

Privileges of the Congregation of the Mission

Text and Commentary

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Introduction

The privileges are the patrimony of the Congregation of the Mission. From the various sources available today, it is possible to select five important works that have been accessible to us since the origin of the Congregation.¹ There are also many other sources,² in the form of interpretations and commentaries, that have been published individually and are now available in various publications of the Congregation of the Mission.

Nevertheless, there are confreres who find it difficult to ascertain the prominent and relevant privileges, because, with the promulgation of the new code of Canon Law (1983), some of the privileges have become universal law. Confreres also have found it challenging to explain them to the local ordinaries in order to make use of the privileges. At times, it is also difficult to prove the existence of the privileges to the members of the Congregation of the Mission. There are three main objectives for which Very Rev. G. Gregory Gay, C.M.,

¹ The privileges of the Congregation of the Mission were given to us, as it was the custom, through some communication published in the *Acta Apostolica*. Usually the privileges were granted to various Orders and Congregations and were then catalogued in the code of 1917. The main published collections of the Privileges of the Congregation of the Mission are: *Manuale facultatum, privilegiorum e indulgentiarum pro sodalibus presbyteris trium Congregationum sanctarum Missionum, que Neapoli sunt erectae*. Neapoli, 1813; *De privilegiis et indulgentiis Congregationi Missionis auctoritate apostolica concessis et confirmatis*. Romae, 1815 ; *De privilegiis et indulgentiis Congregationi Missionis auctoritate apostolica concessis et confirmatis*. Mexici, 1860 ; *Summarium privilegiorum et indulgentiarum Congregationis Missionis concessorum ad confirmatorum*. Parisiis, 1863; *Collectio privilegiorum et indulgentiarum quae S. Sedes Congregationi Missionis benigne concessit*. Parisiis, 1990.

² Important among them are, *Privilegios e Indulgencias de la Congregación de la Misión* by Fernández Martínez, C.M., Madrid, 1947; *Commentarium privilegiorum et indulgentiarum Congregationis Missionis* by Jacinto Fernández, C.M., Matriti, 1962; "Privilegios antiguos y Derecho nuevo" by Miguel Pérez Flores, C.M., published in *Anales* 1991.

Superior General, and the General Council proposed this assignment: they are the patrimony of the Congregation, to respond to the requests and doubts of some of the confreres, and precision about the privileges can help us in our ministry.

After the promulgation of the 1983 Code, Father Miguel Pérez Flores, C.M., made an extensive study of the privileges. That study, which was published in *Anales*³ and *Vincentiana*⁴ was never made available to many confreres in the non-Spanish-speaking provinces. Here we have attempted to select the relevant privileges that are still in force and that may be helpful to the members of the Congregation of the Mission as they engage in various ministries. This does not mean that the other privileges, which were elucidated in the earlier publications, are abrogated.

Understanding Privileges

With the publication of the 1917 Code, there was a change in the granting of privileges to religious institutes. In that Code, Canon 613 §1, said, “Every religious (institute) enjoys only those privileges that are contained in this Code, or that have been directly granted to it by the Apostolic See, exclusive of any communication in the future”.

The present code of Canon Law⁵ explains privileges in Canons 76-94. Canon 76 §1 states: *A privilege is a favor given through a particular act to the benefit of certain physical or juridic persons; it can be granted by the legislator as well as by an executive authority to whom the legislator has granted this power.*

Canon 76 §2: *Centenary or immemorial possession induces the presumption that a privilege has been granted.* There are two presumptions here. First, the actual possession of privileges has been in existence for more than hundred years. This presumption is supported by Canon 78 §1: *A privilege is presumed to be perpetual, unless the contrary is proved.* Centenary possession (i.e. possession for 100 years or more) can be proved by documentation, e.g., our first written document on privileges can be traced back to 1813.⁶ Therefore,

³ *Anales*, 1991.

⁴ *Vincentiana*, 1992.

⁵ Hereafter when I refer to the *Code of Canon Law*, it is the Code of 1983. When there is a reference to the Code of 1917, specific mention will be made of that fact.

