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From the General Curia



Confreres in difficulty

Rome, 12 June 2017

Circular letter to all Visitors and Vice-Visitors of the Congregation of the Mission

May the grace and peace of Jesus be always with us!

One of the goals the General Council has proposed to achieve during the current administration is to assist the Visitors in their task of accompanying confreres in difficulty and reducing the number of those living in an irregular juridical situation.

I have asked the Assistants General to address this situation personally together with the Visitors and their Councils during the canonical visits to the various provinces.

At this time, according to the data in the General Secretariat, there are 169 absent confreres, of which 116 are illegitimate. Attached you will find the information relative to your province. For each of them, I expect you to tell me, **by 31 October**, his exact juridical situation and what you are doing to resolve it, if it is illegitimate.

I hereby invite you to begin immediately, in person or by a confrere whom you would like to delegate to this, planning a systematic and continuous work over time to address the issue of illegitimately absent confreres and, as far as possible, reduce the number.

Obviously, as indicated in *A Practical Guide for the Visitor*, the first duty of each Visitor is to try in every way to dialog with the confrere to help him in the process of discernment and, if possible, to return to the Community. If, after doing everything possible, it should be clear that the confrere does not intend to return, it is opportune for the good of the province itself and the entire Congregation, as well as for the confrere himself, to initiate the process of dismissal from the Congregation (cf. *PGV*, Nos. 178-181).

Attached to this, you will find also two more documents prepared by the Secretary General to help you in discerning the various situations and procedures to follow on a case-by-case basis.

I invite you to contact either the Assistant responsible for your province or the Secretary General, who will be at your service for any clarifications you may need.

I take this opportunity to thank you for your service, especially in this delicate and important task.

Your brother in Saint Vincent,

Tomaž Mavrič, CM
Superior General

Some Clarifications on the Most Frequent Cases

1. Who is to be considered still “inside” the CM (and, therefore, is not to be removed from the Catalog).

He who is absent with the permission of the Superior General or the Visitor for not more than one year, except for reasons of health, study, or an apostolate to be carried out in the name of the institute (cf. C. 67 § 2).

Consequences

- Maintains active and passive voice (C. 67, 1: *he enjoys rights and is held to obligations ... according to the norm of the permission granted to him*). Loses active and passive voice, if a year passes without returning S. 26, § 1, c: *those who have not followed the terms established in their permission to live outside the Community* (cf. C. 67, § 2).

He who has obtained permission to live outside the Congregation (provisional incardination), such as the permission of C. 70 (permission of the Superior General) does not have active and passive voice, according to Statute 25.1.

What should the Visitor do

- Keep in touch with the confrere, send him all the information from the Province or the General Curia.
- Simply communicate the juridical situation to the Secretary General.

He who has permission from the Superior General in view of incardination in a diocese (cf. PGV 145-154).

Consequences

- Does not have (C. 70) active and passive voice, but continues to belong juridically to the CM (cf. PGV 142).

What should the Visitor do

- Continue to take care of the confrere, send him the information of the Province and the circulars of the SG, remember to list him as a member of the Province when sending statistics to the General Curia.

He who is illegitimately absent.

Consequences

- Loses active and passive voice, if absent without permission, or for more than six months after the expiration of permission (cf. C. 72 § 2; S. 26).

What should the Visitor do

- Call him back with charity and firmness and, if he refuses to return, begin the dismissal process (cf. PGV 178-181).
- Confreres raised to the episcopal order

Consequences

- They are deprived of active and passive voice (while in office and, even after, unless they return to the community) (S 25, 2°).

What should the Visitor do

- Keep contacts and inform them about the life of the Province and the Congregation.

2. Who is to be considered “out” of the CM (and therefore should not be included in the Catalog).

He who is “ipso facto” dismissed (cf. PGV 169-171).

Consequences

- The confrere must be considered automatically dismissed (*ipso facto*) from the CM (cf. C. 73; CCL 694).

What should the Visitor do

- Issue, without delay, a declaration of fact so that the dismissal is established juridically (cf. Appendix n. 5 of the *PGV*).

He who was dismissed with a process (cf. PGV 178-181 and also 172-177)

Consequences

- The dismissal decree will be effective after confirmation by the Congregation for Consecrated Life (cf. *PGV* 176, 7°) and become final if the confrere does not appeal within ten days.
- If the confrere does appeal (against the Congregation for Consecrated Life) in the ten days following receipt of the dismissal decree, the decree remains suspended until the competent authority’s response (cf. *PGV* 180, 11°).

