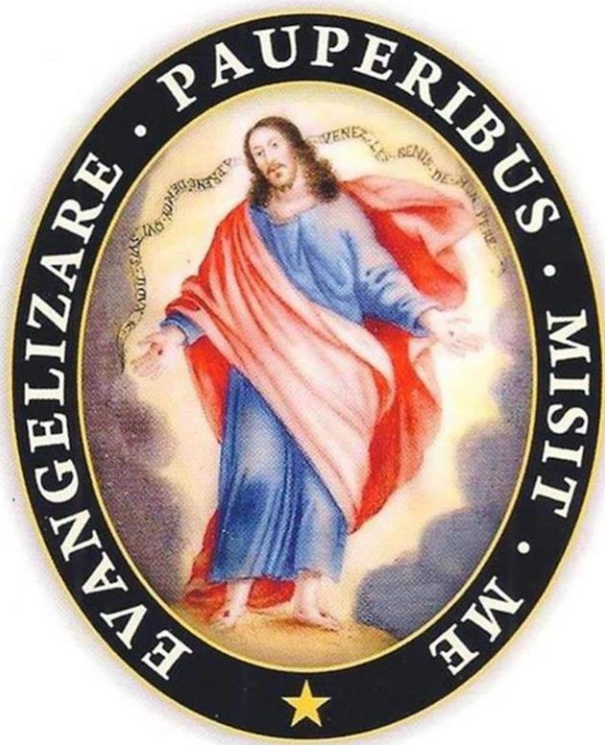


# VINCENTIANA

Anno 55 - N. 3

September 2011



## Statuta Congregationis Missionis

CONGREGATIONIS MISSIONIS  
GENERAL CURIA

# Decree of Promulgation of the Revised Statutes

With the consent of my Council  
I give to the Congregation of the Mission  
the revised Statutes,  
approved by the 2010 General Assembly.

For the renewed or new Statutes  
the official text will be Italian.

Rome, September 27, 2011  
Solemnity of St. Vincent de Paul

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "G. Gregory Gay, C.M." in a cursive script.

G. Gregory Gay, C.M.  
*Superior General*

# The Revised Statutes

Javier Álvarez, C.M.

*Vicar-General*

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.

Translation: CHARLES T. PLOCK, C.M.

# STATUTES OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION

## LIFE IN THE CONGREGATION

### CHAPTER I

#### **Apostolic Activity** (C 10-18)

1. — We are gradually to withdraw from those apostolic works which, after due reflection, no longer seem to correspond to the vocation of the Congregation at the present time.

2. — Given the actual context of globalization, multiple factors and situations put faith to the test, and are challenges for the traditional methods of evangelization. Confreres will take into serious consideration all of this, convinced that this situation demands of them a personal and communal witness of solid faith in God and Jesus Christ, and the seeking of new means to actualize well their vocation as evangelizers of the poor.

3. — In apostolic initiatives, provinces and individual houses should willingly work in fraternal cooperation with each other, with the diocesan clergy, with religious institutes, and with the laity.

4. — Members should seek ecumenical dialogue; but they should also actively participate in religious, social, and cultural affairs with Christians and non-Christians.

5. — In regard to the work of the foreign missions, the following norms should be observed:

1) in a spirit of co-responsibility, provinces, whether on their own initiative or at the invitation of the superior general, should give mutual assistance;

2) individual provinces, or several provinces together, should take on at least one mission territory to which they send members as workers in the Lord's harvest;

3) members should be offered the possibility of helping the work of the missions in a practical way, even to the extent of volunteering to undertake the work of evangelization there;

4) members should be urged to share in the universal and local Church's promotional work for the missions. The promotional work for the Congregation's own missions should be properly organized.

**6.** — Those sent to the foreign missions should be carefully prepared to undertake the special works there by knowledge of the reality of the region where they will labor, so that the pastoral work which they take on may effectively meet the needs of the local Church.

**7.** — §1. In their apostolic activities the confreres will have special care to promote and assist the Vincentian Family and the lay Vincentian associations that are part of the family.

§2. All confreres must be sufficiently prepared to give this service to the different branches of the Vincentian Family, and to be available to serve when it is asked of them.

§3. The heart of this service will consist in sharing one's own experience of faith in the light of the teaching of the Church, and of the Vincentian spirit. So that this service responds to today's needs, we must pay attention to the theological-spiritual, technical, professional, and socio-political formation necessary for these tasks.

§4. When closing houses, we will give special attention to facilitate the continuity of lay groups who share the Vincentian spirit.

**8.** — Inter-provincial meetings should be fostered for the purpose of deepening our knowledge of the vocation of missionaries and of those pastoral methods which more effectively meet the actual conditions and changes of situations and people.

**9.** — §1. It pertains to provinces, according to circumstances, to establish norms governing social action, and to determine concrete means for hastening the coming of social justice.

§2. Members should also, according to circumstances of time and place, cooperate with associations that are concerned with the defense of human rights and the promotion of justice and peace.

**10.** — §1. Parishes are included among the apostolic works of the Congregation, provided that the apostolate which the members exercise there is in accord with the purpose and nature of our Institute, and provided also that the small number of pastors requires it.

§2. These parishes of the Congregation should consist, for the most part, of the really poor, or should be attached to seminaries where confreres give pastoral formation.