⁶ *Manuale facultatum, privilegiorum et indulgentiarum pro sodalibus presbyteris trium Congregationum sactum Missionum, quae Neapoli sunt erectae.* Neapoli, 1813. This is the oldest document on the privileges of the Congregation of the Mission I was able to find. I am not sure if any printed document is available before 1813.

according to this Canon we can affirm that we, the Congregation of the Mission, are in possession of certain privileges. The second presumption rests on the memory of persons, who may not be able to recall all the details surrounding the granting of a privilege, but know that such a privilege was granted. In both of the above-mentioned situations, such a privilege is law. The possessor of the privilege is not obliged to defend the exercise of the same unless challenged to do so.⁷

I. Privileges concerning the Congregation of the Mission in general

1. The Superior General can prove the existence of the privileges of the Congregation of the Mission by signing and sealing the copies or compilations of the same. The signed and sealed copies or compilations by the Superior General have the same validity as that of the original documents.

This privilege provides us with a way to prove the legitimacy of the existence of a particular privilege. A concrete proof for the existence of the privilege is the Papal Bull *Salvatoris Nostri* by Pope Urban VIII through which the Congregation was approved on 12 January 1633.⁸ The Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission can prove the existence of a privilege by his signature and personal seal on a copy or a compilation of privileges. This has the same validity as an original text.⁹ The use of these privileges should be guided by pastoral necessity. In this same regard great prudence is to be used so that ecclesiastical law and the norms of the episcopal conference of the country are respected. Through means of extension not only do the incorporated members of the Congregation of the Mission enjoy these privileges, but also the admitted members.¹⁰ This is clearly stated in our Constitution, article 59 §1.

⁷ James A. Coriden and others, *The Code of Canon Law – A Text and Commentary* (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), 62.

⁸ Other important Papal documents include, *Ex commissa nobis* of Alexander VII, *Exponi Nobis* of Benedict XIII, and *Aequa Apostolicae* of Benedict XIV.

⁹ Miguel Pérez Flores, “Privilegios antiguos y Derecho nuevo,” *Anales* 99, no 4 (Octubre – Diciembre 1988): 14.

¹⁰ *Privilegiis, exemptionibus et indulgentiis Congregationii Missionis concessis vel concedendis gaudent non solum novitii, sed etiam convictores, aliique nobiscum nunc et in futurum conviventes diu noctuque.*

2. Major Superiors of the Congregation of the Mission can give certificates of affiliation to the benefactors of the Congregation. In virtue of this relationship, they participate in the suffrages, indulgences, prayers, and good works of the entire Congregation or of the respective Province.

Today we have the practice of granting a certificate of affiliation to the Congregation to those persons who collaborate in some notable way with our mission. Affiliates can be nominated by a Visitor or Vice Visitor to the Superior General according to the polices of the province or vice province.¹¹

3. The Superior General and the Visitors can admit students, even priests, as candidates to the Congregation of the Mission without the permission of the Bishop, even against his judgment.

In the Code of 1917 (Canon 542, 2^o), admitting a cleric to the novitiate without consulting the local ordinary was an impediment to licit admission. In the 1983 Code (Canon 644), failure to consult the local ordinary does not invalidate the admission of the cleric. It is strongly recommended that superiors consult the local ordinary; nevertheless, once they have done so, they are free to admit the cleric. In practice, it is difficult to imagine a cleric leaving the diocese without informing his bishop and just as difficult to imagine a major superior admitting a cleric without consulting that individual's bishop. Such possibility, however, cannot be ruled out. This privilege underscores the law that gives persons the right to choose the place and institution where they will live out their human and Christian vocation.¹²

4. Superiors of the Congregation of the Mission can dispense their members from common ecclesiastical laws, the same as a Bishop can dispense his priests and the laity.

A dispensation is the relaxation of an ecclesiastical law in a particular situation (Canon 85). This privilege states that the superior can dispense his subjects in the same way as a diocesan bishop. The following points, however, must be kept in mind. One must use prudent judgment, that is, there must be some spiritual benefit to be derived as a result of the dispensation.¹³ Dispensation can be given

¹¹ The granting of this affiliation is no longer in the competency of the provincials or vice provincials. Our Statutes give this authority solely to the Superior General (n. 51, 13^o).

¹² Miguel Pérez Flores, 17.

only for a just and reasonable cause taking into account the circumstances of the case and the importance of the law from which the dispensation is given. Otherwise, it can be unlawful and invalid (Canon 90).