What should the Visitor do

- Consider and treat the “confrere” like a confrere who no longer has rights but, nevertheless, must be treated with charity. The Procurator General or the Secretary General will inform him of the outcome of the appeal.

He who requests the dispensation *ab omnibus oneribus* (AOO) from the Holy See.

Consequences

- He should no longer belong to the CM, because the request for dispensation presumes dismissal.

What should the Visitor do

- Remove the name from the list of members of his own province, and help the former confrere in the preparation of the AOO request.

3. A way to solve the situation of a missionary who still belongs to a Province, despite living outside the Congregation for a long time, would be to expel him so that his name does not appear in the Catalog.

What should the Visitor do

Simple method of proceeding:

- Put up a notice in the Provincial House for 20 days, asking if anyone has knowledge of the whereabouts of this missionary. If nobody says anything, put up another notice asking the same question for another 20 days.
- At the same time, and for the same number of days, send a letter to the confrere, who will be expelled, at the last house where he was assigned, indicating that if he does not contact the Visitor, the expulsion process will begin.
- After 20 days the Superior of the house responds with a letter to the Visitor saying that he does not know where this confrere is.
- The Visitor sends a new letter to the missionary, who is to be expelled, to the last address where he was assigned. After 20 days, the Superior answers the Visitor by mail, saying that he does not know where this confrere is.

The procedure is the same as if it were a canonical warning.

- It is important that the communications of the Visitor to the missionary, who is to be expelled, and the response of the Superior of the House to the Visitor, be sent by certified mail because those certificates are then included in the dossier sent to the Holy See. This is exactly the same as if it were a canonical warning.

If after 20 days + 20 days no information is obtained, three documents must be prepared:

- A brief biography of the missionary in question: age, when he entered the CM, studies that he has done, date of vows, ordination, assignments, ministries carried out, time he has been away, etc.
- Put in writing the actions taken to find him, notices in the Provincial House and letters. In the dossier, it is necessary to include the two notices, as well as a copy of the letters sent by the Visitor to the confrere and the answers of the Superior to the Visitor, all with their corresponding certificates.

This seems ridiculous, but these procedures count a lot to expel someone. Moreover, if the process is not carried out rigorously, the Vatican will not approve it.

- A document of the decision of Visitor and his Council to request the expulsion of the confrere from the Congregation addressed to the Superior General, as it appears in *A Practical Guide for the Visitor*, pp. 119-120. Obviously, the petition must be adapted to the reality of the missionary for whom expulsion is requested.

Diagram of the various juridical situations

Type	Juridical Reference	Competent Authority	Duration	Juridical Consequences
Absence	CCL 665 § 1	Visitor	Max. 1 year except for reasons of health, study, and an apostolate in the name of the Institute)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Must observe the obligations derived from the vows - Continues to depend on superiors - Is ascribed to a house - Maintains active and passive voice
“Exclaustration” “Live outside the Congregation”	CCL 686 §§1 and 745 C 70	Superior General	Max 3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continues to be a member of the CM - Loses active and passive voice - If a cleric, he asks permission of the Ordinary
Permission or Dispensation from vows in view of incardination (either <i>definitive</i> or <i>ad experimentum</i>)	CCL 268, 693; 743	Superior General	Max 5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remains a member of the CM until final incardination. - Rights (active and passive voice) and duties are suspended
Dispensation from vows	C 107 § 9	Superior General (for incorporated or coadjutor brother)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Returns to the lay state
Dispensation AOO (= loss of the clerical state)	CCL 290 and 291	Holy Father		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Returns to the lay state
Dismissal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ipso facto (from the CM) - Short process (from the CM) - Long process¹ (from the CM) - Without a process (from the house) 	CCL 703 C73 (CCL 694) C74 §1 (CCL 695) C74 §2 (CCL 696) CCL 703	Visitor SG (secret vote of a min. of 4 Councillors) SG (secret vote of a min. of 4 Councillors) SG, Visitor or Local Superior		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remains a cleric (if deacon or priest) - The decree has force after confirmation by the Holy See (cf. CCL 700) - The decree is suspended until confirmation by the Holy See (cf. CCL 700) - If necessary, the dismissal process is begun or the case is referred to the Holy See

¹ The *Practical Guide for the Visitor* 181, 2° suggests that the most practical way forward is dismissal for disobedience.

Tempo Forte Report (5-10 June 2017)

Rome, 23 June 2017

*If there are a hundred aspects of any affair,
we should always look at the best side*

THE PRACTICE OF MUTUAL RESPECT AND GENTLENESS

19 August 1646 (CCD:IX:215)

On Sunday, 4 June, we began the *Tempo Forte* with a time for reflection, which was directed by the Secretary General of the Union of Superiors General, Father David Kinnear Glenday (a member of the Comboni Missionaries of the Heart of Jesus). After a brief presentation on the Holy Spirit, each one was then able to engage in personal prayer until 11:00 am. This time for reflection was concluded with the celebration of the Eucharist, which was presided by Father David.

