

The Revised Statutes

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During the last General Assembly (2010), besides reflecting on “creative fidelity for the mission” the delegates dedicated time and effort to the revision of the Statutes of the Congregation and approved those that were revised. In this edition of *Vincentiana* we present those revisions in five languages. Naturally the members of the Assembly were not able to attend to all the details of the revision, for example, the new numbering of the Statutes that resulted from the addition of Statutes, correct punctuation, translation into the official languages of the Congregation (including a translation into Latin) etc. The Assembly gave a vote of confidence to the Superior General and his Council to do this work themselves or through a Commission. This is the reason why the Statutes appear several months after the conclusion of the Assembly.

THE STATUTES, AN ADDITIONAL CODE TO THE CONSTITUTIONS

The Constitutions and Statutes have a common focus: both are expressions of the specific charism of the Congregation and therefore, guardians of its unity and its particular identity in the Church. In a diverse and changing world, such as ours, the Congregation views its Constitutions and Statutes as a point of reference to preserve itself as a whole, as a single and harmonious body, though obviously respecting legitimate diversity. In addition, our Constitutions and Statutes point out the path and the essential conditions that preserve this unity, without which the Congregation would no longer be an effective force on the local and international level. We could say the same thing with regard to our manner of being and living and acting. They are like the compass or the map that guides the Congregation as it continues its journey through time.

Up to now we have spoken about the points in common between the Constitutions and the statutes. Nevertheless there are notable differences between them even though they are part of the same book.

Number 14 of the *Motu Proprio, Ecclesiae Sanctae*, states that the objective of the Statutes is to bring together all those norms that should not be placed in the Constitutions because they are more situational and practical and as such are subject to change and modification. The Statutes are more flexible and easier to modify because they ought to respond to specific times and places. Therefore they can and ought to be changed, thus putting aside those things that become antiquated and distorted.

The nature of the Statutes is that they are more juridical than the Constitutions. The Constitutions also contain juridical aspects (only those that constitute the permanent and universal patrimony of the Congregation) but are clothed in theological reflections and a genuine Vincentian spirituality. The fact is that the Statutes are in reality a predominantly normative text which does not mean that the doctrinal aspect is totally absent in them. The source of their inspiration is the Vincentian charism which is concretized in the Constitutions. Thus the Statutes have exactly the same structure as the Constitutions. This means that they cannot be read or studied or meditated on apart from the Constitutions.

The Constitutions as well as the Statutes form part of “proper law” of the Congregation. While the Constitutions need the approval of the Holy See, the Statutes (whether they are formulated for the first time or revised) require the approval of the General Assembly (cf., Constitutions 137, 3).

THE REVISED STATUTES

Despite the profound reflection that the Assembly made on various Statutes, there have not been many changes of great significance. This fact reveals the seriousness with which our Constitutions were formulated. We now point out the following changes in the Statutes:

- Changes in redaction:
 - Statutes 2, 7, 13, 41, 51.3, 51.12, 54 and 68.

Changes in content:

- Statute 17: This number is the result of the previous #17 and #18.
- Statute 29.2 clarifies the previous #28.2 with regard to the confreres who work in the General Curia.
- Statute 33: this number, with regard to the attachment of missionaries from one Province to another, is the result of combining the previous #32 and #33.

- Statute 43: a new redaction that recognizes that the Internal Seminary can also be international.
- Statute 51: paragraphs 14, 15, 16, 17, have been added to this number that deals with the functions of the Superior General.
- Statute 69: paragraph 14 has been added to this number that deals with the functions of the Visitor.

New Statutes:

- Statute 18: deals with the vow of stability.
- Statute 26: missionaries deprived of active and passive voice.
- Statute 57: number and diversity of Assistant Generals.
- Statute 78: regions in the Congregation.
- Statute 79: Conferences of Visitors.
- Statute 90: Presence of the Brothers in the General Assembly.

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