5. Bishops can impose ecclesiastical penalties on the members of the Congregation of the Mission for those cases in which they have jurisdiction. However, they cannot punish them with censures.

Canon 1320 establishes that *the local ordinary can coerce religious with penalties in all those matters in which they are subject to him*. Here there is no explicit mention of the members of Societies of Apostolic Life. Canon 738 §2, however, specifies, *They (the members of the Society of Apostolic Life) are also subject to the diocesan bishop in those matters which regard public worship, the care of souls, and other works of the apostolate, with attention to cann. 679–683*. In light of this, the ordinary can impose all available penalties. However, because of this privilege, a local ordinary cannot impose on the members of the Congregation of the Mission censures such as, excommunication, suspension, and interdict.¹⁴

6. Those who preside over the General Assembly or the Provincial Assembly can dispense the elected delegates to the Assembly.

Today such a situation may not happen as frequently as it did in the past, nevertheless, we cannot ignore this and view it as an impossibility.

II. Privileges regarding the houses and churches of the Congregation of the Mission

7. The Congregation of the Mission has the privilege of preventing the construction of another religious house or a church or an oratory that is not at least 699 meters distant from the house of the Congregation.

¹³ This privilege gives Superiors of the Congregation the same authority as the local ordinary to dispense from ecclesiastical laws. This authority is stated in Canon 87 §1: *A diocesan bishop, whenever he judges that it contributes to their spiritual good, is able to dispense the faithful from universal and particular disciplinary laws issued for his territory or his subjects by the supreme authority of the Church. He is not able to dispense, however, from procedural or penal laws, nor from those whose dispensation is especially reserved to the Apostolic See or some other authority.*

¹⁴ Miguel Pérez Flores, 22.

The context in which this privilege was granted was past rivalries among ecclesial communities. Canon 610 §1 states that *the erection of houses takes place with consideration for their advantage to the Church and the institute and with suitable safeguards for those things which are required to carry out properly the religious life of the members according to the proper purposes and spirit of the institute*. Today the significance of such a privilege may seem trivial; however, in cases where this Canon is not observed we have the right to approach the competent authority.

8. The Congregation of the Mission can change the location of a house within the same city without the permission of the Local Ordinary.

Canon 733 of the *Code* distinguishes between a house and a community of a Society of Apostolic Life. Nevertheless, the present *Code* does not give any specific information about the transfer of houses. This privilege is in force, but in practice, it is difficult to imagine someone implementing such a change without informing the local ordinary.

III. Privileges concerning the Ministers of the Word

9. The privileges given for the duration of the popular missions can also be used when the priests of the Congregation of the Mission conduct spiritual retreats, novenas, or any other continuous preaching even outside of the missions for those staying in our houses.

The privilege, for example, to celebrate Masses for the dead during the time of a popular mission can also be used at other times during one's ministry. Definitely, there must be a good pastoral reason to use these privileges and the spiritual exercise should be at least three days.

10. Mission Directors can extend to the secular clergy who collaborate in the mission the same privileges regarding the sacrament of penance and the Liturgy of the Hours. This privilege is in force only during the time of the mission.

When diocesan priests collaborate in popular missions that are organized by the members of the Congregation of the Mission, the director can extend to the diocesan clergy the same privileges that they have. These privileges, however, are limited to praying the Liturgy of

the Hours and confessions and are in force only during the time of the mission.

11. **The priests of the Congregation of the Mission, during a mission or during another ministry, can enroll the faithful in all the associations and confraternities approved by the Holy See.**

When using this privilege the Statutes of each Association are to be respected. The enrollment of parishioners should be done only after consulting the pastor about this process especially if this will involve the establishment of an association in that parish.

IV. Privileges Concerning the Eucharist

12. **On Holy Thursday Mass can be celebrated in our churches and oratories, different from the solemn mass and the liturgical offices, for the benefit of the sick.**

The Eucharist can be celebrated on any day and at any hour, except those, which are excluded by liturgical law (Canon 931).

13. **The priests of the Congregation of the Mission have no obligation to assist at the Chrism Mass that Bishops celebrate in the Cathedral unless there are an insufficient number of ministers and diocesan clergy.**

The Chrism Mass is a symbol of communion between the bishop and the clergy. Therefore, all the priests ministering in the diocese, should, as much as possible, concelebrate with the bishop on that day. The priests of the Congregation of the Mission are not obliged to participate in the Chrism Mass. However, it is highly recommended that they participate in the Chrism Mass especially if they are ministering in the diocese.

