

# VINCENTIANA

58<sup>th</sup> Year - N. 4

October-December 2014



## Ratio Formationis

CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION  
GENERAL CURIA



# Promulgation of the *Ratio Formationis*

Rome, 27 November 2014

My brothers:

I present to you our *Ratio Formationis*, completed by a Commission of confreres, and with editorial assistance for clarity and economy of style. As with all documents issued by the General Curia for the good of the Congregation, the *Ratio Formationis* has been created in accordance with our Constitutions and Statutes, specifically Statute 41.1 which states:

*“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” S. 41.1.*

The purpose of the *Ratio Formationis* is to put this statute into practice and to assist the provinces in so doing. I am grateful for the confreres who served on the Commission for the *Ratio Formationis* and who assisted in finalizing and in translating this text.

I offer two recommendations to better understand and implement this document. First, I remind all who apply this document to their formation programs that the *Ratio* expresses what we truly are: an international Congregation. Secondly, I believe that in both initial and ongoing formation, the *Ratio* should promote collaboration and deeper bonds with the Vincentian Family.

The *Ratio Formationis* is comprised of an introduction and eight chapters that cover various aspects of formation for life in the Congregation. They include vocational discernment, stages of initial formation of priest and brother candidates, and the ongoing formation of all confreres. However, this text is meant to be applied as a complete, integral entity. Each chapter represents a part of the whole process of the overall goals, objectives, and strategies of Vincentian formation.

Therefore, with the consent of the General Council, as Superior General, I hereby promulgate on an *ad experimentum* basis the *Ratio Formationis* of the Congregation of the Mission for implementation in all provinces, vice-provinces, regions, and missions throughout the world.

G. Gregory Gay, C.M.  
Superior General

*Given in Rome, 27 November 2014  
Feast of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal*





# RATIO FORMATIONIS

CONGREGATIONIS MISSIONIS

2016

*So, our vocation is to go, not just to one parish,  
not just to one diocese, but all over the world;  
and to do what? To set people's hearts on fire, to  
do what the Son of God did. He came to set the  
world on fire in order to inflame it with His love.*

Vincent de Paul – May 30, 1659

(SV XII, 215)



# Table of Contents

<b>Preamble</b> . . . . .	11
<b>CHAPTER 1</b>	
<b>General Reflections and Directives for Formation</b> . . . . .	13
<b>SECTION 1: Goals, Objectives, and Strategies of Formation</b> . . . . .	13
A. The Goals of Vincentian Life and Formation in their Ecclesial Context . . . . .	13
B. Living According to the Five Virtues and the Goals of Vincentian Life . . . . .	15
C. Living According to the Four Vows and the Goals of Vincentian Life . . . . .	16
D. The Axis and Five Dimensions of Formation: Objectives of Formation . . . . .	16
E. Strategies in Formation . . . . .	16
<b>SECTION 2: Agents of Formation</b> . . . . .	17
A. The Trinitarian God: The Primary, Transcendent, Agent of Formation . . . . .	17
B. The Person in Formation . . . . .	17
C. The Visitor and the Provincial Community in Formation . . . . .	17
D. The Local Community in Formation . . . . .	18
E. The Persons Entrusted with the Ministry of Formation . . . . .	18
F. The Poor as Agents of Formation . . . . .	22
<b>SECTION 3: Stages of Formation</b> . . . . .	23
A. A Model for Understanding the Unity of the Stages of Formation . . . . .	23
B. The Stages of Formation and the Provincial Formation Committee . . . . .	24
C. The Stages of Formation and the Advancement of Candidates . . . . .	24
<b>CHAPTER 2</b>	
<b>Vocation Ministry Stage of Invitation, Inquiry and Discernment</b> . . . . .	25
<b>SECTION 1: Goal and Context of Vocation Ministry</b> . . . . .	25
A. The Goal of Vocation Ministry . . . . .	25
B. The Context of Vocation Ministry . . . . .	25
C. The Context of Vocation Ministry and the Phases of the Discernment Process . . . . .	26
<b>SECTION 2: The Agents of Vincentian Formation Specific to the Stage of Invitation, Inquiry and Discernment</b> . . . . .	26
A. The Inquirer – Discerner – Applicant – Under the Action of the Holy Spirit . . . . .	26
B. The Vocation Director . . . . .	26
C. The Associate Directors and the Vocation Committee . . . . .	26
D. Other Persons in Formation . . . . .	26
<b>SECTION 3: The Objectives and Strategies of Vocation Ministry and of the Processes of Inquiry and Discernment</b> . . . . .	27
A. The Invitation Phase: Strategies for Promoting Inquiry into the Vincentian Vocation . . . . .	27

- B. The Vincentian Axis: The Image of a Vincentian to be Presented to Inquirers . . . . . 28
- C. Human Formation for Inquirers and Discerners . . . . . 28
- D. Spiritual Formation for Inquirers and Discerners . . . . . 29
- E. Intellectual Formation for Inquirers and Discerners . . . . . 29
- F. Apostolic Formation for Inquirers and Discerners . . . . . 29
- G. Community Formation for Inquirers and Discerners . . . . . 30
- SECTION 4: The Process for Application and Admission to the Pre-Internal Seminary Program . . . . . 30
  - A. Profile of Discerners Acceptable for Admission to a Pre-Internal Seminary Program . . . . . 30
  - B. Role of the Discerner in the Application Process for Admission to a Pre-Internal Seminary Program . . . . . 32
  - C. Role of the Vocation Director and the Admissions Team in the Application Process for Admission to a Pre-Internal Seminary Program . . . . . 33
- CHAPTER 3**
- Formation at the Stage of the Pre-Internal Seminary . . . . . 35**
- SECTION 1: The Goal and the Context of Vincentian Formation at the Stage of the Pre-Internal Seminary . . . . . 35
  - A. The Goal of Pre-Internal Seminary Formation . . . . . 35
  - B. The Various Contexts of Pre-Internal Seminary Formation . . . . . 35
- SECTION 2: The Objectives and Strategies of Vincentian Formation at the Stage of the Pre-Internal Seminary . . . . . 36
  - A. The Vincentian Axis . . . . . 36
  - B. Human Formation . . . . . 37
  - C. Spiritual Formation . . . . . 38
  - D. Intellectual Formation . . . . . 39
  - E. Apostolic Formation . . . . . 40
  - F. Community Formation . . . . . 41
- SECTION 3: Profile of Candidates Completing Each Phase of Pre-Internal Seminary Formation . . . . . 42
  - A. Profile of the Candidate Completing the Orientation Phase of the Pre-Internal Seminary . . . . . 42
  - B. Profile of the Candidate upon Completing the Entire Pre-Internal Seminary Program . . . . . 43
- CHAPTER 4**
- Formation at the Level of the Internal Seminary . . . . . 45**
- SECTION 1: The Specific Goal and the Context of Vincentian Formation at the Level of the Internal Seminary . . . . . 45
  - A. The Specific Goal of Vincentian Formation at the Level of the Internal Seminary . . . . . 45
  - B. The Context of Vincentian Formation at the Level of the Internal Seminary . . . . . 45



SECTION 2: The Objectives and Strategies of Vincentian Formation at the Internal Seminary Level . . . . . 46

    A. The Vincentian Axis . . . . . 46

    B. Human Formation . . . . . 49

    C. Spiritual Formation . . . . . 50

    D. Intellectual Formation . . . . . 51

    E. Apostolic Formation . . . . . 52

    F. Community Formation . . . . . 53

SECTION 3: Profile of the Seminarian Completing the Stage of Internal Seminary Formation . . . . . 54

**CHAPTER 5**

**Formation During an Internship Year . . . . . 56**

SECTION 1: The Specific Goal and the Context of Vincentian Formation During an Internship Year . . . . . 56

    A. The Specific Goal of Vincentian Formation During an Internship Year . . . . . 56

    B. The Variable Contexts of Time and Location of the Internship Year . . . . . 56

SECTION 2: The Objectives and Strategies of Vincentian Formation During an Internship Year . . . . . 57

    A. The Vincentian Axis . . . . . 57

    B. Human Formation . . . . . 57

    C. Spiritual Formation . . . . . 58

    D. Intellectual Formation . . . . . 59

    E. Apostolic Formation . . . . . 59

    F. Community Formation . . . . . 60

SECTION 3: Profile of the Intern Completing the Internship Year . . . . . 61

**CHAPTER 6**

**Formation of Brothers at the Post-Internal Seminary Level . . . . . 62**

*Introduction . . . . . 62*

SECTION 1: The Identity of a Brother . . . . . 62

    A. The Identity of the Brother in the Church . . . . . 62

    B. The Identity of the Brother in the Congregation of the Mission . . . . . 63

SECTION 2: The Specific Goals and the Context of Vincentian Formation of the Brother at the Post-Internal Seminary Level . . . . . 64

    A. Specific Goals of the Brother’s Formation at the Post-Internal Seminary Level . . . . . 64

    B. The Context of the Brother’s Formation at the Post-Internal Seminary Level . . . . . 64

SECTION 3: The Objectives and Strategies for the Formation of the Brother at the Post-Internal Seminary Level . . . . . 65

    A. The Vincentian Axis of Formation . . . . . 65

    B. Human Formation . . . . . 66

    C. Spiritual Formation . . . . . 67

D. Intellectual Formation – Theological and Professional . . . . . 69

E. Apostolic Formation . . . . . 70

F. Community Formation . . . . . 71

SECTION 4: Profile of a Brother Completing the Stage of Post-Internal Seminary Formation . . . . . 72

**CHAPTER 7**

**Formation at the Level of the Major Seminary . . . . . 74**

SECTION 1: The Specific Goal and the Context of Vincentian Formation at the Level of the Major Seminary . . . . . 74

A. The Specific Goal of Vincentian Formation at the Major Seminary Level . . . . . 74

B. The Context and Location of Vincentian Formation at the Major Seminary Level . . . . . 74

SECTION 2: The Objectives and Strategies of Vincentian Formation at the Major Seminary Level . . . . . 75

A. The Vincentian Axis . . . . . 75

B. Human Formation . . . . . 76

C. Spiritual Formation . . . . . 79

D. Intellectual Formation . . . . . 81

E. Apostolic Formation . . . . . 82

F. Community Formation . . . . . 83

SECTION 3: Profile of the Student Completing His Formation at the Major Seminary Level . . . . . 84

**CHAPTER 8**

**Ongoing Formation**

SECTION 1: Nature, Goals, and Contexts of Ongoing Formation . . . . . 86

A. Nature of Ongoing Formation . . . . . 86

B. Contexts of Ongoing Formation . . . . . 86

C. Goal of Ongoing Formation . . . . . 86

SECTION 2: The Agents of Ongoing Formation . . . . . 87

A. The Individual Confrere . . . . . 87

B. The Visitor . . . . . 87

C. The Director of Ongoing Formation . . . . . 87

D. The Local Superior and the Local Community . . . . . 87

E. The Spiritual Director . . . . . 88

F. The Director of Apostolic Formation . . . . . 88

SECTION 3: The Objectives and Strategies of Ongoing Formation . . . . . 88

A. The Vincentian Axis . . . . . 88

B. Spiritual Formation . . . . . 89

C. Intellectual Formation . . . . . 90

D. Apostolic Formation . . . . . 90

E. Community Formation . . . . . 91

F. Human Formation . . . . . 91

**Conclusion . . . . . 92**

**Appendixes**

APPENDIX 1: Sample Application for Admission to Pre-Internal Seminary 95

APPENDIX 2: Physician's Report . . . . . 100

APPENDIX 3: Sample Release Form . . . . . 102

**Bibliography . . . . . 103**

    Sources . . . . . 103

    Studies . . . . . 104

**General Index Year 2014 . . . . . 107**



## Preamble

A number of global and ecclesial developments in the post-Vatican II era have affected the life and ministry of the Congregation. Changes in theological and philosophical thinking have led to an emphasis on inductive reasoning and experience, where individual circumstances and contexts carry greater weight in determining truth, meaning, and responsible action. There has been a shift toward collegial authority that relies more on communication, dialogue, and shared decision-making. A fuller recognition of the interdependence of individuals, communities, and nations has generated more sharing of ideas and a greater diversity of strategies. A more positive view of creation and humanity gives greater value to the person and the promotion of one's individual gifts.

While these are constructive movements, they also have engendered instability and confusion within society, the Church, and the Congregation. These include: a tendency toward relativism and a questioning of the possibility and value of making long term or life commitments; a mistrust of authority, especially where communication, dialogue, and shared decision-making have not been forthcoming; and a failure to recognize weakness and sinfulness as dimensions of human reality.

In light of these developments, this *Ratio* presents a vision and a plan for the formation of our members for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The commission charged with the task of preparing the *Ratio* engaged in a threefold process. First, it consulted the multiple provincial plans of formation which the provinces had sent to the General Curia. This was helpful for recognizing and respecting cultural diversity within the Congregation. Second, it carefully reviewed the publications of the Church. These were helpful in offering comprehensive views of the various stages of formation. Third, it consulted a variety of studies to enhance the theological development of some of the themes most relevant to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The commission does not intend to present the only or the final word regarding formation; rather, it offers a guide to the provinces as they work out a *Ratio* particular to their own circumstances and cultures.

The *Ratio* has eight chapters. The first is comprehensive and considers the overall purpose, goals, multiple dimensions, and contemporary challenges which touch on Vincentian formation at every stage. The second through eighth chapters present reflections and guidelines for each of the specific stages of formation. *Chapter 2* treats the stage of vocational inquiry; *Chapter 3*, pre-internal seminary formation; and *Chapter 4*, the internal seminary. *Chapter 5* considers an internship

year, which may be appended either to the internal seminary or to post-internal seminary formation. *Chapters 6 and 7* treat post-internal seminary formation specifically orientated to brotherhood and priesthood, respectively. Finally, Chapter 8 offers guidelines for the ongoing formation of confreres after their initial formation has been completed.

The *Ratio* presents Vincentian formation as a lifelong and integrative process, where the beginning envisions the end and the end grows out of each earlier stage. The *Ratio* offers formators a coherent and integral set of guidelines directed to the precise stage of formation with which they are entrusted. In this sense, this document can be viewed as comprising seven *Rationes* with one introductory chapter rather than simply one *Ratio*. A formator will find the basic information and the assistance he needs simply by reading Chapter 1 and the chapter which treats the specific stage of formation which he serves. Beyond this, he will find further assistance by subsequently focusing upon, and sharing with other formators, the manner in which the objectives, strategies, and expectations of a given stage develop from one another.

The commission's hope is that this effort will assist each confrere and the Congregation as a whole, living in the spirit of St. Vincent, to grow in communion with Christ and his mission, for the good of the Church and for the well-being of the poor.

## Chapter 1

# General Reflections and Directives for Formation

### SECTION 1

#### GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES OF FORMATION

The first article of the Constitutions of the Congregation of the Mission states the purpose of the “little company” succinctly:

*The purpose of the Congregation of the Mission is to follow Christ evangelizing the poor. This purpose is achieved when, faithful to St. Vincent, the members individually and collectively:*

1. *make every effort to put on the spirit of Christ himself (CR I, 3) in order to acquire a holiness appropriate to their vocation (CR XII, 13);*
2. *work at evangelizing the poor, especially the more abandoned;*
3. *help the clergy and laity in their formation and lead them to a fuller participation in the evangelization of the poor.*

In stating this purpose, the Constitutions also indicate the overall goals of formation within the Congregation. To fully grasp these goals, it is necessary to recall their ecclesial context.

#### **A. The Goals of Vincentian Life and Formation in their Ecclesial Context**

The whole Church is called to follow Christ, who describes his mission in Luke’s Gospel in a clear, focused manner: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; to proclaim ‘Good News’ to the poor he has sent me” (4:16). This calling is given to every Christian at baptism. The vocation of the Vincentian is to embrace this baptismal calling, draw strength from the whole community of the baptized, and then be a sign to what life in Christ is meant to be. At the same time, the Vincentian vocation is a calling to follow Christ specifically:

- in the ministry of evangelizing the poor and assisting both clergy and lay persons to embrace this particular commitment to Christ’s mission;
- in giving one’s life and energy to this calling full time;

- in community with others who share faith, prayer, insight, labor and creativity so that all may be more effective than any individual could be alone;
- as a missionary, like the “Son of Man,” to go wherever sent, having “nowhere to lay his head.”

Three corollaries of the Vincentian calling warrant immediate reflection in this *Ratio*. Since the purpose of the Congregation is to follow Christ in evangelizing the poor, we see ourselves primarily as Vincentian missionaries. Being a brother or priest is secondary, and simply describes the way in which a member of the Congregation engages in this missionary vocation. For this reason, except for the stage of post-internal seminary formation, Vincentian formation will be the same for brother and priest candidates, who are equally called to “follow Christ, evangelizing the poor.”

Secondly, our focus on following Christ evangelizing the poor permeates our understanding of priesthood. We are not united under the leadership of a particular bishop, nor restricted to the geographical confines of a diocese. Rather, we give ourselves in community under the guidance of a Visitor and General Superior, specifically to bring Christ to the under-privileged of society and to lead others to follow Christ in this mission. It is important to highlight these differences for candidates in the major seminary, especially if they receive their theological formation at a diocesan seminary or live with diocesan seminarians.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, the goals of formation require a careful understanding of our Congregation’s specifically *Vincentian* missionary character. This inspired the expansion of the Congregation and determined which ministries would be undertaken. The early Congregation extended itself first in preaching popular missions, and soon after in the ministry of formation of the clergy. Later, confreres were sent to countries beyond France and beyond continental Europe, to Madagascar, and eventually throughout the world.

This sense of mission leads the Congregation today to develop new ministries on behalf of the poor, to labor in new ministries of formation, and to be ready to serve wherever we are sent.<sup>2</sup> It affects our formation at every level, and requires candidates, confreres, and the Congregation itself, to:

---

<sup>1</sup> In a similar way, it will be important to highlight the differences between the Vincentian way of life and that of religious, particularly in those situations where our candidates are formed at institutes run by religious.

<sup>2</sup> The *Ratio Missionum*, 3.3.3.1., offers clear criteria for the selection of new ministries in the Congregation’s efforts to respond to the multiple calls for missionary expansion.



- foster the alleviation of poverty and economic disparity among peoples and nations;
- respect cultural diversity, support persons and communities marginalized because of their culture, and foster processes of healthy enculturation;
- form clergy and all Christian people to follow Jesus in evangelizing the poor;
- work with organizations which are dedicated to overcoming injustice and poverty;
- work with other religious denominations to overcome inhumanity and faithlessness;
- work with all members of the Vincentian Family in our common mission in Christ.

Recognizing contemporary challenges and opportunities, the Congregation will also seek to:

- use technology in ways that facilitate its ministry in all places and at all levels throughout the world;
- embrace “systemic change” as a way of alleviating poverty and of empowering the poor.<sup>3</sup>

## **B. Living According to the Five Virtues and the Goals of Vincentian Life**

Vincent himself, and the foundational community of 1625 to 1660, provided recommendations, guidelines and structures to support individual confreres and the entire Congregation in living out their vocation. Foremost are the “five virtues” most suitable for the missioner: simplicity, humility, meekness, mortification, and zeal. Each has a human and spiritual component. These virtues challenge Vincentians at each stage of formation. Each stage requires its own reflections on the virtues and effort to embrace them.

---

<sup>3</sup> Systemic Change aims not only to serve the immediate needs of the poor (by providing food, clothing, etc.), but also to assist the poor to develop strategies by which they can emerge from poverty. Its goal is to change a whole complex of structures that form a particular social system within which the poor live. It focuses on designing projects that have a holistic vision, addressing a series of basic human needs – individual and social, spiritual and physical, especially jobs, health care, housing, education, spiritual growth – with an integral approach toward self-help, sustainable development, and the training of local leaders.

