

**COMPLEMENTARY NORMS OF THE
ANTILLES EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE
ACCORDING TO NORMS OF THE CODE OF CANON LAW**

Approved AEC Annual Plenary Meeting 17 May 2000; Recognitio Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples 27 September 2000; Promulgated by Circular sent to all Bishops of AEC 30 October 2000

Cann. 8, #2, & 455, #3

In conformity with canonical norms (cann. 8, #2, & 455, #3) the Antilles Episcopal Conference decrees that laws established by the AEC, once reviewed by the Apostolic See, are promulgated by a circular letter signed by the President of the Conference and sent to the local bishops. Such laws begin to bind two months from the date of the letter of promulgation unless a different period has been established in the law itself.

Can. 230, #1

The Antilles Episcopal Conference decrees that lay men, other than candidates for sacred orders, who are to be given the stable ministry of lector or acolyte are to have a serious Christian life, a good reputation in the community in which they will exercise these ministries. They must have acquired the necessary competence to help them exercise their ministries fittingly and in accord with liturgical laws. They must be at least 30 years of age when they receive this ministry.

Cann. 236 & 1031, #3

The Antilles Episcopal Conference decrees that candidates for the permanent diaconate should be men of faith and prayer, with a proven record of service to the community. They should enjoy a good reputation in the community and be capable of working harmoniously with the diocesan bishop, priests, religious and laity. Their training shall be for at least three years, following the program approved by the Apostolic See for this region. At the time of ordination they must be at least 35 years of age (can. 1031, #3). After ordination they will participate in the continuing formation program arranged by the diocesan bishop.

Can. 242

The Antilles Episcopal Conference decrees that *The Plan of Formation* approved by the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples in 1995 be the programme of priestly formation in the Regional Seminary of St. John Vianney and the Uganda Martyrs.

Can. 276, #2, 2°

The Antilles Episcopal Conference, while encouraging permanent deacons to pray as much of the liturgy of the hours as possible, decrees that they are obliged to recite daily Morning Prayer (Lauds) and Evening Prayer (Vespers).

Can. 284

Since distinctive priestly attire is expected by the great majority of our people, and in conformity with canonical norms (can. 284) the Antilles Episcopal Conference decrees that priestly attire in public will be a suit and shirt with the Roman collar or a shirt with the Roman collar or with a cross giving clear evidence of the dignity and sacredness of this ministry and making the priest clearly identifiable.

Can. 496

Because of the degree to which circumstances in our region vary from diocese to diocese the Antilles Episcopal Conference decrees that each diocesan bishop, in consultation with his priests, shall formulate statutes for the Council of Priests, in accordance with canons 495-502.

Can. 522

Recognizing the need that a parish priest have the benefit of stability, the Antilles Episcopal Conference, in accordance with canon 522 and always respecting the norms expressed in canon 682, #2, decrees that diocesan bishops may appoint pastors for a term of office of not less than six years. This term may be renewed for further periods of six years each.

Cann. 535 & 895

The Antilles Episcopal Conference decrees that in addition to the parish registers prescribed by canon 535 (baptism, marriage, death, confirmation, canonical status), the diocesan bishop may prescribe others which are to be maintained. The Conference determines that the record of confirmation should be maintained in the registers of the parish where the confirmation took place (can. 895) and in the parish of baptism (can. 535, #2).

Can. 538, #3

In accordance with canon 538, #3 and without prejudice to the prescriptions of canon 1274 or particular law regarding their implementation in this region, the Antilles Episcopal Conference decrees that each diocesan bishop establish and fund a specific program for diocesan priests to adequately provide for:

1. the proper maintenance and housing of retired priests;
2. the support of priests who may become incapacitated and need special care before the age of retirement.