14. **Under two conditions the commitment of the Congregation of the Mission to celebrate perpetual Mass intentions does not extend beyond 50 years. First, if those asking for such Mass intentions know and agree to it. Secondly, after 50 years, those for whom such Masses were offered automatically become participants in the merits and the sacrifices of the members of the Congregation of the Mission, which are offered for the benefactors in general.**

When someone entrusts a perpetual foundation for Masses to the Congregation of the Mission, the obligation to celebrate the Masses

ends after 50 years. The donors must be informed of this restriction or we can be accused of deceit and even theft. Our Statutes prohibit accepting obligations in perpetuity (107 §2). After 50 years, the benefactors continue to enjoy the spiritual goods of the Congregation. Statute 26 §2 states: *Every month each member, according to his status, should offer Mass for the living and dead of the entire Vincentian Family as well as for parents, relatives, and benefactors, adding a special intention for the preservation of the original spirit of the Congregation.*

15. **The Local Ordinary cannot demand of the Parish Priests of the Congregation of the Mission to present the book in which the intention and the offering of the Masses is recorded of the parishes entrusted to the Congregation of the Mission.**

According to Canon 957, it is the right and duty of the local ordinary to see that Mass obligations are fulfilled in the cases of secular clergy and the superior in the case of the churches of Religious Institutes or Societies of Apostolic Life. The local ordinary is obliged to inspect the book, which records the Mass offerings every year (Canon 958 §2). This privilege exempts the parish priests of the parishes entrusted to the Congregation of the Mission of presenting the book, in which Mass intentions are recorded, to the bishop.

16. **The Blessed Sacrament can be reserved in each chapel of the same house if there exist groups who can be considered members of different communities.**

Canon 934 §1, 1° states: *The Most Holy Eucharist must be reserved in the cathedral church or its equivalent, in every parish church, and in a church or oratory connected to the house of a religious institute or society of apostolic life.*

In the house of a religious institute or some other pious house, the Most Holy Eucharist is to be reserved only in the church or principal oratory attached to the house. For a just cause, however, the ordinary can also permit it to be reserved in another oratory of the same house (Canon 936).

Therefore, this privilege allows the Eucharist to be reserved in different chapels or oratories of the same house of the Congregation of the Mission without the permission of the bishop. The existence of different groups in the same community is a just reason to reserve the Eucharist and thus facilitate the veneration of the Blessed Sacrament for each group.

V. Privileges Concerning the Sacrament of Penance

17. The priests of the Congregation of the Mission, who have faculties to hear confessions, can absolve censures reserved to the Ordinary by particular law, but only in the internal forum and in the context of sacramental confession which takes place during missions, spiritual retreats, and days of recollection, etc., that occur inside or outside our houses.

It is important to understand the meaning of censures that are reserved by particular law. Canon 1314¹⁵ defines the difference between *ferendae sententiae* and *latae sententiae*.¹⁶

18. The priests of the Congregation of the Mission cannot only commute private vows but also can dispense from them for a just cause, except those reserved to the Holy See, provided that such dispensation does not injure the acquired rights of others.¹⁷

The vows of Secular Institutes or of Societies of Apostolic Life or other ecclesial communities that are governed by their respective constitutions (even when those vows are not public), cannot be considered as private vows (Canon 1192 §1).

Canon 1196 states: *In addition to the Roman Pontiff, the following can dispense from private vows for a just cause provided that a dispensation does not injure a right acquired by others:*

1° *the local ordinary and the pastor with regard to all their subjects and even travelers;*

2° *the superior of a religious institute or society of apostolic life if it is clerical and of pontifical right with regard to members, novices, and persons who live day and night in a house of the institute or society;*

¹⁵ “A penalty is for the most part *ferendae sententiae*, that is, not binding upon the offender until it has been imposed. It is, however, *latae sententiae*, so that it is incurred automatically upon the commission of an offence, if the law or precept expressly lays this down (1314).