**11.** — §1. Recognizing the great importance of education for both youth and adults, members should take up this work of teaching and educating where it is needed to achieve the purpose of the Congregation.

§2. This work should be carried out, however, not only in schools of various kinds, but also within the family circle, in places of work, and across the whole spectrum of society, wherever young people and adults spend their time.

§3. Schools, colleges, and universities should, according to local circumstances, admit, and promote the development of the poor. All the students, however, should be imbued with a sensitivity for the poor, according to the spirit of our Founder, while the confreres affirm the value of Christian education and provide a Christian social formation.

**12.** — Among the means to be used by the Congregation in its work of evangelization, a suitable place should be given to technical media of social communication, with the purpose of spreading the word of salvation more widely and more effectively.

## CHAPTER II

### **Community life** (C 19-27)

**13.** — Sick and aged confreres, or those in situations of particular necessity who are united in a special manner to the suffering Christ, have a part in our work of evangelization. We will take care to assist them in an appropriate way. In the case where it is no longer possible to have them in the house where they had served, the Visitor with his Council will have the responsibility to make the most appropriate decision, after having evaluated attentively different possibilities, and having heard the confrere in need of assistance.

**14.** — §1. Confreres who are obliged to live alone in works entrusted to them by the Congregation, should take care to spend some time with other confreres, so that they might experience the benefits of community. We, however, should remain close to them to ease their loneliness, and we should invite them with solicitude to share our fraternal and apostolic life from time to time.

§2. We should strive with brotherly and timely concern to help confreres who are struggling with problems.

**15.** — §1. We should faithfully fulfill our responsibilities to our parents, observing the balance necessary to fulfill our mission and to preserve community life.

§2. We should try to receive confreres, priests, and other guests in our houses with hospitality.



§3. We should be liberal to those in need who ask our help by seeking to alleviate their difficulties.

§4. We should willingly extend our friendship to all those associated with us in life and work.

**16.** — The community plan which each community draws up for itself as far as possible at the beginning of its work year, should include all of the following: apostolic activity, prayer, the use of goods, Christian witness where we work, ongoing formation, times for group reflection, necessary time for relaxation and study, and an order of day. All these should be revised periodically.

### CHAPTER III

#### **Chastity, poverty, obedience and stability (C 28-39)**

**17.** — §1. The provincial assembly should adapt its norms concerning the practice of poverty to the Constitutions, and to the spirit of the Common Rules and of the Fundamental Statute on Poverty given to the Congregation by Alexander VII (“Alias Nos supplicationibus”).

§2. Individual provinces and local communities, paying attention to the diversity of place and circumstances, should look into ways of observing evangelical poverty and review them periodically, knowing for certain that poverty is not only a rampart of the Community (cf. CR III, 1), but also a condition for renewal and a sign of progress in our vocation in both the Church and the world.

**18.** — Provinces, local communities, and each confrere shall be committed seriously to deepen the vow of stability, which includes the total gift of oneself in following Christ, the evangelizer of the poor and the faithfulness to remain in the Congregation of the Mission throughout one’s life.

### CHAPTER IV

#### **Prayer (C 40-50)**

**19.** — We should fulfill the following spiritual practices, traditional in the Congregation, according to the community plan: first of all, reading sacred scripture, especially the New Testament; devotion to the Holy Eucharist; mental prayer made in common; examination of conscience; spiritual reading; annual retreat; and the practice of spiritual direction.

## CHAPTER V

**Members****1. Admission into the Congregation** (C 53-58)

**20.** — §1. The internal seminary begins for each member when he is declared by the director or his substitute to have been received according to the provincial norms.

§2. At an appropriate time the Congregation should take measures, valid also in civil law if necessary, to safeguard the rights both of the member and of the Congregation, in case the member leaves of his own accord or is dismissed.

**21.** — Good purposes are made in the Congregation of the Mission by means of either a direct or a declarative formula:

1) **Direct formula:** Lord, my God, I, NN., declare my intention of faithfully dedicating myself in the Congregation of the Mission, for the whole time of my life, to the evangelization of the poor, after the example of Christ evangelizing. Therefore, I propose to observe, with the help of your grace, chastity, poverty, and obedience, according to the Constitutions and Statutes of our Institute.

2) **Declarative formula:** I, NN., declare my intention of faithfully dedicating myself in the Congregation of the Mission, for the whole time of my life, to the evangelization of the poor, after the example of Christ evangelizing. Therefore, I propose to observe, with the help of God's grace, chastity, poverty, and obedience, according to the Constitutions and Statutes of our Institute.

**22.** — §1. The making of good purposes should be done in the presence of the superior or a member designated by him.

§2. Further determinations regarding the making or renewing of good purposes and any form of temporary bond that may possibly be added, and also the rights and obligations which members have between admission into the Congregation and incorporation into it, should be provided by the assembly of each province.

**23.** — Further determinations regarding the time when vows are taken pertain to the provincial assembly of each province.

**24.** — In special circumstances, a provincial assembly may propose for the approval of the superior general, with the consent of his Council, its own formula for making good purposes or taking vows, preserving the essential elements of the established formulas.

## 2. *Rights and obligations of members* (C 59-64)

**25.** — The following lack both active and passive voice:

1) those who by indult live outside the Congregation according to the Congregation's own law and any clause contained in the said indult;

2) members who have been ordained bishops, or even only appointed, during the time of their office; and even after the time of their office, unless they shall have returned to community life;

3) vicars, prefects, and administrators apostolic, even if they are not bishops, during the time of their office, unless they are at the same time superiors of some house of the Congregation.

