



PONTIFICIUM CONSILIUM
DE LEGUM TEXTIBUS

Il Segretario

September 14, 2015

Prot. N. 15061/2015

Your Excellency,

I refer to your letter of 30 May 2015, which reached our Dicastery only this last July, in which you posed questions concerning the authority of the metropolitan within his suffragan dioceses (cf. c. 436 §3 *CIC*). You asked specifically whether metropolitans have ordinary powers even within suffragan dioceses, and whether it is true that the ordination and installation of the suffragan bishop cannot be carried out in the absence of the metropolitan.

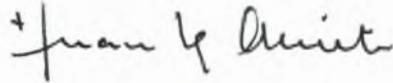
It must be noted first that the metropolitan has no other power of governance over suffragan dioceses apart from those granted to him by law. Given that the post of metropolitan is an ecclesiastical *office* (cf. c. 435 *CIC*), the metropolitan's power of governance is therefore "ordinary" (cf. c. 131 §1 *CIC*), but limited to the competences specifically listed in c. 436 *CIC*, which also include any other concession of special faculties by the Holy See.

While a long-standing custom remains that the metropolitan may ordain the suffragan bishop, current legislation makes no provision for the metropolitan to exercise such a role or any other function in the episcopal ordination rite (cf. c. 1014 *CIC*), or in the taking of canonical possession of a diocese (cf. c. 382 *CIC*). Thus, the absence of the metropolitan has no juridical effect in these celebrations. Nevertheless, his presence at such events would seem most logical and appropriate, given his special responsibility for the unity of the Church in his province, duty of vigilance and that of fostering pastoral coordination and local collegiality among suffragan bishops (cf. Directory for the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops *Apostolorum Successores*, n. 23b).

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I hope that the above information will be helpful to you. Be assured of my prayers and best personal wishes.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Juan Ignacio Arrieta". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

✠ Juan Ignacio Arrieta
Secretary