¹⁶ The School of Navarre University makes a distinction between *ferendae sententiae a iure* and *ab homine*. *A iure* is established by penal norms and as such can be *latae* or *ferendae sententiae* whereas, *ab homine* is imposed by a decree of some governing body or by a judicial sentence that is handed down by an ecclesiastical court. The general principle governing *latae sententiae* is that there is some obligation that must be fulfilled. It has also been necessary, in exceptional cases, to give remission of the penalty in the internal forum. This privilege refers to censure reserved by particular law *ab homine*.

¹⁷ This privilege of commuting and dispensing vows can be used outside the confessional but it is recommended that it be within the context of sacramental confession. When it is within the context of confession, it presupposes that the one who commutes or dispenses has the faculty to hear confessions.

3° those to whom the Apostolic See or the local ordinary has delegated the power of dispensing.

Canon 1197 states: *The person who makes a private vow can commute the work promised by the vow into a better or equal good; however, one who has the power of dispensing according to the norm of can. 1196 can commute it into a lesser good.*

VI. Privileges Concerning the Sacrament of Orders

19. The Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission can dispense his subjects from the interstices (intervals) to be observed in the reception of orders.

Canons 1031, 1032 §2, and 1035 refer to requirements such as age, time between diaconate and priesthood and philosophical and theological studies. The required age for priesthood is 25 years and 23 years for the transitional diaconate. This requirement emphasizes the importance of psychological maturity that is referred to in Canon 1029. The period mentioned between diaconate and priesthood is six months and this is based on the principle that formation is not to be rushed, but rather sufficient opportunity should be given to the candidates to exercise orders before they are promoted to a higher order. A candidate for the priesthood must complete five years of philosophy/theological studies. Episcopal conferences have the responsibility to plan their formation program.¹⁸

Article 90 of our Constitutions states that *the provincial must establish a fitting length of time for students, after completing their theological studies, to exercise the order of diaconate before they are promoted to priesthood.* In spite of all these requirements, this privilege is in force and gives power to dispense from the above requirements.

20. Major superiors of the Congregation of the Mission can dispense their subjects from all occult irregularities but only in the internal forum.

There is no distinction made with regard to irregularities in receiving orders and irregularities in the exercise of orders. In both

¹⁸ James A. Coriden and others, 726 - 727.

cases, said dispensation has to take place in the internal forum.¹⁹ Canon 1044 §1 states: *The following are irregular for the exercise of orders received: (1) a person who has received orders illegitimately while affected by an irregularity to receive them; (2) a person who has committed a delict mentioned in can. 1041, n. 2, if the delict is public; (3) a person who has committed a delict mentioned in can. 1041, nn. 3, 4, 5, 6.*

- 21a. Visitors and Local Superiors of the Congregation of the Mission can dispense their subjects from irregularities and simple impediments in the internal forum (in both public and occult cases) (except those reserved to the Apostolic See).
- 21b. The priests of the Congregation of the Mission can dispense their *alumni* (members) from irregularities and simple impediments (in both public and occult cases), in the internal forum, in the sacrament of confession (except those reserved to the Apostolic See).
- 21c. The priests of the Congregation of the Mission can dispense all the faithful, who have contracted irregularities and simple impediments, in occult cases and in the internal forum (except those reserved to the Apostolic See).

VII. Privileges concerning the Liturgy

22. Major superiors, local superiors, and personal confessors of the Congregation of the Mission can dispense their subjects from reciting the Liturgy of the Hours, when there is a proportionate reason, only on condition that the individual will recite some other prayers.

¹⁹ Irregularities to receive orders are listed in Canon 1041: (1) a person who labors under some form of *amentia* or other psychic illness due to which, after experts have been consulted, he is judged unqualified to fulfill the ministry properly; (2) a person who has committed the delict of apostasy, heresy, or schism; (3) a person who has attempted marriage, even only civilly, while either impeded personally from entering marriage by a matrimonial bond, sacred orders, or a public perpetual vow of chastity, or with a woman bound by a valid marriage or restricted by the same type of vow; (4) a person who has committed voluntary homicide or procured a completed abortion and all those who positively cooperated in either; (5) a person who has mutilated himself or another gravely and maliciously or who has attempted suicide; (6) a person who has performed an act of orders reserved to those in the order of episcopate or presbyterate while either lacking that order or prohibited from its exercise by some declared or imposed canonical penalty.