**26.** — §1. Besides those things indicated in Canons 171, §1, nn. 3-4; 1336, §1, n. 2, of the Code of Canon Law, and in art. 70 and 72 of the Constitutions of the Congregation of the Mission, they are deprived of active and passive voice who, at the time to exercise the right to active and passive voice, whether in the Congregation, in the Province, or in the house, are in some way illegitimately absent, for example:

a) those who are absent from the Congregation without the necessary permission, when the absence is longer than six months;

b) those who have obtained the necessary permission but, when the time lapsed, had not renewed it (cf. *Const.* art. 7, §2);

c) those who have not followed the terms established in their permission to live outside the Community (cf. *Const.* art. 67, §2);

d) those who have gone beyond the three years of permission, except in the cases of sickness, of study, or of apostolate exercised in the name of the Congregation (cf. *Const.* art. 67, §2).

§2. In doubtful cases the Visitor, with the consent of his Council, decides whether a confrere enjoys active and passive voice, considering attentively his situation in the Province, the law proper to the Congregation, and the Provincial norms.

§3. What is said about active and passive voice is equally valid for the consultations established by the law proper to the Congregation and by the Provincial norms.

**27.** — §1. It is the right of each incorporated member of the Congregation to have suffrages offered for him throughout the Congregation when he dies.

§2. Every month each member, according to his status, should offer Mass for the living and dead of the entire Vincentian Family as well as for parents, relative, and benefactors, adding a special intention for the preservation of the original spirit of the Congregation.

§3. In the same way he should offer another Mass for the members of the entire Congregation who have died during the preceding month.

§4. Further determination should be made by each province.

**28.** — It is the right of each incorporated member of the Congregation to be granted each month the celebration of a certain number of Masses according to his intention and without a stipend. Norms regarding the number and manner of the celebration of these Masses are to be laid down by each province.

### **3. *Attachment of members to a province or house*** (C 65-67)

**29.** — §1. During their terms of office, the superior general, the assistants, the secretary general, the treasurer general, and the procurator general at the Holy See do not have a province as far as juridical effects are concerned.

§2. Other confreres who are in service in the offices of the General Curia still belong to their Provinces of origin, and are still listed as belonging to one of its houses, according to an agreement established among the superior general, the Visitor of the Province, and the confrere.

**30.** — §1. A member of the Congregation of the Mission is attached to the province for which the superiors lawfully admit him into the Congregation. This province is known as the province of origin.

§2. A member acquires a new attachment by assignment from one province to another, lawfully done by superiors. This province is known as the province of assignment.

**31.** — In order that a member may leave one province and be attached to another, all that is required is that, the authority of the superior general always respected, the competent major superiors should agree between themselves after consulting the member involved. However, if the member is unwilling, the transfer to another province cannot be made without the approval of the superior general.

**32.** — At the end of his term, the superior general is free to choose his own province.

**33.** — §1. Membership in the Province of destination can be for a determined or an indeterminate amount of time.

§2. In both cases, the two Visitors:

- 1) will make precise in writing, in an agreement, the rights and the duties of the confrere and of the two Provinces;

- 2) will formalize the documents of transfer, which will be preserved in the archives of the two Provinces;
- 3) the Visitor of the Province to which the confrere has been transferred will send to the superior general the notification of the new inscription.

§3. In the case of a temporary inscription, when the time has expired, the confrere returns immediately to be a member of the Province from which he had been transferred, unless the Visitors, after hearing the confrere, had agreed on something else between themselves, always in writing, in conformity with the Statutes.

**34.** — A member is attached to a house or a group constituted as the equivalent of a house by appointment made by a lawful superior.

#### **4. *Departure and dismissal of members*** (C 68-76)

**35.** — The authority to readmit someone into the Congregation pertains:

- 1) to the superior general, after consulting his Council, for everyone;
- 2) to the provincial, after consulting his Council and the provincial of the province from which the member has left or been dismissed, for those who have not yet been incorporated into the Congregation.

## CHAPTER VI

### **Formation**

#### I — PROMOTING AND SUPPORTING VOCATIONS

**36.** — Concern for promoting vocations demands of us constant prayer (Mt 9:37) and the authentic, full, and joyful testimony of apostolic and community life, especially when adolescents and young people, for the development of their own faith, are working with us in the Vincentian mission.

**37.** — §1. Provinces, houses, and individual members should actively engage in encouraging candidates for the Vincentian mission.

§2. Provinces should seek out the more effective means of promoting and supporting vocations, and draw up a provincial plan suitable for this.

§3. The provincial in consultation with his Council should appoint a promoter of vocations to coordinate the efforts for the promotion of vocations in our works.

**38.** — Candidates who want to enter the Congregation should already have made an option for the Christian life, a commitment to apostolic work, and the choice of working within the Vincentian community; otherwise, they are to be gradually helped toward these choices in pastoral-action youth groups, or in apostolic schools where they are available.

**39.** — The formation of candidates, in accordance with their age, should comprise above all fraternal life, frequent use of the word of God, liturgical celebrations, apostolic activity undertaken with their moderators, personal orientation, study, and work.

