

OLS Association

STATUTE

OLS Association

**STATUTE OF THE
OLS ASSOCIATION**

OLS Association

affiliated with
The Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Sorrows

Revised and approved by
The Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life
and Societies of Apostolic Life

June 8, 2008

Congregation for
Institutes of Consecrated Life
and Societies of Apostolic Life

DECREE

The Lay Association known as **OLS Association** - ("MPA" in Italy, Mexico and Brazil) - of the Congregation of the **Sisters of Our Lady of Sorrows**, whose Superior General's seat is in the diocese of Rome, is composed of a group of lay faithful who wish to share the charism of the foundress of the Congregation, Blessed Elisabetta Renzi, adapting it to their life in the world.

The lay associates who adhere to the OLS Association commit themselves to living their love for Christ daily, and to serving others with the same attitudes embodied by Blessed Elisabetta Renzi, under the conditions and aims listed in this Statute.

The Superior General of the Congregation has requested that the Apostolic See approve the canonical establishment of the Lay Association as affiliated with the Congregation, as well as the approval of the Statute.

This Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, after a careful examination of the text of the Statute, with this Decree, proclaims OLS Association as an Association affiliated with the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Sorrows.

Furthermore, the same Authority approves and confirms the text of the Statute of this Association in the Italian language, a copy of which is being conserved in the archives of this Authority.

There are no opposing dispositions.

Vatican City, April 21, 1999

Eduardo Card. Martinez Somalo
Prefect

Piergiorgio Silvano Nesti, C.P.
Secretary

Congregation for
Institutes of Consecrated Life
and Societies of Apostolic Life

Prot. # R 30/99

YOUR HOLINESS,

The Superior General of the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Sorrows, with the approval of her Council, whose general seat is in the diocese of Rome, humbly asks Your Holiness for the approval of the changes made in the text of the Statute of **OLS Association** approved by a decree from the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life on April 21, 1999, as being an association affiliated with this Congregation, in accordance with the presented text.

After careful examination, The Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life approves the changes made in the text of the Statute, as they have been presented.

There are no opposing dispositions.

Given in Vatican City, June 8, 2008

Cardinal Franc Rodé, C.M.
Prefect

Father Sebastiano Paciolla, O. Cist.
Undersecretary

Chapter I
NATURE AND IDENTITY

“The Alleluia dwells beyond Calvary”

1. OLS Association is a group of lay faithful called by God to share the charism of the Foundress of the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Sorrows (OLS), Blessed Elisabetta Renzi.
2. According to canons 215 and 298 of the Code of Canon Law and considering canon 303 (see pages 29-30), the Association has been established at the request of the Superior General of the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Sorrows in cooperation with a group of lay founders. The Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life has given canonical establishment to OLS Association as a Association affiliated with the Congregation of the Sisters of OLS, by decree approval of the Statute (Prot. # R30 – 1/99), dated April 21, 1999.
3. The lay associates, who responded to the Lord's call by joining the Association, devote themselves to living their love for Christ daily, according to their state of life, and to serving others with the same spirit incarnated by Blessed Elisabetta Renzi, under those conditions and aims presented in this Statute.
4. Rimini, and precisely the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Sorrows Convent in Via Fratelli Bandiera 34, has been established as the seat of the Association. The Council has established that any change of seat will not require a modification of this Statute.

Chapter II PURPOSE

*“Other than God, nothing is important,
nothing, nothing in the world!
If there is life, it passes; if there is wealth, it vanishes;
if there is health, it is lost;
if there is reputation, it is attacked.
Ah, they will dissolve, they will perish.”*

SPIRITUALITY

“Be happy, because you know that the good Lord loves you!”

5. The Love of Christ for humankind found a witness in Blessed Elisabetta Renzi: God showed her His never-ending love, His real and intimate nature; and He bestowed on her the charism of being a joyful woman, possessing joy of Spirit, thus revealing to her a secure and short path that leads to perfection.

“The Cross! It gave peace to the world and I love it.”

6. At the foot of the Cross, like the Sorrowful Mother, Blessed Elisabetta Renzi was taken up by her contemplation of Christ’s total love for all of humanity. The sacrifice of the Crucified was the cornerstone of her life, because *“the soul is united with Jesus Christ through love and the power of His cross.”*

“He is everything and sufficient for everything and everyone.”

7. This spirit of union with Jesus Crucified is nourished and supported by receiving the Eucharist: *“I carry Him who carries me.”*

PERSONAL PLAN

“Oh, that I may remain always in the great presence of God!”