The present *Code* obliges priests and deacons aspiring to priesthood to pray the Liturgy of the Hours, using their own approved liturgical books (Canon 276 §2, 3^o). There is a further reference to this Canon, which specifically mentions the members of Institutes of Consecrated Life and of Societies of Apostolic Life (1174 §1). Our Constitutions (C 45 §3) exhort us with the following words: *In celebrating the liturgy of the hours, we unite our hearts and voices to sing the praises of the Lord, raise our prayer continually in his sight, and intercede for people everywhere. For this reason, we celebrate morning and evening prayer in common, unless excused because of the apostolate.*

The above-stated norms establish the obligation of the clergy to pray the Liturgy of the Hours. It is in light of all of this that we have to situate this privilege. The privilege to commute an individual from praying the Liturgy of the Hours is to be substituted by the recitation of other (vocal?) prayers. Extraordinary pastoral work could be a reason to dispense from reciting the Liturgy of the Hours. Relaxation from the ecclesiastical law to pray the Liturgy of the Hours is to be perceived as a privilege and we must never lose sight of the value in praying the Divine Office.²⁰

VIII. Privileges Concerning Temporal Goods

23. Immovable goods, precious movable goods, rights and legal claims, whether personal or real, which belong to the juridical person of the Congregation of the Mission, are prescribed not by a period of 30 years as stated in Canon 1270, but 100 years.

Canon 1270 establishes the period for prescription as 30 years for items described as immovable goods, precious moveable goods, rights and legal actions, both personal and real of juridical person and 100 years for the Apostolic See. Prescription is a means of acquiring or losing rights, or of freeing oneself from obligations by the passage of time (Canon 197). The church recognizes prescription as a means of acquiring temporal goods and freeing oneself from them (Canon 1268). By ‘prescribed goods,’ is meant goods that have considerable value because of artistic, historical, or material value.²¹ The secular laws of each country govern all other cases. This privilege includes

²⁰ Miguel Pérez Flores, 63-64.

²¹ *Exegetical Commentary on the Code of Canon Law*, Vol. IV/1 (Chicago: Midwest Theological Forum, 2004), 73.

goods that belong to the juridical person of the Congregation of the Mission and, as stated in the Canon, goods belonging to the Apostolic See have a period of prescription of 100 years. It is important to remember that this privilege is valid only for the ecclesiastical forum.²²

- 24. The Superior General can give permission to alienate the temporal goods of the Congregation of the Mission without the consent of his Council if the said process fulfills the norms established by the universal law of the Church.**

Canon 638 §3 obliges the Superiors General of Societies of Apostolic Life to obtain the consent of their Councils (also Canon 741) for the alienation of temporal goods.²³ Our Constitutions, in Article 155, establish the same.²⁴ However, this privilege allows the Superior General to act contrary to what is given in the common law of the Church and contrary to what is prescribed in the Constitutions of the Congregation of the Mission. Since this is a delicate matter, it is best that the Superior General seek the consent of his Council. If, however, he does not seek the consent of his council and instead invokes this privilege, his decision would be valid.²⁵

- 25. The Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission (if he prudently judges it necessary) has the competence to decide that the goods of one house be given to another house that is in need.**

This privilege is in force because neither the Constitutions nor the Statutes of the Congregation of the Mission have explicit norms with regard to this matter. According to our Constitutions, Article 150 §1, houses, local communities, and provinces are able to acquire, possess, administer, and alienate temporal goods. This privilege might seem to show a lack of respect for the autonomy of the houses of the

²² Miguel Pérez Flores, 69.

²³ For the validity of alienation, and of any transaction by which patrimonial condition of the juridical person could be adversely affected, there is required the written permission of the competent Superior, given with the consent of his or her council. Moreover, the permission of the Holy See is required if the transaction involves a sum exceeding that which the Holy See has determined for each region, or if it concerns things donated to the Church as a result of a vow, or objects which are precious by reason of their artistic or historical significance (Canon 638 § 3).

²⁴ For the validity of alienation and any other transaction in which the patrimonial condition of a juridical person can be affected adversely, there is required the written permission of the competent superior with the consent of his council. If moreover, it concerns a transaction, which exceeds the highest amount defined for a given region by the Holy See, or items given to the Church in virtue of a vow, or items of precious art or of historical value, the permission of the Holy See is also required (C 155).