## II — FORMATION OF OUR MEMBERS

### 1. *General principles* (C 77-81)

**40.** — In addition to the common formation, each of our members should receive, in so far as possible, a special and professional formation, which will prepare individuals to carry on effectively the works of the apostolate which have been assigned to them by the Congregation, and which are more in accord with their abilities.

**41.** — §1. Each Province will prepare a Formation Plan, which will be in conformity with the principles already established, with the documents and directives of the Church and of the Congregation of the Mission, and which responds to the various local needs.

§2. The provincial should establish a formation commission to draw up and revise the formation program and to deal with all those things which pertain to the entire course of training.

**42.** — Individual provinces, through the help of their formation commission, should organize and promote both common and personal continuing formation.

### 2. *The internal seminary* (C 82-86)

**43.** — The Internal Seminary, according to the needs, may be Provincial or Interprovincial. In both cases it can take place in one or more Houses of the Congregation chosen by the Visitor or the interested Visitors, with the consent of their Council.

**44.** — In special circumstances, and with regard for the degree of human and Christian maturity of the seminarists, the provincial can make suitable adaptations.

### **3. *The major seminary*** (C 87-90)

**45.** — §1. As need demands, the house of the major seminary can be either proper to an individual province or common to several provinces.

§2. Our students can be sent to another province or to a properly approved institute to complete the curriculum of their ecclesiastical studies. In this latter case, care should be taken that they lead a common life according to the custom of the Congregation, and that they receive a suitable Vincentian formation.

§3. In houses of formation a family lifestyle should flourish, and a fraternal spirit should be fostered among students of the same province. If, however, there are many students, they may be organized in a suitable way into smaller groups to make better provision for the personal growth of individuals.

**46.** — During the process of formation, the provincial can, in consultation with the moderators and his own Council, and for a just reason, permit students to interrupt their studies and live outside of a house of formation.

**47.** — Steps should be taken that students from different provinces of the Congregation can come to know each other.

### **4. *The formation of brothers*** (C 91-92)

**48.** — Special cultural and technical training should be available for brothers by means of an approved curriculum of studies leading to a suitable degree or a diploma.

### **5. *Moderators and teachers*** (C 93-95)

**49.** — The major seminary, as the center of formation, should provide help for the members engaged in different works. The moderators and teachers themselves should be actively engaged in the works of the apostolate.

**50.** — In houses of formation, care should be given to provide suitable confreres who will function as confessors and spiritual directors, as the need demands.

# ORGANIZATION

## SECTION I GOVERNMENT

### CHAPTER I Central Administration

#### 1. *The superior general* (C 101-107)

**51.** — Besides the faculties granted him by universal law or by special concession, it is the function of the superior general:

1) to exercise for vice-provinces the same powers which he has for provinces;

2) without prejudice to his right to make a canonical visitation whenever one is needed, to visit the provinces and vice-provinces at least once during his time of office, either personally or by a delegate, in order to animate them and be informed about how their members are doing;

3) *a)* with the consent of his Council and after having consulted those interested, to accept the missions offered to the Congregation by the Holy See or by the Ordinaries of the place, keeping them under his own jurisdiction, or confiding them to a Province or a group of Provinces; to renounce those which had been confided to it;

*b)* with the consent of his Council and after having heard those who are interested, to constitute missionary teams under his own jurisdiction, or to confide them to a Province or to a group of Provinces;

4) to grant to provincials the faculty of accepting or giving up missions given them by local ordinaries outside the territory of any province of the Congregation;

5) at an opportune time before holding a General Assembly, having heard the provincials and the vice-provincials, and with the consent of his Council, to appoint a preparatory commission;



6) to promulgate as soon as possible all the enactments of the General Assembly;

7) with the consent of his Council, to enter into contracts of major importance, observing the norms of law;

8) for a serious reason, having heard the provincial, the consultants and, if time allows, as many members of the province as possible, and with the consent of his Council, to take over for a brief time the government of a particular province; this is to be exercised through an administrator with faculties delegated by the superior general himself;

9) having heard the interested provincials and members, and with the consent of his Council, to transfer members from one province to another;

10) to grant members who have been legitimately separated from the Congregation those suffrages that are customary for our deceased members;

11) in particular cases, for a just reason, and with the consent of his council, to dispense from the Statutes and Decrees of the General Assembly;

12) to nominate, with the consent of his Council and after a consultation with the Visitors involved, the Directors of the Daughters of Charity<sup>1</sup>;

13) to grant affiliation to benefactors and friends of the Congregation, informing them of the spiritual benefits they receive;

14) with the consent of his Council, to animate the Provinces to participate in international missionary activities (works, commitments);

15) with the consent of his Council, and having heard the interested parties, to constitute Regions outside the territory of the Provinces, and to approve the Regions established by the Visitors;

16) with the consent of his Council, to approve the statutes of each Conference of Visitors;

17) to organize the work of the General Council and the Works of the assistants general.

**52.** — The superior general has his domicile in Rome. He should not change it without the consent of the General Assembly and without having consulted the Holy See.

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<sup>1</sup> The superior general exercises over the Daughters of Charity the authority conceded by the Holy See, as is laid out in their Constitutions.

**53.** — General ordinances enacted by the superior general remain in force until the following General Assembly, unless the superior general himself or his successor provides otherwise.

**54.** — When their term expires, Visitors, Superiors, and other officers of the Congregation, as well as the Directors of the Daughters of Charity, continue in office until their successors begin to function; this to maintain good order.

