**

1.) Upon request, the Diocesan Chancellor will send an application packet asking for the following information:

- Brief history/purpose & mission statement of the organization
- Membership size, number served each year, number on board, number of volunteers
- Names and terms of board members and officers
- If an organization is incorporated, a copy of the Articles of Incorporation and By-laws and/or operating guidelines/constitution.
- IRS designation, if organization is an applicable 501(c) organization
- Recommended name of Diocesan/Parish or School Liaison
- Proof of liability insurance or appropriate signed waivers

2.) A Diocesan Review Committee will examine all submitted materials. The Review Committee may request additional materials/information, or may request information from additional sources as the committee believes necessary.

3.) If the lay organization has regular contact with children, youth or vulnerable adults as defined in the Policy for Maintaining Safe Environments, officers/leaders will be required to complete a criminal background check application including references, attend a VIRTUS Protecting God's Children Adult Awareness session and acknowledge receipt of the appropriate policy. Each lay organization will need to work through a parish or school Local Safe Environment Coordinator (LoSEC) or appoint a Local Safe Environment Coordinator from the organization to verify all safe environment requirements have been completed. The lay organization is responsible for all costs associated with these requirements.

4.) If the lay organization will be utilizing the facilities of, or the name of, a parish, school, or entity, its need for liability insurance coverage must be determined prior to approval.

5.) After consultation with the Review Committee, the committee will submit its recommendation to the Bishop. A letter will be sent to each group applying advising them of the Bishop's decision. If the organization is not approved, the letter will explain the reasons why not approved, and steps/actions needed to receive approval.

6.) Initial recognition shall be for a term of two years. Six months before expiration of status, the Diocese will notify each organization they have 120 days to re-apply. Lay organizations seeking to be re-approved should apply, updating information. Re-application must be made 90 days before expiration of recognition status.

7.) If there is a significant change concerning a previously recognized lay organization, the Diocesan Chancellor may institute a review of the lay organization's status. Recognition may be revoked by the Diocese at any time. A letter to that effect will be sent to the liaison and officers/leaders directing them to discontinue using the words, "Recognized by the Diocese of Green Bay" in all materials. Removal of the organization's name from the Diocesan website and from future editions of the Wisconsin Pastoral Handbook will also result.

#### **D. DIOCESAN STEPS UPON RECOGNITION**

Once the decision has been made to provide recognition status to a lay organization, the following actions may be taken:

- The Diocesan Chancellor will include the lay organization's name and contact information in the Diocesan sections of the Wisconsin Pastoral Handbook.
- The Diocesan Chancellor will include the lay organization's name and contact information in the Diocesan Web site under the heading, Recognized Lay Organizations.