

## Chapter 5

# Formation During an Internship Year

The internship year is not necessarily a distinct stage of formation, but may be included within or attached to one of the stages as this *Ratio* has already defined them. The *Constitutions and Statutes of the Congregation* state that men in formation “should be trained, at suitable times, each according to his level of formation and ability, in pastoral practice, especially in association with their moderators, including going to the poor and experiencing their condition.”<sup>35</sup> Although some provinces only include an internship year in formation for confreres seeking priesthood, this *Ratio* considers this year also appropriate for the formation of brothers, and confreres who have not fully discerned whether they are called to be a brother or a priest.

### SECTION 1

#### THE SPECIFIC GOAL AND THE CONTEXT OF VINCENTIAN FORMATION DURING AN INTERNSHIP YEAR

##### A. The Specific Goal of Vincentian Formation During an Internship Year

The goal of Vincentian formation during an internship year is to provide the intern with a foundational experience to discern more deeply his calling to Vincentian life and ministry. It offers him a fuller experience of the poor and their needs, so that he might grow in the ability to bring the good news of the Lord to them and better discern the specific ways he may be called to serve them.

##### B. The Variable Contexts of Time and Location of the Internship Year

The timing of the internship year may differ from one province to another. Some provinces situate the year after the internal seminary and the study of philosophy. Others place it during the major seminary after the first, second or the third year of the study of theology. And some provinces, attending to the individual circumstances of the stu-

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<sup>35</sup> 78, 4.

dent, such as age or former pastoral experience, wait until the diacöate to facilitate a fuller, Vincentian pastoral experience. During the internship year, the young confrere lives in a local and vibrant Vincentian community. He engages in fulltime missionary work, of which at least some confreres in that community are engaged. In all cases, the context of the internship year should challenge the confrere and help him develop further the pastoral skills required of a Vincentian missionary.

## SECTION 2

### THE OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES OF VINCENTIAN FORMATION DURING AN INTERNSHIP YEAR

#### A. The Vincentian Axis

The objective of the Vincentian Axis of formation during an internship year is to provide the intern with a direct experience of Vincentian life and apostolic ministry as it is lived in a community of fulltime service. The following strategies will assist him in this endeavor:

1. He will live concretely and faithfully the pledges he has made in pronouncing “good purposes” or vows.
2. He will continue to grow in his knowledge of the Congregation, learning from the local community of confreres who are pursuing the evangelization of the poor.
3. He will continue reading Vincentian literature, such as biographies and writings of Saint Vincent and other Vincentian saints, as well as the history of the Congregation, to let his experience inform his appreciation of the lives of confreres who have preceded him.
4. With the help of his formators, he will learn to concretely apply the *Constitutions and the Statutes of the Congregation* within his own province, culture, and ministerial situations.
5. To grow in zeal for the evangelization of the poor and allow himself to be evangelized by them, he will keep a record of his initiatives in assisting the poor, and share it with his formators, seeking their counsel.

#### B. Human Formation

The objective of human formation during an internship year is twofold: to help the intern live the five Vincentian virtues in active ministry; and help him progress in maturity and capacity to relate

constructively with others as he engages in ministry. To accomplish this objective:

1. He will continue to seek a fuller understanding of himself, his gifts and limitations, and struggles he meets in his apostolic ministry and life in community. He will take adequate time for reflection, also sharing his thoughts, successes and failures with his formators.
2. He will dialogue and collaborate with the superior, other confreres, and lay people, allowing the experience of living and working with them to challenge him to develop his relational skills.
3. He will respond positively to the inevitable conflicts which arise in community, renouncing every form of violence (including verbal), and growing in capacity to listen to the convictions of others with openness and to express his own convictions humbly.
4. He will responsibly take initiatives in building community, and in serving the poor to whom he has been sent, with care and respect for the needs and the desires of others.
5. He will use free time wisely and preserve his physical health through daily physical exercise.

### C. Spiritual Formation

The objective of spiritual formation during an internship year is to provide the intern with the opportunity to deepen his use of the spiritual resources he obtained in the internal seminary, which are necessary for living the Vincentian vocation. To accomplish this objective:

1. He will take part in a spiritual retreat at the beginning of the internship year and participate in a monthly retreat and other activities organized by the formation director.
2. He will be faithful to the practice of the *lectio divina*, sharing his appreciation of the Word with the Vincentian community and with God's people whenever this is appropriate.
3. He will be faithful to the daily celebration of the Eucharist with the local community or those with whom he is united in apostolic ministry.
4. He will join with the confreres in personal prayer and the celebration of Lauds and Vespers daily, according to the schedule of the local community.
5. He will engage regularly in spiritual direction and the sacrament of Reconciliation.