### **C. Living According to the Four Vows and the Goals of Vincentian Life**

Another set of “structures of Vincentian life” are the four vows underscored by Vincent for following Christ in bringing Good News to the poor: stability (a life-long commitment to serve the poor within the Congregation), celibate chastity, poverty, and obedience. Vincentian formation necessarily attends to the values and the challenges of these vows. They lead the member to grow in giving himself to Christ, in freeing himself for the mission of the Congregation, and in sharing life in Community. Consideration of these vows is necessarily included in each stage of formation.

### **D. The Axis and Five Dimensions of Formation: Objectives of Formation**

The goals of formation become reality only by developing multiple dimensions of the individual’s life: the human, spiritual, intellectual, communal, and apostolic. Growth in each dimension is necessary for embracing a Vincentian way of life. In each dimension, the candidate or confrere seeks to express the Vincentian charism.

The Vincentian charism can be thought of as an “axis” which supports the five dimensions of formation, much as an axle supports five spokes of a wheel. Just as physical energy flows from an axle through the spokes of a wheel leading to action, so the Vincentian charism provides energy for an individual’s development in the five dimensions of formation. In describing each stage of formation, this *Ratio* first treats the Vincentian axis and then each of the five dimensions, articulating specific objectives and ways that their development can be fostered.

### **E. Strategies in Formation**

Formation is a complicated task, requiring specific, concrete steps to achieve its goals and objectives (the axis and five dimensions). These steps are necessary for any aspirant, associate, admitted member, or incorporated confrere to reach the full measure of his calling in the “little Company.” Therefore, this *Ratio* details realistic strategies and norms for each stage of formation. To lead the individual smoothly from one stage to the next, it will be necessary to assess his skills and readiness at each stage. For this reason, this *Ratio* also offers an expected profile of the person in formation at the conclusion of each stage.

**SECTION 2****AGENTS OF FORMATION****A. The Trinitarian God: The Primary, Transcendent, Agent of Formation**

The primary agent of formation is God: the Father who sends Christ to us; the Son who gives us a missionary model to follow; and their Spirit, who comes upon us as upon Jesus, sending us to bring Good News to all who are abandoned. The primacy of God's presence and action will be acknowledged at every stage of formation both by the candidate or confrere in formation, and by formators.

**B. The Person in Formation**

The principal human agent in the process is the person in formation himself. It is his responsibility to seek the light of the Lord at every stage of formation, from his discerning a vocation to his senior years within the Congregation. It is his task to listen to the many voices of formators at every stage, weigh them, and put into action the call of the Lord that emerges from them.

**C. The Visitor and the Provincial Community in Formation**

The provincial community provides the clearest examples of the living charism which St. Vincent entrusted to the Congregation. It is in meeting the confreres, in enjoying their life together, in seeing and hearing them at prayer, and in experiencing them active in their ministries, that discerners will be touched by the Spirit and find themselves attracted to the community.

The Visitor encourages all confreres to take an active interest in promoting vocations. He calls them to welcome young persons into their houses and to aid them in their discernment. He meets the candidates as early as their first year of pre-internal seminary formation, and visits them so that he comes to know them. The Constitutions require his intervention at significant times along their journey: candidates seeking entrance into the internal seminary; members petitioning for good purposes or vows; and confreres seeking permission for ministries or major orders.<sup>4</sup>

The Visitor also needs to know the confreres engaged in the ministry of formation. He discerns their capacity to do formation, assigns them

---

<sup>4</sup> In this regard, he will pay special attention to the evaluations of candidates prior to their petitioning for entrance to the Internal Seminary, as well as evaluations prior to petitions for advancement to subsequent stages of formation.

to their work, and provides for their adequate formation as formators. He needs to understand the processes of formation as they are viewed in the contemporary Church. Finally, the Visitor establishes, supports, and communicates effectively with the provincial Formation Committee, whose tasks are described below.

## **D. The Local Community in Formation**

The local community plays an influential role in formation. It witnesses to the vitality of the Vincentian charism, the vibrancy of community life, and to missionary zeal. It is in their experience of the confreres in the local community – praying, living, and working together – that men in formation will find the charism credible and attractive. It is within the local community that they will acquire a sense of belonging and a realistic appreciation of how the Congregation extends itself to those in need.

## **E. The Persons Entrusted with the Ministry of Formation**

### **1. SPECIFIC ROLES AND MINISTRIES OF THE FORMATORS**

**The Formation Director** has the central role among the formators. He presents the objectives of the particular stage of formation to the candidate or confrere.<sup>5</sup> With the other formators, he models the charism of the Congregation for the person in formation, walks with the individual personally, and assists him to integrate the directives which he is receiving from the other formators. He coordinates the ministries of all the formators, affording the individual a balanced, unified experience of formation. Finally, it is his role, after consulting the other formators, to present to the Visitor an evaluation of the candidate's suitability in moving toward full commitment to ministry as a Vincentian.

**The Spiritual Director** assists the candidate or confrere in formation to grow in the spiritual depth necessary to live the Vincentian vocation, and for moving forward in the overall formation program. He helps the individual to keep in focus the ways in which his relationship with Christ animates and takes expression in all the other dimensions of his journey (human, pastoral, communal, academic).

**The Director of Apostolic Formation** guides the individual in understanding his apostolic ministry – its specific goals and objectives –

---

<sup>5</sup> In this section (E.1.), the term “confrere” is intended to include both admitted and incorporated confreres, beginning with their entrance into the internal seminary until their completion of initial formation.

as well as aiding the individual to recognize the action of Christ and his Spirit in ministry.<sup>6</sup>

**Professors** come to know and guide the individual in his understanding of whatever subject they teach, so that the individual can assimilate that teaching and perceive ways in which it will lead him and others to human and Christian maturity. They present doctrine intelligibly, faithfully, and show its relevance.

**The Director of Human Formation** assists the candidate or confrere to understand better his own personal gifts, strengths, and weaknesses. He guides the individual in all aspects of human development.<sup>7</sup>

**The Local Superior** animates and supports the local community in its Vincentian life and ministry, and therefore supports the formators in their ministry of formation. He should know and understand the many dimensions of formation. He encourages the confreres of the house to be credible, attractive examples to the person in initial formation.

---

<sup>6</sup> With variations in accord to the respective stage of formation, the Director of Apostolic Formation:

- a) Assigns the candidates or confreres in initial formation to specific ministries for the poor in conjunction with those who are regularly engaged in this ministry, and arranges for their onsite supervision.
- b) Helps those in formation integrate the insights gained through their apostolic experiences into their prayer-life and into the process of discerning their Vincentian vocation.
- c) Leads those in formation in the practice of communal theological reflection.
- d) Arranges for periodic discussions with the onsite supervisor to gain a fuller appreciation of the candidate's or confrere's capabilities and struggles. He uses these observations in conversations with the candidate or confrere and also shares them with the formation team.

<sup>7</sup> With variations in accord to the respective stage of formation, the Director of Human Formation:

- a) Is expected to be familiar with the psychological evaluation of each of candidate which has been required prior to his admission to the stage of formation. He meets with the candidate to discuss the report, and works out with him strategies for dealing constructively with its observations and suggestions.
- b) Meets occasionally with the candidate to follow up earlier meetings.
- c) Understands the differences in accompanying candidates in varying age groups.

## 2. THE FORMATION OF THE FORMATORS

Formation is a specialized ministry. No formator has all the skills needed for this ministry by nature or personal temperament. Each confrere who takes on formation ministry should be offered specific formation for that ministry. Formation Directors will be educated in this ministry by other Formation Directors; Spiritual Directors will avail themselves of formation for Spiritual Directors; the person who oversees human formation will need initial training in psychology and the ongoing professional assistance of a certified psychologist; Directors of Apostolic Formation will participate in programs specifically directed to assisting formators in this ministry. Each formator will also benefit from ongoing communication with others who share a similar ministry.

## 3. A PROFILE OF THE FORMATOR

Given the responsibilities and challenges of formation ministry, the Visitor will need to identify confreres to undertake these ministries who are:

- deeply rooted in Jesus and able to communicate their personal experience of, and love for, Jesus;
- immersed in the Vincentian charism, imbued with a genuine Vincentian missionary spirit, knowing Vincent and the history of the Community;
- in touch with the poor, having met Christ in meeting and journeying with them, so that their knowledge of, and love for, the poor is real and not simply ideal;
- men of prayer, able to share the ways prayer and ministry nourish one another;
- capable of understanding and guiding persons on their journey of formation;
- aware of the ways that young people think, appreciative of their struggles in being faithful to Christ and the Church, and able to communicate with them effectively;
- in touch and able to work with various groups of the Vincentian Family;
- appreciative of cultural diversity.

Those who are to serve as Formation Directors will also be persons:

- who understand well the stages of human growth;
- skilled in guiding persons of varying personality types to understand their gifts and limits, and deal with them constructively;

- experienced in having served as an Associate Formation Director or in other formation ministry.

Those who are to serve as Spiritual Directors will also be persons:

- skilled in discerning the movements of the Spirit in their own lives and in the lives of others;
- well grounded in their ability to relate the life of faith to life in the world and human growth;
- experienced in offering spiritual direction in wider contexts of ministry.

Those who are to serve as professors will also be persons:

- well trained in the field in which they are to teach;
- able to communicate their subject matter to students with a variety of needs and learning abilities;
- able to relate their teaching meaningfully to Vincentian life, to the world of today, to following Christ, and to the needs of the poor.

#### **4. THE FORMATION TEAM**

Effective formation requires a team effort. Provinces will have a Formation Team for the stages of initial formation comprising the Spiritual Director, Director of Apostolic Formation, professors, Director of Human Formation, superior of the local community, and the Formation Director. Members of the team complement one another in their specific roles, personalities, and gifts. It will be necessary for members to meet regularly to discuss: (1) the ways they are working for the benefit of the overall program; (2) the challenges which they may be facing in their own area of formation; and (3) the progress of each of the individuals under their care.

##### *a) Interior formation and observable performance*

Formation focuses on the individual's commitment to embracing the Vincentian calling, as manifested in observable action. We can know where another's mind and heart are by the way he behaves and meets specific objectives. But some may function seemingly well for a long time without interiorizing the values and the patterns of life which the Congregation proposes. Candidates can deceive formators and even themselves, thinking that because they function well, they have done the inner work necessary to serve fruitfully over a lifetime. For this reason, accompanying the person in formation involves sharing of interiority as well as observable action.

### b) *Internal - external forum*

For centuries the Church has distinguished these two foci – shared interiority and observable action – as the “internal forum” and the “external forum”. The distinction has led to a restriction of interiority to the spiritual direction relationship, even warning persons in authority in the external forum (seminary rectors, superiors of houses of formation, and deans of discipline) not to enter into the internal forum. This restriction, while often useful, can limit a formator’s knowledge of the person he is to guide and evaluate.

The contemporary Church expects formators to develop a personal relationship with the individual in formation. The best way of expressing the character of that relationship is one of accompaniment: walking together in learning the goals, life patterns, and ministry of the Congregation while also discovering together the gifts, strengths, limitations, and weaknesses of the individual as he responds to his calling.

The need to distinguish “internal forum” from “external forum” often raises the question of whether a Spiritual Director should participate in meetings which focus on individuals in formation. The concern is to preserve the confidentiality of the internal forum. This *Ratio* affirms the importance of Spiritual Directors’ presence in these meetings, as listeners rather than as speakers. Spiritual Directors need to be aware of how others evaluate and guide those under their care. Listening to others will enable Spiritual Directors to support the efforts of the team more fully, and will protect Spiritual Directors from being misled by their directee’s sometimes faulty recounting of his performance and/or interaction with another team member.

## **F. The Poor as Agents of Formation**

We sometimes think of persons who live in poverty as passive recipients of our service. We may limit their role in formation to making us aware of the deprivation and injustices they face. Such awareness does shape our consciousness of the realities of the lives of poor and challenges us to respond to their needs and change society to help eliminate poverty. The goal of Vincentian formation, however, also calls us to build bonds of communion with the poor: sharing, learning, and enjoying Christ’s presence and love together.

The poor are our brothers and sisters; they are images of Christ. We are called to live among them, and come to know them more deeply. We may discover in them a vibrancy of faith, constancy of hope, generosity of love, and steadfastness of trust in God. We may also find them difficult, demanding, or uncooperative. They may try our patience or present us with what seem to be insoluble problems. Here, too, we are urged, in the spirit of Saint Vincent, to meet Christ.



For these reasons, it is important for candidates and confreres at every stage of formation, not only to study about the needs of those who suffer poverty, but also serve them and build interpersonal bonds of Christ-like faith, hope, and love with them. Those who live in poverty are significant and active agents in our formation, mediating the presence of the Lord as we journey through Vincentian life and ministry.

### SECTION 3

## STAGES OF FORMATION

While formation proceeds over a lifetime in identifiable stages, it also has an underlying unity.

### **A. A Model for Understanding the Unity of the Stages of Formation**

The life-cycle of a tree offers a helpful model for the unity of the process of formation and the movement from one stage to another. It begins with the planting and nurturing of a seed. This corresponds to the planting and nurturing of the seeds of a vocation in the inquiry and discernment stage of formation.

The next stage in the life-cycle of a tree is the sprouting of new life. Young sprouts require special care and nurturing with light, water, fertilizer, and rich soil. Similarly, the stage of pre-internal seminary formation offers young candidates the fundamentals of Vincentian life so they can appreciate them as their own.

The third stage of a tree's life-cycle is the sinking of roots deep into the soil. Roots are necessary for the tree to find nourishment for becoming mature and strong, stable in the midst of winds, rain or scorching sun. The internal seminary provides similar support for the candidate's growing in Vincentian life through prayer, service, and Vincentian studies. He begins to see himself as rooted in the Congregation's life and history.

The fourth stage of the life-cycle of a tree is maturation. The tree, well-rooted in soil, is pruned and nurtured to become fruit-bearing. This stage corresponds to the major seminary for those preparing to be priests, or further apostolic and professional formation for those preparing to be brothers. Pruning and maturation at this stage of formation takes the form of refining the candidate's values and growth to obtain a more nuanced understanding of Vincentian life, and adjusting to the realities of adulthood as candidates' roots are tested by life in an imperfect, though loving, community.

In the last stage of its life-cycle, the tree reaches maturity, bearing fruit for many years. The tree is well-formed but still needs care.

And so it is with confreres who have been productive over many years as Vincentian missionaries. They follow Jesus evangelizing the poor in multiple ministries, knowing the joys and withstanding the hardships of Vincentian life and ministry. Nevertheless, these confreres do not “stand alone” in their life journey. They too need, and deserve, ongoing formation.

### **B. The Stages of Formation and the Provincial Formation Committee**

Each province needs a provincial Formation Committee to assure the continuity, consistency, and progressive development of the stages of formation, and the multiple dimensions which run through them. The committee will include the provincial Vocation Director, the chairperson of the Formation Team of each stage of formation, and the Formation Directors of each stage of formation. It will make recommendations to the Visitor with regard to the location of the houses of formation and the relationship to other institutions (such as universities or seminaries) which may complement the Vincentian formation programs. The provincial Formation Committee will also exercise general oversight with regard to the vocational growth of candidates, and assess the effectiveness of the province’s formation program as a whole.

### **C. The Stages of Formation and the Advancement of Candidates**

A careful articulation of the goals, objectives, and strategies appropriate to each stage of formation is of critical importance. To provide criteria for assessing an individual’s readiness for advancement, this *Ratio* offers a profile of the candidate or confrere which he will be expected to meet as he completes each stage of formation. It will be the task of each province, its provincial Formation Committee, and the provincial Formation Teams at each stage of formation, to refine the expected outcomes that will constitute the criteria for advancement from one stage to the next.

The articulation of expected outcomes also applies analogously to ongoing formation. Each confrere needs to continue to grow in his interiority, community life, and ministry. It is important that confreres be transparent in, and accountable for, their performance and service.

## Chapter 2

# Vocation Ministry Stages of Invitation, Inquiry and Discernment

### SECTION 1

#### GOAL AND CONTEXT OF VOCATION MINISTRY

##### **A. The Goal of Vocation Ministry**

The goal of this stage of formation (vocation ministry) is to lead potential candidates to consider a Vincentian vocation and support them in discernment. This is the stage of “sowing seeds.” The sower spreads seeds far and wide. Some fall on good ground and yield thirty, sixty, and a hundred fold; some are trampled along the path; some take no root; some are choked as soon as they sprout. There is a need to distinguish carefully the ground upon which seeds fall (the context) in vocation ministry.

##### **B. The Context of Vocation Ministry**

Vocation ministry is conducted in a world of youth seeking meaning in a particular culture.<sup>8</sup> Some cultures are significantly religious, where youth easily find a place in the Church and receive religious formation. This environment facilitates their openness to vocations within the Church. In more secular cultures, respect for authority and the Church has broken down; sexual freedom, preoccupation with wealth, and promise of power are very enticing. Nonetheless, youth often desire to do something meaningful and to embrace a life of service. These characteristics can be nurtured so young people may be open to a vocation in our Congregation. Vocation ministers should understand each culture’s strengths and liabilities in assessing the full range of candidates whom the Lord invites.

---

<sup>8</sup> The world of youth does not necessarily mean persons younger than 21. Some provinces dialogue with young people prior to secondary school. Others speak with persons of secondary school, university, or post-university age. An older person should not be excluded simply because he is approaching, for example, 40. But it is reasonable to establish an “age boundary” to assure that the candidate has sufficient time after initial formation to engage fruitfully in the Vincentian mission. Whatever the age, vocation ministry has the same basic structures and phases of progressive discernment. Only the strategies for approaching the person will differ according to his age level.

### **C. The Context of Vocation Ministry and the Phases of the Discernment Process**

The process of “sowing the seeds” of a vocation unfolds through three discernible phases. The first phase is **initial invitation**. Vocation ministers invite youth to learn about, and share in, Christ’s mission. In doing so, some of the young persons may begin inquiring about Vincentian life. The second phase is **active discernment**. Persons at this phase seek human and Christian growth with some openness to a vocation within a society of apostolic life. Vocation ministers provide inquirers with the information and witness they need to understand the Vincentian vocation, and assist them in discernment.<sup>9</sup> The third phase is **application for admission** to a program of formal formation. After one or two years of inquiry and discernment, persons may seek to enter a Vincentian house of formal formation.<sup>10</sup>

## **SECTION 2**

### **THE AGENTS OF VINCENTIAN FORMATION SPECIFIC TO THE STAGE OF INVITATION, INQUIRY AND DISCERNMENT**

#### **A. The Inquirer – Discerner – Applicant – Under the Action of the Holy Spirit**

The first task of every inquirer or discerner is to open his mind and heart to the movement of the Holy Spirit. In this process, he needs to receive an understanding of the Vincentian way through both word and example, and be assisted in discernment by competent confreres. It is the inquirer’s task to bring what he receives to prayer, and to open his heart in a willing surrender to the Father’s call.

#### **B. The Vocation Director**

The Vocation Director has a special role of announcing God’s word and offering an example of Vincentian life. He ought to be full time, for he will have to sow seeds at each of the three stages in which vocations may be found. He will have to come to know inquirers, discerners, and those who seek admission to a house of formation, and aid them in the application process.

---

<sup>9</sup> This can take place through periodic (perhaps monthly) meetings while the discerner lives in his own home, in a formally constituted discernment house, or within a local community house under the guidance of a confrere.

<sup>10</sup> The length of time may vary in individual provinces and with individual circumstances.

### C. The Associate Directors and the Vocation Committee

To be present and active throughout the geographical area of a province, the Vocation Director will need the aid of Associate Vocation Directors in spreading seeds of vocations, and Discernment Directors who will journey with inquirers. Together they form a Vocation Committee to support one another in this ministry.

### D. Other Persons in Formation

Candidates who have already made the transition from inquiry to formal formation are a significant resource for planting seeds of vocations among inquirers. They understand the concerns and apprehension of inquirers. Their witness alleviates much of the darkness in the steps which inquirers are thinking of taking.