INITIATIVES OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL WITH REGARD TO THE WHOLE CONGREGATION

[1] Presentation of Strategies (continued)

[1.1.] Initial Formation (continued): Father Javier Álvarez presented a proposal with regard to formation for the African Provinces, a proposal that has a twofold objective: to better the process of initial formation and to open the process of formation to the intercultural reality (thus placing formation in line with the guidelines of the 2016 General Assembly). With regard to the matter of the formation of formators, it was noted that, for the past

20 years, COVIAM has offered a formation course of six weeks during the months of July and August (thus taking advantage of the time for vacation). The General Council suggested that SIEV could collaborate with the project for the formation of formators, if the members of COVIAM desired this form of collaboration. The Conference of Visitors of Africa and Madagascar has already committed itself to continue the formation of formators. With regard to this matter of formation in Africa, the Council decided that this proposal should be studied and discussed by each of the Provincial Councils in Africa and then by the members of COVIAM, when they come together for their annual meeting.

The General Council viewed in a very positive manner the experience of the Interprovincial Seminary, which began to function two years ago in the Province of Nigeria. At the present time, there are 39 students in the theologate from the following provinces: four from the Province of the Congo, three from the Region of Rwanda-Burundi, three from the Vice-Province of Cameroon, three from the Province of Madagascar, 26 from the Province of Nigeria. Father Tewolde Hagos (Province of Saint Justin De Jacobis) is the Director of the Seminary and Father Longenus Odum (Province of Nigeria) is the Treasurer and professor at the Interreligious Center (BIGAR) where our theologians engage in their studies with some 500 other students.

This has been a very interesting experience in the area of interprovincial formation (that is, the experience in Nigeria). The students are happy and the formation takes place in the midst of a very positive and serious environment. The students appear to live together in a simple and joyful manner (such is the testimony of Fathers Zeracristos and Javier who recently visited the seminary).

Since this seminary is unable to accommodate any more theologians because of a lack of rooms (at the present time, two students occupy each room), COVIAM has presented the General Council with a plan to add an addition 45 rooms, which would be

constructed as an annex to the present seminary. This will create the possibility of accommodating 60-65 students, and each student would have his own room. The common rooms of the present building (dining room, chapel, meeting room, etc.) can accommodate the proposed number of 60-65 students. When this project is completed, all the African Provinces are willing to send their theology students to this institution, thus the majority of the African students will be formed at the Eunugu Seminary in Nigeria. This very concrete project is intended to give an international color to formation. At the same time, this project fosters interprovincial collaboration and establishes stronger bonds among the provinces.

In this regard, the Visitors, who have not yet responded to the Superior General's letter with regard to the state of formation in their provinces, are asked to do so before the next *Tempo Forte* at which time this theme will be further discussed.

[1.2.] Solidarity (continued): Father Miles Heinen presented a new draft proposal to the members of the General Council. It should be remembered that the issue of solidarity was the subject of the only postulate that was approved by the General Assembly. The objective of the proposal is to provide the Congregation with a structure for solidarity among the provinces, a structure that would promote both the mission and charity. This draft will be sent to all the Visitors and their council members and then to the various Conferences of Visitors, which will be asked to study said proposal.

[1.3.] Missions (continued): Father Matthew Kallammakal, in the name of a commission composed Fathers Zeracristos, Aarón, and himself, presented a draft proposal for the international missions. Here we are not dealing with some new plan or with a matter that is distinct from the present Statutes of the International Mission, but rather we are attempting to present a strategy that will actualize the current Statutes, especially in the area of the selection of candidates and the preparation of those candidates. It was noted that both the Statutes and the *Ratio* are two well-developed documents and yet

there is often much difficulty in complying with the demands of those documents (this happens because of the urgent demand to relieve the missionaries in different places).

Some of the objectives of the plan are as follows: entrusting the missions to certain provinces, preparation of future candidates, and formation of young confreres for the international missions. The dialogue concluded with a request that the commission develop a draft proposal that would focus on the concrete issues that were discussed. The objective of this proposal is to guide the council in their decision-making process.

[1.4.] Missionaries in difficulty (continued): the Secretary General presented a proposal to the members of the Council. This proposal attempts to involve all the Visitors in order to confront and resolve, as quickly as possible, the various irregular situations that exist in almost every province. The proposal is accompanied by a document that is intended to guide the Visitors when dealing with some of the most common situations that the missionaries will present.