Can. 766

In accord with the norms of canon 766 and except as provided in the *Directory on Children's Masses*, a non-cleric may speak at Mass only after the Communion Prayer and before the Final Blessing (can. 767, #1). The homily is expressly reserved to priests and deacons and the Diocesan Bishop cannot dispense from this reservation. Lay persons with adequate doctrinal formation and of exemplary Christian character may preach in a church or oratory on other occasions in accord with the following norms:

1. when no cleric is available;
2. when special circumstances require the participation of lay persons, such as financial matters or special explanations;
3. when the diocesan bishop judges it opportune.

Can. 804, #1

Recognizing the immense social and spiritual value of Christian education the Antilles Episcopal Conference decrees that religious educators should be solidly grounded in the Catholic faith and living exemplary Christian lives. They may use only texts approved by the competent ecclesiastical authority. Every Catholic school should provide periods of instruction in the Catholic religion, accompanied from time to time by suitable liturgical celebrations. All of this should be done with sensitivity to the beliefs and practices of students who are not Catholics, avoiding any appearance of proselytism.

Can. 831, #2

The Antilles Episcopal Conference decrees that, in accordance with canon 831, #2:

1. Clerics and members of religious institutes who take part regularly in radio or television programmes which concern Catholic doctrine or morals must have the authorization of their major superior and of the diocesan bishop of the place where the programmes originate.
2. If they take part occasionally in such programmes it is sufficient that clerics are authorized to preach and that religious have the authorization of their major superior.

Can. 854

The Antilles Episcopal Conference decrees that the sacrament of baptism is to be ordinarily administered by pouring the water but immersion may be used unless the diocesan bishop determines otherwise.

Can. 877, #3

Because of the degree to which civil legislation varies in the different nations of our region the Antilles Episcopal Conference decrees that, in accordance with canon 877, #3 it is left to the diocesan bishop to formulate norms governing the registration of names of adopting and natural parents in the baptismal register. The fact of legal adoption, however, must always be noted in the register.

Can. 964, #2

In accordance with canon 964, # 2 the Antilles Episcopal Conference decrees that in addition to a confessional in a visible location and with a fixed grille between the confessor and the penitent, there also may be a place where the penitent can sit and confess without a fixed grill. This “penitential room” is to be in an open place in a Church or Oratory (can. 946, #1) and furnished according to directives laid down by the diocesan bishop to ensure the necessary measures of pastoral prudence for the worthy celebration of the sacrament.

Can. 1126

The Antilles Episcopal Conference decrees that, in accordance with canon 1126, the procedure for obtaining permission for a mixed marriage or a dispensation from disparity of cult is as follows:

1. The Catholic party is required to declare that he or she is prepared to remove all dangers of falling away from the faith and to make a sincere promise to do all in his or her power that the children will be baptized and brought up in the Catholic church. This declaration and promise may be made in one of two ways, either:
 - a) By signing the declaration and promise contained in the appropriate form in the presence of a priest or deacon, which also signs as a witness,
 - Or**
 - b) By making the declaration and promise verbally in the presence of the priests or deacon who then signs a statement on the appropriate form confirming that this has been done.
2. The cleric must also assure the bishop of the following:
 - a) That the declaration and promise have been made and the non-Catholic party has been informed (Can. 1125,2)
 - b) That in the opinion of the cleric the declaration and promise has been sincerely made (Can. 1125, 1).

Can. 1127

Where serious difficulties exist in observing the Catholic canonical form in a marriage involving disparity of cult or in a mixed marriage the local Ordinary of the Catholic party may, for a sufficient pastoral reason, dispense the Catholic from the observance of the form.

An exhaustive list of such pastoral reasons is impossible but the following are illustrative:

1. to achieve family harmony or avoid family alienation;
2. to allow parental agreement to the marriage;
3.to recognize significant claims of relationship or friendship with a minister of another church;
4. to prevent serious economic damage to the Catholic party.

Ordinarily, when a dispensation from the canonical form is granted it is in view of a celebration of some religious marriage service. Nevertheless, it may be necessary at times to grant the dispensation so that a civil ceremony may be performed. In any case, a public form recognized by civil law is required for the validity of the marriage.

If the marriage is to take place in another diocese, the Ordinary of that diocese should be informed before the marriage.