## SECTION 3

### THE OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES OF VOCATION MINISTRY AND OF THE PROCESSES OF INQUIRY AND DISCERNMENT

This *Ratio* offers strategies for the phases of invitation, discernment, and admission to a program of formal formation. Provinces should adapt them to their respective cultural contexts.

#### A. The Invitation Phase: Strategies for Promoting Inquiry into the Vincentian Vocation

In leading youth to inquire about a Vincentian vocation, the Vocation Director and his associates:

- **Use traditional and modern media to promote vocations.** These include publishing pamphlets and brochures which offer a brief understanding of a Vincentian vocation, a monthly newsletter on Vincentian activity, and using electronic media such as Facebook.
- **Visit places where youth are found with some of the candidates in formal formation.** These include parish youth groups, groups in the Vincentian Family (such as Marian Youth groups), schools (including retreats), and vocation workshops.
- **Meet with young people who attend a minor seminary not run by the confreres but who have manifested some interest in a Vincentian vocation.**

- **Visit families.** Parents play an important role in a person's consideration of a religious vocation.<sup>11</sup>
- **Elicit the assistance of other confreres.** This could be done by encouraging confreres in local Vincentian community houses to welcome inquirers and discerners to visit them.

### **B. The Vincentian Axis: The Image of a Vincentian to be Presented to Inquirers<sup>12</sup>**

From the beginning, vocation ministers help inquirers appreciate the calling to deepen life with Christ and share his ministry to the poor. The dominant image of the Vincentian which they present is that of a missionary. This includes both being a priest and a brother. The inquirer may be unsure of, and need not decide on, which of these paths of ministry he desires to follow. It is important for him to understand that both brother and priest are fully Vincentian and fully missionaries. At the same time, it is helpful for the inquirer to understand the differences between the ministries of the priest and the brother.

### **C. Human Formation for Inquirers and Discerners**

The objective of human formation is to help the inquirer-discerner grow in the maturity needed for a Vincentian vocation. In that light, he will be guided to:

- listen attentively to others while presenting his own views humbly and clearly;
- share his experiences with openness appropriate to his age;

---

<sup>11</sup> Parents may support a genuine Christian and Catholic vision of life. In other cases they may view a vocation as a way for their children to acquire resources for the family. Some parents may discourage a religious vocation because they wish to have grandchildren. Vocation ministers need to nurture the spirit of the parents as well as that of the inquirer.

<sup>12</sup> In provinces where there is a large number of young persons inquiring about a Vincentian vocation, it may be necessary to screen them before allowing them to continue their discernment. The Vocation Director may: seek letters of recommendation from the inquirer's pastor; visit the home of the inquirer's family; request a letter from the inquirer declaring his desire to enter a discernment program and committing himself to following the program's stipulations; administer preliminary tests to ascertain the inquirer's basic academic ability; and request copies of the inquirer's Baptismal and Confirmation certificates. It may also be wise to require the inquirer to participate in the discernment phase for two years before applying for admission to the pre-internal seminary stage of formation. It would be helpful if this phase of vocation ministry were conducted in a residential setting under the supervision of a Discernment Director.

- contribute generously in the discernment program's community and apostolic projects.

The Vocation Director, or his associate, will reflect with the inquirer-discerner upon his strengths and weaknesses, and his gifts and needs.

#### **D. Spiritual Formation for Inquirers and Discerners**

The objective of spiritual formation is to provide the inquirer-discerner with an understanding of the fundamentals of Christian and Vincentian spirituality. The individual will be helped to:

- make Christ the center of his life;
- develop a practice of personal prayer including participation in the Eucharist and the
- Sacrament of Reconciliation;
- commit to living a moral life and to be truthful, respect the reputation and property of others, and love others chastely.

#### **E. Intellectual Formation for Inquirers and Discerners**

The objective of intellectual formation is to lead the inquirer-discerner to the conviction that learning is necessary for a Vincentian vocation. He shows that conviction by the discipline he brings to his current studies and the grades he earns in his courses. If he is otherwise qualified for admission to the pre-internal seminary but has academic difficulty, the Vocation Director may recommend avenues of scholastic assistance.

#### **F. Apostolic Formation for Inquirers and Discerners**

The objective of apostolic formation is to give the inquirer-discerner an appreciation of Christian service. The Vocation Director may encourage him to engage in service on a weekly basis, in conjunction with his parish or in other placements. It would be helpful for the inquirer-discerner and the Vocation Director to receive an evaluation of the service performance from the placement supervisor. The Vocation Director, or his associate, should reflect with the inquirer-discerner on his service, individually or within a group. Questions such as how he experiences God in service, how he experiences himself, his comfort or struggle, his joy or disinterest, can lead to fruitful discussion and aid the inquiry-discernment process.

## **G. Community Formation for Inquirers and Discerners**

The objective of community formation is to have the inquirer-discerner relate to peers with a similar interest in the Vincentian vocation. The Vocation Director or his associate arranges meetings of inquirers-discerners, and plans workshops, retreats, and/or other group dynamics, such as apostolic experiences in which they participate together. These events could include a presentation on vocational discernment, time for prayer, one-to-one conversation with the Vocation Director or associate, and time for inquirers-discerners to interact with candidates in formal formation and confreres. A professional psychologist may be used to conduct some of the group meetings. The Vocation Director will help inquirers-discerners evaluate their comfort within these group experiences as an indicator of suitability for moving forward in formation.

### **SECTION 4**

#### **THE PROCESS FOR APPLICATION AND ADMISSION TO THE PRE-INTERNAL SEMINARY PROGRAM**

##### **A. Profile of Discerners Acceptable for Admission to a Pre-Internal Seminary Program**

To be accepted into a pre-internal seminary program, the discerner should show that he possesses:

##### **1. Aptitude for Vincentian Formation.** The discerner:

- manifests honest appreciation of the centrality of Christ for living the Vincentian life;
- strives to grow in understanding of, and commitment to, ways of following Christ;
- desires to grow in appreciation of the struggles of the poor and of the ways they can be served;
- has the capacity for living the vowed life of the Congregation.

##### **2. Aptitude for Human Formation.** The discerner:

- is ordinarily between the ages of 18 and 40, and free from canonical impediments to living in a society of apostolic life;<sup>13</sup>
- has adequate physical health so as to contribute to community life and apostolic service;

---

<sup>13</sup> In provinces that conduct pre-internal seminaries in which candidates complete their secondary education, the discerner may be as young as 15.



- has emotional balance and deals well with the challenges that his status in life presents him with.<sup>14</sup>

**3. Aptitude for Spiritual Formation.** The discerner:

- has received the sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation;
- is faithful in joining in the celebration of the Eucharist;
- participates regularly in the Sacrament of Reconciliation;
- spends time in daily prayer appropriate for his age and growth;
- has lived chastely for at least two years prior to his application.

**4. Aptitude for Intellectual Formation.** The discerner possesses a level of intellectual ability necessary for conducting careful discernment and serving in future ministry wisely and responsibly.<sup>15</sup>

**5. Aptitude for Apostolic Formation.** The discerner:

- has had some experience of service to the poor and service within the Church;
- offers an account of how this experience has affected his consideration of a vocation to the Vincentian Community.

**6. Aptitude for Community Formation.** The discerner:

- maintains good interpersonal relationships with his peers;
- works congenially with others, and can follow the leadership of others as well as contribute to the group by taking helpful initiatives;
- possesses willingness to learn from the guidance of the Vocation Director and his associates.

---

<sup>14</sup> A discerner who is a recovering substance abuser should participate faithfully in a recovery program for at least three years preceding the time at which he applies to a formal house of Vincentian formation. He will be expected to continue the recovery program throughout his formation.

<sup>15</sup> In those provinces where the pre-internal seminary admits persons of secondary school age, the candidate will have shown by his achievements in primary school that he has the intellectual capacity for succeeding in secondary school. In provinces that admit only persons who are beyond secondary school age, the applicant will have completed secondary school and will produce a verifiable diploma or its equivalent which will enable him to begin further studies.

## **B. Role of the Discerner in the Application Process for Admission to a Pre-Internal Seminary Program**

When applying for admission to a house of formal Vincentian formation, the discerner will:

1. Write a letter in his own hand stating his motivation for seeking to become a Vincentian.
2. Complete an application form for admission.<sup>16</sup>
3. Request that original baptismal and confirmation certificates from the appropriate parishes be sent directly to the Vocation Director.
4. Request transcripts from each of the institutions of education which he has attended.
5. Request that letters of recommendation be sent directly to the Vocation Director by:
  - the pastor of his home parish or director of a base community in regions where this is applicable;
  - two professional persons (e.g., his past teachers or employers);
  - the pastoral supervisor who has guided his apostolic work;
  - two personal references (for example, from friends who know him well);
  - one family member;
  - the rector or formation director of all seminaries which he may have attended.
6. Take a physical examination, which will include a report of his physical health, signed by a certified physician. He will have the report sent directly to the Vocation Director.<sup>17</sup>
7. Sign a consent form (provided by the Vocation Director) giving the Vocation Director permission to conduct a criminal background check.
8. Sign a form (provided by the Vocation Director) giving the Vocation Director freedom to receive and share with the Admissions Team, the results of the psychological exam which he will be required to take.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> An example of an application form for admission to the pre-internal seminary can be found in the appendices to this *Ratio*, and may be adapted by provinces for use in their respective cultural and situational contexts.

<sup>17</sup> An example of a physician's report form can be found in the appendices to this *Ratio*, and may be adapted by provinces for use in their respective cultural and situational contexts.

<sup>18</sup> An example of a release form can be found in the appendices to this *Ratio*, and may be adapted by provinces for use in their respective cultural and situational contexts.

When the discerner has provided all of the required documents, he will meet with the Vocation Director, the superior of the house of formation which he is seeking to enter, and the Formation Director of that house. These interviewers will discuss with the discerner his aptitude for embracing the different dimensions of formation. They will assess his readiness and suitability for the next stage in the formation process.<sup>19</sup>

### **C. Role of the Vocation Director and the Admissions Team in the Application Process for Admission to a Pre-Internal Seminary Program**

1. The Vocation Director has the responsibility of guiding the discerner through the application process. He undertakes the following tasks:
  - Assesses the discerner's capability of meeting the standards delineated in the "Profile of Discerners Acceptable for Admission to a Pre-Internal Seminary Program," described above. He will share that assessment with the Admissions Team.
  - Gives the discerner a list of the required documents with instructions for obtaining them.
  - Gathers and presents all the documentation to the Admissions Team.
  - Enlists an agency to conduct a criminal background check on the discerner and includes the report of that agency in the documentation required for admitting him.
  - Arranges for the discerner's psychological examination from a certified psychologist. He will include the psychological report in the documentation required for admitting the discerner.
  - Arranges for the discerner's interviews with the members of the Admissions Team.
2. After reviewing the documentation and conducting the final interviews with the discerner, the Vocation Director and the members of the Admissions Team decide to accept him into a house of formal Vincentian formation, accept him conditionally, delay his acceptance, or reject his application.

---

<sup>19</sup> Some provinces may also require a letter from the applicant's parents in which they give their consent to having their son enter the formation program, and state that they will not ask for anything from the Congregation if their son chooses to leave the program. Some provinces may also require the applicant to submit a letter stating that he enters the house of formation freely, and will ask for nothing from the Congregation if he decides to leave the program.

3. If the discerner is not accepted into the house of formation, the Vocation Director will inform the discerner of the decision and the reasons why. He may discuss options for the discerner which include continuing to discern while dealing constructively with the reasons for delaying his acceptance, or ending further consideration of a possible calling to the Vincentian Community.
4. If the discerner is accepted, the superior of the house of formation (or the Visitor, if it is the province's practice), will write a letter of acceptance to the discerner indicating the date and the time when the discerner will begin his residence at the house of formation, and offering any other details which will enable the discerner to make a smooth transition to this stage of formation.

## Chapter 3

# Formation at the Stage of the Pre-Internal Seminary

### SECTION 1

#### THE GOAL AND THE CONTEXT OF VINCENTIAN FORMATION AT THE STAGE OF THE PRE-INTERNAL SEMINARY

##### A. The Goal of Pre-Internal Seminary Formation

The goal of pre-internal seminary formation is to assist the candidate to strengthen his baptismal commitment and more deeply discern his call to Vincentian ministry. In line with the biblical image of the sower and the seed, this stage of formation creates favorable circumstances for the sprouting of the seed of a vocation and caring for it in its tender age, removing elements of a candidate's life which can choke growth.

##### B. The Various Contexts of Pre-Internal Seminary Formation

The ages at which inquirers seek initial formation for a religious vocation vary with the different cultures in which the Congregation of the Mission lives and works. As a result, some provinces maintain initial formal formation programs at the secondary school level in "minor seminaries".<sup>20</sup> In other provinces, inquirers have already completed their secondary education and are ready to pursue undergraduate studies in philosophy.<sup>21</sup> Regardless of these varying contexts, pre-internal seminary formation is best divided into two phases: an Orientation Phase and an Associate Phase.

The Orientation Phase provides an introduction to the dimensions of formation and the structures of seminary life. It generally lasts one

---

<sup>20</sup> Within this context, inquirers complete their secondary school education as candidates for the Congregation. After completing the minor seminary, they seek admission to the internal seminary. The candidate may pursue his secondary school studies in an institute managed by the Vincentians or he may be sent to an institute managed by others.

<sup>21</sup> Within these provinces, there are also inquirers who have completed university studies and may have begun their professional life. They often need some undergraduate courses in philosophy as a prerequisite for their study of theology after the internal seminary.

year. Its content is largely the same for secondary school and university level candidates. The Associate Phase prepares candidates for making a decision with regard to entering the internal seminary. The content of this phase differs for candidates in secondary school and candidates in university years or beyond. It varies in length depending upon the academic needs of the candidates. Because of their considerable differences, the two phases of the pre-internal seminary will be guided by separate formation directors. The roles of these directors are mostly the same, but directed to two different groups of candidates.

## SECTION 2

### THE OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES OF VINCENTIAN FORMATION AT THE STAGE OF THE PRE-INTERNAL SEMINARY

#### A. The Vincentian Axis

The objectives of the Vincentian Axis of formation in the pre-internal seminary are to: provide the candidates with a foundation for living the process of formation; foster within the candidates a love for Vincent de Paul and an appreciation for Vincentian life; and bring them to a human, spiritual, and academic depth needed to make a mature decision with regard to petitioning for admission to the internal seminary.

1. These objectives will be achieved during the Orientation Phase by the following strategies:
  - Candidates will read a basic account of the life of Saint Vincent de Paul. Formators will offer candidates conferences or classes on how the Congregation today lives in continuity with Vincent's mind and heart, and help them appreciate the apostolic and missionary nature of the Community.
  - Formators, through conferences, classes and/or readings, will present candidates with a basic understanding of the Vincentian virtues, and their value in serving the poor and living in community.
  - Candidates will learn the meaning of the four vows and be introduced to the ways in which they support the life and the mission of the Community.
  - Formators will assist the candidates, through individual interviews and communal formation sessions, in the discernment which they began during the Inquiry Stage.
2. The Associate Phase will continue to employ the strategies listed above, and also the following:
  - Candidates will read at least one biography of the life and works of Saint Vincent during this period. University level associates

will also be introduced to the Conferences of Saint Vincent. Formators will guide them to appreciate our founder's spirituality, especially as it is understood in the candidates' culture and province.

- Each candidate will formulate a personal growth plan, under the guidance of his formator, to include a personal goal for each of the dimensions of his formation: human, spiritual, intellectual, apostolic, and communal. The plan may include ways to pursue personal interests, such as music, art, or other appropriate extracurricular activities, without impinging on his primary commitments.

## **B. Human Formation**

The objective of human formation during the pre-internal seminary is to help the candidate mature, and grow in integrity and interior freedom so that he may live the Vincentian life. Guidelines vary here with the different age levels of the candidates. For the teenager, this will entail provision of educational materials and guidance on psycho-sexual and social development, including affirming his personal identity, his role in his peer group, and his relationship with authority. For the young adult, this will entail helping the candidate integrate within his vocational calling, deeper dimensions of psycho-sexual development, especially experiences of loneliness, and desire for intimacy, love, and being generative.

### **1. To meet these objectives during the Orientation Phase:**

- The candidate will seek a realistic appreciation of his family and socio-cultural background as a foundation for fuller self-acceptance and human growth. Formators will help the candidate explore his personal identity, strengths and weaknesses, and his relational skills.
- Formators will help candidates transition from the familiar setting of their homes and cultures to seminary life. They will help the candidates see the value and purposes of the structures of formation. They will assist the candidates, through group processes and individual counsel, to integrate the values of their own culture, and those of other cultures, within the multi-cultural composition of the group.
- Formators will present conferences or workshops on the multiple dynamics of human self-understanding and growth. These could address psycho-sexual development, human affectivity, self-esteem, fruitful relationships, anger and ways of dealing with it, physical health (including eating habits, sleep, and exercise), and feelings of guilt and appropriate ways of dealing

- with them. They may wish to enlist the services of a professional psychologist to make these presentations.
- Candidates ought to discuss with the Director of Human Formation, the challenges and difficulties they encounter in the area of human growth.
  - Candidates will learn to use free time creatively to develop talents and healthy ways of relaxing and channeling energy. They should participate in sports or other exercise to maintain good health.
2. The Associate Phase will continue to employ the strategies listed above, and also the following:
- Candidates will seek an integrated understanding of the reality of the society in which they live, recognizing its strengths as well as its limits, biases, and prejudices.

### C. Spiritual Formation

The objectives of spiritual formation in the pre-internal seminary are to: introduce the candidate to the spiritual dynamics of the Christian and Vincentian life; provide him with a clearer understanding of the moral doctrine of the Church; and assist him to develop concrete ways of following Christ in prayer and action.

1. To meet these objectives in the Orientation Phase:
- Formators will help candidates, through conferences or classes, understand their baptismal calling and the Vincentian vocation as a way of deepening it.
  - Formators will help candidates learn the ways of building an intimate relationship with Jesus through personal and communal prayer, and interior silence.
  - Formators will assist the candidate to see his life within the larger designs of God, recognizing the divine hand at work in preparing him for the very ministry of Christ, after the example of Vincent.
  - Formators will guide candidates in reading the Word of God prayerfully and reflectively as an integral part of their daily life.
  - Each candidate will have a personal Spiritual Director to assist him in his discernment, and in understanding, appreciating, and living the spiritual values of the Congregation. Candidates will be expected to seek the counsel of their Spiritual Director at least once a month.<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> During the orientation phase, much of the work of spiritual direction will focus simply on building a trusting relationship with the candidate to enable him to articulate his thoughts and feelings about his spiritual journey.



- Formators will guide candidates to experience the Eucharist as the central moment of each day, and offer conferences or classes on the Eucharist.
  - Formators will instruct candidates so that they can assist competently at the altar during the liturgy of the Eucharist and at Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.
  - Candidates will participate in the sacrament of Reconciliation regularly, finding God's compassion.
  - Candidates will celebrate the feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary, pray the Rosary and the Novena to Our Lady of Miraculous Medal, and accept Mary as a model of discipleship.
2. The Associate Phase will continue to employ the strategies listed above, and also the following:
- Candidates will follow an order of day which includes Morning and Evening Prayer recited in community, a substantial period of mental prayer, and celebration of the Eucharist. Candidates will read a portion of the Scriptures each day and visit the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament each evening.
  - Candidates will develop the habit of reading spiritual books which treat both the lives of saints and also the themes of a Christian spiritual life. Formators will recommend books which are appropriate to the candidate's age and level of education, and guide him in reading them.
  - Members of the formation team will offer weekly conferences and periodic workshops on Vincentian and spiritual themes such as the five Vincentian virtues, the four vows, the life of Saint Vincent, the early history of the Congregation, and a basic treatment on the Word of God, *lectio divina*, the Eucharist, and the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

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

The objective of intellectual formation in the pre-internal seminary is to help the candidate continue his program of study in preparation for Vincentian ministry. At the secondary school level, this includes laying a foundation for the candidate's intellectual growth to deepen his faith and better discern his Vincentian vocation. At the university level, this also includes providing the candidate with the opportunity to obtain an undergraduate diploma in the liberal arts or sciences, with a major or a heavy concentration in philosophy.