[2] Other initiatives

A commission has been formed to design a new Vincentian Association that would be directed toward those deacons interested in belonging to the Vincentian Family. In this regard, we are not starting from zero. In 2003, the Provinces of France (Paris and Toulouse) developed a document entitled, Statutes for the Vincentian Association of Vincentian Deacons. This document was in force *ad experimentum* for some time. We are attempting to restart that initiative and we are convinced that the Congregation can provide assistance to those deacons who are interested in deepening their vocation of service.

The commission is composed of three members: Father Paul Golden (Western Province USA), Deacon Roger Dubois who works in conjunction with our Community in Montreal (Canada), and the Visitor of the Province of France (or an individual designated by him).

OFFICES DEPENDENT ON THE SUPERIOR GENERAL AND HIS COUNCIL

The Office of Communication: Father Jorge Rodríguez (Director) spoke to the Council about the advances made in this area. The Office is to be expanded in such a way that digital copies of our *Constitutions and Statutes* and the *Common Rules* will be available in 12 languages. At the same time, the Office is working in the area of vocational promotion. Father Jorge has suggested that 2018 could be dedicated to this theme.

CIF: Father Adam Bandura, Assistant at CIF, has submitted his resignation. At this time, we are searching for a confrere to replace him. One of the necessary requisites is that said confrere have a good knowledge of the English language.

SIEV: Negotiations have not yet been concluded between Adamson University and SIEV in the matter of granting a Master's Degree in Vincentian Studies. As soon as these negotiations are concluded, all the members of the Congregation will be offered the possibility of participating in specialized Vincentian studies. This "online" specialization (in different modalities) will be offered to all interested members, especially young members of the Congregation. On 26-30 June 2017, the members of SIEV will meet at the General Curia to concretize the details of this program, to evaluate other projects, and to share some reflections with regard to the Vincentian bibliography.

INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS

Bolivia: At the present time, there are three international missions in this country: El Alto, Cochabamba, and Beni. This year marks the 25th anniversary of the presence of the Vincentians in El Alto, while the mission in Beni is at its beginning stage. The missionaries ministering in Beni are: Fathers Julio César Villalobos (Province of Peru) and Andreas Medi Wijaya, (Province of Indonesia). They are very animated in their ministry despite the fact that they are ministering in a very isolated area where access is very difficult. Moving from one place to another is by boat.

Solomon Islands: A process of collaboration has begun between the Curia and the Provinces of Indonesia and Oceania with the objective that these provinces together will take charge of this mission. More specifically, the Province of Indonesia will take responsibility for the diocesan seminary (four confreres will minister there). The Province of Oceania will take responsibility for the formation of the Vincentian candidates and for parish ministry (three confreres will minister in these works). The Curia will support this mission financially with a contribution of \$65,000.00 annually. A written agreement will spell out all the details of this collaboration and a new agreement with the bishop will concretize the commitments of each party.

Angola: Two missionaries are involved in this mission. However, the superior of this mission, Father Marcos Gumieiro (Province of Curitiba) will be leaving this mission for reasons of health. We hope that there will be volunteers so that we might continue to serve in this mission.

Benin: As of 1 January 2018, the Province of Poland is willing to take responsibility for this international mission. We are thankful for the initiative of the Province of Poland that is the fruit of the celebration of the 400th anniversary of the origin of the Vincentian Charism.

Punta Arenas: The superior of the mission, Father Ángel Garrido, is concluding his three-year term as superior and intends to return to his province (San Vicente de Paúl, Spain). We are looking for two confreres to complement the team there.

Tefé: On Sunday, 11 June, Bishop Fernando Barbosa dos Santos, CM, presented the members of the missionary team to the faithful. The members of the team are: Fathers Rogelio Toro Isaza (Province of Colombia), Paulo Estaquio Venuto (Province of Rio de Janeiro), and Alexandre Fonseca de Paula (Province of Fortaleza). This mission will be the fruit of a collaborative effort between the Provinces of Brazil, CLAPVI, and the Curia. In order to avoid difficulties in the future it will be necessary to clarify the competencies of each entity. Father Javier Álvarez will accompany the members of this mission.

We concluded this section of our meeting by reviewing a request from Bishop George Desmond Tambala from the Diocese of Zomba (Malawi) who wants the Congregation to take up a ministry in his diocese that would be in harmony with the vocation of the Congregation. We are always pleased to receive such requests, because they reveal the esteem in which the Congregation is held. Unfortunately, we are unable to honor this request because of a lack of personnel. This request has been forwarded to the Province of South India.

CONFERENCES OF VISITORS

Father Matthew Kallammakal reported that the annual meeting of the Visitors of the Asian-Pacific area was held in Vietnam from 17-24 February. At the same time and in the same place, the members of the Commission for Charism and Culture (CCC) also met. The two groups worked together and planned the following activities: a gathering for formators in the Province of Indonesia (June 2017), a common Internal Seminary in the Philippines (beginning in 2019), a regional meeting with the confreres involved in the ministry of popular missions (2018), a regional formation session for confreres ordained five years or less.

Father Zeracristos reported that the annual meeting of COVIAM was held in Moundou (Chad) from 1-8 March 2017. The following agreements were reached: to continue and to extend the interprovincial formation experience in Eunugu (Nigeria) and to hold the annual meeting of formators in Eunugu from 1 July to 7 August 2017. COVIAM is open to collaboration with regard to the mission in Chad and this mission may be entrusted to the Province of Nigeria. During this meeting, those present reflected on the lines of action as outlined in the *Final Document* of the 2016 General Assembly.

Father Tomaž participated in the meeting of CEVIM, which was held in Fatima (Portugal) from 24-27 April. During this gathering, the Visitors spoke about having two or three major seminaries in Europe without putting aside the possibility of accepting students

from other countries. In this regard, a commission was formed to study this issue. There was also discussion about the launching of a common missionary project in the city of Melilla. The Visitors are open to this project but have been unable to find two missionaries to initiate this project.

Your brother in Saint Vincent,

Tomaž Mavrič, CM
Superior General

Event at the European Parliament

28 June 2017

It is a tremendous joy and an extraordinary honor for the worldwide Vincentian Family to have the opportunity to mark this year's celebration of the 400th Anniversary of the Vincentian Charism at the European Parliament.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the President of the European Parliament, Mr. Antonio Tajani, for the invitation, and to his office and all the other committees within the European Parliament who have worked so hard to prepare this event. I also would like to thank Mr. Alojz Peterle, member of the European Parliament, who contributed so much to make this event a reality.

I too want to extend my thanks to Father Robert Maloney, CM; to the members of the Vincentian Family Office, coordinated by Father Joseph Agostino, CM; and to all the others members of the Vincentian Family who did so much in these last months leading up to today's encounter.

I would like to thank all of you, members of the European Parliament, distinguished guests from Europe and other countries around the world, representing countries, Church and civil institutions, organizations, the different branches of Consecrated life in the Vincentian Family, as well as lay groups, who came here today to participate in this event.

Looking back with deep thankfulness on the 400 years of heroic service to the poor by millions of persons who were inspired by the Charism of Saint Vincent de Paul, we also look with great hope to the future. Those people gave themselves totally to assisting others most

in need around the world, performing wonders and miracles in the poorest areas of the world. We want to continue meeting the poorest of the poor in every corner of the world, wherever there is a sister or brother in need physically, materially, spiritually, or any other area, and do all we can to combat the different kinds of poverties in order to make this world a better place, a place according to God's plans. Some of these are also the clear values, goals, and priorities of Europe.

Four hundred years ago, Saint Vincent de Paul was touched so deeply by the material and spiritual poverty he had encountered, that he made two radical moves. Firstly, he began his own personal conversion in relation to persons on the margins of society. Secondly, he responded immediately, in a concrete and organized way, to the tremendous needs of the poor.

He involved all levels of society, all levels of government, institutions, different groups within the Church, as well as various civil groups. He build a network of charity that spread, first across France, and then to other countries of Europe and the world. This network of charity, the Vincentian Family, its collaborators and volunteers, now has spread this spirit of charity across Europe and the world, where in over 150 countries the flame that started 400 years ago keeps burning.

Because Vincent de Paul was in love with Jesus, he was in love with the poor. He made no distinction among persons, with regard to religion, color, race, background, etc. He rushed to help people in every way possible.

Vincent de Paul believed strongly in collaboration. He believed that every person could bring her or his gifts and talents together to achieve a single goal: the "Globalization of Charity."

We are here today, in the city of Brussels, in this beautiful building of the European Parliament, surrounded by many other institutions of Europe that help this miracle that is Europe move forward.

Encouraged by the presence of representatives of many governments, institutions, Church representatives, branches of the Vincentian Family, Church and civil groups, our dream becomes more and more a reality, something attainable. The “Globalization of Charity” remains our common dream. If we dream alone a dream remains a dream. If we dream together, the dream becomes a reality.

Tomaž Mavrič, CM
Superior General
Congregation of the Mission and
Company of the Daughters of Charity