

Missionary Families of Christ
CORPORATE REALITIES OF MFC

MFC as a corporate body is manifested in two realities—the spiritual and the secular. As a spiritual body, MFC is an association of lay faithful within the Catholic Church. As a secular body, it can become a legal corporation subject to the state. As a spiritual body, MFC has its Statutes. As a secular body, it would have its By-laws.

An MFC community may remain as simply a spiritual body unless it becomes necessary to incorporate as a secular body. The basic reason for incorporating MFC as a legal/secular body is to be able to transact corporate business, such as handling money with appropriate receipts, signing contracts, etc. This usually becomes necessary when MFC in a particular country becomes big enough such that transactions can no longer be handled on an informal or *ad hoc* basis.

When MFC is incorporated, then it becomes subject to both the Church and the State. This can cause challenges when its processes under its Statutes are not in direct conformity with state laws and requirements. The greatest challenge is the matter of choosing the top leadership that will govern the body. As a spiritual body, leaders are appointed, while as a secular body, officers are elected.

Since MFC will not violate any laws of the land and will conform to the requirements of its incorporation, the challenge then is to evolve a system whereby the spiritual and the secular in relation to the corporate body may be meshed.

Failing this, then there should remain the distinction between MFC as a spiritual body and MFC as a secular entity. All MFC members are part of the former, but not all have to be part of the latter. The former would always adhere to its pastoral-governmental processes, while the latter would conform to state laws. If the latter is tightly controlled as to membership, then it becomes easier not to subject the body to the vicissitudes of democratic election processes.

This distinction between the two realities of being MFC is also important given the nature of the worldwide MFC family, where incorporated entities would be subject to the particular laws of their respective countries. As a worldwide family, the inter-relationships will be among the different spiritual MFCs and will have nothing to do with the secular bodies in the different countries. The relationship with the secular body within a particular country will be the concern only of the spiritual community in that country.

Further, there is only one MFC throughout the whole world, which is composed of the spiritual MFCs in the different countries. However, there can be many secular or corporate MFCs. The spiritual MFC communities inter-relate with each other across the world, while the secular MFC corporations do not do so.

Finally, MFC communities throughout the world should carry the same name, or an acceptable variant thereof (especially if translated to the local language), to be able to distinguish them as part of the one worldwide family. But the secular corporations can be called by any name.

It should always be clear that the primary reality of MFC is that it is a spiritual body. Its secular incorporation, forced by circumstances, is a secondary reality.

(SG. Oct 7, 2019)