8. The lay member of OLS Association:
 - a. will participate assiduously in the Eucharistic celebration, aware that:
“When a soul has worthily received the sacrament of the Eucharist, it swims in love; it is humble, kind, mortified, charitable, and modest, in harmony with all; it is capable of the greatest sacrifices ... it is not the same as it was before.”
 - b. will take the Mother of Jesus as a model of his/her own vocation and mission;
 - c. will unite him/herself to Christ in prayer, transcending the self, strengthening his/her faith and witnessing through his/her life the treasure found in the awareness that *“the Lord is the giver of all goods.”*
 - d. will live as a contemplative in action like the Sisters of OLS, each in his/her own state of life wherever he/she is.

MINISTRY

“Loving our Lord and our neighbors with the love of a thousand hearts and the work of a thousand hands”

9. Supported by prayer, the OLS Association member will bring to society the actions of Blessed Elisabetta Renzi. He/she will be committed to the work of trying to “*alleviate or remedy human misery*” through loving his/her neighbors, whether individually or as a group, according to charity.
10. The members of OLS Association can commit themselves:
 - a. to the existing works of the Sisters of OLS (schools, catechesis, social assistance, missions);
 - b. to new projects that are undertaken in cooperation with the Association for Volunteers (Italy);
 - c. to the activities of the local diocesan church;
 - d. to all those works which, inspired by the charism of Blessed Elisabetta Renzi, respond to the particular needs of the times in different places.
11. The apostolic spirit in everything that one does must essentially be a spirit of service, in charity and humility, filled with simplicity, friendliness, joy in one’s work, and happiness of spirit.

Chapter III

FORMATION PROGRAM

“I would like for all my being to be silent and for everything in me to adore Him.”

- 12.** The OLS Association member needs a well-designed formation program which:
- a. should be experienced as a conscious, free, and consistent answer to the gift of faith, and
 - b. should develop an authentic inner freedom.

- 13.** The formation program of the OLS Association member will cover human, spiritual, doctrinal and charismatic topics; it will be gradual, respectful of every single person and guided by the Holy Spirit.

The OLS Association member will consider regular participation in group meetings as essential for his/her human and spiritual growth, according to the formation program and the materials provided by the Association.

- a) Human formation: The OLS Association member lives with happiness of spirit, availability, and sacrifice as a way of being part of the family in all those circumstances in which he/she is called to live, as well as in meetings and occasions of fraternity promoted by the Council.
- b) Spiritual formation:
 - prayer
 - study of Sacred Scripture
 - retreats
 - recollection days
 - spiritual direction

will allow the member to live united with Christ and to understand the value of the Eucharist, being nourished by it, in order to bring about communion within the Church.

- c) Doctrinal formation: individual and group reading and meditation of Church documents that allow the member to live according to the teachings of the Church, regarding the faith which is believed and professed.
- d) Charismatic formation: The “genetic characteristics” of OLS Association are found in the charism of Blessed Elisabetta Renzi. In order to live and consistently witness to the life to which he/she has been called, it is essential for the OLS Association member to study Elisabetta Renzi’s charism by reading her writings, her biography, the collection of her thoughts, etc.

Chapter IV

ORGANIZATION

MEMBERS

- 14.** All the faithful who have participated actively and consistently in OLS Association for a period of at least two years by attending the group meetings, and who express in writing their wish to be part of OLS Association, are to be considered members of OLS Association. After the intended time of formation, these faithful laity are welcomed into the Association by publically making their promises (preferably during the celebration of the Mass on the anniversary of the beatification of Blessed Elisabetta Renzi) in the presence of a priest, of the Superior General of the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Sorrows, and of the President of OLS Association or of their designees. The Council of OLS Association reserves the right to accept each request, after having consulted with the person in charge of membership for the local group.
- 15.** This promise is subject to a yearly renewal during the celebration of the Mass (preferably on the anniversary of the beatification of Blessed Elisabetta Renzi) in the presence of a priest, of the Superior General of the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Sorrows, and of the President of OLS Association, or of their designees.
- 16.** To remain an OLS Association member, a person must renew his/her promise within a three year period, and the member must participate in at least one assembly yearly, unless their absence is justly motivated.

NON-MEMBERS

- 17.** Those who participate in the life of the Association without having pronounced the promise are to be considered non-members.

THE PERSONS IN CHARGE OF THE LOCAL GROUPS

- 18.** OLS Association is divided into local groups, coordinated by a person in charge. The person in charge, an OLS Association member, is to be elected by a relative majority during a group meeting. This vote is to be considered valid, regardless of the number of members present. The person in charge remains in office for a period of one year and is eligible for re-election.

The duties of the person in charge are:

- to make the Association known, fostering its development with the help of the other members of the group,
- to carry on the yearly programs of spiritual formation,
- to coordinate group meetings,
- to be a point of reference for the members of the local group,
- to consult with the President concerning possible initiatives to be taken.

