

PONTIFICIUM CONSILIUM PRO LAICIS

(Pontifical Council for the Laity)

149/04/S-61/A-33 a.

DECREE

The first *Volunteers of Suffering Center* was born in Rome in 1947, founded by the Servant of God, Msgr. Luigi Novarese (1914-1984) with the intent of being an apostolate for suffering individuals giving them a unique role in the Church and society. Following this aim, the *Volunteers of Suffering Center* is composed of both healthy and suffering members.

The *Silent Workers of the Cross*, an international union of the faithful recognized by the Pontifical Council for the Laity with the Decree of May 17, 2001, participate in the *Volunteers of Suffering Center*.

The *Volunteers of Suffering Center* has its own roots in the request to all humanity for prayer and penitence by the Blessed Virgin at the Sanctuaries of Lourdes and Fatima.

At the 50th anniversary of the *Volunteers of Suffering Center* which took place at Marino (Rome), on September 6, 1997, Pope John Paul II referred to Msgr. Novarese's profound devotion to Mary with these words: "He understood that Mary herself united with her Divine Son at the foot of the cross teaches us to live suffering with Christ and in Christ through the powerful love of the Holy Spirit. *Mary is the first and the most perfect 'Volunteer of suffering'* who united her own pain with her Son's sacrifice so that it had a redemptive meaning." (Teachings of Pope John Paul II, 20/2 (1997), p. 268)

After many years of work, there are numerous Centers in the Church, particularly recognized by the Ordinal dioceses. To facilitate their co-ordination, the Board of Directors of the Association of the faithful *Silent Workers of the Cross*, after having received orders from the General Assembly at Ariano Irpino in October, 2001, unanimously approved the Constitution of the *International Confederation of the Volunteers of Suffering Center* and sent it to the Pontifical Council for the Laity for its approval and its judicial recognition of the Confederation.

In fact, Article 2 of the Constitution reads: "The aim of the Confederation is to promote, to favor and to assure that the Associations which comprise the organization fulfill the charismatic goal of Msgr. Luigi Novarese, who saw the suffering of the ill, offered in participation with the Easter mystery of Christ, as a means to render it apostolic and therefore special and prophetic for the valorization of every form of suffering present in man's life. . . ."

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Therefore as a consequence of what has been cited above:

In view of the request by Reverend Father Giovan Giuseppe Torre, President of the *International Confederation of the Volunteers of Suffering Center* on January 24, 2002, soliciting this Ministry to recognize the legal status of this same Confederation as well as to approve its Constitution;

In view of the Decree of the Pontifical Council for the Laity of May 17, 2001;

Given the opportunity to recognize the above-mentioned Confederation and to approve its Constitution for a better co-ordination and diffusion of this Apostolate in the service of suffering individuals and noting the agreement by the Confederation to accept the suggestions for the Constitution made by this Ministry;

In view of Articles 131-134 of the Apostolic Constitution *Pastor bonus*, of the Roman Curia and Canon 312, § 1,1° of the Canon Law Code, the Pontifical Council for the Laity decrees:

1° The recognition that the *International Confederation of the Volunteers of Suffering Center* has a private judicial corporate existence, according to Canons 298-311 and 321-329 of the Canon Law Code.

2° The approval of the Constitution of the Confederation duly authenticated by this Ministry and deposited in its archives for a period *ad experimentum* of five years.

Proclaimed in the Vatican, January 21, 2004, Saint Agnes, virgin and martyr.

Josef Clemens, Secretary

Stanislaw Rylko, President