Can. 1236, #1

Recognizing the preference that the table of a fixed altar be a single natural stone, the Conference nevertheless allows any worthy and solid material to be used for a fixed altar.

Cann. 1251 & 1253

All disciples of Christ are called to do penance. Parents, pastors and teachers should motivate children to penitential practices. The Church has established days and seasons of penance so that all her children may be united in a common observance of this Christian activity. The season of Lent and all Fridays of the year which are not solemnities are times when we are called to particular and manifest acts of self-denial and mortification, especially by one or more of the following means.

Ash Wednesday and Good Friday (can. 1251) are especially important days for manifesting our spirit of penance. On these two days Catholics, from their 18th year, make a particular effort to deny themselves, especially by mortifying their appetites in the quantity and quality of food they eat and the beverages they drink.

Because of the dire poverty of so many of our people and the limited variety in the quantity and quality of their diet, it is difficult to establish common norms, even within one diocese. The Antilles Episcopal Conference, therefore, decrees that our faithful may fulfill the obligation of penance by either fast or abstinence on the designated days and seasons by one or more of the following forms of penance or prayer or acts of charity:

1. Making a visit of about 15 minutes to the Blessed Sacrament;
2. Reading the Scriptures for 15 minutes;

3. Skipping any one meal and not eating between meals;
4. Eating only vegetables that day (avoiding fish and eggs as well);
5. Abstaining from alcohol, for those accustomed to such drink;
6. Abstaining from smoking, for those who smoke;
7. Abstaining from all beverages except water between meals;
8. Giving 10% of that day's earning to charity;
9. Abstaining from meat for those for whom meat is a regular part of their diet.

Can. 1262

The Antilles Episcopal Conference, in accordance with canon 1262, requires each diocesan Ordinary to establish norms regarding collections and financial contributions. The norms shall include directives that in each parish the faithful shall be informed about the purpose of each special collection and, in due time, given an account of the results, in accordance with the prescriptions of canon 1287 #2.

Can. 1277

In accord with canon 1277 the Antilles Episcopal Conference decrees that the following are extraordinary acts of administration and are, therefore, subject to the limits established by canon law and the following enactments:

1. To alienate (transfer ownership) or encumber goods belonging to the stable patrimony when the value exceeds the determined minimum (cann. 1292, #1; 1295)
2. To incur debts (without corresponding increase in the current assets of the moral entity) that exceed the established minimum (can. 1295).
3. Leasing Church property when the lease extends over a period of two years.
4. Any leasing or renting of Church property shall be in writing, observing all applicable civil and particular norms. If the lease of property subject to the diocesan bishop extends beyond three months, the written consent of the local bishop is required.

Can. 1292, #1

In accord with canon 1292, #1 the Antilles Episcopal Conference decrees that the maximum amount for the alienation of Church property is US \$500,000.00 and the minimum amount is US \$30,000.00.

Extraordinary administration above the maximum requires permission from the Holy See. Extraordinary administration within the maximum but above the minimum amount requires permission from the diocesan bishop or, if the property belongs to a Pontifical Institute, the major superior.

Can. 1421

In accord with canon 1421, #2 the Antilles Episcopal Conference authorizes the diocesan bishop to appoint a suitably qualified lay catholic as judge to serve as one member of a collegiate tribunal.

Can. 1425, #4

In those dioceses where it is impossible to constitute a college of judges, the Antilles Episcopal Conference permits the diocesan bishop to entrust a trial of first instance to a single clerical judge, in accord with canon 1425, #4.

Note on Complementary Norms

The revised Code of Canon Law promulgated by Pope John Paul II in 1983 contained eighty-four canons that call for or permit legislative action by Episcopal Conferences. Since that time the Antilles Episcopal Conference has taken action on the above canons thereby establishing particular legislation for the dioceses of the AEC.

President of the Antilles Episcopal Conference, Archbishop Donald Reece of Kingston, Jamaica has instructed that the Norms be made more accessible to dioceses of the AEC, including through the AEC Website.

AEC Secretariat, 12 November 2009