1. To achieve this objective in the Orientation Phase:
  - Candidates will be instructed on basic study methods to develop skills in writing, oral communication, and group discussion.

- Formators will assist candidates to appreciate learning as a necessary means for discerning their vocation and for ministering competently in the contemporary world.
  - Formators will assure that the academic program offers adequate instruction in the moral teaching of the Church. They will also lead candidates in discussion of the Church's moral teaching.
  - Candidates will learn to use modern communication techniques (especially internet) constructively to broaden their intellectual awareness, and proclaim Christian and human values to the widest possible audiences. They will avoid disreputable and deviant sites. Formators will guide candidates, through conferences and individual conversations, in finding and evaluating helpful sites and materials.
2. The Associate Phase will continue to employ the strategies listed above, and also the following:
- Candidates will be provided with the opportunity to participate in an accredited educational program either at the secondary school level or university level.
  - Formators will carefully choose the institutions to which they send candidates and assess the adequacy of the program of study offered. They will be attentive to how well studies of religion (at the secondary school level) and theology (at the university level) keep pace with the study of the sciences and philosophy.
  - Formators will assist candidates to integrate their learning in these different areas.
  - Formators should know what remedial resources are available at the schools for the benefit of candidates who come with a deficient academic background or ability. In conjunction with academic deans, formators will provide each candidate with individual academic counseling, so that he may profit from his schooling as fully as possible.
  - Each candidate will have a quiet place for personal study and also a place where he can safely keep his own books, notes and course work.

## **E. Apostolic Formation**

The objectives of apostolic formation in the pre-internal seminary are to inculcate in candidates love for apostolic life in the spirit of St. Vincent, and provide them with supervised experience of service to the poor.

1. To achieve this objective in the Orientation Phase:
  - Formators will help the candidate understand that the primary means of witnessing to Christ is to acquire the disposition and sentiments of Christ.
  - Formators will present general information to candidates regarding the apostolic dimension of Christian life and the mission of the Congregation. In particular, they will describe the apostolic activities the confreres do in the province.
  - Formators will provide candidates with experiences of those who are poor and the conditions of their lives, having them visit and serve the poor in the vicinity of the seminary.
2. The Associate Phase will continue to employ the strategies listed above, and also the following:
  - Candidates will be given opportunities to visit diverse sites where confreres of the province and members of the Vincentian Family engage in their apostolic mission.
  - Each candidate will engage in apostolic service to the poor for several hours each week. An apostolic supervisor will guide the candidate in his efforts and offer him periodic opportunities to share his reflections on his experiences, at times putting them into the context of Scriptural accounts.

## **F. Community Formation**

The objective of communal formation in the pre-internal seminary is to initiate the candidates into community life, providing them with the experience of living together as brothers in faith, supporting one another in the task of discerning their vocation.

1. The following strategies will help achieve this objective during the Orientation Phase:
  - The candidate will come to understand, through presentations on the nature and goals of the Congregation, that community is fundamental to the Vincentian life.
  - With formators' assistance, candidates will seek to obtain qualities which foster healthy relationships and life in community: trust, respect for others, openness, sincerity, good manners, compassion, kindness, flexibility, transparency, truthfulness in word and action, and a concern for justice.
  - Candidates will be encouraged to form friendships within the community. At the same time, they will be counseled to avoid exclusiveness in their relationships, which can become divisive and detrimental to Christian brotherhood.

- Candidates will take care of the physical environment of the community, keeping its resources in good condition and using them moderately so they are also available for others.
  - Formators will assist candidates to appreciate diversity, and to interact creatively and constructively with their companions from other cultures and ethnic groups to build community.
  - Formators will arrange for candidates programs of common prayer, study, manual labor, recreation, and apostolic ministry to foster communal and fraternal life.
  - Formators will arrange programs to help group dynamics among the candidates, such as working in small groups to find support in dealing with struggles as they transition into community living (possibly as part of weekly house meetings or monthly days of recollection), or workshops with a psychologist who can offer them tools for better communal living.
2. The Associate Phase will continue to employ the strategies listed above and also following:
- Each candidate will meet at least once a month with the Formation Director to discuss his personal growth in his life in community.
  - Formators will implement a communal rule of life, appropriate to age of the group, to regulate the day to day living of the members of the community, and articulate the values that lie behind community practices.
  - Formators will explain the role of authority and obedience in community from human and Christian perspectives, including those which arise from our being a society of apostolic life.

### SECTION 3

#### PROFILE OF CANDIDATES COMPLETING EACH PHASE OF PRE-INTERNAL SEMINARY FORMATION

##### **A. Profile of the Candidate Completing the Orientation Phase of the Pre-Internal Seminary**

At the completion of the Orientation Phase, for his advancement, the candidate will manifest:

1. Basic understanding of the life of Saint Vincent and the Vincen-tian charism, and desire to learn more about the Congregation and grow in its life. He will speak of his discernment openly with his formators.

2. Promptitude and regularity in meeting the demands of the seminary schedule, especially with regard to common prayer, common recreation, conferences, and classes.
3. Discipline in study, to be shown by having completed the courses of study with passing grades and having developed effective study habits.
4. Ability to live in community harmoniously, with genuine respect for his formators and peers, especially those who are of different cultures. He will also manifest a grateful and generous spirit toward the community, contributing time and effort in keeping the house and environment clean and in good order.
5. Willingness to give himself in ministry to those who are poor through his apostolic service.
6. Ability to learn from others, especially his formators.

## **B. Profile of the Candidate upon Completing the Entire Pre-Internal Seminary Program**

At the conclusion of the Associate Phase, the candidate will have met the pre-requisites for entering the internal seminary. These include having shown:

1. Genuine appreciation of ways of relating to Christ as friend, guide, and saving Lord.
2. Basic appreciation of Saint Vincent's life, spiritual journey and motivation, and mission.
3. A disciplined embrace of the life of prayer in the Congregation, especially by faithful participation in Morning and Evening Prayer, daily mental prayer, daily Eucharist, and devotion to Mary.
4. Ability to live a morally upright life supportive of others who seek Christ, and affective maturity which indicates a capacity to live celibate chastity.
5. A trusting relationship with his formators, especially his Formation Director and Spiritual Director.
6. Satisfactory growth in self-knowledge and comfort with his gifts and limitations. He will have shown the capacity to grow in overcoming his limitations, with a sense of humility.
7. Successful completion of his academic program, whether it be at the secondary school or university level.
8. Successful completion of an appropriate level of religious or theological study.

9. Ability to live and work generously and joyfully in community, in harmony with like-minded peers and also those whose temperaments or cultures differ from his own.
10. Desire to build upon his apostolic experience, especially by coming to know the poor and their needs more fully and by seeking ways of serving them more effectively.
11. Adequate physical health. He will be expected to complete a physical examination and have a doctor's report sent to the Admission Team or the Formation Director of the internal seminary, testifying to his physical health and his ability to do the work of the Congregation.
12. Emotional and psychological health. He is expected to complete a psychological examination and have a psychologist's report sent to the Admission Team or Formation Director of the internal seminary testifying to his emotional health and ability to do the work of the Congregation.

Chapter 4

# Formation at the Level of the Internal Seminary

SECTION 1

## THE SPECIFIC GOAL AND THE CONTEXT OF VINCENTIAN FORMATION AT THE LEVEL OF THE INTERNAL SEMINARY

### A. The Specific Goal of Vincentian Formation at the Level of the Internal Seminary

The goal of Vincentian formation in the internal seminary is to provide the seminarian with a firm foundation for living the life of a Vincentian missionary, committed to “following Christ, evangelizing the poor.” This level of formation can be likened to that of a sprouting plant in process of developing deep roots for a stable and fruitful life in the Congregation.

To clarify this goal, it is helpful to compare the internal seminary of a society of apostolic life and a novitiate, properly so-called, of a religious community. St. Vincent did not wish the Congregation or its members to be “religious” (in the canonical sense), or bound by the obligations of monastic life, not even by the obligation to recite the Divine Office in common. For St. Vincent, the spirituality of the Congregation, and life in community – as well as the pronouncing of the vows – were intended **to serve the mission**: “following Christ evangelizing the poor.” Our internal seminary, therefore, provides seminarians with opportunities to experience and reflect upon the interplay of Christ-centeredness, prayer, life together, and dedicated service. They begin to live wholeheartedly the Vincentian way of being “contemplatives in action.”

### B. The Context of Vincentian Formation at the Level of the Internal Seminary<sup>23</sup>

The program of the internal seminary will be conducted in a house of the Congregation established specifically for this purpose, to focus the seminarians clearly upon its goal and objectives. At the same time,

---

<sup>23</sup> Among the provinces of the Congregation, candidates seeking entrance to the internal seminary come with varying degrees of education and age levels.

the internal seminary should be near or connected with another house of the Congregation so that the seminarians can meet and work with confreres engaged in ministry for the poor. It should also be located in or near an area of poverty so that the seminarians have the opportunity to experience the poor directly.

Where seminarians are few in number, it would be beneficial for several provinces to develop and support a common, interprovincial, internal seminary program. Visitors, with the consent of their Councils, will decide in which province, and where within that province, the internal seminary will be located.<sup>24</sup> They also decide which confreres from the cooperating provinces are best suited to serve as formation personnel.

The internal seminary program will be at least twelve months in duration. This period can be continuous or interrupted. If it is interrupted, the provincial assembly determines the number of continuous months and the time when the internal seminary is inserted into the course of studies.<sup>25</sup> Care will be taken to enable the seminarian to achieve the internal seminary's goals and objectives while he attends to other demands (such as study). To allot sufficient time in such cases, the internal seminary may be longer than twelve months.

## SECTION 2

### THE OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES OF VINCENTIAN FORMATION AT THE INTERNAL SEMINARY LEVEL

#### A. The Vincentian Axis

The objective of Vincentian formation in the internal seminary is twofold: to provide the seminarian with a broad and detailed understanding of our founder, community, and charism; and to help him develop a disciplined life of prayer and apostolic service. This twofold objective will be fostered by these strategies:

---

In some provinces, candidates enter the internal seminary immediately after secondary school, having completed the pre-internal seminary. In others, candidates enter after university, but will also have completed the pre-internal seminary. In still others, discerners, who have been carefully screened, prepared, and guided, seek admission to the internal seminary without attending the pre-internal seminary. In all cases, candidates will have begun living the Vincentian values, whether in a pre-internal seminary or in a less formal program of formation.

<sup>24</sup> *Statutes* 43.

<sup>25</sup> *Constitutions* 83.



1. The seminarian will learn the meaning of Saint Vincent's words, that "Jesus is the Rule of the mission." To do this:
  - He will develop a loving relationship with Jesus as he is presented to us in the Gospels.
  - He will learn from the example of Jesus: his compassion for others, especially the poor; his personal struggles in preaching and manifesting to others God's kingdom of love, justice and peace; his unwavering dedication to his mission, which called for self-denial, even to the cross; and his constant prayer.
2. The seminarian will develop a thorough knowledge of Saint Vincent, the history of the Congregation, and the historical development of the Vincentian Family. To do this:
  - He will read at least two biographies of Saint Vincent, accompanied with a reading of his letters, his conferences, and the *Common Rules*.
  - He will read the history of the Congregation and attend to the ways, from its simple beginning, it has lived out its missionary character. He will also read the biographies of Vincentian saints and beati, seeing in them the unfolding of the Vincentian charism through many centuries.
  - He will study the *Constitutions and Statutes of the Congregation*. He will seek from his formators a clear understanding of the implications of these norms and an appreciation of how they are faithfully lived in his own province and culture.
  - He will study the history of his own province and become familiar with its works, both past and present, and come to know the confreres of the province and their ministries. He will seek from his formators a knowledge of the challenges and the hopes of the province as it moves into the future.
  - He will come to know the Vincentian Family, and reflect upon how Saint Vincent collaborated widely in order to bring the Gospel to the poor. The seminarian will meet Daughters of Charity and other members of the Vincentian Family to appreciate firsthand their work, and the ways Vincentian missionaries, Daughters, and other members of the Vincentian Family effectively collaborate.
3. The seminarian will learn the significance of the five virtues which Saint Vincent regarded as most important for living an effective life as a missionary:
  - **Simplicity**, "which consists in saying things plainly, as they are in our hearts, without useless elaborations, and in doing everything with our minds set on God alone, without deceit or

artifice.”<sup>26</sup> The seminarian will appreciate that this virtue is necessary for an open and effective life in community and in collaborative ministry.

- **Humility**, which frees us from self-sufficiency, and establishes in us an attitude of openness to God and to the poor, and so enables us to be evangelized by them.<sup>27</sup> The seminarian will learn to appreciate that humility does not entail denial of one’s gifts and talents, but rather requires one to recognize, acknowledge, and invest them.
  - **Meekness**, which leads us, after the example of Christ, to be gracious to those around us, especially the lowly, as well as to those who offend us, treating them with affability and understanding.<sup>28</sup> The seminarian will develop habits of listening to others carefully before responding, and seek to understand the needs of others before reacting.
  - **Mortification**, which enables us to live in a state of continual conversion. True Christian mortification enables us to overcome those attachments that hinder our freedom to follow Christ and to face up to the difficulties that are inherent in a missionary apostolate.<sup>29</sup> The seminarian will grow in willingness to deny his own preference – to “die to himself” – precisely to develop his deeper and more authentic self in light of the Gospel.
  - **Zeal**, which expresses the missionary character of the community and shows itself in our readiness to take on the works that the Congregation asks of us in the service of evangelization.<sup>30</sup> The seminarian will pay prayerful attention to the zeal which motivated Christ throughout his public ministry.
4. The seminarian will learn the nature of the four vows as they are pronounced in the Congregation. He will strive to appreciate that:
- **Stability** entails fidelity to God, who calls us to commit ourselves to follow Christ by evangelizing the poor in the Vincentian community for our whole lives.<sup>31</sup> The seminarian will appreciate the possibility, power, and gift of the surrender of the whole of his life to this work of love.
  - **Celibate Chastity** leads us to open our hearts more to God and neighbor without discrimination.<sup>32</sup> The seminarian will grow

<sup>26</sup> *Common Rules* II, 4.

<sup>27</sup> *Common Rules* II, 6-7.

<sup>28</sup> *Common Rules* II, 6.

<sup>29</sup> *Common Rules* II, 8-10.

<sup>30</sup> *Common Rules* II, 11.

<sup>31</sup> *Constitutions* 28; 39.

<sup>32</sup> *Common Rules* IV, 1; *Constitutions* 29; 30.

to appreciate this vow as a means of “loving others in the freedom of being children of God.” He will see that the vow does not stifle true intimacy or generativity, but enables him to deepen those profound desires through fraternal love and apostolic fruitfulness.

- **Poverty** identifies us with Christ and frees us to share the life of the poor and employ all we have in their service. It asks us to regard our materials goods as their patrimony.<sup>33</sup> The seminarian will come to understand that this vow fosters freedom to love and care for those in need, and work with them to create more just social systems so that they acquire their rightful share of this world’s goods.
  - **Obedience** identifies us with Christ who did the will of the Father, and frees us to respond to his call, and to the direction of our superiors in the Church and Congregation.<sup>34</sup> The seminarian will appreciate that it is the Constitutions of the Congregation that govern our life and ministry together.
5. The seminarian will come to understand the meaning and value of “good purposes.” He will see in them an opportunity to declare, at the end of the time of the internal seminary, his intention to make a lifetime commitment to the life and mission of the Congregation in the relatively near future.

## B. Human Formation

The objective of human formation in the internal seminary is to enable the seminarian to develop integral self-knowledge and a balanced life-style to support a productive, Vincentian vocation. This objective will require the seminarian to engage in the following strategies:

1. He will speak with formators openly and regularly about his sense of himself, his strengths and struggles.
2. He will reflect upon the ways his human gifts can be developed and serve a Vincentian vocation, as well as the ways his limits may challenge his growth as a Vincentian.
3. He will develop discipline, personal responsibility, collaboration, personal initiative, and the ability to listen to and learn from others in seeking to become a wholesome human being and Vincentian.

---

<sup>33</sup> *Common Rules* III, 1; *Constitutions* 12, 3°; 31.

<sup>34</sup> *Common Rules* V, 1; *Constitutions* 36-38.

4. He will understand the positive dimensions of human sexuality and the need for intimacy and generativity, including his own affectivity and ways of expressing it chastely in a celibate lifestyle. He will learn the meaning and purpose of sexual intercourse, and with the help of his formators, deal with his sexual feelings maturely. He will discuss with his formators his own sexual identity.
5. He will evaluate his feelings toward, and ways of relating to, authority figures. He will respect them, listen to them with openness and trust, while expressing his own views humbly but sincerely.
6. He will evaluate his desire for, or dependence upon, material things, including electronic devices, television, and new clothing, to grow in the ability to live simply.
7. He will take care of his physical health. He will maintain a balanced diet, get physical exercise on a regular basis, and get proper sleep.

### C. Spiritual Formation

The objective of spiritual formation in the internal seminary is to provide the seminarian with a deepened spiritual foundation to live the Vincentian vocation consistently and joyfully. The seminarian will embrace the following strategies to achieve this objective:

1. He will attend to Christ's attitudes toward, and ministry to, the poor and those whom Jesus formed as his coworkers. He should learn from the example of Jesus to relate his prayer to action and his ministry to prayer.
2. He will reflect upon and study a portion of the Word of God daily, especially the Gospels, so that he is energized for life in the Community and for service according to its mission. The formators will teach the seminarian the practice of *lectio divina* as a way of opening his mind and heart to God.
3. He will appreciate the flow of the liturgical year and the ways that the different seasons manifest the mystery of Christ and his redemptive love.
4. He will adopt the Vincentian practice of daily mental prayer, together with the local community, for at least a half-hour. Formators will teach him the nature and practice of the different types of mental prayer (discursive, affective, and prayer of simple regard). They should assist him through his times of light and darkness so that he appreciates that God is present and active even when he seems removed and distant.

5. He will grow in ability to find in spirituality and prayer a source of nourishment for apostolic life. He will bring his experience of the poor and their struggles, and his ministry, to prayer.
6. He will join with the local community in celebrating Lauds and Vespers.
7. He will participate daily in the celebration of the Eucharist. He will grow in appreciation of the Eucharistic as nourishment for his life among the poor, in community, and in the world.
8. He will appreciate the role of Mary in her historical life with Jesus and in the Church today. Formators will help him understand the importance of devotion to Mary (and similarly to all the saints, particularly Vincentian saints), and to distinguish exaggerated from genuine Christian devotion. They will help him learn to pray the Rosary in contemplating God's gracious love, manifest in the mysteries of Christ, and assist him to celebrate Marian and Vincentian feasts with understanding and missionary insight.
9. He will meet with a personal Spiritual Director at least once a month to process each of these strategies and advance in the spiritual objectives of the internal seminary program.
10. He will participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation as an opportunity to be strengthened by the Lord's healing love, especially where he senses himself to be struggling with his weaknesses.
11. He will appreciate the Church and its leadership. He will see that the Vincentian vocation is a calling to work with the Church and its leadership harmoniously.
12. He will develop the habit of regular spiritual reading to find support and inspiration for deepening his Christian life and his Vincentian vocation.
13. He will take part in retreats, days of recollection, and other periods of intensive spiritual development to hear God's call more deeply and review his progress in achieving these spiritual objectives.