## **2. *The vicar general*** (C 108-114)

**55.** — §1. The vicar general ceases to hold office:

- 1) by his successor's acceptance of office;
- 2) by resignation accepted by the General Assembly or by the Holy See;
- 3) by deposition decreed by the Holy See.

§2. If the vicar general becomes manifestly unworthy or incapable of discharging his office, the superior general should, with his Council but excluding the vicar general, judge the matter, inform the Holy See, and follow its directives.

**56.** — A vicar general who has taken over the government of the Congregation as superior general can immediately, at the end of the six year term, be elected superior general, and he can be reelected.

## **3. *Assistants general*** (C 115-118)

**57.** — Remaining in vigor what is established in the Constitutions art. 116 §2:

§1. The assistants general are elected from different Provinces, keeping in mind, where possible, the different cultures present in the Congregation of the Mission.

§2. The Assembly determines the number of Assistants.

**58.** — The assistants must reside in the same house as the superior general. In order to constitute a quorum in the General Council, besides the superior general or the vicar general, there must be present at least two of the assistants.

**59.** — When, however, the number of assistants absent for a just reason is such that there are not enough to constitute a quorum for council, the superior general can call into Council, with the right of voting, one of the officers of the general curia in this order: the secretary general, the treasurer general, or the procurator general at the Holy See.

60. — The assistants general cease to hold office:

- 1) by their successors' acceptance of office;
- 2) by resignation accepted either by the superior general with the consent of the other assistants or by the General Assembly;
- 3) by deposition decreed by the superior general with the consent of the other assistants, and with approval of the Holy See.

#### 4. *Officers of the general curia* (C 119)

61. — §1. The secretary general:

- 1) assists the superior general in those things which are to be written for the whole Congregation;
- 2) attends the General Council meetings by reason of his office in order to take minutes, but without a vote;
- 3) can propose for appointment by the superior general the names of confreres, according to the norm of our own law, as co-workers under his own direction to manage the archives, edit publications, and write letters.

§2. If the secretary general is impeded from fulfilling his duties, the superior general can temporarily appoint in his place one of the assistants or officers or co-workers.

62. — §1. The treasurer general, by reason of his office and under the guidance of the superior general with his Council, administers the goods of the Congregation and other goods entrusted to the general curia, according to the norm of universal law and our own law.

§2. With the approval of the superior general, he visits provincial treasurers and, in particular circumstances, even local treasurers or administrators of works of major importance.

63. — §1. It is the function of the procurator general at the Holy See:

- 1) to take care of requests for ordinary faculties from the Holy See;
- 2) with the consent of the superior general, and having heard the interested provincials, to take up with the Holy See the business of the Congregation, provinces, houses, and members.

§2. The procurator general at the Holy See, by written mandate of the superior general, can exercise in the Roman curia the office of postulator general of the Congregation, according to the norm of law.

## CHAPTER II

**Provincial, regional and local administration****1. *Provinces and vice-provinces* (C 120-122)**

**64.** — Although each province is circumscribed by territorial boundaries, there is nothing to prevent a house of one province being located within the territory of another province, according to the norm of art. 107, 7) of the Constitutions.

**65.** — §1. A vice-province is a union of a number of houses circumscribed by territorial boundaries which, in accord with a contract with a province, depends on that province and forms one whole with it, and is presided over by a vice-provincial with proper ordinary power, according to the norm of universal law and our own law.

§2. It is also possible to set up a vice-province which does not depend on any fully constituted province, but depends directly on the power of the superior general, and which is presided over by a vice-provincial with proper ordinary power.

§3. A vice-province by its nature is transitory and is changed into a province when the required conditions are met.

§4. What is stated in the Constitutions and Statutes of the Congregation in regard to provinces applies, relevant conditions having been met, to vice-provinces, unless it is expressly stated otherwise in the Constitutions and Statutes themselves, or in the norms and contracts of the individual vice-province.

**66.** — §1. When a province is divided and a new province is set up, all the goods which are destined for the benefit of the province as well as the debts contracted by the province must be divided proportionately and equitably by the superior general with his Council, safeguarding the wishes of pious founders and donors, lawfully acquired rights, and the particular norms by which the province is regulated.

§2. The division of the archives of the mother province is reserved to the decision of the superior general after he has heard the interested provincials.

**2. *The provincial and the vice-provincial* (123-125)**

**67.** — What is stated in the Constitutions and Statutes in regard to the provincial applies also to the vice-provincial, unless it is expressly stated otherwise in the Constitutions and Statutes themselves or in the norms and contracts of each vice-province.

**68.** — §1. The provincial is appointed for a six year term by the superior general with the consent of his Council after consultation with at least those members of the province having active voice. In the same way and under the same conditions the provincial can be confirmed once by the superior general for a three year term.

§2. The method and circumstances of the consultation can be determined by the provincial assembly with the approval of the superior general with the consent of his Council.

§3 The Provincial Assembly can propose for the approval of the superior general, with the consent of his Council, a particular way to elect the Visitor; however such an election must have, at least, the following conditions:

- 1) that the term of office be for at least three years, but not longer than six years;
- 2) that the Visitor who is elected not be in office for more than nine consecutive years;
- 3) that in the first two ballots an absolute majority of the votes be required, not counting the null votes; that in the third ballot only the two who had the greater number of votes in the second ballot would have passive voice, even if their numbers are equal;
- 4) in case of a tie vote, the confrere older in vocation or in age is considered elected.

