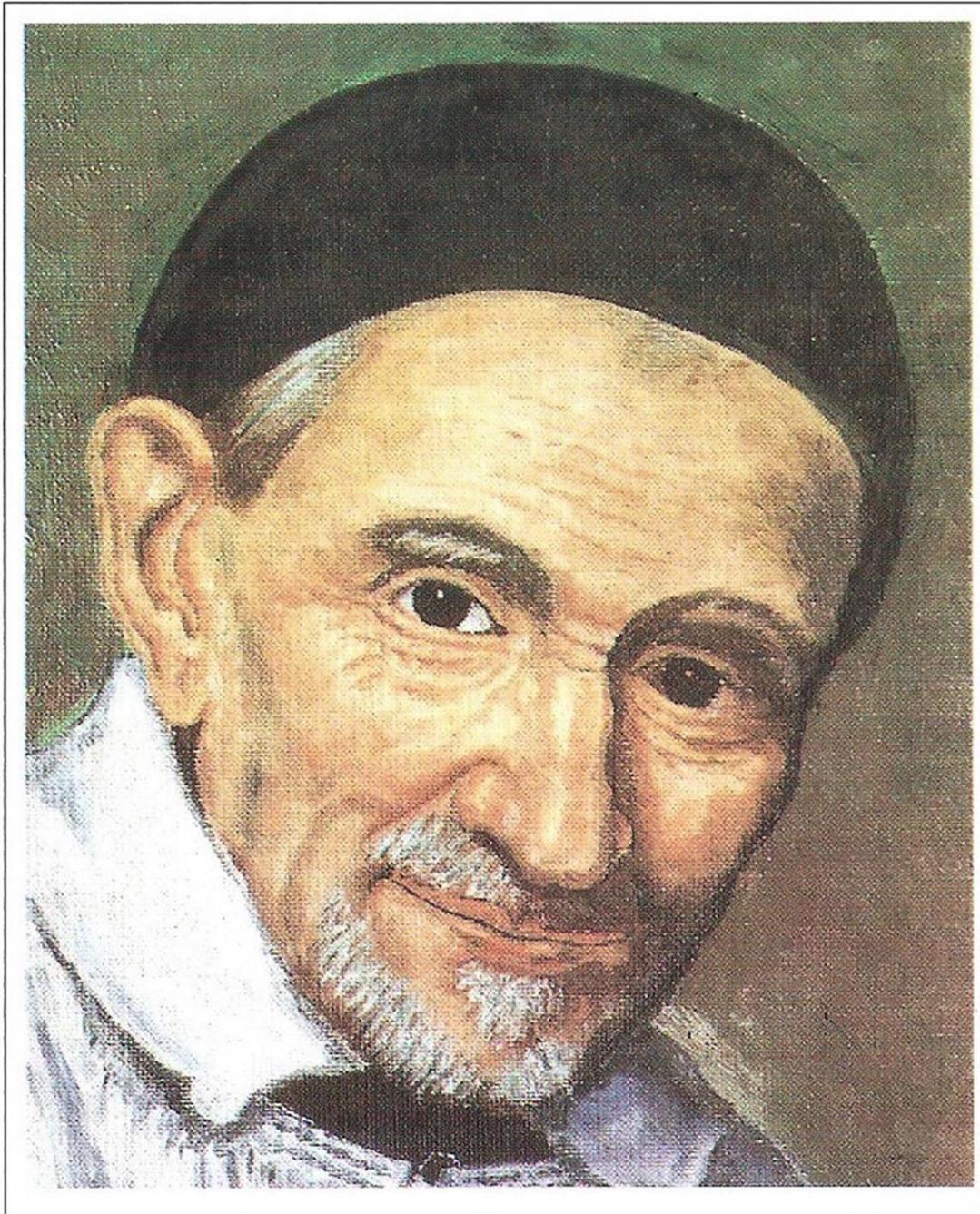


VINCENTIANA

47th YEAR - N. 1

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2003



Provincial Treasurers' Meeting

Rome, 4-9 November 2002

CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION

GENERAL CURIA

To the members of the Congregation of the Mission

My very dear Confreres,

May the grace of Our Lord be always with you!

Except for Jesus, no figure receives more attention in the passion narratives than Peter. The evangelists differ in recounting many significant details about Jesus' final days (what he said at the Last Supper, who was present at his crucifixion, what words he spoke from the cross), but the four gospels agree in relating that Peter denied Jesus three times. Nowhere else in the passion narratives do all the gospels so converge. The story of Peter's denials is an extraordinarily vivid one, filled with colorful details which captured the imagination of the early Christians and remained fixed in their memories: Peter's following Jesus timidly from a distance to the courtyard of the high priest; his warming himself at a blazing fire, where a servant girl recognizes him; his slipping outside furtively to escape her persistent questions; the bystanders' recognizing his Galilean accent; his regressing in three steps from evasion, to denial, to a curse and an oath; the cock's crowing and Jesus' glancing at Peter at precisely the moment of the third denial; his remembering Jesus' prophetic words and weeping bitterly.