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

The objective of intellectual formation in the internal seminary is to provide the seminarian with a knowledge of the historical, spiritual, and doctrinal resources which form the bases of contemporary Vincentian spirituality and life. The following strategies will help the seminarian meet this objective:

1. He will learn some of the basic principles of contemporary biblical interpretation, and be introduced to reputable Catholic commentaries on Scripture to assist him in understanding what he reads and studies.
2. He will consult books on the history of the Church and of the society in which Saint Vincent labored, to better understand the Congregation in previous ages. He will read contemporary commentaries on the life of St. Vincent and the history of the Congregation as found in periodicals such as *Vincentiana*.
3. He will read the documents of the Church, particularly the most recent papal encyclicals, the documents of the Second Vatican Council, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and the pastoral letters of the local bishops. Together with his formators, he will process the ways these readings apply to the life of the Congregation and its mission.
4. He will read Catholic periodicals to learn the ways in which people of faith address issues of the day. He should take note of articles which address questions of social justice and the needs of the poor.
5. He may give effort to learning a second language, at least by grasping a basic vocabulary and the fundamentals of grammar that he can build upon later.

## **E. Apostolic Formation**

The objectives of apostolic formation in the internal seminary are to provide the seminarian with experiences of ministry to the poor, and help him understand the ways in which apostolic ministry and spirituality interrelate and feed one another. The following strategies will help him meet these objectives:

1. He will participate in supervised ministry on behalf of the poor for approximately six hours each week, to include some immediate contact with poor persons.
2. He will be guided regularly by the person in charge of apostolic formation in the process of apostolic reflection, to include questions such as: "Where do I experience God in this situation?" "What is God asking?" The seminarian will focus on his experience in ministry and the struggles and needs of the persons he meets.
3. He will develop qualities necessary to serve the poor well: Christ-like evangelical charity; confidence in the Lord's presence; patience in walking with others who desire more than one can reasonably

provide; readiness to listen and to dialogue with others who do not share the same convictions; and self-giving.

4. He will study ways of serving the poor by reading and discussing with his formators, books or articles on the causes of poverty. He will become knowledgeable about the theory and practice of systemic change.
5. He will become acquainted with the ways in which the confreres of his own province – and those of other provinces – minister to the poor. In this way he will learn from confreres who manifest wisdom and zeal in fulfilling their Vincentian calling in ministry.
6. He will become aware of, and open to, missions “*ad gentes*” as a possible way he may be called to serve as a Vincentian in his own life.

## **F. Community Formation**

The objective of the communal formation in the internal seminary is to foster among the seminarians, true Christian fraternity: an ability to live and work harmoniously with persons who have a similar vocation but also a variety of gifts and different personalities. The following strategies should be implemented to achieve this objective:

1. The seminarian will appreciate his fellow seminarians, formators, and other confreres with whom he may live as members of one family in the Lord. He will learn from those who are different in convictions and/or temperament, listening attentively, and sharing his own views humbly but forthrightly. He will appreciate that shared differences can be a source of creativity accomplishing more together than the sum of what individuals could accomplish alone.
2. The seminarian will recognize that tension and conflicts are inevitable in community, and will be guided so that he can face these situations with mutual forgiveness.
3. The seminarian will participate faithfully in scheduled prayer and liturgy. He will be on time for meals, and share himself actively at community meetings and common recreation.
4. The seminarian will respect the prayer and work of others by maintaining an atmosphere of silence. He will respect the legitimate privacy of others and maintain confidentiality when he is asked to do so or when circumstances require it.
5. The seminarian will participate in formulating the House Plan, learning to embrace simplicity and growing to live as the poor, holding everything in common.

6. The seminarian will learn to use the resources of the community with moderation, recognizing that they are not his personal property but are goods which ought to be available to all.
7. The seminarian will feel free to share his opinion and express his personal needs, and he will respect the response and/or guidance he may then receive.
8. The seminarian will be present at community celebrations when confreres from different houses of the province gather, and at domestic and provincial assemblies. In this way, he will come to know the confreres better, and prepare to commit himself to the province when he pronounces “good purposes.”
9. The seminarian will share responsibility for the well-being of the local community, serving the needs of others, especially of those who may suffer physical disability due to sickness or age. He will help clean the house and show respect for community property, including learning the proper ways of operating the different appliances before he uses them.
10. The seminarian will be instructed in creating a budget, and learn the basic processes of financial management. He will come to understand the financial state of the house or province, and begin to acquire the basic skills needed to serve as local or provincial treasurer in the future.

### SECTION 3

#### **PROFILE OF THE SEMINARIAN COMPLETING THE STAGE OF INTERNAL SEMINARY FORMATION**

At the time of completing the internal seminary, the seminarian will be expected to have acquired the following personal characteristics and patterns of life:

1. He will have come to appreciate the meaning of Saint Vincent’s words: “Jesus Christ is the Rule of the Mission,” and have developed a personal relationship with Christ.
2. He will have manifested consistency in participating in communal mental prayer and liturgy.
3. He will, through his way of relating to the Lord in prayer, have shown to members of the community and to those he serves apostolically that he can live the celibate life happily and fruitfully.
4. He will have manifested commitment to a simple lifestyle through his respect for the goods of the community and moderation in seeking to meet his own material needs.



5. He will have manifested openness to formators and a continued willingness to learn from them.
6. He will have engaged in community discussion and shown the potential to participate productively in communal decision-making.
7. He will have exhibited comfort in relating to those who are poor and treated them with respect.
8. He will have a basic understanding of, and a desire for, priesthood or brotherhood as it is lived in the Vincentian community.
9. He will have the intellectual ability to engage in the theological education necessary for effective priestly ministry or the theological/professional education necessary for effective ministry as a brother.
10. He will have manifested a commitment to pursuing a life in accord with the *Constitutions and Statutes of the Congregation*.

## 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-

---

<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.

## Chapter 6

# Formation of Brothers at the Post-Internal Seminary Level

### **Introduction**

*Everything stated in the Constitutions and Statutes regarding formation applies to the training of brothers.*<sup>36</sup>

Up to this stage of formation, all candidates will have received the same formation, with no distinction for which path, priesthood or brotherhood, they will take as Vincentian missionaries.<sup>37</sup> During the internal seminary, however, candidates become members of the Congregation and will have made a decision on whether to become a brother or priest. This chapter of the *Ratio* provides guidelines for the formation of brothers. It parallels the treatment of formation for priests in the major seminary in the next chapter.

### **SECTION 1**

### **THE IDENTITY OF A BROTHER**

#### **A. The Identity of the Brother in the Church**

To contextualize this chapter of the *Ratio* within the history of the Church, it is advantageous to point out premises which have given rise to the brotherhood and ground its identity.

1. To be a brother is to inherit the kerygmatic experience of the primitive ecclesial community that practiced fraternal charity, where all members were of *one heart and mind*.<sup>38</sup>
2. The “command” of Jesus on universal brotherhood implies the equality of God’s children: *As for you, do not be called “Rabbi.” You have but one teacher, and you are all brothers.*<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup> *Constitutions*, 91.1.

<sup>37</sup> In some provinces, candidates choose the path of brotherhood or priesthood prior to their entrance to the internal seminary. This may affect the curriculum they follow in their university studies.

<sup>38</sup> *Acts* 2:42-47; 4:32-35.

<sup>39</sup> *Matthew* 23:8.



3. Many congregations of lay origin were established at crucial moments in the history of the Church and society: the Franciscans (the 13<sup>th</sup> century), the Brothers of Saint John of God (the 16<sup>th</sup> century), and the Christian Brothers (the 17<sup>th</sup> century). Many have opted for the poor.
4. By virtue of his baptism, the brother participates in the one priesthood of Christ.<sup>40</sup>
5. In light of the clericalism emphasized at times in the history of the Church, the Second Vatican Council stated that lay consecrated life *is a state for the profession of the evangelical counsels which is complete in itself*.<sup>41</sup>
6. *Vita Consecrata* expresses *great esteem for the kind of consecrated life in which religious brothers provide valuable services of various kinds, inside or outside the community, participating in this way in the mission of proclaiming the Gospel and bearing witness to it with charity in everyday life*.<sup>42</sup>
7. The ministry of the brother has a basis in the teaching of Paul VI, in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (#73) which clearly gave support to lay ministries within the Church, and underscored the significance of the service of the brother in the ecclesial community.<sup>43</sup>

In light of these reflections, this *Ratio* recognizes that the vocation of the brother is not rooted in, nor limited to, supporting the mission of the ordained ministers through engaging in “secular activities.”<sup>44</sup> Rather, it is rooted in discipleship, following Christ bringing “Good News” to others, especially the poor.

## **B. The Identity of the Brother in the Congregation of the Mission**

To be a brother in the Congregation is an authentic Christian, consecrated and Vincentian vocation, *complete in itself, a true gift from God, with its own special content, and not a vocation which is half clerical and half lay*.<sup>45</sup> The brother, distinct from the clerics, is called to live his vocation-mission from the perspective of his consecration

---

<sup>40</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, #10.

<sup>41</sup> *Perfectae Caritatis*, #10.

<sup>42</sup> *Vita Consecrata*, #60.

<sup>43</sup> See also *Puebla*, #804.

<sup>44</sup> For some years now, the understanding of the vocation to the consecrated life has moved toward a radical “rediscovery” of the great charismatic depth of the consecrated lay person.

<sup>45</sup> “Brothers for the Mission”, *Vincentiana* [1989], #2, March-April, pp. 141.

as a layman.<sup>46</sup> The brother will be visibly both a layman and minister, and an equal collaborator of the priests in the life and ministry of the Congregation.

## SECTION 2

### THE SPECIFIC GOALS AND THE CONTEXT OF VINCENTIAN FORMATION OF THE BROTHER AT THE POST-INTERNAL SEMINARY LEVEL

#### A. Specific Goals of the Brother's Formation at the Post-Internal Seminary Level

The goals of post-internal seminary formation for the brother are: to bring the confrere to the point of making a life-long commitment to the Vincentian way of life; assist him in discerning the specific type of apostolic ministry he is called to offer as a Vincentian; and provide him with an initial level of professional competence for that ministry.

#### B. The Context of the Brother's Formation at the Post-Internal Seminary Level

The formation of the brother at this stage can take place in any suitable house of the province. The local community and Visitor, together with the brother's formators, will support his formation and provide him with guidance. If the province is blessed with several brothers in this stage of their formation, it would be beneficial for them to reside in the same local community which may be constituted as a house of formation.

The duration of this level of formation will coincide with the length of time which the *Constitutions* stipulate after the completion of the internal seminary and pronouncement of good purposes. It will include adequate time for the preparation and pronouncement of vows, and also for the brother's initial professional and ministerial training.

---

<sup>46</sup> The new perspectives that have been opened to the brothers do not diminish the value of the traditional domestic ministries through which they have offered valuable service to the Congregation and an extraordinary example of humility and self-sacrifice. The Congregation can never adequately express its gratitude for these services.

---

**SECTION 3****THE OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES FOR THE FORMATION  
OF THE BROTHER  
AT THE POST-INTERNAL SEMINARY LEVEL****A. The Vincentian Axis of Formation**

The objectives of the Vincentian Axis of the formation for the brother at this level are twofold: to help him deepen his appreciation of the spirit of Saint Vincent de Paul; and assist him to embrace that spirit, and bring what he has accomplished in the internal seminary to a more challenging and active world. He will be helped to accomplish these objectives through the following strategies:

1. He will focus his life on Jesus Christ, the “Rule of the Mission,” and make every effort to acquire *those intimate personal attitudes of Christ which our Founder recommended to the members from the beginning: love and reverence towards the Father, compassionate and effective love for the poor, and docility to divine providence.*<sup>47</sup>
2. He will participate in some way in the life and situation of those who are poor since this will draw him closer to their reality and be a sign of the presence of the kingdom of God.
3. He will reflect frequently in prayer and in regular conversation with his formators upon the **five Vincentian virtues**. He will look for opportunities to put these virtues into practice.
4. He will appreciate more deeply the value and practice of the **evangelical counsels** which he will express in the vows of:
  - **Stability** - He will understand that only by consistency in dedicating his life to the poor and by faith-filled perseverance will he be able to deepen in his own spirit Christ’s way of love.
  - **Celibate chastity** - He will recognize more fully the loving power of celibate chastity and see that it is nourished by prayer, fraternal communion, and generous apostolic ministry, all of which entail a Gospel-centered renunciation of self.
  - **Poverty** - He will appreciate more that dependency upon God which enables him to evangelize the poor authentically and effectively, and enter into solidarity with them.<sup>48</sup>
  - **Obedience** - Obedience will involve him in a common search for the will of God *through mutual sharing of experience, and open and responsible dialogue.*<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>47</sup> *Constitutions*, 6.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. *Constitutions*, #31.

<sup>49</sup> *Constitutions*, #37.1.

5. With a missionary spirituality, he will seek the inner freedom to be available for ministry within and beyond the geographical boundaries of his home province.
6. He will regularly reflect upon Saint Vincent's writings, biographies describing his life and mission, the history of the Congregation and of his own province, the life of Saint Louise, and the lives of other members of the Vincentian Family who are saints or beatified.

## **B. Human Formation**

The objective of the human formation of the brother at this level is twofold: to enable him to recognize his personal assets and weaknesses; and help him invest his assets and move beyond his weaknesses in living and serving as a Vincentian. To meet these objectives, the brother, supported by formators and professional counsel as appropriate, will implement these strategies:

1. He will meet regularly with a formator skilled in human formation and his Formation Director to discuss his self-esteem, gifts, limits, and relationship to his family, and the ways these affect his life in community, his apostolic service, his decision on the particular ways he wishes to serve the poor as a Vincentian, and his professional training.
2. He will grow in his skill to develop interpersonal relationships with peers, older members of the community, and those he encounters in his apostolic assignment including supervisors, co-workers, and especially the persons he serves.
3. He will grow in his ability to share himself appropriately with his peers and with the other members of the community, but most particularly with his formators.
4. He will be attentive to, and appreciative of, the views of others as they express themselves at community meetings. He will also offer his own thoughts and opinions humbly, yet confidently, at such meetings.
5. He will grow in his appreciation of human sexuality and the ability to express his desires for intimacy, generativity, and creativity in ways that are personally meaningful and satisfying. He will appreciate more fully that, at root, sexual energy is relational energy that can lead him to true human and spiritual communion with others in respectful, transparent, and mutually cooperative patterns of life.
6. He will evaluate his dependence on material things, desire for comfort and convenience, and his use of community goods.

He will make simplicity real in his life, and develop freedom to live comfortably without accumulating material things which can rob him of time and energy that could better be used for community life and apostolic service.

7. He will reflect on his relationships with authority figures, particularly his parents, noting when and why he has been comfortable or experienced difficulty. He will share his experiences with the confrere entrusted with human formation, to discover ways they support or impede his relationships with current authority figures. He will respect and follow reasonable guidance and decisions of authority, and concurrently, speak of his desires and convictions to authority figures simply and humbly.
8. He will share his hopes and fears regarding a lifelong commitment to celibate chastity, life in community and as a missionary, and ministry to the poor.
9. He will affirm habits of caring for his physical and psychological health including: healthy eating; regular physical exercise; getting an annual physical examination; and maintaining supportive friendships.

### **C. Spiritual Formation**

The objective of the spiritual formation of the brother at this stage of his journey is to assist him to further interiorize and live out the spiritual values and practices of the Congregation. To achieve this objective, he and his formators will employ these strategies:

1. He will deepen his appreciation of his baptismal consecration which is the foundation of a brother's lay consecration in the Congregation. He will develop a growing intimate relationship with Christ as his Teacher, Lord, and Master – considering his calling to discipleship as of prime importance.
2. In and with Christ, he will grow in intimate union with the Father, seeking to abide by the Father's will.
3. He will grow in understanding how God is active in himself, the community, and the world, transforming all through the action of his Spirit. He will be mindful of Christ's conviction of being sent forth by the Spirit to bring Good News to the poor. He will develop the practice of calling on the Spirit to bless his service for others, personal study, and tasks he undertakes for the benefit of the community.
4. He will seek to see Christ in the person of the poor. He will also develop the practice of bringing the poor and their needs to prayer.

5. He will meditate diligently on the Word of God, especially through *lectio divina*.
6. He will be exact in joining with the community in personal meditation as part of its daily prayer. He will find support in this practice from the words of St. Vincent, who expressed his conviction saying: “Give me a man of prayer and he will be able to do anything.”<sup>50</sup>
7. He will participate regularly in the celebration of the liturgy of the hours.
8. He will live the sacramental life of the Church more deeply, especially daily celebration of the Eucharist.
9. He will honor the Virgin Mary to discover in her a most caring companion in journeying with Christ. He will celebrate her feasts in the ways specific to the culture and practices of his provincial community.
10. He will practice examination of conscience and regularly participate in the sacrament of Reconciliation. He will come to see in these the Lord calling him to continual growth and conversion, and also the grace-filled encouragement of the Spirit.
11. He will practice faith sharing for the benefit of the whole community and its individual members.
12. He will meet with a personal Spiritual Director on a monthly basis, and learn from his counsel.<sup>51</sup>
13. He will participate in monthly and annual retreats for renewing his commitment to living in communion with Christ and the members of his local community, and for deepening his missionary fervor to evangelize the poor.
14. Meeting with his Spiritual Director and other formators, he will discern the specific ways he is called to serve the poor as a Vincentian, taking note of his specific gifts as well as the multiple needs of the poor, and recognizing the importance of adequate preparation and training if he is to serve those needs competently. He will bring those considerations to prayer.
15. In accord with the needs of evangelization and after adequate discernment, the brother may receive and serve in the lay ministries of lector and acolyte.
16. Together with his Spiritual Director and Formation Director, he will prepare for his definitive commitment to the Congregation

---

<sup>50</sup> *Correspondence, Conferences, and Documents*, XI: 76.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. *Statutes*, #50.

and the pronouncement of vows. He will be given the opportunity to make a retreat for at least three days prior to his pronouncing these vows.

#### **D. Intellectual Formation – Theological and Professional**

The objective of the intellectual formation of the brother at this level of formation is twofold: to provide him with theological background so that he might more fully and responsibly bring his faith into his life in the Congregation; and provide him with professional training so that he can serve the poor well or work competently and effectively in the formation of other ministers who seek to serve the poor. To accomplish these objectives, he will engage in the following strategies with the help of his formators:

1. He will seek formal theological education at a Catholic university, theological school or seminary,<sup>52</sup> to embrace his faith with maturity and participate in the life, conversations, and the decision-making of the community with fuller ease and personal initiative.<sup>53</sup> This will help him to bring his faith more effectively to his ministry, and to discussions and planning with others engaged in ministries for the poor.<sup>54</sup>
2. He will study the social doctrine of the Church, and reflect upon the ways it is grounded in the life and mission of Christ, guides our Vincentian life and mission, and is concretely applied.
3. He will become more aware of *the factors that cause an unequal distribution of the world's goods, so that we can better carry out our prophetic task of evangelization.*<sup>55</sup> He will pay careful attention to the theory and practice of systemic change, finding ways of empowering the poor to participate in their own advancement as fully integrated and equal members of society.

---

<sup>52</sup> In this regard, it is worth noting the stipulation of *CIC* 229.2: They (lay persons) also possess the right to acquire that fuller knowledge of the sacred sciences which are taught in ecclesiastical universities and faculties or institutions of religious sciences, by attending classes there and pursuing academic degrees.

<sup>53</sup> This course of study will differ from that required for the priesthood in length of time, and number of credits and courses. Theological study for brothers is intended to provide them with a fuller, adult faith formation.

<sup>54</sup> Brothers and priests cooperate fully in missionary work. This ministry supposes the adequate theological formation of brothers and their ability to give witness to Christ as one engages in various secular works, catechizes, motivates people to honor God through good example, and analyzes current problems in light of the Word of God.

<sup>55</sup> *Constitutions*, #12.2.

