

N° 443.

**LETTONIE
ET LE SAINT-SIÈGE**

Concordat, signé au Vatican le 30
mai 1922.

**LATVIA
AND THE HOLY SEE**

Concordat, signed at the Vatican,
May 30, 1922.

¹ TRADUCTION. — TRANSLATION.No. 443. — CONCORDAT² BETWEEN THE HOLY SEE AND THE LATVIAN GOVERNMENT, SIGNED AT THE VATICAN MAY 30, 1922.

French official text communicated by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Latvia. The registration of this concordat took place June 16, 1923.

The HOLY SEE, represented by His Eminence Cardinal GASPARRI, Secretary of State to His Holiness Pius XI, and the GOVERNMENT OF LATVIA, represented by His Excellency Zigfrids A. MEIEROVICS, President of the Council, Minister for Foreign Affairs, after having communicated their full powers, found in good and due form, have agreed upon the following provisions :

I.

The Catholic Religion may be freely and publicly practised in Latvia, and the Church shall be recognised as a corporate body possessing all rights which the Latvian Civil Code accords to other corporate bodies.

2.

The Holy See, in agreement with the Latvian Government, and after the latter shall have handed over to the Archbishop the Church and immovable property referred to in Article 7, shall establish an Archiepiscopal See in Riga and shall attach one or two Suffragan Bishops to the Archbishopric at Riga. The Archbishop and Bishops shall be of Latvian nationality.

3.

In all matters ecclesiastical, the Archbishopric of Riga shall be under the direct jurisdiction of the Holy See.

4.

The Holy See, before appointing an Archbishop of Riga, shall communicate to the Latvian Government the name of the candidate chosen, in order to ascertain whether the Latvian Government has any objection to such nomination from a political point of view.

¹ Traduit par le Secrétariat de la Société des Nations.

¹ Translated by the Secretariat of the League of Nations.

² The exchange of ratifications took place at the Vatican, November 3, 1922.

5.

Before assuming office, the Archbishop shall take the following oath of allegiance before the President of the Latvian Republic :

“ I swear before God and by the Holy Gospels, as befitteth an Archbishop, myself to respect and to cause my Clergy to respect the Government established under the Constitution of the Latvian Republic and to commit no act whereby public order may be compromised. ”

6.

The Holy See, in agreement with the Latvian Government, re-establishes the Diocesan Chapter of Riga, in accordance with the provisions of Canon Law.

7.

The Latvian Republic, for its part, undertakes :

- (a) To give to Riga for the use of the Roman Catholic Church a Cathedral Church chosen by the Government and deemed suitable by the Archbishop ;
- (b) To give a suitable building for the residence of the Archbishop and the Chapter, with the Offices of the Chancellery and the Consistory.

8.

Members of the Chapter, vicars and all ecclesiastics in general shall be appointed by the Archbishop, in conformity with the provisions of Canon Law.

9.

Ecclesiastics, from the order of sub-deacons upwards, shall be exempt from military service and from civil duties incompatible with the priestly calling, such as, service on juries and the membership of tribunals, etc.

10.

The Catholic Church shall have the right to found and maintain its own denominational schools ; the Latvian Government undertakes to respect the denominational character of these schools and the Catholic Church undertakes to respect all legislation concerning private schools in accordance with the Government's undertaking.

II.

A diocesan ecclesiastical seminary shall be established, in accordance with Canon Law and under the Archbishop's authority, for the training of a Latvian priesthood. The language employed for instruction in the seminary shall, except in the case of philosophy and in all matters ecclesiastic, be Latvian.

Regarding the foundation of a Latvian College in Rome, or the allocation of a fixed number of scholarships to such pupils as the Archbishop may wish to send to Rome to pursue higher ecclesiastical studies, the Latvian Government shall enter into an agreement with the Holy See.

12.

In view of the still insufficient number of ecclesiastics of Latvian nationality, the Archbishop may, during a period of transition, obtain ecclesiastics from abroad in accordance with his requirements, and the latter may freely carry out the duties entrusted to them by the Archbishop. The Archbishop shall duly communicate the names of these ecclesiastics to the Government of the Republic in order that he may be informed if the Government has any objection, from a political point of view, to their appointment. The members of the Chapter, the Deans and the titular vicars must be Latvian nationals.

13.

The Latvian Republic will not in any way restrict the activities, under the Archbishop of Riga's supervision, of Catholic associations in Latvia, and these shall possess the same rights as other associations recognised by the State.

14.

Catholic churches, chapels and cemeteries shall be regarded as the property of the Catholic Church in Latvia. The Church Authorities shall be free to administer this property, which may not be alienated or confiscated by any person or persons whatsoever or employed for other purposes in opposition to the wishes of the Ecclesiastical Authorities.

15.

The immunity of churches, chapels and cemeteries shall be respected in accordance with the provisions of Canon Law.

16.

The property of the Church may be taxed like the property of other citizens, but buildings intended for the celebration of Divine Service, the Seminary, the Bishop's residence and the Presbytery shall be exempt from taxation.

17.

Ecclesiastics accused of disregarding the obligations imposed by their priestly Office shall appear before the Archbishop or his nominees. No appeal shall lie from the Episcopal Court to the Lay Courts.

18.

If Ecclesiastics are accused before the Lay Tribunals of crimes under the Latvian Code, the Archbishop or his Delegate shall be duly informed of the fact and he or his Delegate may be present at the proceedings of the Tribunal and during the hearing of the case.

19.

Ecclesiastics sentenced to imprisonment shall serve their sentence in a Monastery. In other cases Ecclesiastics who have been sentenced shall serve their sentence like other prisoners, after the Archbishop has deprived them of their priestly dignity.

20.

The present Concordat shall remain in force for three years from the date on which the ratifications are deposited, and shall be renewed by tacit consent from year to year, unless denounced six months beforehand.

If the Concordat is denounced, the property referred to in the Concordat, with all immunities appertaining thereto, shall remain the property of the Catholic Church, and the persons referred to in the Concordat shall become again amenable to Latvian Law.

21.

The present Concordat shall be ratified by the Holy See and by the Latvian Constituent Assembly.

22.

The exchange of ratification shall take place at the Vatican and the Concordat shall come into force as soon as the ratifications have been deposited.

In faith whereof the above-mentioned Plenipotentiaries have signed the present Concordat.

Done at the Vatican on May 30, 1922, in duplicate.

ZIGFRIDS A. MEIEROVICS.
PIERRE Cardinal GASPARRI.