§4. For the one elected or re-elected to assume the office of provincial, the confirmation of the superior general with the consent of his Council is required.

**69.** — It is the function of the provincial:

- 1) in accord with the provincial norms and with the consent of his Council, to establish the provincial plan;
- 2) with the consent of his Council, and having consulted the superior general, observing the norms of law, to establish or suppress a major work of some house;
- 3) having consulted as far as possible the interested parties, and having heard his Council, to assign members to individual houses according to the needs of these houses. In more urgent cases, however, the provincial is obliged at least to inform his Council;
- 4) in accord with provincial norms, and with the consent of his Council, to appoint the provincial treasurer, the director of the internal seminary, and the director of the major seminary;
- 5) to approve the community plan of each house prepared by the local superior and his community;
- 6) to send the superior general reports about the affairs of the province and about official visitations of houses which he has made;

7) with the consent of his Council, to enter into necessary and useful contracts, observing the norms of universal law and our own law;

8) having heard his Council, to appoint in plenty of time the preparatory commission for the provincial assembly;

9) to be able to break a tie vote, in accord with the norm of law;

10) to notify the superior general as soon as possible about vows taken by members and their incorporation into the Congregation, as well as about orders received by them;

11) to take care of the provincial archives either personally or through competent people;

12) to approve members and grant them jurisdiction both for the hearing of the confessions of members and, safeguarding the rights of ordinaries, for preaching the sacred word of God, and also to delegate these same faculties to others;

13) in particular cases and for a just reason, and with the consent of his Council, to dispense from provincial norms;

14) to regularize the situation of confreres who find themselves in irregular situations.

**70.** — A vice-provincial has the same rights, faculties, and obligations as a provincial, unless it is expressly stated otherwise in the Constitutions and Statutes themselves.

**71.** — The ordinances of a provincial remain in force until the next provincial assembly, unless another provision has been made by the provincial or his successor.

**72.** — §1. When the office of provincial becomes vacant, the government of the province passes temporarily to the assistant provincial. But if there is no assistant, it passes to the provincial consultor who is senior by reason of appointment, vocation, or age, unless the superior general has provided otherwise.

§2. The provincial assembly can propose for the approval of the superior general, with the consent of his Council, its own way of providing temporarily for the government of the province in case of the death of the provincial or his cessation from office.

### **3. *The assistant provincial*** (C 126)

**73.** — §1. The assistant provincial is one of the provincial consultors and is elected by the consultors with the provincial, unless the provincial assembly has provided otherwise.

§2. In the absence of the provincial, the assistant has the authority of the provincial, except in those matters which the provincial has reserved to himself.

§3. When the provincial is impeded, the assistant replaces him with full authority until the impediment ceases. The Provincial Council, without the provincial, passes judgment on the impediment and as soon as possible informs the superior general, whose directives are to be followed.

#### **4. *The Council of the provincial*** (C 127)

**74.** — §1. The consultors are appointed for a three year term by the provincial after a consultation with at least those members of the province who have active voice. In the same way, and under the same conditions, the consultors can be confirmed for a second and a third term of three years, but not for a fourth.

§2. The provincial assembly can propose for approval by the superior general, with the consent of his Council, its own method of appointing or electing the consultors, as well as their number, the time when they take office, and their term of office. The provincial must inform the superior general about the designation of the consultors.

§3. For a serious reason, a provincial consultor can be removed from office by the superior general at the request of the provincial, with the consent of the other consultors.

§4. Where there is no assistant provincial, what is stated about the assistant provincial in art. 73, §2 and §3, applies also to the provincial consultor who is senior by appointment, vocation, or age, unless the provincial norms provide otherwise.

#### **5. *The provincial treasurer*** (C 128)

**75.** — The treasurer is named by the provincial with the consent of his Council, or in some other way enacted in the provincial norms.

**76.** — If the provincial treasurer is not a consultor, he participates in the Provincial Council when called in by the provincial, but without vote.

**77.** — It is the function of the provincial treasurer:

1) to see that the goods of the province are held by proper title in the Church and the state;

2) by his advice and his labors, to help the local treasurers in the discharge of their duties, and to watch over their administration;

3) to see to it that each house contributes the required amount for the expenses of the province, and to send to the treasurer general at the proper time the tax for the general fund;

4) to see to it that the employees of the Congregation are paid a just wage, and that the civil laws concerning taxes and social security are exactly obeyed;

5) to keep accurate and up-to-date records of expenditures and receipts, and to preserve other documents;

6) to make a report of his administration to the provincial and his Council, according to the norm of art. 103.

## **6. *Regions***

**78.** — §1. A region is a territory with at least one house, which belongs to a province or depends directly on the superior general.

§2. The region is erected by the superior general with his Council or by the Visitor with his Council. The region is confided to a regional superior.

§3. The regional superior enjoys the faculties delegated to him by the superior general or by the Visitor so that he can facilitate the realization of the mission that is proper to the Congregation.

§4. If the regional superior is named by the Visitor with his Council, his nomination must be approved by the superior general with his Council (cf. Const. art. 125, 5°).

§5. The region is constituted through an written agreement which makes precise the faculties delegated and the reciprocal commitments between the superior general or the Visitor and the regional superior.