4. He will read Catholic periodicals to remain conversant with theological and pastoral perspectives. This will enable him to bring his faith to the contemporary Church and world with insight, and to develop a critical awareness of reality, moving beyond what is presented in the secular media.
5. He will participate in convocations and workshops conducted by the province as it seeks to foster ongoing formation in community life and apostolic service.
6. He will be given the opportunity to participate in workshops or other programs sponsored by other societies of apostolic life that assist participants to deepen their appreciation of consecrated life and service to the poor. These can also help him grasp more fully his identity as a brother in the Congregation of the Mission, as he meets with brothers of other congregations.
7. In accord with his gifts, abilities and interests, he will have opportunity not only to take courses in technical and theological areas (including the humanities), but also to acquire a true profession. For example, he could seek professional formation as a catechist, pastoral agent, social worker, medical professional, accountant, professor, librarian, architect, civil engineer, lawyer, nurse, carpenter, musician, or chef. He will be encouraged by the fact that evangelization of the poor *does not stifle diverse talents and gifts but directs them to the service of the mission.*<sup>56</sup>
8. He will also be given the opportunity to acquire adequate training for competent service within the Congregation as a treasurer, administrator, or formator (i.e., ministries that do not depend on Orders), if he is needed for one of these ministries.
9. In accord with the missionary character of his vocation, the brother will be given the opportunity to study missiology and learn another language.

## E. Apostolic Formation

The objective of the apostolic dimension of the brother's formation at this stage is to provide him with a concentrated experience of Vincentian ministry so that he can better discern his aptitude, personal gifts, and specific calling within Vincentian ministry. To fulfill this objective, with the support of his formators:

1. He will maintain regular contact with some local Christian community whose members are poor and/or share in the reality of

---

<sup>56</sup> *Constitutions*, #25.2.



poverty. This may involve him in serving in one or more locations and ministries.

2. He will meet with his ministry supervisor regularly to reflect upon the spiritual dimensions of his service and the practical ways he may enter into that service more fruitfully. He will share the aspects of the ministry which he may struggle with, as well as those which are easier for him and seem helpful to others.
3. Under the guidance of formators, he will participate in theological reflection on his apostolic ministry. If possible, he will also do this with a group of brothers in this level of formation and the local community.
4. He will become aware of the multiple needs of the poor and the complexities of ministering to those needs. He will allow this awareness to lead him to discern his own gifts and desires for alleviating those needs, and the ways the Lord may be calling him to give himself in professional service as a Vincentian.
5. He will be given opportunities to be in contact with the other branches and members of the Vincentian Family to learn the value of ministering with them, and the importance of being united together in order to serve the poor in a more effective manner.

## F. Community Formation

The objective of community formation at this stage of the brother's journey is to assist him to relate to a wider age group of confreres with multiple apostolic experiences, sharing the different gifts they bring to community as they live and work together. To accomplish this objective, with support of his formators:

1. He will regularly review the *Constitutions and Statutes of the Congregation* and the Provincial Norms, recognizing that he has all the rights and obligations they contain, and appreciating their significance for life in the local community.
2. He will participate in the "Order of Day" of the local community, especially by sharing in its scheduled times of prayer, and joining the confreres in daily meals and common recreation.
3. He will nourish the fraternal life of the community by sharing in conversation and informal dialogue, a practice *which promotes both personal and community development and renders the work of evangelization more effective.*<sup>57</sup>

---

<sup>57</sup> *Constitutions*, #21.2.

4. He will be expected to participate in all house meetings, appreciating the different views which other confreres express while freely and humbly expressing his own.
5. He will participate in formulating the local house's Community and Apostolic Plans as means of expressing willingness to live in community and work as a member of a team.
6. He will join in efforts to foster equality, respect, and fraternal relationships among all the members of the community in order to live in union and harmony, and *to get along as good friends*.<sup>58</sup> He will develop appropriate friendships with confreres without becoming exclusive or possessive.
7. He will engage generously in community labor to maintain the house, respect the goods of the community, and embrace simplicity of life.
8. He will come to know the confreres of the wider provincial community by joining in its convocations, assemblies, and celebrations of Vincentian feasts or other events, and spending some portion of his vacation time at different community houses.

#### SECTION 4

#### **PROFILE OF A BROTHER COMPLETING THE STAGE OF POST-INTERNAL SEMINARY FORMATION**

At the conclusion of his post-internal seminary formation, the brother will be ready for his first fulltime assignment as a definitively incorporated confrere. He should manifest the following characteristics:

1. He will be a man centered in Jesus Christ, the "Rule of the Mission."
2. He will be a man of prayer, actively rooted in the spirit and the teaching of Saint Vincent, cultivating the Vincentian virtues and the evangelical counsels accordingly.
3. He will consistently participate in the life and the decision-making of the community, offering his views when appropriate and acting with responsible and generous obedience.
4. He will relate comfortably with men and women of all ages, manifesting a generous concern for their efforts to follow Christ, and respecting appropriate boundaries in all of these relationships.

---

<sup>58</sup> *Common Rules*, VIII.2.

5. He will live simply in community and assist generously in caring for its everyday material needs.
6. He will opt for the poor with conviction that the world needs witness and signs of the universal love of God more than it needs words and theories. He will be convinced that to be in the midst of the poor is his greatest treasure and complete joy.
7. He will work effectively with others in furthering the mission of the Congregation and the Church, complementing priests in pastoral activities. He will be able to work autonomously, but in conformity with the Apostolic Plan of the province or local community.
8. He will have identified well his own gifts and the specific ways he can contribute to alleviating specific needs of the poor. He will have mastered at least an initial specialized training program which will enable him to serve those in need competently and professionally.
9. He will have acquired a sense of "being a missionary," with an openness and readiness to go wherever he is sent and to move beyond homeland, wherever the needs of the poor call him.

## Chapter 7

# Formation at the Level of the Major Seminary

### SECTION 1

#### THE SPECIFIC GOAL AND THE CONTEXT OF VINCENTIAN FORMATION AT THE LEVEL OF THE MAJOR SEMINARY

##### **A. The Specific Goal of Vincentian Formation at the Major Seminary Level**

Formation in our Congregation is directed especially toward evangelization, charity, and promotion of justice toward the poor.<sup>59</sup> Therefore, the goal of the major seminary is to equip the Vincentian with the spirituality, theological knowledge,<sup>60</sup> apostolic skills, and ministerial identity needed to serve effectively as a priest of the mission. He is to be dedicated to priestly ministry for the benefit of the poor, directly, and in forming others so that they too will actively follow Christ in concern for those who are poor.

##### **B. The Context and Location of Vincentian Formation at the Major Seminary Level**

The institutions which provide theological formation for our students vary from province to province. In some provinces, students receive their formation in a seminary administered by Vincentians. In others, students receive their academic formation at a school of theology or a diocesan seminary, but are guided in their human, spiritual, communal, and apostolic formation at a Vincentian house of formation. In still others, students reside at a diocesan seminary which takes responsibility for the academic formation of Vincentian students, and also a large measure of their human, spiritual, communal, and apostolic formation. The degree to which the Vincentian Axis affects formation in the major seminary varies with these differing scenarios.

---

<sup>59</sup> *Constitutions* 87, 2; 37<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, *Lines of Action* 10; 31, 2.

<sup>60</sup> In some provinces, the major seminary also provides philosophical education. The goals, objectives, and strategies detailed in this chapter do not preclude the possibility of reserving philosophical studies to the major seminary.

This is especially significant where provinces use the resources of the diocesan seminary in forming Vincentian students for the priesthood. There are many similarities between the ministry and life of diocesan priests and that of Vincentian priests, and also many differences. A diocesan priest's identity and apostolic work are normally geographically defined, and meet the sacramental needs of the diocese. By contrast, the identity of a priest who is a religious or a member of a society of apostolic life is rooted in the mission and charism of that particular congregation, which only from time to time coincides with the apostolic circumstances of a diocese requiring parish service.

Hence, diocesan seminaries structure priestly formation to foster a vision, acquisition of skills, and life patterns that look toward diocesan and parish ministry. On the other hand, Vincentian formators of our students for priesthood need to assure that the Vincentian charism, objectives in life, and ministry are adequately addressed. Being attentive to these aspects shall not prejudice a genuine positive regard for the education and formation which Vincentian and diocesan students share in common. But it requires conscious effort on part of formators to orientate our students toward their Vincentian heritage and calling.

## SECTION 2

### THE OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES OF VINCENTIAN FORMATION AT THE MAJOR SEMINARY LEVEL

#### A. The Vincentian Axis

The objective of Vincentian formation in the major seminary is to enable the student to bring a Vincentian perspective and the experience of Vincentian Life to his study of theology, life in community, and apostolic ministry so that he will be able to live the Vincentian charism at a deeper level. The formation process is expected to be: centered on Christ;<sup>61</sup> shaped by fidelity to the Word of God; fostered by shared life in a Vincentian community; nourished continually by direct contact with the poor;<sup>62</sup> marked by a readiness and growing capacity to assist in the formation of the clergy and laity to lead them to evangelize the poor;<sup>63</sup> and driven by a missionary spirit.<sup>64</sup> To achieve this objective:

---

<sup>61</sup> *Constitutions* 78, 1.

<sup>62</sup> *Constitutions* 78, 4.

<sup>63</sup> *Constitutions* 1, 3.

<sup>64</sup> *Constitutions* 12, 5; 13; 16; *Statutes* 1.

1. Students will grow in their understanding and living of the five virtues, reflecting on them in prayer, discussing them with formators, and bringing their appreciation of them to communal faith sharing.
2. Students will deepen their knowledge of St. Vincent, his writings, the purpose of our Congregation, the Common Rules, our history, the *Constitutions and Statutes*, other documents of the Congregation, especially more recent ones, and the Provincial Norms, through prayer and by devoting some period of time each week to “Vincentian reading.”
3. Students will increase their knowledge of our Vincentian works and other branches of our Family, especially the Daughters of Charity and Vincentian lay movements.
4. The program will provide regular times of communal reflection on these themes, but especially the Vincentian virtues and vows as students approach their final incorporation into the community.

## **B. Human Formation**

The objective of human formation in the major seminary is twofold: to foster the student’s understanding of his own gifts and limitations; and enable him to invest his gifts freely for the good of the Congregation and its mission. To accomplish this objective, the student and his formators will employ the following strategies:

1. The student will seek to understand the ways his family life and interaction with friends, teachers, authority figures, and persons whom he himself may have served, have shaped his self-understanding and capacity to build interpersonal relationships.
2. He will grow in openness and honesty, and develop the capacity both to listen carefully and to find value in what others offer, as well as to share his own views humbly but with confidence.
3. He will develop skills of reconciliation in moments of interpersonal struggle, recognizing that differences, misunderstanding, and hurt create barriers within community, but are also opportunities for deeper mutual appreciation and growth. He will free himself from needless reactions based on fear of being known or judged.
4. He will grow in his understanding of the human dynamics which undergird the living of the vows, recognizing that “grace builds on nature,” and that consecrated life takes human fulfillment beyond what nature alone can achieve. To carry out this strategy:

- He will identify his hopes, fears, human traits, and previous experiences (his own, his family's and his friends') which give him concern about making a lifelong decision and commitment.
  - He will evaluate the ways he has dealt with fears and struggles in his vocational journey, renewing his commitment to those ways that have been helpful.
  - He will appreciate the humanity of Jesus (tested as we are), his trust in the Father, and his divinity which strengthened and graced his humanity. He will allow the prospect of lifelong commitment to lead him to grow in trust of, and friendship with, Jesus.
  - In prayer and conversation with formators, he will evaluate the ways he envisions the poor, and his own willingness and capacity to serve and love them, no matter how they present themselves.
  - He will assess his willingness to live and work with others who have views and patterns of working different from his own. He will discuss his feelings in this regard with his formators.
5. The student – through prayer, reading, and conversation with formators – will strive to understand more fully the nature, dynamics, goals, and limits of human sexuality, which is at root “relational energy.” He will explore how celibate life promises true human and sexual fulfillment – not as energy leading to an ecstatic moment of physical sexual expression – but as energy for deepening relationality, generativity, and mutual love. In light of these considerations:
- He will explore insights into human sexuality which contemporary psychology and philosophy offer in helpful books and articles. He will seek to integrate his own experience of his sexuality with the insights and understanding of each of these fields of knowledge.
  - He will understand the teaching of the Church with regard to human sexuality, particularly as that teaching reflects contemporary psychological and philosophical insight.
  - He will speak honestly with formators about his struggles and growth in living chastely. He will see the importance of building open, respectful, and caring human relationships as support for, and the fruit of, chaste sexual integration, enabling him to relate comfortably and effectively with men and women in his life and ministry.
  - He will be able to engage the assistance of professional psychological counseling if, in consultation with his Spiritual Director and/or Formation Director, he judges it would be helpful.

- In these cases, clear agreements shall be worked out between the student, counselor, and members of the formation team to safeguard his personal freedom and confidentiality.<sup>65</sup>
- He will embrace *stabilizing factors* to help him live out his commitment faithfully. These include: praying faithfully in intimate union with Christ;<sup>66</sup> living in community with others as “friends who care for one another deeply;”<sup>67</sup> dedicating himself joyfully to the Vincentian apostolic mission; forming habits of personal discipline and asceticism; developing prudence in relationships, conscious of the dangers that certain situations can hold;<sup>68</sup> and living a balanced lifestyle.
  - The student and formators will understand and abide by civil and Church norms about pedophilia.
  - The student and formators will understand and adhere to Church guidelines (promulgated on November 4, 2005) for evaluating and/or assisting students with homosexual tendencies.
6. The vow of poverty facilitates a human and Christian response to material disparity and the human cry for a more just world. By asking us to give our earnings to community and share with one another, and also by asking the Congregation to share its possessions with those who are most in need, the vow frees us to reach out to others in need. In light of these observations:
- Each student will identify ways in which he is overly dependent on material things and seeks comforts which impede his freedom to serve others wholeheartedly.
  - Each student will experience the ways in which the living of his vow of poverty is freeing, and how it gives him and the community the opportunity to experience God’s reign, and enables us to dedicate our thought, creativity, and energy to serving those who are marginalized and poor.
7. Obedience can be seen as an infringement on personal autonomy. A fuller understanding of human dynamics and values, however, underlies the vow of obedience. Religious authority and obedience integrate one’s individual freedom and independence with that of others as all seek life together with a common mission. Hence:
- Each student will bring to prayer and conversation with formators, how his past feelings and attitudes toward parents, previous formators, teachers and other persons in authority, affect his manner of relating with persons in authority today. He will

---

<sup>65</sup> See *Codex Iuris Canonici*, 220.

<sup>66</sup> *Constitutions*, 30.

<sup>67</sup> *Common Rules*, VIII, 2.

<sup>68</sup> *Common Rules*, IV, 2, 4.



implement ways of moving beyond those feelings and attitudes which may hinder his relating with authority.

- Each student will also reflect upon the times when he may have exercised some form of authority or leadership, recalling the factors which made those opportunities difficult or easy.
8. Each student will maintain a healthy diet, exercise regularly, and seek a regular physical examination.

### C. Spiritual Formation

The objective of spiritual formation in the major seminary is to deepen the student's relationship with Christ, as he prepares to evangelize the poor in priestly ministry. The following strategies will help achieve this objective:

1. Since Christ, incarnate as the Evangelizer of the Poor, is the light and strength of the Vincentian priestly vocation, students shall have a greater knowledge of, and love for, Christ and his mission.<sup>69</sup>
2. Since communion with the Triune God is the foundation of Christian life and a model of Christian community, students will grow in their appreciation that all life and holiness are gifts of the Father's love, and experience more fully the presence and action of God's Spirit within us.
3. Students will grow in love and confidence toward Mary, who, according to St. Vincent, understood with greater depth than all others the evangelical teachings, and made them a reality in her life.<sup>70</sup>
4. Students will love and serve the Church, the Body of Christ. They will understand how Vincentian ministry becomes fruitful by respecting and working in harmony with Church leadership.
5. Students will participate regularly in the spiritual exercises of the Congregation. These include:
  - daily participation in the Eucharist, as the central moment of the communal living of faith;<sup>71</sup>
  - communal celebration of Lauds and Vespers,<sup>72</sup> mental prayer in common,<sup>73</sup> and daily personal and community prayer;<sup>74</sup>

---

<sup>69</sup> *Common Rules* X, 2; *Constitutions* 1; 48; 77.

<sup>70</sup> *Constitutions* 49, 1; see *Common Rules* X, 4.

<sup>71</sup> *Common Rules* X, 3; *Constitutions* 45, 1.

<sup>72</sup> *Constitutions* 45.

<sup>73</sup> *Statutes* 19.

<sup>74</sup> *Constitutions* 46; 47, 1.

- reading the Word of God, especially the New Testament, and meditating on it, so as not to become “empty preachers of the Word, who do not listen to it from within”;<sup>75</sup>
  - participation in times of deeper spiritual experience: days of recollection, annual retreats, etc.<sup>76</sup>
6. Each student shall have his own Spiritual Director,<sup>77</sup> to whom he shall disclose his conscience humbly and confidently so as to walk more surely in the way of the Lord.<sup>78</sup> A missionary of the Congregation shall be named as Spiritual Director of the major seminary, but students shall remain free to approach any other priest approved for this function.<sup>79</sup>
  7. Each student shall have an ordinary confessor, although he is free to confess to any priest.<sup>80</sup>
  8. Students, with the aid of the formation team, shall develop a spirituality of the vows in the service of the mission, following Christ the Evangelizer of the Poor.<sup>81</sup>
  9. Students will serve in the ministries of lector and acolyte to deepen their personal appreciation of the Word of God and the Eucharist.
  10. Students will look forward to Sacred Orders, participating in pre-ordination retreats in order to reflect on their significance and the commitments flowing from them.
  11. Students will seek fuller appreciation of the ways that Jesus, revealed in the Gospels, dealt with the challenges of human relationships, recognizing that he too experienced a full range of human feeling.
  12. Students will allow their study of theology to enter into their prayer life and deepen their relationship with Christ. With the help of their Spiritual Director, they should be challenged by their learning and inquiry to grow in intellectual, spiritual and personal conversion.
  13. Students will bring the poor to prayer, and reflect on how their awareness of the poor, their needs, and the skills necessary to meet them, deepens their awareness of their own need for Christ.

---

<sup>75</sup> *Common Rules X, 8; Constitutions 85, 3.*

<sup>76</sup> *Constitutions 47, 2.*

<sup>77</sup> *Common Rules X, 11; Statutes 19.*

<sup>78</sup> See *Optatam Totius*, 8.

<sup>79</sup> *Codex Iuris Canonici*, 239, 2.

<sup>80</sup> *Common Rules X, 6; Constitutions 45, 2; see Statutes 50; Codex Iuris Canonici*, 246, 4.

<sup>81</sup> *Conferences, Correspondence, Documents XII, 366.*

## D. Intellectual Formation

The objective of intellectual formation in the major seminary is to provide the student with a depth and breadth of theological understanding to lead God's people in the threefold ministry of ordained priesthood: teaching, shepherding, and presiding in liturgical prayer. The following strategies will help meet this objective:

1. In all of his theological studies, the student will give special attention to the Church's doctrinal tradition for advancing God's reign of justice and peace in the twenty-first century. He will recognize that the poor, no less than the Church as a whole, deserve an empowering theological understanding of the Catholic tradition in order to live their calling in Christ fruitfully and joyfully.
2. To follow Christ, who is the "Rule of the Mission," the student will be attentive to the study of Christology as a way of building a richer interpersonal relationship with the Lord. It will help him embrace Jesus as a model for responding to the Father's call to bring about a world of inclusive love and justice, which are the foundations of a true and lasting peace. It will enable the student to find light and support for welcoming and supporting the poor as he encounters them in service.
3. The student will devote himself to study of the Word of God. He will allow that Word to deepen his appreciation of the presence and action of God, through Christ and in his Spirit, as God unfolds his mercy and establishes his justice in the world throughout history. He will study homiletics to acquire the skill of preaching the Good News meaningfully.
4. The student will study liturgy in general, and Eucharistic liturgy in particular. He will develop a prayerful style of presiding, paying careful attention to the General Instruction of the Roman Missal and the rubrics for celebrating the Eucharist.
5. The student will attend carefully to the Church's teaching with regard to social justice. He will seek to discover ways of facilitating social justice nationally and globally, and comprehend systemic change as a way to create a more just society and a means of empowering the poor.
6. To help his commitment to the vows, the student will seek a fuller theological understanding of consecrated life, and its origins and development in the Church.