6. He will give witness to a fruitful life of celibate chastity by appropriately sharing his hopes, struggles, joys, and disappointments with others, and by manifesting Christ's love and service among the poor.

#### **D. Intellectual Formation**

The objective of intellectual formation during an internship year is to help the intern develop a broadened, concrete, ecclesial appreciation of pastoral ministry, especially as it is reflected in contemporary theology and directed to evangelization of the poor. To accomplish this objective:

1. He will continue the habit of regular reading and personal study as the necessary complement to his ministerial activity. In this regard, he is expected to:
  - take advantage of the formation courses which may be offered during this time;
  - become familiar with the documents of the Church that treat pastoral work and new evangelization;
  - read the letters and the documents sent to the confreres by the Superior General, the General Assemblies, and the local Visitor;
  - grow in appreciation of the theory and practice of systemic change, striving to uncover ways to apply them to the situation in which he and his Vincentian confreres are ministering.
2. He may continue to become familiar with a second language.
3. He will write a paper on Vincentian spirituality as the source of effective ministry to the poor. He will share the paper with the Director of Formation and his fellow interns at an appropriate time.

#### **E. Apostolic Formation**

The objectives of the apostolic formation during an internship year are to:

- provide the intern with the opportunity to engage in direct, full-time ministry to the poor, such as visiting the sick, caring for immigrants, refugees, and the homeless, and various social works;
- help the intern better understand the struggles, needs, frustrations and joys of the poor, as well as contemporary ways they can best be served;
- and provide the intern with a fuller sense of the demands which fulltime ministry to the poor places upon him and all who seek to be servants of the poor.

To accomplish these objectives, the intern will use the following strategies:

1. He will dedicate a full day's work to an apostolic mission, and with the help of his apostolic supervisor:
  - appreciate different forms of ministry which the community offers;
  - discover the ways in which he can better minister to the needs of the poor, carefully discerning the implications of the social and ecclesial contexts of their lives;
  - learn methods of catechizing and fostering fuller liturgical participation on the part of God's people;
  - appreciate people's love for a variety of popular devotions, and learn how to guide persons so that these devotions may be centered in genuine Catholic spirituality and be fruitful in the people's lives.
2. To process the ways in which his apostolic experiences, spirituality, and his strengths and limits reciprocally influence one another, he will discuss with his pastoral supervisor, at least twice a month, his successes, struggles, joys, and disappointments in ministry.
3. For the same reasons, he will engage in regular pastoral theological reflection, guided by the person in charge of the apostolic formation of the interns, with members of the local community and, if possible, some of the poor on whose behalf the intern ministers.
4. In his ministry, the intern will learn to work as a member of a team, harmonizing his efforts with those of the superior, formators, other confreres who serve in the same apostolate, the laity, and with other groups of the Vincentian family. He should learn how to take initiatives in the pastoral work, as well as when to consult with the superior regarding those initiatives.
5. He will exercise sufficient leadership and be creative in carrying out his pastoral ministry, learning how to use social media, and growing in ability to speak in public and communicate a message.
6. In all of his efforts, the intern should seek to defend the rights and dignity of the poor and to develop practices, which can bring about systemic change.

## **F. Community Formation**

The objective of communal formation during an internship year is to provide the intern with an opportunity to experience a community of confreres with a larger variety of interests, temperaments, and experiences, so he can grow in the ability to deal wisely and fruitfully with

the challenges of community living, and find in it support for a Vincentian apostolate. To accomplish this objective:

1. He will observe the community schedule of prayer, meals, recreation and meetings, and actively participate in the planning and the evaluation of the local community.
2. He will grow in the ability to converse and communicate with the confreres of the local community, as well as with those in the wider community of the province.
3. He will maintain formal communication with the superior, hopefully at least once a month, as well as with the Director of Formation, the Visitor, and his fellow interns.
4. He will grow in knowledge of the provincial community.
5. He will learn about the art of administration.

### **SECTION 3**

#### **PROFILE OF THE INTERN COMPLETING THE INTERNSHIP YEAR**

By the end of the internship year, the intern should meet the following expectations:

1. He will be more convinced of his Vincentian vocation, committed to following Jesus and loving the poor, expressing this commitment in words and having shown it in actions.
2. He will be committed to the goals of his province and the Congregation.
3. He will have shown readiness to take responsibility for his ongoing human and spiritual formation.
4. He will have shown ability to participate in the life of a Vincentian community, which is active in its ministry of following Christ and serving the poor.
5. He will have shown the ability to speak of his own strengths and weaknesses with his formators, especially as they manifest themselves in community life and ministry.
6. He will have grown in his appreciation of the nature, values, and strategies of systemic change.

He will have manifested, though his life in community and his ministry, a Vincentian spirit, living the five virtues and the values expressed.