§6. One can set up the region either in order to have its own autonomy to transform itself into a Vice Province or Province, or to become a region since it cannot maintain its autonomy as a Province or a Vice Province.

§7. To erect a region into a Vice Province or a Vice Province into a Province, it is necessary that the Region or the Vice Province have the concrete possibility of vocations and an economic base sufficient for maintaining its mission and the missionaries.

## **7. *The Conferences of Visitors***

**79.** — §1. To encourage collaboration among the Provinces in the fields of the mission, of communication, and of formation, the Visitors should form Conferences of Visitors.



§2. Let these conferences always safeguard the unity of the congregation, the autonomy of the provinces, and the principles of subsidiarity and co-responsibility.

§3. It is up to each conference to prepare its own statute and to submit it to the superior general with his Council.

### **8. Offices of local administration** (C 129-134)

**80.** — The local superior has the right and duty;

1) to keep the provincial informed about the state of the house entrusted to him;

2) to assign to members of the house those tasks and offices the assignment of which is not reserved to major superiors;

3) to convoke and direct the domestic assembly;

4) together with his community, to work out the common plan for his house and present it for the approval of the provincial;

5) to keep the archives and the seal of the house;

6) to inform members about the decrees and news of the Congregation;

7) to see to it that Mass obligations are fulfilled.

**81.** — §1. The local superior administers the house with the collaboration of all the members, especially the assistant and the treasurer, who are named in accord with provincial norms.

§2. In the absence of the superior, the assistant takes over with full authority according to norms enacted in our own law.

§3. Meetings of the members of the community, after the fashion of a Council, should be held frequently.

## CHAPTER III

### **Assemblies**

#### **1. Assemblies in general** (C 135-136)

**82.** — Superiors and members should prepare for the assemblies, earnestly participate in them, and faithfully observe the laws and norms established by them.

**83.** — §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:

- 1) to fulfill the task of first teller;
- 2) to draw up the minutes and documents of the sessions.

**84.** — Before and during the assembly there is to be fostered free communication of information regarding the matters to be decided and the qualities of those to be elected.

**85.** — 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.

## **2. *The General Assembly*** (C 137-142)

**86.** — The General Assembly has the right of making declarations which have doctrinal force and the character of an exhortation.

**87.** — §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.

**88.** — §1. The superior general with the consent of his Council should determine the time and place for holding the General Assembly.

§2. 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.

**89.** — §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.

**90.** — §1. 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.

§2. The superior general with his Council will also decide how to resolve those cases in which it is impossible to have a legitimate election of delegates to the General Assembly and the importance of their presence in it.

**91.** — §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 judgment, 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 collect sources and prepare studies, 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.

**92.** — §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 new ballots are to be written.

**93.** — The directory approved by one assembly remains in force until it is changed or abrogated by another assembly.

### **3. *The provincial assembly*** (c 143-146)

**94.** — Norms made by the provincial assembly are general rules applicable to all cases described in them. These norms, nevertheless, do not affect the authority of the provincial as this is described in universal law or our own law, nor his executive power necessary for carrying out his office. They remain in force until they are revoked by a subsequent provincial assembly or by the superior general.

**95.** — It pertains to the provincial, having heard his Council, to set the date, and to designate the house in which the provincial assembly is to be held.

**96.** — The superior general should communicate to the provincial a decision about the provincial norms within two months after receiving them.

**97.** — Taking part in the provincial assembly there should be, unless something else is established by the provincial norms, as many delegates elected from the one provincial body consisting of all the members with passive voice, as there are delegates who must be present by reason of office, plus one delegate for every twenty-five members with active voice or part thereof.

**98.** — From this one provincial body, those are to be considered as elected who have received the greater number of votes, and in case of a tie, those who are senior by reason of vocation or age; the same number are substitutes according to the order of a majority of votes.

**99.** — If the superior of a house is impeded from going to the provincial assembly, the assistant of the house should go in his place. If, however, the assistant has been elected as a delegate, then one of the alternates should replace him.

**100.** — The provincial assembly can propose for the approval of the superior general, with the consent of his Council, its own method of representation in the provincial assembly, in such a way, however, that the number of elected delegates is greater than the number of those who are to participate in the assembly by reason of office.

**101.** — It is the responsibility of each province to establish in assembly its own norms of procedure, that is to say, a directory, within the limits of universal law and our own law.

**102.** — The provincial assembly is to proceed to the election of delegates and alternates for the General Assembly in separate ballotings, in which there is needed an absolute majority of votes. If in the first and second balloting no one is elected, then in the third balloting he is elected who obtains the greater number of votes, and in case of a tie, the senior by vocation or age.

## SECTION II

### TEMPORAL GOODS (C 148-155)

**103.** — The Congregation should conscientiously reflect on, wholeheartedly embrace, and faithfully and firmly practice the following principles:

1) a unanimous effort to restore that simplicity of life-style which, by example more than by words, and in the name of the poverty of Christ, contends against the avarice which arises from an affluent society, and against a greed for wealth which is ruining almost the whole world (cf. CR III, 1);

2) an effective care to use its goods to promote social justice;

3) the alienation of superfluous goods in favor of the poor.

**104.** — Within the bounds of equity and with the consent of his Council, the superior general has the right to impose a tax on provinces; similarly, with the consent of his Council, the provincial has this right with respect to houses of his province.

**105.** — Goods which are entrusted to the Congregation only for their management are to be administered under the direction and vigilance of superiors with their Councils.

