

Some Norms for the Financial Administration Of the Provinces of the Congregation of the Mission

Our Constitutions (Articles 148-155) and Statutes (Articles 75-77 and 100-107) speak at length about the administration of the goods of the Congregation. The *Practical Guide for the Visitor* also speaks about this matter in considerable detail (§§ 240-247 and 309).

1. Our norms call us to great transparency in rendering accounts of the receipts and expenditures of our houses, provinces, and the Congregation as a whole, as well as about the status of our patrimony. In this light, for the future well-being of the Congregation and also, unfortunately, because abuses have arisen, I would like to call to mind the following norms of the Congregation:

1.1. The treasurers of the local houses are to present an account of the receipts and expenditures of the houses, as well as a report on the status of the houses' patrimony, once a month to the local superior. A signature of approval is to be affixed to the account, provided that it is found to be accurate (Statute 103 § 2).

1.2. The provincial treasurer is to present an account of the receipts and expenditures of the province, as well as a report on the status of the province's patrimony, twice a year to the provincial with his council. A signature of approval is to be affixed to the account, provided that it is found to be accurate (Statute 103 § 2).

1.3. Members entrusted with the administration of special works of either a province or a house shall submit an account of the receipts and expenditures to their respective superiors at the time and in the manner determined by provincial norms (Statute 103 § 3).

2. In order to foster the proper administration of temporal goods and to obtain broader financial advice, Canon 1280 requires that every juridic person have a finance council.¹

2.1 In this spirit, with the consent of the members of the General Council, in accord with Article 107, 2° of our Constitutions, I am establishing a general ordinance applicable to all of the provinces of the Congregation of the Mission. It is as follows:

¹**Canon 1280:** *Each juridic person is to have its own finance council or at least two advisors, who according to the norm of its statutes assist the administrator in carrying out his or her function. Cf. also: Canon 492 § 1: In each diocese a finance council is to be established by the bishop, over which he himself or his delegate presides, and which is to be composed of at least three members of the Christian faithful truly skilled in financial affairs as well as in the civil law, of outstanding integrity and appointed by the bishop.*

§ 2: *Members of the finance council are to be named for a five year term; but having completed this term they may be named to other five year terms.*

§ 3: *Those persons are excluded from the finance council who are related to the bishop up to the fourth degree of consanguinity or affinity. Cf. also: Canon 493: In addition to the duties committed to it in Book V: "The Temporal Goods of the Church," the finance council is to prepare each year according to the directions of the diocesan bishop a budget of the income and expenditures foreseen for the governance of the entire diocese in the coming year; moreover at the close of the year it is to examine a report of receipts and expenditures.*

In each province of the Congregation of the Mission a finance committee will be established. It shall be presided over by the provincial superior or his delegate. It shall be composed of the provincial treasurer and at least three other members, knowledgeable in financial matters and the related portions of civil law, some of whom may be lay persons. It shall have an advisory role, offering recommendations to the provincial and the members of his council. The members of the finance committee shall be appointed by the provincial for a three-year term, which is renewable.

I ask that this ordinance be put into practice within six months from the date of this document; that is, by January 1, 2002.

2.2 Among the competencies of this committee shall be the following:

2.2.1 It shall prepare annually a budget of the income and expenditures of the province for the coming year.

2.2.2 At the end of each fiscal year, it shall review and present for the approval of the provincial superior the account which the provincial treasurer has prepared of the province's receipts and expenditures, as well as the report on the status of the patrimony of the province, making appropriate recommendations to the provincial superior and provincial treasurer in this regard.

2.2.3 It shall supervise the conservation, growth and administration of the patrimony of the province and make appropriate recommendations to the provincial superior and the provincial treasurer in this regard.

2.2.4 It shall serve as a consultative body to the provincial superior and provincial treasurer in relation to significant economic questions concerning investments, expenditures, and the conservation and disposal of the patrimony of the province.

2.2.5 It will serve, when asked, as a consultative body to the provincial superior and the provincial treasurer in relationship to any other economic matters that they might propose to the committee.

Some provinces already have norms concerning the matters described above. Such norms remain in effect, unless they are contrary to what is prescribed above. If necessary, such norms should be revised to include the points contained in this document.

3. It is recommended that, in each province at least one confrere, perhaps someone pertaining to the finance committee, be instructed by the provincial treasurer about the working of the treasurer's office, so that in the case of the absence, sickness, or sudden death of a treasurer someone would be capable of taking over the running of the office.

To assist finance councils already established or to be established in the provinces, I offer the attached sample guidelines, which are intended as illustrative and not normative.