

Vatican warns bishops of schismatic groups in Philippines

MANILA, Dec. 2, 2013—The Vatican has alerted Philippine bishops of the presence and activity of two schismatic groups not recognized by the Holy See.

The Apostolic Nunciature in a communiqué told the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines that the so-called Roman Catholic Society of Pope Leo XIII (*Societas Catholica Romana Papae Leonis*) and the Opus Sancti Michaelis Archangeli (OSMA) are not Catholic associations or movements recognized by Rome.

Msgr. Seamus Horgan, first secretary to the Apostolic nuncio, said the Opus Sancti Michaelis Archangeli (OSMA) is a group based in Bologna, Italy and guided by the putative Superior General Michel Upmann as well as Fr. Gabriele Domenico Fiume, Fr. Giacomo Silva and a certain Fr. Antonio Fabbroni.

“These groups are not Catholic associations and sacred orders received from their leaders are not recognized by the Catholic Church,” said Horgan.

According to its website <http://www.cpl13.it/>, OSMA has communities in 13 countries outside of Italy, including USA, Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala, Philippines, Panama, Cameroon, Ecuador, Uganda, Germany, Romania, Pakistan and Peru.

Last year, the Apostolic Nunciature has also sounded the warning about the presence of RCSPLXIII and another group called Igreja Catolica Apostolica Brasileria (ICAB).

Msgr. Gabor Pinter, chargé d'affaires of the Apostolic Nunciature, then said that the RCSPLXIII is led by Mr. David G. Bell, “a schismatic group not recognized in anyway by the Catholic Church.”

He said that the bishops ordained in the RCSPLXIII “cannot exercise any ministry within the Catholic Church, which does not recognize their ordination.”

“All organizations and associations connected with the Society must be regarded in the same manner as other non Catholic institutions are,” said Gabor.

“Furthermore, since Mr. Bell has committed the crime of schism, all who have received ordination from him have incurred, for their part, the sanction prescribed by can. 1364 of the CIC: that is excommunication *latae sententiae*,” he said.

Gabor said that the same considerations are also extended to the ICAB, a schismatic community founded by Mr. Carlos Duarte Costa, who died in 1961, and was succeeded by Mr. Luis Fernando Castillo Mendes, who in turn passed away in 2009.

A schismatic is one who separates himself from the unity of the Church by refusing to submit to the Pope or those under him according to the hierarchy of the Church.

Regardless of adherence to every other law of the Church, rejection of the pontiff is cause to be named schismatic.

Schism, according to the canon law, is one of the offenses that carry a penalty of automatic excommunication. (CBCPNews)