**106.** — §1. Treasurers must give an account to superiors and keep the members informed of their administration.

§2. With respect to the treasurer general, an accounting of receipts and expenditures and a report on the status of the patrimony are to be examined once a year by the superior general with his Council; for the provincial treasurer, twice a year by the provincial with his Council; for the treasurer of a house, each month by the local superior. A signature of approval, moreover, is to be affixed to the accounting or report provided it is found to be accurate.

§3. Members entrusted with the administration of special works of either a province or a house should submit an accounting of receipts and expenditures to their respective superiors at the time and in the manner determined by provincial norms.

§4. If, however, there are goods which do not belong to the Congregation but are entrusted to it for management, accounting for them should be submitted both to their owners and to the superiors of the Congregation.

§5. The treasurer general should give a general accounting of his administration to provincials at the end of each year; to the General Assembly every six years.

§6. Provincials should submit a financial accounting for their provinces to the superior general at the end of the year.

§7. Provincial treasurers should give to the members of their province a general report of their administration and of the patrimony of their provinces, according to provincial norms.

**107.** — All administrators, both superiors and treasurers, can act in the name of the Congregation only within the limits of their office and the norm of law. For this reason the Congregation, a province, and a house are responsible only for the administrative acts performed according to the aforesaid norms. As for other acts, those who perform illicit or invalid ones will be held responsible for them. If, however, any juridic person of the Congregation shall have contracted debts or obligations on its own, even with permission, it will be held responsible from its own resources.

**108.** — §1. The General Assembly can determine the sum beyond which the superior general cannot make extraordinary expenditures.

§2. Provincials can make expenditures according to norms enacted by the provincial assembly.

§3. Local superiors can make expenditures within the limits determined by provincial norms.

**109.** — Superiors must not allow debts to be contracted unless it is certain that the interest on a debt can be paid off from ordinary revenues, and that the amount received as a loan can be repaid within the agreed time by legitimate payment of the annual installment.

**110.** — §1. Laws regarding work, security, and justice, in favor of persons working in houses and works of the Congregation, should be exactly observed.

§2. Superiors should act with the greatest prudence in accepting pious foundations which create long-term obligations. Obligations in perpetuity must not be accepted.

§3. Gifts should not be made from the goods of the Community except according to the norm of the Constitutions and Statutes.

§4. In accepting goods which come to the Congregation, a province, or a house by way of bequest or gift, the wishes of the donor in regard to the ownership and use of the goods should be respected.

§5. Social security should be acquired for the members by the Congregation, the bishop, or those for whom they work. Moreover, houses, provinces, and the general curia itself should have adequate insurance against dangers of various kinds.

## STATUTES OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION

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## APPENDIX

### INTERPRETATION OF THE FUNDAMENTAL STATUTE ON POVERTY

#### A) CONTENTS OF THE STATUTE

In the fundamental statute these normative elements can be noted:

**1.** — It is presumed that members retain dominion of immovable goods or simple benefices which the possessor will possess in the future.

**2.** — Members are obliged to apply the yield of their goods to pious works. This is the principal and positive norm arising from the Vincentian orientation by which we dispose of ourselves and our goods in the ministry of evangelizing the poor; this is the excellent, shining, and evangelical value of the Statute. The duties of piety and justice demand that, in the first place, needy parents and relatives be provided for.

**3.** — Members cannot keep the yield of their goods. This is a negative norm forbidding us to “capitalize” by accumulating yield and becoming rich; it has its source in evangelical poverty which is a poverty not only in spirit but also in reality.

**4.** — Members can, with the permission of the Superior, use the yield of their goods for their own purposes. This is a permissive norm. It is clear that here there is question of concession only, and in no way of a positive recommended orientation (cf. SV XII, 382).

**5.** — Members do not have free use of their goods, in so far as they must depend on superiors. This norm flows from the communal dimension of our poverty.

#### B) EXPLANATION OF THE STATUTE

**1.** — The Statute considers immovable goods and simple benefices as sources of yield. Therefore, today, all other goods which are truly productive, as well as rights entitling one to receive yield, can be considered the equivalent of immovable goods, according to common estimation of various places.

**2.** — The Statute says nothing about movable goods which are not the yield of productive goods; but, according to its spirit, such movable goods are not exempt from the special and positive norm

which obliges us to dispose of them in the ministry of evangelizing the poor directly or through the community, and are not exempt from other norms either.

**3.** — The Fundamental Statute is not the only source of the norms by which our vow of poverty is regulated.

**4.** — In order to understand better the spirit of the Fundamental Statute, it will be useful to consider other principles of Vincentian poverty, for example:

- a)* our commitment to the evangelization of the poor;
- b)* poverty of spirit (cf. SV XII, 377-386; CR III, 47);
- c)* community of goods (CR III, 3, 4, 5, 6);
- d)* conformity of our life to the life of the poor (cf. CR III, 7);
- e)* the universal law of work (cf. SV XI, 201 ff.);
- f)* that the fruits of our work belong to the Community;
- g)* that community goods are to be considered the patrimony of the poor; that we may not, either as individuals or in common, keep goods non-productive or not invested in a way that is most profitable for the promotion of the poor;
- h)* that the Community has ownership of goods so that we can perform our ministries gratis, where necessary, and give alms to the poor (cf. CR III, 2; SV XII, 377-386).