In reflecting on Peter's denials, it is important to recall that they have a prelude and a sequence.

Notice three scenes in the prelude. In the earliest scene, a more peaceful one, Peter professes his faith in Jesus publicly (Mk 8:29; Mt 16:16); but now, at the beginning of the passion, he denies with an oath that he even knows him. In a second scene, at the Last Supper, Peter asserts: "Even though all are shaken in faith, it will not be that way with me!" (Mk 14:29), evoking Jesus' prophecy: "I give you my assurance, this very night before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times" (14:30). Peter insists: "Even if I have to die with you, I will not deny you" (14:31); but his words are sheer bravado. Mark's gospel ends the Last Supper abruptly with this unrealistic boast and the drama shifts to the Garden of Olives, where the third scene in the prelude takes place. In the garden, Jesus says to Peter, James and John: "Watch and pray" (cf. Mk 14:34-38). They fall asleep. Then Jesus singles out Peter: "Asleep, Simon? Could you not stay awake for even an hour? Watch and pray that you may not be put to the test. The spirit is willing but nature is weak" (Mk 14:37-38). Watch! Pray! In the prelude, Peter does neither. He does not prepare for the great test which is about to unfold.

The meaning of all this is quite clear, especially in Mark's gospel. Mark is telling us that the disciple who is first named (1:16) and last named (16:7), the one who first professed Jesus publicly (8:29) and who vaunted his willingness to follow Jesus even to death (14:31) fell asleep, did not pray, fled at the crucial moment, and denied with an oath that he even knew Jesus. He was completely unprepared to take up the cross with the Lord and follow him (8:34).

Of course the sequel is a much happier story. Though Peter is slow to believe even after the resurrection (cf. Lk 24:11), Jesus appears to him (Lk 24:34) and leads him to repentance so that, having been converted, he begins to strengthen others (cf. Lk 22:32). Peter professes his love for the Lord three times (Jn 21:15-17), paralleling his three denials. He takes his place as leader of the Twelve, the evangelist of the circumcised (Gal 2:7), and a pillar of the Jerusalem church (Gal 2:9).

Is there any more apt Lenten figure than Peter? Lent is the time for renewing our baptismal profession of faith, for redirecting our lives to the Lord, for resolving anew to take up our cross and follow Jesus. This Lent let me offer you three reflections suggested by Peter's role in the passion narratives.

1. The first reflection is very simple, and very stark too. One need not be a psychiatrist to penetrate the reasons for Peter's failure. He was quite unaware of his own weakness; he was cocky rather than humble. Contrary to Jesus' repeated plea, he did not watch and he did not pray. Peter's weakness stands out all the more forcefully in Mark's gospel if we recall the words with which Jesus, just before the beginning of the passion narrative, introduces a final parable: "Be constantly on the watch! Stay awake! You do not know when the appointed time will come" (13:33). So, Peter's story poses rather direct questions to us this Lent: Do we recognize our own fragility? Do we stand before the Lord humbly, conscious that we "hold his gifts in earthen vessels" (2 Cor 4:7)? Are we alert, on the watch? Are our eyes open to see the Lord still agonizing in the garden? Do we recognize his anguish in street people huddled in doorways for protection against the cold? Does his suffering glance, mirrored in the eyes of hungry children or hopeless mothers, touch our hearts? Do we pray humbly and steadfastly, as Jesus asks? His questioning words to Peter contain one of the most fundamental challenges in the New Testament: "Could you not stay awake for even an hour? Watch and pray that you may not be put to the test" (Mk 14:37). Do we take seriously the urgent imperative of the first of two New Testament letters attributed to Peter, or do we gloss over it as old-fashioned, figurative language: "Be sober and watch, for your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion walks about seeking whom he will devour" (1 Pt 5:8)?

2. In many eras during the history of the Church, hagiographers have hesitated to mention the faults of the saints. The evangelists had no such scruples. They speak with great frankness about Peter's infidelity. But a subtle pedagogy of hope underlies the recounting of this story. The account of Peter's denials does not have a final negative thrust. Rather, the New Testament writers note his renewed, positive role in the post-Resurrection life of the Church (Lk 24:34; Acts 1:15; 1:22; 2:14; 3:1; 4:8; 5:29; 8:32ff; 10:9ff; 1 Cor 15:5). Peter's story is meant to encourage Christians who were already suffering persecution by the time the gospels were written. His death as a martyr, somewhere around the year 64 A.D., stood as a clear witness that, having failed initially, he eventually took up his cross with courage and followed Jesus. Surely, in difficult times, many early Christians, like Peter, experienced their own weaknesses and failed, as we do. But the evangelists assured them that there is hope: change, growth, conversion are always possible. