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INITIAL PHASE GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2016

Prayer for the Time of the General Assembly 2016

*O God, merciful Father, who has sent your Son as Savior of the World,
you have chosen us to announce the Gospel to the poor,
our Lords and Masters.*

*We give you thanks for having called us to this missionary vocation.
We are celebrating the 42nd General Assembly of the
Congregation of the Mission.*

*We ask you to give us the light of your Spirit to enlighten our minds,
to strengthen our wills, and to make us docile to your inspirations,
so that we can be attentive to the call of the Gospel and of the Church,
and to discern the signs of the times.*

Open our hearts to your divine grace.

*May this be a time of communion and of participation,
so that we can be prophetic witnesses of your love to the whole world.
Living in this continual state of renewal may we remain faithful to the
charism of Saint Vincent in this age of the new evangelization.*

*Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal,
as we begin the fourth centenary of our Vincentian charism,
help us to bring the joy of the Gospel to the ends of the earth,
so that no periphery will be deprived of your light, and the poor will again
be in the center of the Church and of our lives.*

We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Orientation for the Work of the General Assembly Taken from the provinces' replies

FOUR HUNDRED YEARS OF FIDELITY TO ITS CHARISM AND THE NEW EVANGELIZATION

1. THE VINCENTIAN CHARISM AND THE NEW EVANGELIZATION

Paul of Tarsus, whose conversion inspired Vincent de Paul (some 400 years ago) to establish the Congregation of the Mission, stated: *Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel* (1 Corinthians 9:16). Paul VI affirmed that evangelization constitutes *the grace and the vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize* (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*, # 14) and Pope Francis invites us to engage in the New Evangelization through a courageous going out to the peripheries.

We know that there are various characteristic elements of the Vincentian charism (2.3.1): Christ as the Rule of the Congregation, evangelization of the poor, community for the mission, collaboration, formation of the clergy, and formation of the lay members of the Vincentian Family.

In preparing for this Assembly, the provinces have recognized that, at times, we have become closed in upon ourselves (2.3.2a), we have been lacking in adapting an austere lifestyle (2.3.2.f), we have abandoned traditional missionary work, and we are also lacking in the areas of planning and evaluation (2.3.2.e).

FOR REFLECTION AND DIALOGUE

In light of this reality, what can we do to revive our charism today?

1.1. IDENTITY, COMMUNITY, AND MISSION

We are members of a Congregation that was established by Vincent de Paul to evangelize the poor. In preparation for this Assembly, the

provinces have stated that we ought to strengthen the following aspects of our identity:

- Fidelity to the Constitutions and Statutes (2.3.1.b);
- Experience God in such a way that it gives meaning to our activity (9.1.a);
- Clothe ourselves anew in the spirit of Christ, develop an incarnational spirituality, attention to the five virtues (9.1.d), and personal sanctification (9.1.b).

With regard to community life, the provinces recognized that we have been tremendously effected by the phenomenon of individualism (2.3.2.b; 4.2.b; 5.2.a) and activism (5.2.b), and those realities are causing a deterioration in our common life (5.2.a), a deterioration with regard to our sense of belonging (4.2.c.) and our service on behalf of the poor (11g).

FOR REFLECTION AND DIALOGUE

In light of the above statements, what do you believe the members of this Assembly can do in order to strengthen our identity, our understanding of community, and our service on behalf of the poor?

1.2. THE GOOD NEWS OF MERCY

Preaching and the sacrament of Reconciliation are at the very heart of the origin of our Vincentian charism. Today the Church is committed to the proclamation of the joy of the gospel of mercy. This proclamation demands that we act with new ardor, new methods, and new expressions.

Pope Francis invites us to be “Spirit-Filled Evangelizers” (preaching) and “Missionaries of Mercy” (reconciliation). This demands that each one of us and the whole Congregation renew our missionary vitality and do so in accord with our proper charism because:

- a. Preaching and reconciliation allow us to confront ourselves with the Word of God and to experience and to share the merciful love of God;
- b. Preaching and reconciliation call us to preparation and creativity;
- c. Preaching and reconciliation help us (as penitents) to give new value to the sacrament of Reconciliation, which in turn enables us to be authentic missionaries of God’s mercy.

FOR REFLECTION AND DIALOGUE

In light of the preaching and reconciling dimension of our charism, what should be our contribution to the New Evangelization?

1.3. EVANGELIZATION OF THE POOR AND THE PERIPHERIES

Privileged service on behalf of the poor is at the very heart of the gospel. If the message that we proclaim is not translated into good news for the poor, then we lose authenticity and credibility. After 400 years, our Congregation has to continue to listen to “the cries of the poor” because their voice

- a). Gives meaning to our vocation. Furthermore, the poor invite us to be persons of integrity as they question our lifestyle; they are an ongoing challenge;
- b). The poor make us aware of the fact that they have not yet become “our burden and our sorrow” because we have eased that burden by distancing them from our lives;
- c). The poor impel us to offer proposals in the area of service that bring us into direct contact with them and also demand that we embrace an attitude of prophetic denunciation (11).

As members of a congregation that is called to evangelize the poor, we are invited to move out of our comfort zone and to go out to all the peripheries that need the light of the Gospel. The following are the most noteworthy peripheries that have been proposed (12):

- a). The poorest and most marginalized: persons in situations of risk, prisoners, immigrants, people who live on the streets, the infirm, farm workers, refugees, and people who live in ghettos of misery in large cities;
- b). The international missions that respond to the demands of our charism, especially in Asia and Africa;
- c). Those places where people experience indifference, Christians in Muslim countries and in de-Christianized countries, especially in Europe;
- d). Those places where there is insufficient clergy;
- e). The moral, spiritual, and social peripheries;
- f). The refugees in Europe;
- g). Those places where members of the Vincentian Family are ministering but where there are no confreres;

- h). Those provinces where there are insufficient Missionaries.

FOR REFLECTION AND DIALOGUE

How might we revitalize our service on behalf of the poor and which peripheries should we move out toward?

2. SOME PRESENT URGENCIES FOR THE CM

2.1. FORMATION

We are reminded, in fidelity to the new *Ratio Formationis*, to continue to develop our vocational promotion programs and our formation programs in order to form Missionaries who are faithful to their charism, zealous in their ministry, and attentive to the signs of the time.

The provinces invited us to be particularly attentive to the following dynamics:

- a). To live our Vincentian vocation and to invite others to share in our vocation (2.3.1.a);
- b). To promote vocations to the Congregation (4.1.c);
- c). To form men who are willing to respond to the cries of the poor (11);
- d). To make financial and personnel resources available for the formation of members to the Congregation, as well as for the specialized formation of our members (13.1.3.b);
- e). To cultivate in our candidates the desire to minister on the missions, to learn new languages, and to develop an ability to live in a multicultural environment (13.2.3.ss);
- ef). To create, on the regional level, international centers of formation (14.1.a).

FOR REFLECTION AND DIALOGUE

What areas of formation need to be strengthened (vocational promotion, initial formation, ongoing formation, formation of the clergy)?

2.2. GLOBALIZATION AND INTERCULTURALISM

The Congregation of the Mission should take care to open up new ways and use new means adapted to the circumstances of time and place (Constitutions # 2)

More and more of our provinces and apostolates are becoming intercultural. As an international Congregation, the presence of so many races and languages and traditions enriches all of us, while, at the same time, presenting challenges and impelling us to strengthen the sense of community among us.

1. From the time of their initial formation, the confreres can learn to be aware of our international character, can learn to speak new languages, and to be available for the international missions.
2. The Congregation ought to make every effort to overcome the racial, linguistic, and cultural barriers that exist among the members.

FOR REFLECTION AND DIALOGUE

How can we deepen an awareness of our international character?

2.3. SHARED MISSION AND SOLIDARITY

Almost from the time of its beginning, the Congregation has had an international dimension. We will not, however, be a global community until every individual and every province take more decisive steps toward solidarity and shared mission. Regardless of the place to which we are sent, we are called to serve the poor as our friends and as our brothers and sisters, providing for the needs of others:

1. In accord with the model of patrimonial funds (which ought to be established for every needy province), common funds should be created for initial and ongoing formation, for the care of the infirm and the elderly, and for the formation of the laity.
2. The promotion of strategies in the Congregation (such as the establishment of a project development office) which, in turn, will support the ministry of provinces as they serve the poor (13.1.3).

FOR REFLECTION AND DIALOGUE

What gifts, talents, and strengths could your province place at the service of the whole Congregation?

2.4. INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS

As an international Congregation, we are continually invited to respond to missionary calls. In order to minister in the International

Missions, interprovincial collaboration is necessary. In this sense, then, the provinces consider the following to be important (13.2.4.):

- a). A dialogue among the Superior General, the Visitors of the confreres destined for the international missions, and the local superior of the mission;
- b). A balance between the missions that are dependent on the Superior General and those that depend on one or various provinces;
- c). A special power so that the Superior General can send missionaries where they are needed (Cf. Constitutions # 103; Decree # 1, GA/1992; and the study of said decree: *Vincentianna*, # 6 [1993] p. 537).

N.B. It should be noted that in this area of the International Missions, the Congregation has published the *Ratio Missionum* (2002) and *The Statutes of the International Missions* (2013).

FOR REFLECTION AND DIALOGUE

Which of the previous suggestions do you consider most important in order to develop the International Missions?

3. LINES OF ACTION

The following Lines of Action were established by the 2010 General Assembly:

1. *Formation (initial and ongoing)*
2. *Reconfiguration*
3. *Dialogue with the poor and with the Vincentian Family*
4. *Creativity in our ministries*
5. *The methodology of systemic change*

All the provinces responded in a positive manner to this question and stated that said lines of action enrich us all; strengthen our vocation, charism, and international character; and, furthermore, respond to the urgent needs of the Church.

In addition, the following was also stated:

1. As stated in the *Ratio Formationis*, there is an expressed need to give greater attention to the area of formation and to do so beginning with the time of vocational promotion and continuing through the time of ongoing formation of the confreres.

2. Consolidate and support the plans of the Conferences of Visitors (14.4.d).
3. The hope that, in the future, reconfiguration will take on forms that enhance our service on behalf of the poor

FOR REFLECTION AND DIALOGUE

What lines of action (to be developed during the next six years) should this Assembly propose for the whole Congregation?

4. OUR DREAMS AND HOPES

The provinces offered the following recommendations for the next six years:

1. In the area of missionary vitality:
 - a). Establish, on a regional level, international centers for the formation of missionaries;
 - b). Take steps in some new direction such as human trafficking, refugees, and immigrants.
2. In the area of solidarity and finances:
 - a). Use patrimony funds as a model for the whole Congregation;
 - b). Establish an international fund for formation;
 - c). Establish a solidarity fund for the care of the infirm and elderly confreres;
 - d). Guarantee health insurance for those confreres who minister outside their province, especially those in the missions.
3. In the area of formation:
 - a). Focus on the promotion of vocations from the perspective of the evangelization of the poor in the International Missions, as well as in that particular province;
 - b). Continue the programs of ongoing formation, mindful of those programs geared toward confreres at the distinct ages of their ministry;
 - c). Prepare confreres for the ministry of the formation of the clergy;
 - d). Support the vocation of the Brother (in accord with the criteria established in the *Ratio Formationis*).

4. In the area of programs:

- a). Develop a model for programing and for evaluating the activities of the province;
- b). Establish a Commission for Justice and Peace and a Commission for the Integrity of Creation;
- c). Establish (on the provincial level) an office for the development of projects;
- d). Consolidate and support the plans of the Conferences of Visitors;
- e). Enlist the assistance of lay experts for advice in financial matters;
- f). Develop a new film on Saint Vincent.

FOR REFLECTION AND DIALOGUE

Which of these dreams/hopes (three or four) do you consider most important for the Congregation to develop during the next six years?

Directory for the General Assembly 2016

I. PURPOSE AND AUTHORITY OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1. The General Assembly, immediately representing the entire Congregation as the supreme authority of the Congregation, has the right:
 - 1°. to protect the heritage of the Institute and to foster appropriate renewal in accord with that heritage;
 - 2°. to elect the superior general, vicar general, and assistants general;
 - 3°. to enact laws or Statutes, and Decrees, for the good of the Congregation, with due regard for the principle of subsidiarity. Statutes which are not explicitly abrogated remain in force. Decrees must be explicitly confirmed in order to remain in force;
 - 4°. by a two-thirds vote to request from the Holy See changes in the Constitutions approved by it;
 - 5°. to interpret authentically the Statutes; the authentic interpretation of the Constitutions, however, belongs to the Holy See (C. 137).
2. The General Assembly has the right of making declarations, which have doctrinal force and the character of an exhortation (S. 86).
3. A General Assembly, once it is convoked by the superior general, can be:
 - 1°. an ordinary General Assembly, for electing the superior general, vicar general, and assistants general, and for the transaction of the business of the Congregation;
 - 2°. an extraordinary General Assembly, when it is convoked by the superior general according to the norm of our own law (C. 138).

II. MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

4. The following are to be present at the General Assembly:
 - 1°. the superior general, the vicar general and assistants general, the secretary general, the treasurer general, and the procurator to the Holy See;
 - 2°. provincials, and delegates of the provinces elected according to the norm of our own law (C. 139).

5. § 1. The superior general, the vicar general, and the assistants general who are going out of office remain members of the assembly in the subsequent sessions of the same assembly.

§ 2. Besides those who must be present by reason of office at the General Assembly according to the norm of our Constitutions, there should be present one delegate from each province and vice-province for the first one hundred members having active voice; if, however, there are more than one hundred members having active voice, there will be another delegate for each seventy-five members or part thereof. The number of delegates to the General Assembly is to be computed according to the number of members having active voice on the day of the election of delegates in the provincial assembly.

§ 3. If the office of provincial is vacant, the one who holds the interim government of the province goes to the General Assembly. If the provincial is legitimately impeded from going to the General Assembly, the one who substitutes for him in office goes in his place. If, however, the latter was elected a delegate, the first elected alternate goes to the General Assembly (S. 89).

§ 4. In case no brother is elected to participate in the General Assembly, the superior general with his Council will assure the presence of one of them (S. 90 § 1).

§ 5. If, for a serious reason, a delegate is prevented from participating in the General Assembly, the first alternate will participate in his place.

§ 6. If a member of the General Assembly is obliged to leave it after the Assembly has begun, he will not be replaced.

6. § 1. No one can have a double vote.

§ 2. Conditions attached to a vote before the election are to be considered as not having been attached.

§ 3. Election imposes on the one elected the obligation of participating in an assembly or of accepting an office, unless excused for a serious reason. If it is a matter of participation, the serious reason is approved by the competent superior, who afterwards seeks from the assembly its confirmation; if it is a matter of accepting an office, the serious reason is to be approved by the assembly itself.

§ 4. No one of his own authority is able to substitute another for himself in assemblies.

- § 5. The majority of votes is to be computed from the valid votes only. Blank votes are invalid (C. 136).
7. Superiors and members should prepare for the assemblies, earnestly participate in them, and faithfully observe the laws and norms established by them (S. 82).
8. Before and during the assembly free communication of information regarding the matters to be decided and the qualities of those to be elected is to be fostered (S. 84).
- 1°. Prior to the Assembly, the Preparatory Commission will gather and publish appropriate factual information about each member of the Assembly, his specialized formation, his experience, his assignments, his responsibilities, etc.
- 2°. If, during the Assembly, members should request similar information concerning other Confreres, the Central Commission shall gather it and publish it.

III. BEGINNING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Convocation

9. §1. An ordinary General Assembly must be held in the sixth year after the last ordinary General Assembly.
- § 2. An extraordinary General Assembly is held as often as the superior general, with the consent of his council, and having heard the provincials, thinks that it should be held.
- § 3. Provincial assemblies must precede the holding of a General Assembly (S. 87).
10. § 1. The superior general with the consent of his council should determine the time and place for holding the General Assembly.
- § 3. However, in the sixth year, for a just reason, the holding of a General Assembly, by a decree of the superior general with the consent of his council, may be anticipated or delayed for six months from the day on which the preceding ordinary General Assembly began (S. 88).

The Preparatory Commission

11. § 1. Before the convocation of the General Assembly, the superior general, with his council, having heard the provincials and paying

attention to different regions and works, should appoint a preparatory commission at an opportune time.

§ 2. With ample faculty being left to the superior general with his council to determine the work of the preparatory commission according to the circumstances of the time, the tasks of this commission can be the following:

- 1°. to inquire from the provinces and from individual members what, in their judgement, are the more urgent problems and what method should be used to deal with them in the General Assembly;
- 2°. after receiving the answers, to select, when necessary, the matters that are more universal and more urgent, to prepare studies and collect sources, and to send everything to the provincials in plenty of time before the holding of domestic assemblies;
- 3°. to receive the proposals or postulata of the provincial assemblies, the studies made by provinces, and the postulata proposed by the superior general after hearing his council;
- 4°. to organize all this material, and from it to draw up a working document; to send all this material out in plenty of time so that members of the assembly and the alternates can have it all in hand two whole months before the beginning of the General Assembly.

§ 3. Once the assembly has begun, the task of this commission ceases; the chairman of the commission, however, personally or through another should, if it seems opportune, present an account of the work of the commission (S. 91).

Approval of the Directory

12. The Directory approved by one assembly remains in force until it is changed or abrogated by another assembly (S. 93).
13. If a new Directory is proposed, copies will be sent to all members of the Assembly beforehand. At the beginning of the Assembly, a representative of the Preparatory Commission will present the proposed Directory to the members of the Assembly in order to familiarize them with its contents. Any change from the Directory shall be submitted for the approval of the present Assembly and, in order to be approved, requires an absolute majority of the votes.

IV. ORGANIZATION OF THE ASSEMBLY

The President of the General Assembly

14. It is the function of the Superior General to preside over the General Assembly (cf. C. 107, 4°).

The Secretary of the General Assembly and the Tellers

15. § 1. In elections, at least three tellers are required.

§ 2. By law, the tellers are the two youngest members of the assembly by reason of age along with the president and secretary after his election.

§ 3. At the beginning of the assembly, there is an election of a secretary, whose function is:

1º. to fill the task of first teller;

2º. to draw up the minutes and documents of the sessions (S. 83).

16. § 1. The SECRETARY of the General Assembly is a member of the General Assembly elected in secret ballot by an absolute majority of the valid votes. If in the first and second ballot no candidate secures an absolute majority, then in the third ballot a relative majority suffices.

§ 2. Then, the Assembly will elect, using the same procedure, a deputy secretary, who will help the secretary in his task, working under his responsibility. For practical reasons, the two should know the same language.

§ 3. The Secretary works under the guidance and direction of the Central Commission.

17. If a teller is elected to fulfill another function in the Assembly, his place as teller will be taken by the member of the Assembly who follows him in order of age.

The Moderators

18. § 1. Three MODERATORS will be nominated before the Assembly by the Superior General, with the consent of his Council, from among the members of the Assembly. At the beginning of the Assembly, these nominees will be presented for the vote of the Assembly, which may accept them or elect others.

§ 2. With special competence in the area of organizational behavior and group dynamics, the principal function of the Moderators is

to assist the Assembly in the successful completion of its work. Attentive to the diversity of cultures and to areas of concern, the Moderators promote the work of the Assembly by carrying out these duties:

- a). to direct, by turns, the plenary sessions in an orderly manner;
- b). to indicate who is to speak in the plenary sessions and to see that the time-limit of the interventions is observed (cf. no. 24); the Moderator may be assisted in this task by a Timekeeper;
- c). to decide, with the approval of the Assembly, when a motion is to be put to vote after due and mature deliberation;
- d). to present the work agenda of the Assembly;
- e). to communicate to the Assembly useful and relevant messages and information.

The Central Commission

19. § 1. The CENTRAL COMMISSION will consist of a President, three Moderators, the Secretary and five elected members.

§ 2. The election of the five members proceeds as follows: each linguistic or regional group (the groups to be suggested by the President) proposes to the President three names (even of those belonging to other groups). The President in turn presents all the names thus proposed back to the members on a single ballot in alphabetical order. The members then vote for five candidates according to their preference. Among those receiving an absolute majority, the five persons with the highest number of votes are elected. If more than two ballots are required, a relative majority suffices on the third ballot.

§ 3. The function of the Central Commission is to coordinate and direct the entire work of the Assembly, taking into account the pace, the tone, and the mood of its members.

§ 4. In order to assist the Moderators in their work, the Central Commission may recommend to the Assembly the naming of a Timekeeper.

§ 5. The Central Commission is responsible to supervise the drafting of the final synthesis document of the Assembly, including the fundamental commitments that will be undertaken by the Congregation over the next six years. This draft will be presented to the General Assembly for its discussion, modification, and final approval, as stipulated in VII of this Directory.

Groups

20. § 1. The Central Commission – taking account of the current reality of the Congregation – may propose the formation of groups for dialogue and reflection, such as:
- a). LINGUISTIC Groups;
 - b). THEMATIC Groups for exchanging ideas around themes of common interest proposed by the Assembly;
 - c). CONTINENTAL Groups in order to take into account the views of the Continental Conferences (COVIAM, CEVIM, CLAPVI, APVC, NCV).

Members of the Assembly always remain free to join, or form, other groups.

§ 2. These groups represent a privileged space for dialogue and sharing. They will report their conclusions to the Assembly and provide a written account of their discussions to the Secretary.

Particular Commissions

21. The Central Commission will ask the linguistic groups to suggest members for the PARTICULAR COMMISSIONS needed for facilitating the work of the Assembly; e.g., for drafting propositions or documents. From the names suggested, the Central Commission will propose, for the approval of the Assembly, the members of these commissions.

V. ORGANIZATION OF INTERVENTIONS

22. The sessions of the General Assembly may be:
- a). Plenary sessions
 - b). Group sessions (cf. no. 20) or Commissions (cf. no. 21).
23. The President of the Assembly has the right to address the Assembly whenever he thinks it opportune.
24. Each delegate also has the right to speak when he is called upon by the Moderator, in accordance with the Directory. The time limit for interventions from the floor is: three minutes for spontaneous interventions, five minutes for written interventions previously submitted to the secretary for distribution to the translators.

25. The delegates at the Assembly may also present the following motions:
- 1°. When a delegate believes that the discussion is not proceeding in accordance with the Directory, he may propose a **point of order**, which is approved or rejected by the Body immediately. This point of order is approved by a simple majority of votes.
 - 2°. When a delegate thinks that a recess is needed or that the session should be adjourned because the circumstances of the moment make it advisable, he may present a **motion to recess or to adjourn**, which is approved or rejected by the Body immediately. This motion to recess or to adjourn is approved by a simple majority of votes.
 - 3°. When a delegate thinks that it is more convenient to postpone the discussion of an issue to some other time in order to obtain more information or to look for consensus on conflicting views, he proposes a **motion to postpone** to a set time. In this case, the Moderator allows two persons who are in favor and two who are against the motion to speak. Then the Moderator presents the motion to the Body for its approval or rejection. This motion to postpone to a set time is approved by a simple majority of votes.
 - 4°. When a delegate believes that an issue must be reconsidered, after the Body has already decided on it, because of additional information or data obtained, he may propose a **motion to reconsider**. The Moderator allows two persons who are against the motion to speak before he presents it to the Body for approval or rejection. This motion to reconsider, to be approved, needs two thirds of the votes.
 - 5°. When a delegate believes that an issue has been sufficiently dealt with, he can propose a **motion to end the discussion**. The Moderator will allow two persons who are against this motion to speak before he presents it to the Body for approval or rejection. This motion to end the discussion, to be approved, needs two thirds of the votes.

VI. STUDY OF THE THEME

26. § 1. For the study of the theme, the Preparatory Commission of the General Assembly, using the replies received from the Provincial Assemblies, may draft a *documentum laboris* or another

type of document, which, at the opportune moment, a member of the Preparatory Commission will present to the Assembly.

§ 2. If another document is proposed, for example, a “consultation document,” the approval of the Assembly will not be necessary.

27. The theme of the Assembly and the questions raised will be studied in various formats, including expert witnesses, roundtable discussions, and groups (cf. no. 20) formed with flexibility in order to promote the greatest possible exchange and dialogue.
28. When the Assembly employs small groups, each one will designate a moderator to promote discussion and the participation of each and every member. A reporter, also selected by the group, will gather together the ideas discussed in the group and will transmit these in writing to the Secretary.

VII. THE COMMISSION OF SYNTHESIS AND REDACTION OF THE FINAL DOCUMENT

A. The Commission

29. §1. The Commission of Synthesis and Redaction of the Final Document will be composed of three members of the Assembly who will be nominated before the Assembly by the Superior General, with the consent of his Council. At the beginning of the Assembly, these nominees will be presented for the vote of the Assembly, which may accept them or elect others.

§2. These three members of the Commission of Synthesis and Redaction of the Final Document may also be part of the Central Commission, if they are elected to it by the Assembly. When it is opportune, they may be invited by the President of the Central Commission to review their work.
30. The members of this Commission are to listen attentively to the voices of the Assembly and to put into writing their collective aspirations. They are to take into account the reports submitted by the various groups to the Secretary of the Assembly. Commission members are attentive observers and privileged witnesses of the Plenary Sessions of the Assembly.
31. The result of their work should be given in writing to the Delegates and presented to the Assembly at least at the end of each week or

whenever the Central Commission requests it. The Moderators will invite the Assembly to share briefly their impressions of this text.

32. The content of the Final Document ought to be composed of at least two parts: the concrete commitments on the level of the Congregation for the next six years, and the Lines of Action, which the continental groups have decided upon and which are not submitted for vote.

B. Approval of the Final Document

33. In the last days of the Assembly, the Commission of Synthesis and Redaction of the Final Document will propose a Final Document for discussion and approval.
 1. Groups as well as individuals may formulate amendments and present them directly to the Commission.
 2. This Commission revises the text in light of what has been suggested and prepares a written report on the amendments accepted and rejected.
 3. This report, printed and distributed to the Delegates, is also presented to the Assembly by a member of the Commission.
 4. The Moderator will submit the amendments to the Assembly for its approval in the following matter:
 - a) those accepted, which contain some significant change, are voted on one by one;
 - b) those accepted, which are of lesser importance, are voted on globally;
 - c) those rejected are voted on globally.
 5. Each member of the Assembly has the right to propose a motion contrary to the report of the Commission, asking for a separate vote on any amendment.
 6. The Final Document, with the approved amendments, is presented to the Assembly by the Moderator for its definitive approval, as a whole or in parts. Once the text is approved, it becomes the official document of the Assembly.
 7. This Document will be prepared in English, Spanish, and French. The Commission of Synthesis and Redaction of the Final Document will indicate which is the basic text.

VIII. STUDY OF THE POSTULATA

34. § 1. Every missionary, community, province, vice-province, or region of the Congregation of the Mission has the legitimate right to send proposals in the form of postulata to the General Assembly (cf. Code of Canon Law, Canon 631, 4°).
- § 2. The following constitute material for a postulatam:
- Requesting some modification in the Constitutions (cf. C. 137, 4°), or in the Statutes (cf. C. 137, 3°);
 - Asking to have a Decree promulgated (cf. C. 137, 3°);
 - Requesting the authentic interpretation of some point of the Statutes (cf. C. 137, 5°);
 - Asking that the authentic interpretation of some point of the Constitutions be requested of the Holy See (cf. C. 137, 5°);
 - Requesting a declaration of doctrinal or exhortative character;
 - Requesting that the General Assembly include some particular theme in the project of the Congregation for the next six years.
35. § 1. Prior to the General Assembly, the Superior General, with the consent of his Council, will name a special Commission to study the postulata received from the provinces and to make a recommendation to the Assembly, at an appropriate time, as to how these postulata should be treated, always safeguarding the right of the Assembly to discuss and treat the postulata as it wishes.
- § 2. The postulata are approved by an absolute majority of valid votes. This does not hold for those that concern an amendment to the Constitutions (cf. C. 137, 4°; Directory, no. 1, 4°), for which a two-thirds majority is required.
- § 3. The same commission presents the decrees which were promulgated by the previous General Assembly, in order that the General Assembly confirm them, if it judges it opportune (cf. C. 137, 3°; Directory, no. 1, 3°).

IX. ELECTIONS

A. The Election of the Superior General

Preparation for the Election

36. Before the Assembly

§ 1. At least six months before the Assembly, the Preparatory Commission of the General Assembly will send a letter to all the Visitors of the Congregation asking them, together with their Councils, after having consulted the confreres they wish, to present three possible candidates for the office of Superior General in order of preference. The Visitors should respond to this request within two months. The Preparatory Commission is obliged to keep secret the content of this consultation.

§ 2. The Preparatory Commission according to the responses received will draw up a list with all the names presented by the Visitors in the order of votes received. The votes will be weighed using this system: first preference =3 points, second preference =2 points, third preference =1 point.

§ 3. The Preparatory Commission will present this list to the Superior General, who will consult each of the most frequently mentioned candidates to find out if he has grave motives for not accepting (C. 96).

37. During the Assembly

§ 1. The alphabetized list of the most frequently mentioned candidates, without publishing the support received, will be distributed to the participants in the Assembly, at the very beginning of the Assembly with a brief biography of each candidate.

§ 2. The Central Commission will organize a straw vote in which each delegate will be able to choose three names in order of preference. These names are able to be taken from the list presented, or one is also able to nominate other members of the Congregation.

§ 3. The tellers at the Assembly will line up the names of the candidates according to the amount of support received (using the point system in the straw vote).

§ 4. After having spoken with the possible candidates, the Superior General will present to the Assembly the list of those who have

received the most support (without publishing the numbers). This list is able to contain up to ten names.

38. Election of the Superior General

§ 1. At the moment of election, each member of the Assembly can choose someone from the list or any other member of the Congregation.

§ 2. For the good of the Congregation, it is desirable that members freely and willingly share among themselves regarding the qualities and dispositions of candidates. But any electioneering or soliciting of votes for one or other candidate must be completely rejected.

§ 3. Before the election of the Superior General, a day of retreat is planned; the Central Commission will also provide for a time of prayer in order to prepare more immediately for the elections.

§ 4. In the election of the Superior General, there shall be no more than two ballots in the same session.

39. § 1. On the day of the election of the superior general, the electors should offer Mass for a successful election and, after a brief exhortation, begin the session at the appointed hour under the direction of the president.

§ 2. On prepared ballots, the electors should write the name of him whom they choose for superior general.

§ 3. When all the ballots are counted, if their number is greater than the number of electors, the procedure is null and must be repeated. (S. 92).

40. § 1. The procedure for the election of the superior general is as follows: if on the first balloting no one receives two thirds of the votes, a second balloting is to be held in the same manner as the first. If no one receives the required majority in the second balloting, a third and a fourth are to be held in the same way.

After the fourth inefficacious balloting, a fifth should be held, in which an absolute majority of votes, discounting the invalid ones, is required and suffices.

After a fifth inefficacious balloting, a sixth should be held, in which only the two candidates who had the greater number of votes, even though equal, in the fifth balloting shall have passive voice, unless several had an equal number of votes in first or second place; in this case, these also have passive voice in the sixth balloting, in

which a relative majority of votes, discounting the invalid votes, is required and suffices. In the event of a tied vote, the candidate who is senior by vocation or age shall be considered elected.

§ 2. After the election is legitimately completed, and the one elected has accepted office, the decree of election is drawn up, and the one presiding shall proclaim in a clear voice the one elected. But if the president himself has been elected superior general, the secretary of the Assembly shall draw up the decree and the moderator shall proclaim the one elected.

§ 3. The one elected should not refuse the burden committed to him except for a serious reason.

§ 4. When the election is completed and thanks given to God, the ballots should be destroyed.

§ 5. If the newly elected is not present, he should be summoned, and the Assembly can deal with other business of the Congregation until he arrives (C. 140).

B. The Election of the Vicar General and of the Assistants General

41. § 1. The election of the **Vicar General and at least three Assistants General** (C. 109, C. 116 § 2) will be preceded, a day in advance, by meetings of the Continental groups.

§ 2. Each group will be asked to prepare a single page, listing the five criteria it judges most important in an Assistant and proposing the names of four to six persons who could best serve as Vicar General and Assistants General.

§ 3. Each group will also propose the number of Assistants General, which it feels necessary for the good of the Congregation.

§ 4. The results of each group meeting (i.e., the list of criteria and the list of names prepared by the group) will then be published for the reflection of the members of the Assembly.

§ 5. The Superior General may propose to the Assembly the number of Assistants General which he deems necessary for the good government of the Congregation (cf. C. 116 §2).

§ 6. For the good of the Congregation, it is desirable that members freely and willingly share among themselves regarding the qualities and dispositions of candidates. But any electioneering or soliciting of votes for one or other candidate must be completely rejected.

42. *The vicar general is elected under the same conditions as the superior general and in the manner prescribed in article 140, § 1 of the Constitutions (C. 141). (Cf. no. 41, § 1 of the Directory).*
43. The other Assistants will be elected on the day after the election of the Vicar General.
44. § 1. When the elections of the superior general and vicar general are finished, the General Assembly proceeds to the election of the other assistants in distinct ballotings.
- § 2. Those will be considered elected who, discounting the invalid votes, receive an absolute majority of votes; these should be proclaimed by the president of the Assembly as elected.
- § 3. If in the first and second balloting no one is elected, then in the third balloting he is elected who receives a relative majority of votes, and in case of a tie, the senior by vocation or age (C. 142).
45. After the election of each one of the Assistants, there will be a break and then a new session. During the election of each one, however, there will not be a break; rather, the necessary ballots will take place one after another.

X. CLOSING OF THE ASSEMBLY

46. *When the business is finished, the acts of the assembly approved by the participants are to be signed by the president of the assembly, by its secretary, and by all participants, and, having had the seal affixed, are to be preserved diligently in the archives (S. 85).*
47. When the Superior General, with the consent of the members of the Assembly, judges that the work of the Assembly is concluded, he declares it closed (cf. C. 107, 4°).

XI. APPENDIX

48. A “simple majority” means more than half the votes saying “YES” or “NO.” Invalid votes and abstentions are not counted. If there are an equal number of “YES” and “NO” votes, the motion fails.
49. A “two-thirds majority” means two-thirds or more of the valid votes saying “YES” or “NO.” Invalid votes and abstentions are not counted. If there is exactly two-thirds, the motion carries.
50. An “absolute majority” is more than half the number of valid votes.

Delegates / Assistants for GA 2016

PROVINCE	LAST NAME	FIRST NAME(S)	Office	Language
Gen. Curia	Fr. Gay	Gregory	Sup Gen	E S I
Gen. Curia	Fr. Álvarez Munguía	Francisco Javier	Vic Gen	S F I
Gen. Curia	Fr. Chaves dos Santos	Eli	Ass Gen	S P I
Gen. Curia	Fr. Kallammakal	Mathew	Ass Gen	E
Gen. Curia	Fr. Zeracristos	Yosief Woldemichael	Ass Gen	E I
Gen. Curia	Fr. Zontak	Stanislav	Ass Gen	E F I
Gen. Curia	Fr. Geders	Joseph C.	Oec Gen	E I
Gen. Curia	Fr. Turati	Giuseppe	Sec Gen	E S F I G
Gen. Curia	Fr. Kanjirathamkunel	Shijo	Proc Gen	E S F I
Centr Amer	Fr. Lazo Rodríguez	José Edilberto	Vis	S
Centr Amer	Bro. Marroquín	Stuardo Alberto	Del	S E
Argentina	Fr. González	Gustavo Martín	Vis	S
Argentina	Fr. Aguayo Viveros	Hugo Alberto	Del	S
Aus-Ger	Fr. Kangler	Franz Josef	Vis	E F G
Aus-Ger	Fr. Radina	Hans-Georg	Del	E G
Brazil – Cur	Fr. Spisla	Fabiano	Vis	S P
Brazil – Cur	Fr. Iancoski Portes	Antônio Carlos	Del	S P
Brazil – Flum	Fr. Mói Santos	Geraldo Eustáquio	Vis	P
Brazil – Flum	Fr. Teixeira Ribeiro	Vinicius Augusto	Del	P
Brazil – Fortal	Fr. Batista Mitozo	Silvio Alfredo	Vis	S P
Brazil – Fortal	Fr. Nascimento Mesquita	Antonio Marcos	Del	S P
Chile	Fr. Macías Fernández	Luis Fernando	Vis	S E
Chile	Fr. Chávez Savarenes	Luis Ricardo	Del	S F
China	Fr. Kusno Bintoro	Yohanes	Vis	E
China	Fr. Wang Cheng-Chien	John	Del	E
Colombia	Fr. Escobar Ruiz	José Orlando	Vis	S E I F
Colombia	Fr. Gutiérrez Galindo	Héctor Vidal	1Del	S F
Colombia	Fr. Naranjo Salazar	Gabriel	2Del	S E F
Congo	Fr. Yoka Mongu	Bernardin	Vis	F
Congo	Fr. Ekofa Nsimba	Guy	Del	F
Costa Rica	Fr. Mata Pérez	Oscar Efren	vVis	S
Costa Rica	Fr. Pérez Hernández	Javier	Del	S
Cuba	Fr. Walker	Gilbert R.	Adm	E S
Cuba	Fr. Lusarreta Induráin	Jesús María	Del	S

PROVINCE	LAST NAME	FIRST NAME(S)	Office	Language
Ecuador	Fr. Prager	John P.	Vis	E S
Ecuador	Fr. Molina Robalino	Guido	Del	S
Ethiopia	Fr. Memheru	Mekonnen Menkir	Vis	E
Ethiopia	Fr. Asfaw	Feleke Temesgen	Del	E
France – Paris	Fr. Marionneau	Pierre	Vis/Ass	F E
France – Paris	Fr. Feugang	Guénolé	Del	F E
France – Toulouse	Fr. Mauvais	Christian	Vis	F
France – Toulouse	Fr. Pellefigue	Frédéric	Del	F E
Hungary	Fr. Kunay	Viktor	Vis	E
Hungary	Fr. Vass	Csaba	Del	I
India – North	Fr. Nayak	Vijaya Kumar	Vis	E Hindi
India – North	Fr. Nayak	Ignatius	Del	E I
India – South	Fr. Onatt	Mathew	Vis	E
India – South	Fr. Mattathiveliyil	Tomichan	1Del	E G
India – South	Fr. Kandathil	Thomas Sebastian	2Del	E
Indonesia	Fr. Wijanarko	Robertus	Vis	E
Indonesia	Fr. Kurniawan Dwi Madyo	Fransiskus Xaverius	Del	E
Ireland	Fr. Scallon	Pascal	Subs-Vis	E F
Ireland	Fr. Roche	Paul	Del	E
Italy	Fr. Albanesi	Nicola	Vis	F I
Italy – Nap	Fr. Di Trapani	Valerio	Del	E I
Italy – Rome	Fr. Sasso	Ricardo	Del	E F S I
Italy – Tur	Fr. Armani	Gherardo	Del	F I
Madagascar	Fr. Rafanomezantsoa	Alexandre Zéphirin	Vis	F E
Madagascar	Fr. Ralahizafy	Pierre Marie Jérôme	Del	F I
Mexico	Fr. Gutiérrez Nava	Aarón	Vis	S
Mexico	Fr. Aldana Aguiñaga	Rubén	Del	S
Mozambique	Fr. Azevedo Fernandes	José Luís	vVis	S P E
Mozambique	Fr. Mucavele	Fernando Abel	Del	F P
Nigeria	Fr. Mbata	Cyril	Vis	E
Nigeria	Fr. Osuji	Urban	Del	E
Oceania	Fr. Brett	Gregory	Vis	E
Oceania	Fr. Tuimavule	Joseva	Del	E
Orient	Fr. Haddad	Ziad	Vis	F I
Orient	Fr. Jreige	Ramzi	Del	F I
Peru	Fr. Guillén Goñi	Pedro Javier	Vis	S
Peru	Fr. Chávez Alva	César Alfonso	Del	S

PROVINCE	LAST NAME	FIRST NAME(S)	Office	Language
Philippines	Fr. Agner Dumas	Venerando	Vis	E S I
Philippines	Fr. Manimtin	Marcelo	1Del	E S I F
Philippines	Fr. Pilario	Daniel Franklin	2Del	E
Poland	Fr. Banko	Kryspin	Vis	F I
Poland	Fr. Stelmach	Kazimierz	1Del	F I
Poland	Fr. Łucyszyn	Józef	Subst	E I
Poland	Fr. Borowski	Adam	3Del	E I
Poland	Fr. Holc	Paweł	4Del	E I
Portugal	Fr. Esteves Da Cunha	Álvaro António	Vis	S F E P
Portugal	Fr. Pereira Pita	Nélio	Del	S E P
Puerto Rico	Fr. Paulino Peralta	Alejandro Juan	Vis	S
Puerto Rico	Fr. Laupe	Socrate	Del	S
Slovakia	Fr. Jaško	Jaroslav	Vis	E S
Slovakia	Fr. Hoffmann	Emil	Del	S E
Slovenia	Fr. Novak	Pavle	Vis	S F E
Slovenia	Fr. Valant	Leopold Charles	Del	F E
Spain – Barcel	Fr. Alagarda Náchér	Enrique	Vis	S E P
Spain – Barcel	Fr. Serra Casanova	Javier Antonio	Del	S E
Spain – Madrid	Fr. González Hernando	Joaquín	Vis	S
Spain – Madrid	Fr. Ruiz García	Antonio	Del	S E I
Spain – Salam	Fr. De La Rosa Mendoza	Juan	Vis	S
Spain – Salam	Fr. Villar Suárez	José Manuel	Del	S I
Spain – Saragos	Fr. Carmona Morales	David	Vis	S
Spain – Saragos	Fr. Delgado Rubio	Corpus Juan	Del	S I
Sts. Cyril&Meth	Fr. Mavrič	Tomaž	vVis	S E
Sts. Cyril&Meth	Fr. Talapkanych	Mykaylo	Del	E F I
St. Justin De Jacob.	Fr. Ghirmatsion	Negasi O/Ghiorgis	Vis	E I
St. Justin De Jacob.	Fr. Teclmicael	Tekeste	Del	E I
USA – East	Fr. Carroll	Michael J.	Vis	E
USA – East	Fr. Agostino	Joseph V.	1Del	E S
USA – East	Fr. Guerra	Alcibiades I.	2Del	S
USA –West	Fr. Van Dorpe	Raymond A.	Vis	E
USA – West	Fr. Lusabe	Lennoxie	1Del	E F
USA – West	Fr. Heinen	Miles J.	2Del	E S
USA – NE	Fr. Kopystynski	A. Rafał	Vis	E
USA – NE	Fr. Kotlinski	Eugeniusz	Del	E
Venezuela	Fr. Kristen	Henry Miguel	Vis	S

PROVINCE	LAST NAME	FIRST NAME(S)	Office	Language
Venezuela	Fr. Bravo Hernández	Jesús Amable	Del	S
Vietnam	Fr. Nguyen Huu Gia	Augustin	vWis	E
Vietnam	Fr. Tran Cong	Gérard Du	Del	F E I
Holland	Fr. Jaspers	Harrie	Del	E I
Cameroon	Fr. Ondoua Kono	Clément Victorien	vWis	F
Cameroon	Fr. Kollo	Salomon Colbert	Del	F

Office	LAST NAME	FIRST NAME(S)	Language
Commun	Fr. Rodríguez Baquero	Jorge Luis	
Translat	Fr. Rodríguez López	Astor Luis	ENG - ESP
Translat	Fr. Santangelo	Claudio	ENG/ESP/FRA - ITA
Translat	Fr. Stehlik	Thomas	ESP - ENG
Translat	Fr. Eid	Abdo	ESP - FRA
Translat	Fr. Rybolt	John	FRA - ENG
Translat	Fr. García Rubio	José Gregorio	FRA – ESP
Translat	Fr. Swanson	Derek	ITA – ENG
Translat	Fr. Aristizábal Sánchez	Humberto	ITA – ESP
Translat	Fr. Molengi	Prosper	ITA/ENG – FRA
Secr.	Sr. Ann Mary		
Secr.	Sr. Marie Claire		

NB. Languages: E=English, S=Spanish, F=French, P=Portuguese, I=Italian, G=German

Welcome Address Visitor - Western Province, USA

Raymond Van Dorpe, CM

27 June 2016

Good morning! Speaking for all the confreres of the Western Province, I welcome you here to Chicago and DePaul University. Speaking for the confreres of all three American provinces, I welcome you to United States! I hope you will have an opportunity to enjoy this wonderful University and this colorful, diverse city. We are honored by your presence here for these three weeks of the General Assembly.

Beginning this year, the American Provinces are celebrating 200 years of "Walking with the Poor." This is our Bicentennial. We are half as old as the Congregation (more or less!). Since you are with us as we being our celebration, let me tell you how the Congregation came to the United States.

The presence of the Congregation of the Mission in America is due, in large part, to this man: Napoleon Bonaparte.

In 1803, for the princely sum of \$15,000,000, the Emperor Napoleon sold this vast stretch of land to the United States of America. It was approximately 828,000 square miles or 2,145,000 square kilometers, practically doubling the size of a nation that was only 22 years old.

In 1815, this man, Louis V. G. DuBourg, was in Rome to be consecrated Bishop of the Louisiana Territory. While there, he spent some time recruiting missionaries to spread the faith in this new land. He happened to be staying with the confreres in Monte Citorio and heard a conference being given by a young confrere, Felix DeAndreis. So moved was he by the preaching of this young Vincentian, that he convinced him to come to America, along with others who were looking for missionary appointments.

On 3 June 1816, 13 brave men, led by Felix DeAndreis and Joseph Rosati, set out across the Atlantic Ocean to spread the gospel in the wild frontier of America. That was 200 years and two weeks ago.

Their final destination was the state of Missouri, in the middle of the continent! It took them two years to travel halfway across the continent, stopping in Baltimore, Maryland and Bardstown, Kentucky for long periods of time. They finally reached Missouri and settled in the small village of Perryville. The people of this settlement had made a gift of land to Bishop DuBourg for a seminary, in exchange for the services of a priest and the establishment of a parish.

By 1835, the number of confreres had grown and their ministries had expanded to the point where they were established as an independent province. From the seminary in Perryville, the confreres went to all corners of United States – from Philadelphia to California and from Texas to New York. Many would become pioneer bishops themselves.

In 1888, the size of the province warranted a division, and so the Province of the United States was divided East and West, with the headquarters in Perryville, Missouri and Germantown, Pennsylvania.

The next 90 years saw wonderful growth in both the number of confreres and the variety of works. The two provinces established many seminaries for the formation of the diocesan clergy and started colleges for the education of the laity, mostly the children of immigrants. The confreres also started many parishes on the frontier of the country, as well as those in cities, which primarily served the poor immigrant populations that were still flowing in from Europe.

During these years of rapid growth, the call to spread the gospel to the ends of the earth saw the establishment of the missions *ad gentes*, first joining other confreres in China, and then to Panama, Kenya, and a few others – some for short periods of time and others for the long term.

In 1975, a further division of provinces took place, so that there were now five provinces, including the New England Province that ministered mostly to immigrants from Poland. In hindsight, this division was probably ill-conceived, for it was about this same time that we began to see a decline in vocations and the gradual increase in the average age of the confreres. Many works were opened, then closed. Works in which the confreres had labored for decades had to be turned over to others, or simply closed altogether.

Nevertheless, the confreres continued to find new ways to live the Vincentian charism. As our work in seminaries declined, the confreres have moved into other ministries that serve the poor in more direct

ways. It was also during this period that our universities saw substantial growth and continued to offer quality higher education to the poor and underserved populations.

In 2010, the three provinces of the western region (the area of the original Western Province), reconfigured into one. As we observe the anniversary of 200 years of evangelization in America, we are celebrating and collaborating with other branches of the Vincentian Family.

We hope you will join us in spirit and in prayer as we look forward to whatever and wherever Divine Providence may lead us. Where will we be in 50 years? Only God knows!

Again, we are honored by your presence and hope that you will find your stay here in America to be enlightening and inspiring.

Welcome!