

Annual meeting with Moderators of Associations of the Faithful,
Ecclesial Movements and New Communities
***"Working conditions in the Associations.
A service in Justice and Charity"***
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**Regulating Work in the Associations:
Some Practical Orientations**

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ABSTRACT

Being a member of a lay association, ecclesial movement or new community does not alter or diminish the rights and duties that flow from a person's state of life. Responsible management of personal resources, and planning for the uncertainties of the future, are personal responsibilities incumbent upon the faithful.

In cases where members committed in full-time apostolate for an association are paid a salary, this responsibility is exercised applying the fruits of their own labour and of their own patrimony. When the participation required in the association's community life or apostolate means that a member does not dispose of the financial means to provide for their own current and future material needs, the duty to provide for these needs falls upon the association.

The association may meet these needs through a variety of forms of support, adapted to members' personal circumstances, but must observe the relevant legal definitions of what is 'work' and of what is a 'just remuneration'.

Fundamental basic material needs include current needs of a) basic living standards (housing, heating, light, food, clothing, and household and personal items), as well as access to b) education, and c) healthcare.

Provision must be made, in the present, for future needs. Contingent future needs include possible accident and unforeseen illness. Predictable future needs include old-age pension provision.

For pension provision, the scope of measures undertaken by an association should not aim merely to *alleviate* poverty, but should, as a minimum, result in *preventing* "absolute poverty". It is preferable for acquired pension rights to be personal and directly attributed to the individual person in law, but a common fund can serve to give supplementary payments where acquired personal pension rights are insufficient to prevent "absolute poverty". Interventions from the association, in these specific

circumstances, to alleviate poverty or to prevent pension poverty, should not be considered as acts of charity, but rather as a solidarity based in equity, that is to say: undertaken in order to avoid an injustice.

An association should apply the same principles of care in the help given to people who leave the association, voluntarily or involuntarily, based on an objective assessment of a person's basic needs and of the extent to which the person's time within the association has an impact on their ability to meet these basic needs.