

DICASTERIUM PRO DOCTRINA FIDEI

NOTE FOR THE AUDIENCE WITH THE HOLY FATHER

13 November 2023

The Request of His Excellency, the Most Rev. Julito CORTES,
Bishop of Dumaguete (Philippines)
Regarding the Best Pastoral Approach to
Membership in Freemasonry by the Catholic Faithful

Recently, His Excellency, the Most Rev. Julito CORTES, Bishop of Dumaguete, after explaining with concern the situation caused in his Diocese by the continuous rise in the number of the faithful enrolled in Freemasonry, asked for suggestions regarding how to respond to this reality suitably from a pastoral point of view, taking into account also the doctrinal implications related to this phenomenon.

Membership in Freemasonry is very significant in the Philippines; it involves not only those who are formally enrolled in Masonic Lodges but, more generally, a large number of sympathizers and associates who are personally convinced that there is no opposition between membership in the Catholic Church and in Masonic Lodges.

To address this issue appropriately, it was decided that the Dicastery would respond by involving the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines itself, notifying the Conference that it would be necessary to put in place a coordinated strategy among the individual Bishops that envisions two approaches:

(a) On the doctrinal level, it should be remembered that active membership in Freemasonry by a member of the faithful is forbidden because of the irreconcilability between Catholic doctrine and Freemasonry (cf. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "Declaration on Masonic Associations" [1983], and the guidelines published by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines in 2003). Therefore, those who are formally and knowingly enrolled in Masonic Lodges and have embraced Masonic principles fall under the provisions in the above-mentioned *Declaration*. These measures also apply to any clerics enrolled in Freemasonry.

(b) On the pastoral level, the Dicastery proposes that the Philippine Bishops conduct catechesis accessible to the people and in all parishes regarding the reasons for the irreconcilability between the Catholic Faith and Freemasonry.

Finally, the Philippine Bishops are invited to consider whether they should make a public pronouncement on the matter.

Ex Audientia die 13.11.2023

Franciscus

Víctor Card. Fernández