## E. Apostolic Formation

The importance of apostolic ministry in the major seminary is two-fold. First, it expresses the purpose of the Congregation and the life which the students seek to develop. Secondly, the experience of the struggles of the poor, the challenges of ministering to them, and the gifts of sharing faith and life with them, become the lens for further theological investigation and understanding. Therefore:

1. Vincentian students should engage in some form of apostolic ministry among the poor on a weekly basis.
2. The ministry will be carefully supervised to enable the student to appreciate the values and the limits of this labor, and to develop the discipline and skills to serve wisely and fruitfully.
3. The objectives and amount of time dedicated to this ministry will be planned and agreed upon through a discussion involving the student, the supervisor, and the formator in charge of apostolic formation.
4. The person in charge of apostolic formation will conduct theological reflection involving all the Vincentian students so that each can discuss his experience of ministry in community. The sessions will promote attentiveness to the spiritual depth of the apostolic experience, its Vincentian character, and how the Word of God and contemporary theology both enlighten and are challenged by the experience.
5. Apostolic formation will take advantage of the summer period when the students are not in formal study. During this period, students will be assigned to another community house where they can be engaged in useful apostolic activity.<sup>82</sup> The Director of Apostolic Formation will contact the local superior who will guide the student in his participation in the life of the local community. The Director of Apostolic Formation will also work with a confrere who will supervise the student in his apostolic ministry, and together articulate the objectives of the summer apostolic program. The local superior and the confrere supervisor will write an evaluation of the student's performance during this summer program and send it to the Director of Apostolic Formation within a month after the student has completed it.
6. Apostolic formation may be enhanced by an internship year apart from the major seminary. The Director of Apostolic Formation

---

<sup>82</sup> Where the summer period is three months in duration, the students may be assigned to this local community for eight to ten weeks. When it is shorter, the formation team will determine what length of time is possible for this assignment.

will work out the details of the program and communicate with a local superior and apostolic supervisor in the same ways as he does with the summer apostolic program. The internship year will include a mid-year and final evaluation of the student. The Director of Apostolic Formation should visit the hosting local community once each semester.

## **F. Community Formation**

The objective of communal formation in the major seminary is to foster among students, formators, and other confreres who may live in the community, bonds of shared missionary purpose, fraternal love, and a sense of belonging to one another and to the wider Vincentian Congregation. It will be a time when students come to a deeper possession of their Vincentian identity as they move to the pronouncement of vows, and ordination as deacons and priests. For these reasons, they will attend to the following:

1. They will reflect upon, and periodically share together, the norms of the *Constitutions and Statutes of the Congregation*, circular letters of the Superior General, documents promulgated by the most recent General Assembly, and articles published in *Vincentiana*, as they advance toward pronouncing vows.
2. Students will participate in provincial events, such as convocations and assemblies, to develop a sense of belonging to a wider community, and learn from and contribute to, the ongoing life of the province.
3. Students will reflect upon the ways the four vows make common life possible. They will allow the vows to lead them to care for the community, its resources, members and projects.
4. Students will understand religious authority and obedience as a way of fostering unity among the members of the community, enabling them to take responsibility for the well-being of one another, as well as enabling each to offer his gifts to the community.
5. Students will offer their own thoughts, desires, and difficulties to one another and to the superior in the process of making decisions regarding community life.
6. Students will develop the art of careful listening and a willingness to surrender some of their own preferences and independence for the good of the whole community.
7. Students will respect and care for the material goods given for use of the community, and be attentive to living simply (yet in reasonable comfort), avoiding tendencies toward consumerism or luxury.

8. Students will participate in formulating the annual budget for the local community, and be given the opportunity to review an account of that community's monthly income and expenditures, so that they learn about managing finances and prepare for future service as treasurers of their local community.
9. Special care for community formation will be taken where students live in a house of studies or a diocesan seminary. Such situations can weaken the developing sense of Vincentian identity. In this light:
  - Members of the community should reside in close proximity to promote interaction and sharing.
  - The community should establish times of shared prayer, periodic shared Eucharist, community meetings, faith sharing, and shared recreation.
  - It will be helpful for students and formators to spend some restful vacation time together. It can also be helpful for students to spend time at other community houses when not engaged in study.
  - If students from several provinces are studying together, it will be important that they experience the life and the members of their home province during this formation period.

### SECTION 3

#### **PROFILE OF THE STUDENT COMPLETING HIS FORMATION AT THE MAJOR SEMINARY LEVEL**

At the conclusion of the major seminary, the confrere should be ready for priestly ministry in the Vincentian community, and consistently manifest the following characteristics:

1. He will be able to preach meaningfully to people of different age groups, and unfold Sacred Scripture in a way which touches his hearers' minds and hearts, leading them to a fuller Christian commitment.
2. He will be able to lead the people of Christ prayerfully in liturgical worship.
3. He will be able to articulate the teaching of the Church faithfully and meaningfully in apostolic settings.
4. He will manifest steadfast discipline in participating in the prayer life of the Vincentian community.
5. He will be consistent in participating in the life and the decision-making of the community, offering his views when appropriate, and acting with responsible and generous obedience.

6. He will relate comfortably with men and women of all ages, manifesting concern for their efforts to follow Christ. He will understand and respect appropriate boundaries in all of these relationships.
7. He will manifest dedication to lifting up the lives of those who are poor.
8. He will have acquired a sense of “being a missionary,” with openness and readiness to go wherever he is sent. In accord with the guidelines of the *Ratio Missionum*,<sup>83</sup> he will have the desire and the ability to listen to, and to discern carefully, the invitation to move beyond homeland wherever the needs of the poor may call him.
9. He will have acquired appreciation of formation ministry, not only by having participated in it, but also by understanding the teaching of the Magisterium and the Congregation with respect to formation.

---

<sup>83</sup> See in particular, section 3.3.3.1.

## Chapter 8

# Ongoing Formation

### SECTION 1

## **NATURE, GOALS, AND CONTEXTS OF ONGOING FORMATION**

### **A. Nature of Ongoing Formation**

With the pronouncement of vows (for brothers), or presbyteral ordination (for priests), the confrere completes initial formation and is ready for fulltime ministry. He has reached the maturity, like the full grown tree, to bear fruit. His life now requires greater initiative, autonomy, competence, and responsibility. Ongoing formation refers to the system of relationships and programs which assist adult confreres humanly, spiritually, intellectually, apostolically, and communally – fostering among them Vincentian perspectives, ideals, patterns of living, and ways to advance in communion with the Lord.

### **B. Contexts of Ongoing Formation**

Ongoing formation extends possibly five times longer than initial formation, and has varied contexts. One can consider a confrere's first assignment, his changes of assignments, his taking on the responsibility of being a superior, his moving through "middle age," and his living his "senior years," as different contexts and progressive "stages" of ongoing formation. Each presents new challenges and calls us to live more deeply our Vincentian commitment to: service of the poor, celibate chastity, poverty, obedience and working cooperatively with authority, and to living simply, humbly, gently, selflessly, and zealously.

### **C. Goal of Ongoing Formation**

The goal of ongoing formation is to support the confrere in his Vincentian journey from his final commitment and/or ordination in the Community, to his entrance into eternal life.



## SECTION 2

### THE AGENTS OF ONGOING FORMATION

#### A. The Individual Confrere

The primary human agent of ongoing formation is the confrere himself. It is his responsibility to work toward integrating his needs and gifts as he finds Christ in prayer, community, and in his mission to the poor.

#### B. The Visitor

The Visitor has central responsibility for animating and supporting ongoing formation in the province. He will gather confreres as a province at least annually (in a meeting, convocation, or provincially assembly), to share their lives, aspirations, struggles, and vision of the province and its manner of living in community for the mission today. He will lead the confreres in formulating a Provincial Plan to enable them to work together creatively in their community life and in their ministry to the poor and to those in formation. He will appoint a confrere as Director of Ongoing Formation and establish a committee for ongoing formation so that it is fostered and facilitated. Finally, he should know the gifts, competencies, needs, and desires of each confrere to offer him avenues for personal growth in following Christ in community and ministry.

#### C. The Director of Ongoing Formation

Each province will have a Director of Ongoing Formation who will know the resources for ongoing formation which are available to the confreres. These include programs having an apostolic orientation, such as the formation of formators, and the formation of missionaries "ad gentes," and programs for effectively meeting the needs of the poor, such as training in systemic change. These will also include programs focused on renewal: sabbaticals, retreats, and workshops dealing with personal growth issues. They will include programs of formal education: advanced study and/or post-graduate degrees. The Director of Ongoing Formation assists each confrere as he pursues ongoing formation, offering him information he has gathered on available programs, including their strengths, foci, length, and the type of commitments they require.

#### D. The Local Superior and the Local Community

The local superior mirrors the Visitor as the animator of the local community and in supporting, fostering and guiding the ongoing formation and growth of each confrere. He should understand each con-

frere's needs, strivings, hopes, and successes, as he seeks to develop his life in Christ and in the community, and renew his dedication to the mission. It is also the superior's responsibility to guide the local community in its formulation and periodic evaluation of the House Plan, and an order of day.

### **E. The Spiritual Director**

Unlike initial formation, ongoing formation does not include a distinct person who serves as Spiritual Director as part of a formation team. The confrere himself seeks spiritual accompaniment through a person he names as his Spiritual Director or an intimate, honest, and wise friend with whom he can share openly.

### **F. The Director of Apostolic Formation**

Similarly, ongoing formation does not include a distinct person who serves as Director of Apostolic Formation as part of a formation team. Nevertheless, there are important supports for deepening the apostolic dimension of a confrere's life. The local superior and the members of the ministerial team with whom the confrere serves provide him with opportunities for sharing theological and pastoral reflection. In a way, those to whom a confrere is accountable in ministry serve as apostolic supervisors and/or mentors.

## **SECTION 3**

### **THE OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES OF ONGOING FORMATION**

We are never fully formed; all seasons of a Vincentian's life have formational issues. We are also called in our ongoing formation to continual conversion, both as individual missionaries and as a Congregation.<sup>84</sup>

#### **A. The Vincentian Axis**

The objective of the Vincentian dimension of ongoing formation is to help and encourage the confrere to shape and integrate his entire life in becoming a living expression of Christ, evangelizing the poor today. The following strategies will help meet this objective:

---

<sup>84</sup> This is clear from our *Constitutions*, article 12.6, where we are bid "to live in a state of continuous conversion both on the part of each individual member and on the part of the whole Congregation..."

1. He will read the *Constitutions and Statutes of the Congregation* annually, and share inspirations and challenges from his reading with a Spiritual Director and/or local community in common reflection.
2. He will assist the local community in forming a House Plan and assiduously live according to it.
3. He will respond to the proposals and decisions enacted by the General Assembly, the Superior General and his Council, and provincial assemblies, seeing these as valuable means for enabling the Congregation and confreres to live the Vincentian charism more fully in the world today.
4. He will reflect regularly upon the goals and strategies of his own ministry to relate them explicitly to the Gospel and to the way of Vincent, drawing inspiration from these sources for personal renewal.
5. He, together with the local community, will reflect upon the lives of Vincentian saints and beati, particularly by taking care to celebrate Vincentian feasts liturgically.
6. Together with the local community, he will strive to create a Vincentian focus for morning or evening prayer at least once a week.

## **B. Spiritual Formation**

The objective of the spiritual dimension of ongoing formation is to foster the confrere's ever-deepening union with Christ and his passionate concern for the poor: to build God's kingdom of love, justice, and peace in the world today. To meet this objective:

1. The confrere will make an annual retreat of five days to focus on personal renewal and evaluate how his ministry and life in community have been expressions of his union with Christ.
2. He will share his spiritual journey with other confreres, especially with a Spiritual Director or other confrere with whom he can speak with openness concerning the joys and challenges of his life.
3. He will celebrate the Eucharist daily, and participate regularly in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
4. He will be attentive to the Word of God, particularly as it is presented in the Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours.
5. He will spend quality time each week reading spiritual books and/or periodicals to keep up to date with Christian approaches to religious and pastoral issues of the day.
6. He will seek nourishment from the teachings and documents of Vatican II.

### **C. Intellectual Formation**

The objectives of the intellectual dimension of ongoing formation are to: assist confreres to remain current in theological and pastoral developments within the Church as it faces issues of the contemporary world and their diverse cultural realizations; and assist confreres to acquire the competencies they need for their specific apostolate. These objectives will be met by employing the following strategies:

1. The province will provide confreres with opportunities for formal training as they: enter a new apostolate; assume the role of Spiritual Director (especially serving those in initial formation); become a superior; and prepare to engage in a mission “ad gentes” (linguistic and cultural formation).
2. The province will provide confreres with opportunities for periodic workshops on the ways of addressing current pastoral and community issues which affect Vincentian life and ministry today.
3. The confreres will acquire necessary competencies when they consider and/or accept new ministries.
4. The confrere will consistently read at least one periodical which addresses contemporary pastoral and/or theological issues, and at least two spiritual or theological books annually to nourish his growth in theological understanding, and discuss what he reads with other confreres.

### **D. Apostolic Formation**

The objective of the apostolic dimension of ongoing formation is to support confreres as they: seek to deepen their appreciation of Vincentian ministry; transition from one work to another; seek to exercise creativity in taking on new works; and let go of ministries or placements which no longer serve the Vincentian mission effectively. The following strategies will serve this objective:

1. When beginning a new ministry, each confrere should seek the guidance of a confrere who has experienced that ministry for some period of time.
2. A confrere about to undertake a new ministry that requires special skills should be offered an opportunity to prepare for the ministry through a program of formal education.
3. Each local community will have an Apostolic Plan which envisions ways in which confreres can support one another both in their ministerial labors and in their apostolic reflection.
4. Each local community will include in its House Plan, at least monthly opportunities for communal theological reflection and faith sharing, centered upon the ministries of the confreres.

## **E. Community Formation**

The objective of the communal dimension of ongoing formation is to help confreres develop an increased sense of belonging, being brothers in one family as they journey together in Christ through the varied stages of their lives. The following strategies will foster this objective:

1. Confreres will participate in the establishment of a House Plan and an Order of Day to which they will commit themselves as a covenant to one another.
2. Each confrere will take responsibility for building community by meeting the needs of his brothers and by generously fulfilling any office he holds within the local community.

## **F. Human Formation**

The objectives of the human dimension of ongoing formation are to help confreres maintain their physical and psychological health, and continue to develop their gifts while learning ways to move beyond their human weaknesses. The following strategies will serve these objectives:

1. Confreres will be given opportunities to seek psychological counseling if it will be helpful for further developing their self-understanding and human skills, particularly relational skills.
2. Confreres will care for their physical health by regular physical exercise, maintaining a proper diet, and by seeing a doctor at least annually for a physical examination.

## Conclusion

By his rich legacy, Saint Vincent himself calls us to ongoing formation and conversion. In his own life this call led our Founder to hear the cries of the poor, found seminaries, hold Tuesday Conferences and retreats for clergy, send missionaries far and wide, and imagine that his Little Company could make a lasting contribution to the Church and to the world. St. Vincent never stopped rekindling the gift of God that was within him. As his life moved on, he continued to find new ways to respond to the call of the Lord, while recognizing the need to let go of some aspects of his earlier ministry. With Saint Vincent, we embrace a life of ongoing formation. May God, who has begun this good work in us, bring it to completion.

# APPENDIXES

APPENDIX 1:  
SAMPLE APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION  
TO PRE-INTERNAL SEMINARY

APPENDIX 2:  
PHYSICIAN'S REPORT

APPENDIX 3:  
SAMPLE RELEASE FORM





Appendix 1

# Sample Application for Admission to Pre-Internal Seminary

**Congregation of the Mission**  
**(address)**  
**(phone)**

**PERSONAL PROFILE**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(FIRST) (MIDDLE) (LAST)

Street: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Birth: Month: \_\_\_\_\_ Day: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_  
Place: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Citizenship: \_\_\_\_\_  
If naturalized, give date: Month: \_\_\_\_\_ Day: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_

4. What is your first language? \_\_\_\_\_  
Are you fluent in a second language? Yes:  No:   
If yes, what is that language? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Are you a convert? Yes:  No:  If so state:  
Previous religion or denomination: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of reception into the Church: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Home Parish: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Were you ever in the military service? Yes:  No:   
If so, what branch? \_\_\_\_\_  
During what years? \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

8. Have you ever been arrested and/or been involved in criminal proceedings  
in your home country, another country, or the USA? Yes:  No:   
If so, when (give all dates, if more than once)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



In case of emergency, the Congregation of the Mission should contact the following:

- a) Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone Number (Area Code first): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone Number (Area Code first): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

**EDUCATION**

1. Secondary Schools: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 (CITY AND STATE)  
 Dates: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

2. Universities:

- a) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (NAME)  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 (CITY AND STATE)  
 Dates: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (NAME)  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 (CITY AND STATE)  
 Dates: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_  
 Degree: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Please name and describe your extracurricular activities participated in during secondary school or university:  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

4. Please indicate any offices you held in these activities:  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Dates \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Dates \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Dates \_\_\_\_\_

5. Please list any previous seminaries to which you applied but did not attend:

\_\_\_\_\_ Dates \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Dates \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Dates \_\_\_\_\_

6. Please list any previous seminaries you attended:

\_\_\_\_\_ Dates \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Dates \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Dates \_\_\_\_\_

7. Have you participated in the rite of candidacy? Yes:  No:

If yes, Diocese: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Have you been admitted to the ministry of lector? Yes:  No:

If yes, Place: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Have you been admitted to the ministry of acolyte? Yes:  No:

If yes, Place: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Have you been ordained to holy orders? Yes:  No:

If yes, Place: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

11. Have you ever attended and/or completed a novitiate? Yes:  No:

If yes, Congregation: \_\_\_\_\_ Dates: \_\_\_\_\_

12. Have you ever pronounced vows in a religious congregation?

Yes:  No:

If yes, Congregation: \_\_\_\_\_ Dates: \_\_\_\_\_

**MEDICAL INFORMATION**

1. Are you allergic to any medicines or foods? Yes:  No:

If so, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Do you need a special diet? Yes:  No:

If so, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Do you need any continuing medication for any health problems?

Yes:  No:

If so, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Is there any other medical information that the administration at the Congregation of the Mission should know about you and your health?

Yes:  No:

If so, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Insurance Coverage (all candidates must have health insurance coverage):**

a) Do you have your own plan? Yes:  No:

If so, what company? \_\_\_\_\_

Which plan? \_\_\_\_\_

b) Do you wish to apply for insurance, if possible,  
through the Congregation of the Mission? Yes:  No:

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix 2

# Physician's Report

Name of Candidate: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date of Physical Exam: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Examining Physician: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE ELABORATE BELOW ON POSITIVE FINDINGS**

Height: \_\_\_\_\_ Weight: \_\_\_\_\_ B/P: \_\_\_\_\_ Pulse: \_\_\_\_\_  
 General Nutrition: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Skin: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Eyes: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Ears: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Nose & Throat: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Teeth & Gingiva: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Glands: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Heart: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Lungs: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Abdomen: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Genitalia: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Rectal: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Neuro-Muscular System: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Skeletal (posture): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Vision: R20/\_\_\_\_ L20/\_\_\_\_ Wears corrective lenses? Yes:  No:

**REQUIRED LAB WORK**

CBC \_\_\_\_\_  
 Urinalysis \_\_\_\_\_  
 Albumen \_\_\_\_\_  
 Sugar \_\_\_\_\_  
 PPD (if not done within past year) \_\_\_\_\_  
 SMA-12 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Electrolytes \_\_\_\_\_  
 HIV Titer \_\_\_\_\_  
 VDRL \_\_\_\_\_

Is the candidate under treatment?