²⁵ Miguel Pérez Flores, 70.

Congregation. However, if the Superior General judges it necessary, he has the power to make use of this privilege for the overall good of the Congregation.

26. Major superiors of the Congregation of the Mission can change the destination of the goods received from a legacy *inter vivos* to another purpose but they must always avoid giving scandal.

This privilege is an exception to Canon 1300,²⁶ which insists on fulfilling and respecting the intentions of the faithful who donate goods to ecclesial institutions. This privilege allows goods that have been received for one purpose to be designated for another purpose. Disposing of goods received for a pious intention is not foreseen here.

27. The Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, in case of necessity and utility of the houses, can sell immovable goods, if they are not higher than the amount established by the Holy See even if contrary to the provisions in the last will. This can be done after consulting with two or three experts about the value of such goods.

It is important to fulfill the intention and the conditions under which immovable goods are received, especially when these goods are bequeathed through an individual's "last will and testament." Even though circumstances may arise that justify changing the purpose for which these goods will be utilized, nevertheless much caution should be used when considering the process of alienation.²⁷

IX. Plenary Indulgences granted to the Congregation of the Mission

Pope Paul VI wanted to change the practice with regard to indulgences. He requested that Religious Congregations, Orders, Societies of Apostolic Life, Secular Institutes, and Pious Associations revise their indulgences. Plenary indulgences could be gained only on specific days established by the Holy See. Such indulgences would be granted when requested by the Superior General or the ordinary.

²⁶ The intentions of the faithful who give or leave goods to pious causes, whether by an act *inter vivos* or by an act *mortis causa*, once lawfully accepted, are to be most carefully observed, even in the manner of the administration and the expending of the goods, without prejudice to the provisions of Can. 1301 § 3 (Can. 1300).

²⁷ Miguel Pérez Flores, 72.

The Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission manifested his desire and petitioned the Holy Father to recognize the indulgences that had already been granted in the past. The same was requested for the Daughters of Charity. The Congregation of the Mission received a reply from the Sacred Penitentiary on 28 October 1967, a reply in which the request had been granted.²⁸ The plenary indulgences of the Congregation of the Mission and Daughters of Charity are perpetual in nature, whereas for pontifical associations, like the Association of the Miraculous Medal, those indulgences are granted for seven years (at the end of seven years the Superior General has to request, in writing, the renewal of those indulgences).

The Sacred Penitentiary granted plenary indulgences to the Congregation of the Mission with the conditions to fulfill and stated that certain conditions had to be fulfilled, namely, reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, participation in the Holy Eucharist, and offering prayers for the intentions of the Holy Father.

- 28. All the members of the Congregation of the Mission can gain plenary indulgences on the following occasions if the above-mentioned conditions are fulfilled:**
- a. Solemnity of Saint Vincent de Paul (27 September)
 - b. Feast of the Miraculous Medal (27 November)
 - c. Solemnity of Saint Louise de Marillac (9 May)
 - d. Feast of Saint Catherine Labouré (28 November)
 - e. Feast of Saint John Gabriel Perboyre (11 September)
 - f. Feast of Saint Francis Regis Clet (18 February)
 - g. Feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul, Foundation of the Congregation of the Mission (25 January)
 - h. On the celebration of the General Assembly.
- 29. All the members of the Congregation of the Mission, by fulfilling the above conditions, can gain a plenary indulgence:**
- a. On the feast of the patron saint of the house
 - b. On the feast days of the Saints and Blessed whose remains or relics are kept in the house
 - c. At the end of any regular visit to the Blessed Sacrament.

²⁸ *Ibid.* 122.

30. All the members of the Congregation of the Mission, by fulfilling the above conditions, can gain a plenary indulgence on the following occasions:
- a. On the day of entering the Internal Seminary
 - a. On the day of good purposes
 - a. On the day of perpetual vows
 - a. When celebrating their 25th, 50th, 60th, 70th anniversary of vows.

These privileges with regard to plenary indulgences are perpetual.²⁹

²⁹ Here I have dealt with those privileges that pertain to the Congregation of the Mission and have not included any of the privileges pertaining to the Daughters of Charity or any other institute or association of the Vincentian Family.