In these functions, the person in charge can be helped by the other members of the local group.

COMMITTEES

- 19.** The committees are working groups, dealing with the different apostolic areas. They will choose among the members of the group a Chairperson who will be in office for a period of one year and who is eligible for re-election.

ECCLESIASTICAL ASSISTANT

- 20.** The Ecclesiastical Assistant is a representative of the Magisterium of the Church in order to guarantee communion with the Church; he is appointed by the local Church authority, following the suggestions of the Superior General, according to the canonical norms of the associations for the lay faithful.

Chapter V

GOVERNMENT

ORGANIZATION OF OLS Association

21. The Assembly and the Council are the governing bodies of OLS Association.

- **THE ASSEMBLY**

22. The Assembly is formed by OLS Association members, together with the Council. The Assembly will meet at least twice a year. Every OLS Association member has the right to present proposals to the Council and to the Superior General. The President will lead the Assembly.

23. During the Elective Assembly, each member can nominate three persons for election to the Council. After the vote, the Assembly gives the Superior General the list of those persons who received the majority of votes and thus are eligible for the Council.

- **THE COUNCIL**

24. The council is composed of nine members:

- seven lay members who have obtained the majority of votes
- two religious, appointed by the Superior General of the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Sorrows, who have the right to vote in the Assembly.

25. The Council remains in office for a period of three years and its members are eligible for re-election. The members will meet each time the President deems necessary, at least twice a year, or at the request of at least four members.

26. The Council has the duty to:

- safeguard and carry on the annual organization and the formation program of the Association,
- evaluate the requests of the membership to the Association,
- determine the Committees and designate their members,
- prepare for the meetings of the Assembly,
- promote and coordinate the initiatives of the Association,
- administer the account of the Association,
- make a budget for expenditures.

27. The Council has the power either to confirm the former Legal Representative, even if not a member of the Council in office, or to appoint by simple majority a new representative from among its members.

28. The **President** will be in office for a period of three years and is chosen by the Superior General from among the seven lay members of the Council after due consultation.

29. The duties of the President are:

- to promote the spirituality of Blessed Elisabetta Renzi,

- to represent the Association in society,
 - to call and to chair the Assembly,
 - to call and to chair the Council meetings,
 - to invite consultants to the Assembly or to the Council meetings as he/she deems necessary.
- 30.** If absent, the President can appoint a member of the Council as his/her representative, but not the secretary of the Council.
- 31.** It is the President's responsibility, after consulting with the Superior General and the other Council members, to evaluate whether unjustified absences of a Council member should be grounds for his/her replacement on the Council.
- 32.** The **Treasurer**, who is also the Legal Representative, has custody over the material goods and the account of the Association, and he/she will administer these following the instructions of the Council.
He/she will prepare an annual report on the administration of goods of which the OLS Association may come into possession. This report is to be presented for approval during the first Assembly each year.
In these duties, he/she can be substituted by the President.
Sources of funding for the Association can be: membership dues, donations and gifts, inheritances, and incomes from non-profit activities.
- 33.** The **Secretary**, who is elected by the Council from among its members, will assist the President in carrying out his/her duties.
It is the secretary's job to record the minutes of the Council and Assembly meetings.
In these duties, the Secretary can be substituted by a member of the Council who is elected by the Council members.

Chapter VI

OTHER NORMS

- 34.** In the event that the Association would cease to exist, its goods will be given to the Missions of the Congregation of the Sisters of OLS.

- 35.** Only the Council has the authority to modify this Statute. The Council can also act on the suggestion of the Assembly, when three-fourths of the members are present and with a resolution from two-thirds of those present. The final approval of these modifications is up to the Apostolic See.

- 36.** All matters not foreseen in this Statute are subject to the norms of Canon Law concerning associations and Church Associations.

CANONS
from the Code of Canon Law

Can. 215 - The Christian faithful are at liberty freely to found and direct associations for purposes of charity or piety or for the promotion of the Christian vocation in the world and to hold meetings for the common pursuit of these purposes.

Can. 298 - § 1. In the Church there are associations distinct from institutes of consecrated life and societies of apostolic life; in these associations the Christian faithful, whether clerics, lay persons, or clerics and lay persons together, strive in a common endeavor to foster a more perfect life, to promote public worship or Christian doctrine, or to exercise other works of the apostolate, such as initiatives of evangelization, works of piety or charity, and those which animate the temporal order with a Christian spirit.

Can. 303 - Associations whose members share in the spirit of some religious institute while in secular life, lead an apostolic life, and strive for Christian perfection under the higher direction of the same institute are called third orders or some other appropriate name.

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KEY

CIC: Code of Canon Law

OLS: Our Lady of Sorrows