Yes:  No:

If yes, please detail: \_\_\_\_\_

Should this candidate have restrictions on physical exercise? Yes:  No:

If yes, please detail: \_\_\_\_\_

Please give any other important information relating to this candidate's physical health:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix 3

# Sample Release Form

**FOR THE RESULTS OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTING**

I, the undersigned, release the written results of my psychological tests to the Provincial Superior of the \_\_\_\_\_ Province of the Congregation of the Mission, to the Vocation Director of the same Province, the Chairperson of Formation Committee, and to the Superior and Formation Director of the Local Community to which I am applying. After the admissions process has been completed, I understand that the results of the tests will be available only to the Chairperson of the Formation Committee and to the Superior and Formation Directors of each community in which I will reside.

I understand that the results of these tests will be used for confidential and professional purposes only. The Vincentians will not give a copy to persons other than those mentioned above without my consent. Once I complete the formation program, the results of these tests will be sent to the provincial files. After two years, these results will be isolated and will be available to no one without my explicit consent. Should I withdraw from the formation program the results of these tests will be destroyed.

Signature of Candidate \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Signature of Evaluator/Witness \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_



# Bibliography

## Sources<sup>85</sup>

- ABELLY, LOUIS. *La Vie du venerable serviteur de Dieu Vincent de Paul*. Paris: Florentin Lambert, 1664.
- COMMISSIONE DEI SUPERIORI GENERALI DEGLI ISTITUTI RELIGIOSI LAICALI PRESSO USG (Unione Superiori Generali). *Hermano en los Institutos Religiosos Laicales*. Roma, 1991.
- CONFERENCE OF MAJOR SUPERIORS OF MEN (in the USA): *Formation for Presbyteral Ministry in Institutes of Religious Life*, October 2011
- CONFERENCIA DEL EPISCOPADO LATINOAMERICANO, V. Aparecida: *Documento Conclusivo*. Bogotá, Colombia: 2007.
- CONFERENCIA DEL EPISCOPADO LATINOAMERICANO, III. Puebla: *La evangelización en el presente y en el futuro de América Latina*. Bogotá, Colombia, 1985.
- CONFERENCIA LATINOAMERICANA DE PROVINCIAS VICENTINAS, "N° 127: Septiembre-Diciembre 2007" (2007). *CLAPVI (Boletín de la Conferencia Latinoamericana de Provincias Vicentinas)*. Primer Encuentro de Hermanos Vicentinos. Santo Domingo, 14-21 octubre 2007, p. 541-605.
- CONFERENCE OF RELIGIOUS OF IRELAND, CHILD PROTECTION TASK FORCE. *Ministry with integrity*. Cori: 2001.
- CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION: 41<sup>st</sup> General Assembly. *Creative Fidelity to the Mission*, Consultation Document. Rome: 2012.
- CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION: GENERAL CURIA. *Constitutions and Statutes of the Congregation of the Mission*, Rome: 1984.
- CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION: GENERAL CURIA. "The Basic Program for the Internal Seminary," *Vincentiana*, 26, no. 5-6 (September-December, 1982).
- CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION: GENERAL CURIA. "Brothers for the Mission," Rome: *Vincentiana*, 33, no. 2 (March-April, 1989).
- CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION: GENERAL CURIA. "Instruction on Stability, Chastity, Poverty, and Obedience in the Congregation of the Mission," Rome: *Vincentiana*, 40, no. 1 (January-February, 1996).
- CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION: GENERAL CURIA. "Program for Vincentian Formation in the Major Seminary of the Congregation of the Mission," *Vincentiana*, 32, no. 2 (March-April 1988).
- CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION: GENERAL CURIA. "Ratio Missionum," *Vincentiana*, 46, no. 1 (January-February 2002).

---

<sup>85</sup> Unlisted among these sources are the multiple unpublished plans of formation prepared by the various provinces of the Congregation and sent to the General Curia prior to the preparation of this present *Ratio*. These documents are available in the archives of the Congregation.

- PROVINCIA DE COLOMBIA. *Directorio de la Pastoral Vocacional*. Bogotá.
- PAUL VI, POPE. *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, Rome: December 8, 1975.
- PAUL VI, POPE. *Ministeria Quaedam*, Rome: August 15, 1972.
- JOHN PAUL II, POPE. *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, Rome: March 25, 1992.
- JOHN PAUL II, POPE. *Vita Consecrata*, Rome: March 25, 2006.
- SACRED CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION. *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis*, 2. Rome: 1985.
- SACRED CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION. *A Guide to Formation in Priestly Celibacy*. Rome: Vatican Press, 1974.
- SACRED CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION. *Guidelines for the use of Psychology in the Admission and Formation of Candidates for the Priesthood*. Rome: Vatican Press, 2008.
- SACRED CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION. *Instruction Concerning the Criteria for the Discernment of Vocations With Regard to Persons with Homosexual Tendencies in View of Their Admission to the Seminary and to Holy Orders*. Rome: Vatican Press, 2005.
- SACRED CONGREGATION FOR RELIGIOUS AND FOR SECULAR INSTITUTES. *Mutuae Relationes*. Rome: Vatican Press, 1978.
- SEMINARIO MAYOR NUESTRA SEÑORA DEL CARMEN. *Perfiles del candidato al sacerdocio a lo largo de las diferentes etapas del proceso formativo. Presbíteros, discípulos y misioneros de Jesús Buen Pastor*. Arquidiócesis de Villavicencio (Colombia), 2011.
- UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS. *The Basic Plan for Ongoing Formation*. Washington, D.C., 2001.
- UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS. *The Program of Priestly Formation*, Fifth Edition. Washington, D.C., 2006.
- VATICAN COUNCIL II. *Optatam Totius*, Rome: October 28, 1965.
- VATICAN COUNCIL II. *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, Rome: December 7, 1965.
- VATICAN COUNCIL II. *Perfectae Caritatis*, Rome: October 28, 1965.
- VINCENT DE PAUL. *Correspondence, Conferences, Documents, Vol. 1-13b*. Brooklyn, NY: New City Press, 1985-2003.
- VINCENT DE PAUL. *Correspondence, Entretiens, Documents, Vol. 1-14*. Paris: Gabalda, 1920-1925.

## Studies

- ANTONELLO, ERMINIO. "Constitutions: fount of the missionary's spiritual life." *Vincentiana*, 44, no. 4-5 (July-October 2000).
- AZCÁRATE, SANTIAGO. "Vincentian Community – Community for the Mission." Congregation of the Mission. *Vincentiana*, 46, no. 3 (May-June 2002).
- BAUSCH, WILLIAM J. *Becoming a Man: Basic Information, Guidance, and Attitudes on Sex for Boys*. Mystic CT: Twenty-third Publications, 1992.

- BERBEGAL, FRANCISCO, C.M. "Cuál es la formación que hoy debe darse a un hermano de la C.M." Conferencia Latinoamericana de Provincias Vicentinas, "Nº 127: Septiembre-Diciembre 2007" (2007). *CLAPVI (Boletín de la Conferencia Latinoamericana de Provincias Vicentinas)*. Santo Domingo, 14-21 octubre 2007, p. 569-575.
- CENCINI, AMEDEO. *The Sentiments of the Son: A Formative Journey in Consecrated Life*. Pauline Books and Media, 2005.
- CHINEYAKA, C.E. *Rooted in Christ*, Ambassador Press 2007, ISBN 978-2107-97-2.
- DODIN, ANDRÉ. *L'esprit vincentien: le secret de saint Vincent de Paul*. Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1981.
- GALIS, T. *Počiatkové formácia kandidátov kňazstva, Kňazský seminár sv. Františka Xaverského*. Baďín 2002.
- GOERGEN, DONALD J., ed. *Being a Priest Today*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992.
- HENNESSY, PAUL K., ed. *A Concert of Charisms: Ordained Ministry in Religious Life*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1997.
- KRAFT, WILLIAM F. *Sexual Dimensions of the Celibate Life*. Kansas City, Kansas: Andrews & McMeel, Inc., 1979.
- LORETO RELIGIOUS FORMATION MINISTRY PROGRAMME. *Our dream for formation*. Dublin: 2010.
- MALONEY, ROBERT P. "As Friends Who Love One Another Deeply: Reflections on Community Living Yesterday and Today," *Vincentiana*, 44, no. 4-5 (July-October 2000).
- MALONEY, ROBERT P. "Being a Vincentian, Being a Formator," *Vincentiana*, 44, no. 2 (March-April 2000).
- MALONEY, ROBERT P. "On The Formation of Formators (A study document used in the General Council to implement some of the recommendations of the General Assembly of 1998)," *Vincentiana*, 44, no. 2 (March-April 2000).
- MALONEY, ROBERT P. *Prologue: La notion de changement systémique*. In: Commission de la Famille Vincentienne pour promouvoir le changement systémique. *Semences d'espoir : Histoires de changement systémique*, 9-18. Paris: Médias-paul, 2009.
- MALONEY, ROBERT P., and others. *Seeds of Hope : Stories of Systemic Change*. Vincentian Family's Commission for Promoting Systemic Change, 2008.
- MALONEY, ROBERT P. "Some Qualities of a Good Formator," *Vincentiana*, 46, no. 4-5 (July-October 2002).
- MALONEY, ROBERT P. *The Way of Vincent De Paul: A Contemporary Spirituality in the Service of the Poor*. Brooklyn, N.Y.: New City Press, 1992.
- PEREZ FLORES, MIGUEL - ORCAJO, ANTONINO. *The Way of Saint Vincent is Our Way*, trans. Charles Plock, et al. Philadelphia: Eastern Province, Congregation of the Mission, 1995.
- QUINTANO, FERNANDO. "Faithful to the Vincentian Identity: Creative in Facing New Challenges," *Vincentiana*, 45, no. 2 (March-April 2001).

- RIDICK, JOYCE. *Treasures in Earthen Vessels: The vows*. New York: Alba House, 1984.
- RYBOLT, JOHN E. "‘As Good Friends’: Reflections on the Development of the Concept of Fraternal Life in the Congregation of the Mission." *Vincentiana*, 37, no. 4-5 (July-October 1993).
- SCHILLEBEECKX, EDWARD. *Celibacy*. New York: Sheed & Ward, 1968.
- SHELTON, CHARLES M. *Adolescent Spirituality: Pastoral Ministry for High School and College Youth*. New York: Crossroad, 1990.
- TURANSKÝ, Š. *Krehkost' duchovného povolania*. Don Bosco 2005, ISBN 80-8074-029-1.

# General Index Year 2014

N. 1

JANUARY-MARCH 2014

## Introduction

- 1 Editor's Note

## From the Superior General

- 3 Letter on the Feast of the Miraculous Medal
- 7 Meeting of Pope Francis with the Superiors General – *Vatican Press Office*
- 12 Foundation Day
- 14 2014: Lent and the Lesson of Lampedusa
- 19 Recent Homilies

## From the General Curia

- 25 Tempo Forte Meeting Summary (December 2013) – *G. Gregory Gay, C.M.*
- 33 Meditation Moment on the Constitutions. Apostolic Activity of the Congregation of the Mission. Constitutions, Part II, Ch. 1, # 10-18  
*G. Gregory Gay, C.M.*
- 39 New Appointments – *G. Gregory Gay, C.M.*

## Spotlight Interview

- 45 An Interview with Fr. Toshio Sato, C.M. Member of the Western Province of the United States – *John T. Maher, C.M., with Toshio Sato, C.M.*

## Theme: *The Vincentian Missionary Parish of Today*

- 53 Editor's Note
- 54 Vincentian Missionary Parishes in the Province of Argentina  
*Juan Carlos Gatti Octavien, C.M.*
- 60 Our Vincentian Mission in Tunis, Tunisia. St. Augustine and St. Fidelis Parishes – *Firmin Mola Mballo, C.M.*
- 65 Living the Vincentian Mission in a Mission "ad gentes". International Mission, El Alto, Bolivia – *Aidan R. Rooney, C.M.*
- 70 Journeying Together: An Indigenous Vincentian Parish in Panama  
*Joseph G. Fitzgerald, C.M.*
- 75 The Experience of the Missionary Parish of Our Lady of Mount Carmel  
*Armand Ntoutou, C.M.*
- 79 Vincentian Parish Ministry in the Chad Mission  
*Onyekachi Sunday Ugwu, C.M.*
- 83 A Vincentian Missionary Parish – *Babu Oonnukallinkal, C.M.*

**Of Current Interest**

89 Vocation and Mission of Laity in the Church and in the World  
*Félix Álvarez Sagredo, C.M.*

105 The French School of Spirituality

**N. 2****APRIL-JUNE 2014****Introduction**

109 Editor's Note

**From the General Curia**

111 Meditation Moment on the Constitutions

118 Tempo Forte Meeting Summary (March 2014)

124 New Appointments

126 2013 Annual Statistics of the Congregation of the Mission

130 New Financial Ordinance

134 Materials from the Preparatory Commission for the 2016 General Assembly

134 *Letter to the Visitors of the Congregation of the Mission*

136 *A Practical Guide for the Provincial Assembly*

148 *A Possible Directory for Running a Provincial Assembly*

151 *"Reflection Sheet" for Domestic and Provincial Assemblies*

155 *Prayer for the Time of Assemblies*

156 *Instructions for Presentation of Posulata to the General Assembly*

**From the Superior General**

159 Recent Homilies

**Spotlight Interview**

163 An Interview with Fr. Wolfgang Pucher, C.M. Member of Province of Austria – *John T. Maher, C.M., with Wolfgang Pucher, C.M.*

**Theme: Pathways in the Congregation and our Charism**

171 Present and Future Pathways for the Congregation of the Mission  
*Javier Álvarez, C.M.*

182 Beatifications in Process for the Vincentian Family  
*Shijo Kanjirathamkunel, C.M.*

189 Vincentian Contributions to the New Evangelization  
*Celestino Fernández, C.M.*

- 202 Summary of the Meeting of the Central American and Panamanian Region  
*Enrique Alagarda, C.M.*
- 215 The 'Audacity of Charity' from a Biblical Viewpoint  
*Patrick J. Griffin, C.M.*

### N. 3

#### JULY-SEPTEMBER 2014

#### Introduction

- 225 Editor's Nore
- 227 About our Authors

#### From the General Curia

- 229 Meditation Moment. Reflection on the Vow of Obedience by the General Curia
- 236 Tempo Forte Summary (June 2014)
- 243 New Appointments at the General Curia

#### From the Superior General

- 245 Letter to the Vincentian Family for the feast of St. Vicent
- 249 Letter to the Vincentian Family on the Plight of Christians in Iraq
- 251 Sunday Mass Homily for JMV Moderators (Paris, 20 July 2014)

#### Spotlight Interview

- 255 An Interview with Fr. Manuel Ginete, C.M. Member of Province of the Philippines – *John T. Maher, C.M., with Manuel Ginete, C.M.*

#### Theme: *Vincentian Bishops Reflect on "Evangelii Gaudium"*

- 263 The Social Dimension of Evangelization  
*Bishop Vicente Bokalic Iglc, C.M. (Argentina)*
- 272 The Social Dimension of Evangelization  
*Bishop George Bou Jaoudé, C.M. (Lebanon)*
- 278 Meditation on "Evangelii Gaudium"  
*Bishop Jorge García Isaza, C.M. (Colombia)*
- 282 The "Francis Effect": One Bishop's Impression  
*Most Reverend David M. O'Connell, C.M., J.C.D., D.D. (USA)*
- 288 Reflection on the Fourth Chapter of "Evangelii Gaudium": The Social Dimension of the Gospel – *Bishop Rolando C. Santos, C.M. (Papua New Guinea)*
- 296 "Evangelii Gaudium" and the Social Dimension of Evangelization  
*Bishop Luis Solé Fa, C.M. (Honduras)*
- 302 "Evangelii Gaudium" and the Vincentian Charism  
✦ *Abune Varghese Thottamkara, C.M. (Ethiopia)*

**N. 4****OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2014**

309 Promulgation of the Ratio Formationis

**RATIO FORMATIONIS**

Congregationis Missionis 2016

313 Table of Contents

319 Preamble

321 CHAPTER 1

General Reflections and Directives for Formation

333 CHAPTER 2

Vocation Ministry Stages of Invitation, Inquiry and Discernment

343 CHAPTER 3

Formation at the Stage of the Pre-Internal Seminary

353 CHAPTER 4

Formation at the Level of the Internal Seminary

364 CHAPTER 5

Formation During an Internship Year

370 CHAPTER 6

Formation of Brothers at the Post-Internal Seminary Level

382 CHAPTER 7

Formation at the Level of the Major Seminary

394 CHAPTER 8

Ongoing Formation

400 Conclusion

**Appendixes**

403 APPENDIX 1

Sample Application for Admission to Pre-Internal Seminary

408 APPENDIX 2

Physician's Report

410 APPENDIX 3

Sample Release Form

411 Bibliography

415 General Index Year 2014



# VINCENTIANA

Quarterly Publication of the Congregation of the Mission

## SUBSCRIPTION FOR 2015

1. The subscription of all the communities of the Congregation of the Mission is paid automatically through their accounts with the Econome General.

2. The individuals who wish to subscribe in their own name should:

- **Direct their subscription to:**

VINCENTIANA  
Congregazione della Missione  
Via dei Capasso, 30  
00164 Roma - Italia  
vincentiana@cmglobal.org

- **Indicate in which language to receive it:**

English       Spanish       French

- **Indicate their complete data:**

**Surnames and Name** .....

**Complete address** .....

**Fax** ..... **E-mail** .....

- **Pay their subscription thus:**

*Members of the Congregation of the Mission* may do so either directly to the Econome General, in the form indicated below, or through their Provincial Econome.

*Other subscribers*, through a bank check in the name of:

*Congregazione della Missione*

3. VINCENTIANA considers renewed automatically all subscriptions that have not been voided or terminated

4. The General Council has determined that VINCENTIANA will be published quarterly so we have so we have set the subscription price at:

**Annual Subscription € 55,00 / \$ 65 USD**



# VINCENTIANA

*Journal Published quarterly  
Congregation of the Mission  
General Curia - Rome - Italy*

58<sup>th</sup> Year - N. 4  
October-December 2014

## **Editor**

John T. Maher, C.M.

## **Editorial Board**

Jean Landousies, C.M.  
Javier Álvarez Munguia, C.M.  
Jorge Luis Rodríguez, C.M.  
Giuseppe Turati, C.M.

## **Publication**

General Curia  
of the Congregation of the Mission  
Via dei Capasso, 30  
00164 Rome (Italy)  
Tel. +39 06 66 13 061  
Fax +39 06 66 63 831  
vincentiana@cmglobal.org

## **Authorization**

Tribunal of Rome  
5 December 1974 - N. 15706

## **Legal Representative**

Mario Di Carlo, C.M.

## **Printer**

Tipolitography Ugo Detti  
Via Girolamo Savonarola, 1  
00195 Rome (Italy)  
Tel./Fax +39 06 39 73 75 32  
info@tipografiadetti.fastwebnet.it

## **Subscriptions for 2015**

€ 55,00 / \$ 65 USD

*Vincentiana is published  
in English, French and Spanish,  
thanks to the collaboration  
of a team of translators*

Cover: Fabio Elias Lorada

**In our next  
issue...**

**Preparing  
for the  
General Assembly  
in 2016**

