

DECREES
OF THE
FIFTH PROVINCIAL
COUNCIL OF
PORTLAND IN OREGON



Authorized English Translation



*Only the Latin Text, Approved by
The Holy See, Is Authentic*

year 1957

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GENERAL NORMS

DECREE 1.

Decrees of former Provincial Councils of Portland not herein contained are hereby abrogated.

DECREE 2.

Diocesan statutes contrary to these decrees are not binding.

DECREE 3.

Vested rights remain intact.

DECREE 4.

That discipline may be uniform throughout the province, local customs contrary to these decrees should be quickly and prudently suppressed by the local Ordinaries.

DECREE 5.

Should grave doubts arise about the meaning of these decrees, they shall be discussed at the provincial conferences of the Bishops and, should need be, laid before the Holy See.

DECREE 6.

Local Ordinaries should see to it that decrees which have to do with the faithful laity be clearly, distinctly, and frequently, explained to them.

DECREE 7.

Provincial law contained in this Council is to be diligently explained in seminaries and, in so far as it affects religious, also in their houses, and it is to be technically discussed at clergy conferences.

DECREE 8.

In their diocesan visitations the local Ordinaries will see to it that these provincial decrees are put into effect and faithfully observed by all concerned.

DECREE 9.

Deans will do likewise in their annual, or more frequent, visitations.

DECREE 10.

In the following decrees whenever the permission of the Ordinary is required, it must always be obtained in writing.

whose only purpose is to extend the Gospel to all creation and to extend the Church from sea to sea, is to be set up in every parish.

TITLE IV

CORRECTING CERTAIN SINS OF THE FAITHFUL

DECREE 46

Let the faithful be constantly aware of their duty to profess Christianity not only orally but by their lives and deeds, in observance of divine and ecclesiastical laws.

DECREE 47

- §1. Let the faithful beware of all sorts of superstition: divination (the pretended art of foretelling by magical or diabolical means that which is future or of discovering that which is hidden or obscure), implicit invocation of the devil (even though one protests against the influence of the evil spirit, one still invokes him by using evidently inadequate means to produce some definite effect), sortilege or sorcery (divination by the casting of lots), magic, spiritism, evocation of the dead; they may not take part in non-Catholic religious ceremonies or assist in them by singing or playing musical instruments; they must stay away from "revival meetings" as well as from the cult which calls itself "Christian Science."
- §2. Lest faith be weakened or the error of indifferentism grow, the faithful are to abstain completely from listening to radio and television sermons of non-Catholic ministers.

DECREE 48

Let parish priests be zealous against blasphemy and instill in the faithful a horror of it, for it is an insult to God, diabolical madness and a certain indication of a crude and uneducated mind. Priests should see that the faithful know and use ejaculatory prayers in reparation of this sin in others.

DECREE 49

Parish priests, both in public sermons and private conversations, should zealously remind the faithful of their obligation to keep holy Sundays and feasts of obligation, especially by assisting at Mass and abstaining from servile work.

DECREE 50

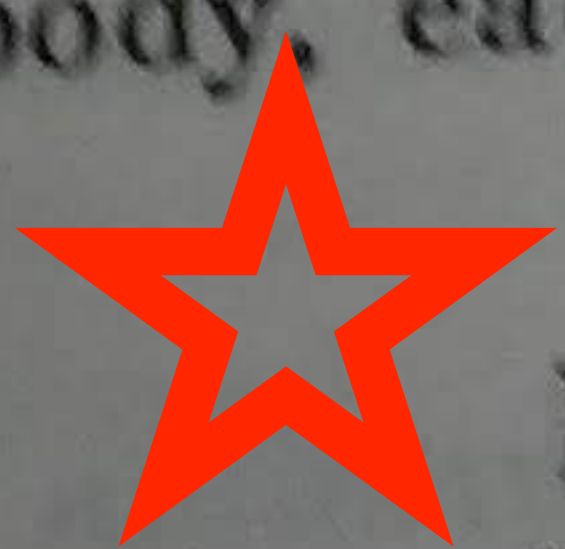
Cultivating good usages, let the faithful avoid moral dangers; let them frequent only cinemas, spectacles and theaters which are good; let them avoid reading bad books. Parish priests should teach the faithful to be moderate in attending dances and other forms of recreation not otherwise dangerous, especially on Saturdays and the vigil of holy days of obligation, lest Mass attendance on the days of precept be endangered.

