

THE ASSEMBLY OF CATHOLIC ORDINARIES OF THE HOLY LAND
Latins, Melkites, Maronites, Sephians, Armenians, Chaldeans, Custody of the Holy Land

EPISCOPAL COMMISSION FOR PILGRIMAGES

Guidelines

NB. References are taken from the September 9, 1987 decision of the High Court of Justice.

The Episcopal Commission for Pilgrimages (ECP), established by the Assembly of Catholic Ordinaries of the Holy Land (ACOHL), has received the mandate to:

- promote the quality of Christian pilgrimage to the Holy Land by giving attention to the programs offered by the travel agencies;
- ensure that the spiritual leader/ animator has good theological and spiritual preparation, geographical and cultural knowledge of the region;
- recognize that the mission of the spiritual leader of the pilgrimage is directly received from the Diocesan, Eparchial or Religious Ordinary, and the recommendation of the office for the pastoral care of the pilgrimages of Episcopal Conferences;
- develop, promote and establish contacts with the tourism ministries of the region and tourist guide unions;
- collaborate with the Pilgrimage Commission of the Custody of the Holy Land;
- render service to the Catholic and non-Catholic churches recognized in Jerusalem.

Terminology:

To avoid any confusion, the commission clarifies the meaning of the words:

- **Pilgrimage:** It is an act of worship, in which the "religious and cultic" dimension (3.a) takes precedence over any other considerations. It is manifested during the visit to the shrine or sanctuary linked to the celebration of a mystery of faith; or when stopping at a place related to a passage of Holy Scripture, such as a landscape, a body of water, archaeological artifacts, interreligious and ecumenical exchanges;
- **Religious Tourism:** Its main purpose is socio-cultural, although it does not exclude a liturgical celebration and the possibility of catechesis;
- **Spiritual Animator:** A bishop, a priest, a deacon, a religious (even religious who obtains the animator's card) can lead a group of pilgrims from abroad (3.a) without the presence of a local tour guide or a silent guide.

It is essential and obligatory for the animator to:

- be knowledgeable of the country and the Word of God;
- have an ongoing training and continuing formation through readings, conferences, lectures, courses;
- have ease communication, fosters and facilitates interpersonal relationship;
- be respectful in encounters with all people and believers of other religions;
- show understanding and closeness to the country's Christians.

The animator must always remember that:

- this service is free; and must not require remuneration (4.a), such as salary, commission, and tips;
 - pilgrimage animation is not only a source of income;
 - the animator must know how to retire at age 75..;
 - visits to historical places where prayer is not permitted, such as museums, Yad Vashem, Kotel, national parks, etc. should be avoided.
- **The Holy Land:** Jerusalem, Israel, Palestine, Cyprus and Jordan offer places where the pilgrim with Bible in hand, can read the history of salvation.

THE ASSEMBLY OF CATHOLIC ORDINARIES OF THE HOLY LAND
Latins, Melkites, Maronites, Sephians, Armenians, Chaldeans, Custody of the Holy Land

Structure of the ECP:

- a) The ECP President is elected by the ACOHL at a plenary meeting and by secret ballot. The term is for five years and renewable once.
 - b) The ACOHL can always choose a committee chair from outside and among the priests engaged in the pastoral care of pilgrimages.
- a) The President forms the commission by choosing at least five persons (consecrated or lay) who can help in reflection and animation.
 - b) In the case of an official position or statement, the Permanent Council of the ACOHL must be contacted to obtain its consent.
 - c) The Custos of the Holy Land appoints a representative of the Custody to be a member of this commission.
3. During its first meeting, the commission shall elect its secretary by secret ballot and confirms the deputy secretary presented by the Permanent Episcopal Council of the Assembly.
4. The Secretary closely monitors the work of the office and signs the Spiritual Leader Cards.
5. The Assistant Secretary ensures the technical work that goes from the acceptance of an application to the issuance of the Spiritual Animator Card; his work is remunerated by the ACOHL according to the civil laws in force.
6. The President, Secretary, and Assistant Secretary form the Technical Council to approve new card applications, find a solution to problems that arise in the immediate future

Spiritual Animator Card:

1. The Spiritual Animator Card, officially recognized by the Ministries of Tourism, is green in color.
2. It is approved for two years. For the first time application, the applicant submits all the required documentation: application, mission received, certificate of studies, copy of the passport, copy of the ordination certificate or religious profession, a photo in a religious habit. For renewal, it is sufficient to complete the application and present the mission letter of assignment from the Ordinary.
3. Once approved, the card is issued for two consecutive years or for each pilgrimage, depending on the number of pilgrimages that the spiritual leader accompanies.

Contribution:

1. The application for the card and its renewal are subject to a contribution for expenses.
2. The contribution for cards issued for two consecutive years is EU 70, while EU10 is the contribution for a card issued for each pilgrimage – beginning on Pentecost Sunday, May 20, 2018.

Activities:

1. The President will convene the ECP three times a year according to an agenda that the Secretary shall prepare and make known in advance. In emergencies, the President can always call a special meeting.
2. The ECP maintains good relations with the Commission on Tourism and Pilgrimage Committee of Episcopal Conferences. This collaboration is for the purpose of establishing the criteria for the selection of pilgrim animators, to pay consideration to programs proposed by agencies, to indicate possible contacts with institutions, parishes, schools, and to offer permanent or ongoing biblical formation for priests and lay guides.

Read, corrected and approved by the ACOHL during the meeting in Nicosia on 11-12 April 2018.