

THE STATUTES OF THE APOSTOLIC FEDERATION

Hoerde, August 20, 1919, edited by Father Kentenich (complete)³⁴

- I. *The External Organization, a branch of the Schoenstatt Sodality for Students, advances, as of August 20, 1919, from its previous status and becomes the "Apostolic Federation."*
- II. *Patroness of the Federation is the Mater Ter Admirabilis, the special patron is St. Paul, our motto: "Caritas Christi urget nos!" (C. CH. u. n.).*
- III. *The purpose of the Federation is the education of trained lay apostles in the spirit of the Church.*
- IV. *Means towards the attainment of the goal:
The Federation requires:*
 1. *Serious striving for the greatest possible perfection according to one's state in life.
It therefore requires that each member:*
 - a) *be under the guidance of a priest acting as spiritual director,*
 - b) *carry out the particular examination (P.E.) in writing,*
 - c) *set up a spiritual daily order (S.D.O.) and control it in writing in the familiar way,*
 - d) *give an accounting of his S.D.O. and P.E. to his spiritual director each month.*
 2. *Practical activity in all fields of apostolate.*
 3. *Prayer for one another as spiritual bond and for the fruitfulness of our work. The Federation's official newspaper is the "MTA."*
- V. *Organization*
 1. *The Federation is subdivided*
 - a) *into sections (1 section leader, 4 groups)*
 - b) *into groups (1 group leader, 4 members)*
 2. *For now the Federation has chosen to work in diaspora groups and not in groups bound to a place.*
 3. *Group members are to remain in lively correspondence among themselves and with their leader, at least once a month. The correspondence between the group leaders and the section leader is obligatory, that of the group leaders among themselves is to be strived for.*
 4. *The time of candidacy lasts half a year and introduces the new member to the spirit and working methods of the Federation.*
 5. *It is required to briefly report to the group leader before the 15th of each month whether or not the accounting of P.E. and S.D.O. to the spiritual director has been made. At the end of the month, the group leaders are to report the same of themselves and their group to the section leader. The same applies to the section leader [who is to report] to the central office concerning himself and the section.*
 6. *On the day of permanent admission, each individual is to be given a certificate of membership in the Federation.*
 7. *Exclusion from the Federation comes with the failure to comply with points IV.1.a) and b); especially point a). Deliberations are still incomplete concerning the election or appointment of section leaders and group leaders and admission and dismissal of members.*

LETTER TO THE GROUP LEADERS OF THE APOSTOLIC FEDERATION

November 6, 1919 (excerpts)³⁵

Schoenstatt, November 6, 1919

My dear group leaders!

....The sodalist conference in Hoerde gave us a solid constitution: we now know for certain what we want and ought to do. Therefore allow me to adopt the call which Archbishop Faulhaber proclaimed in his powerful speech at the Catholic Congress in Munich just recently: "Awake! Awake! And wake one another!"³⁶

My dear group leaders, I don't know if you are aware of all the wide ramifications of our task, and of the difficulties which we must overcome. And yet we must see clearly in order to carry out correctly and autonomously our posts of such high responsibility.

Through the adoption of the constitution of Hoerde [the Statutes], we have, from the very outset, given up being a mass movement. We must hold tight to that, otherwise our little troop could be easily misled into reaching false conclusions. The demands which we have made are so exacting that relatively few will decide to remain loyally in our circle. That is not a disadvantage. On the contrary, if we lead our new groups in the right spirit, then that will become our strength. There are mass organizations beyond count today; in our democratic age they are necessary if one wishes to have an effective influence on public opinion; but they will languish all too quickly if constant and resolute attention is not paid to the "little work" of their religious and moral animation. Here we wish to and must become active if we want to justify our existence and make an enlightened contribution to the solution of the problems of our time....

Spiritual "little work," that is our glory and greatness! Social democracy sees existing conditions as the cause of the modern horrors of mass misery; its only source of liberation and salvation is a revolutionary change of the external conditions. It will not reach its goal. To be sure, there are many aspects of social and civic life which are corrupt and cry out for reform. But the deepest source of our unhappiness lies in our very selves, in the unredeemedness and slavery of our own souls. Consistent with this insight, we demand and strive for a sweeping moral and religious renewal of the individual and of all of human culture. This is a task we share with all contemporary Catholic organizations, whether societies, confraternities, or sodalities. One essential difference [to them] is the form we use to pursue our aim, and the hoped-for degree of reaching and permeating the soul.

My dear group leaders! Do you not also find that even where religious living and thinking are found, starting with our intellectual circles, the ability to resist the spirit of the world is relatively small? What they lack, or better, what all of Christianity today lacks is the spirit of genuine interior life.³⁷ Spiritual life is dying out! ...

War and revolution have come. Both have increased the superficiality and exteriorization into lack of restraint. We know that from our own insight and experience.

*And in the midst of this chaos we establish a program that is tantamount to a solemn declaration of the importance of the spiritual life.*³⁸ To my knowledge there is no other lay organization which is so direct, so outspoken and – I would like to say – so unmerciful in pursuing the spirit of the world to its last refuge. Now you will gradually begin to see the far-reaching significance of our movement.

In our day and age it is already difficult enough to lead a vibrant spiritual life behind protective cloister walls. It will be even more difficult for mature persons living a public life. We are neither members of an order nor fully mature personalities; the storms of youth have not yet lost all strength; they drive us forcefully into the lifestyle of the masses. Does not the confession to our Federation sound like a magnanimous, ringing battle cry which – to draw a quote from Nietzsche – calls "every war-proven and victory-certain instinct" to the plan. And you don't want to live the

Hoerde program for yourselves alone. Trailblazers and leaders are what you want to be for our younger sodalists and Federation members. The entire movement is now your work and must remain so. I can and want to simply assist you through advice and actions. That is why I have held back so much, not even showing up at the conference in Hoerde.... I must honestly admit that in moments of stillness I tremble at the thought of the work we have undertaken. But the thought of our heavenly Mother and unreserved trust in her quickly and completely dispells all dark clouds. Calm consideration of our development up till now justifies the conclusion: Our MTA wants to use us as instruments for the renewal of the world. I also place much trust in the help of our fallen hero sodalists. What they so heroically strived and laid the foundation for while here on earth is something which they will most certainly not abandon in heaven....