DECREE 51

Those of the faithful who associate themselves with Catholic temperance societies are to be praised.

DECREE 52

Let women avoid present-day immodesty in dress; they should not enter the temple of the living and seeing God, nor much less venture to receive the sacraments unless modestly dressed. For it is written: "This is the Lord's dwelling place . . ." (*Gen. XXVIII. 17*); and "He that eats . . . without recognizing the body, eats . . . to his own condemnation" (*I Cor. XI. 29*).



DECREE 53

Husbands and wives who in disregard of divine and ecclesiastical law live apart are to be admonished to resume life in common; should they refuse, they should be denounced to the Ordinary.

DECREE 54

The faithful are to be informed, prudently and discreetly, of the excommunication, reserved to the Ordinary of the place, which they incur who commit the horrible crime of abortion (can. 2350, §1).

DECREE 55

- §1. Let husbands and wives remember that "since . . . the conjugal act is destined primarily by nature for the begetting of children, those who in exercising it deliberately frustrate its natural power and purpose sin against nature and commit a deed which is shameful and intrinsically vicious" (*Pius XI. Enc. Let. 31 December 1930*).
- §2. Besides, priests are severely admonished "not to allow the faithful entrusted to them to err regarding this most grave law of God; much more, that they keep themselves immune from such false opinions, in no way conniving in them" (*idem. ibidem*). And the other words of the Pope are to be heeded in this matter of such great importance: "If any confessor or pastor of souls, which God forbid, lead the faithful entrusted to him into these errors or should at least confirm them by approval or guilty silence, let him be mindful of the fact that he must render a strict account to God, the Supreme Judge, for the betrayal of his sacred trust, and let him take to himself the words of Christ: 'Blind guides of blind folk they are! And when one blind man guides another, both will fall into the ditch'" (*idem, ibidem*).

DECREE 56

- §1. Husbands and wives are urged to practice the virtue of temperance, using the lawful pleasures of marriage with the moderation of Christian mortification; thus accustomed to restraint in lawful things, they will more easily avoid the unlawful.
- §2. Decidedly alien from the Christian mentality is that evil double standard by which men are more easily excused than women in sins against the sixth commandment; since (whatever may be the human consequences), the offense is equal in both cases.

- §2. When such sufficient reason is lacking, written permission shall be obtained from the parish priest of the bride to have the ceremony in another place.

DECREE 309

Parish priests shall seriously urge upon Catholics their Christian obligation to be married in church at Mass; the Mass shall be that for the Bride and Groom if the rubrics permit.

DECREE 310

Because of the very serious prohibition of church law, as well as because of the considerable scandal involved, the faithful shall be informed that no suit for civil divorce may be opened unless permission of the Ordinary will have previously been obtained.

DECREE 311

- §1. Even though a marriage should be null because of an obvious defect, for example, lack of form, no priest shall presume so to declare it on his own authority; but shall submit the matter to the Ordinary of the place for judgment.
- §2. In no case shall any promise of favorable outcome be made to the parties.
- §3. No one shall gather testimony in a marriage case unless properly delegated to do so; the exception shall be if there will exist danger that there will be no other opportunity to obtain it.

DECREE 312

All marriage cases are to be referred to the Chancery Office by the parish priest of the plaintiff.

DECREE 313

- §1. No marriage, Catholic or mixed, shall take place after 6:00 p. m.
- §2. Catholics shall by all means take advantage of the opportunity to have a Nuptial Mass.
- §3. Any unseemly, even profane, celebrations after the religious ceremony are to be avoided as a serious abuse; should they now be customary, they shall be prudently shunned.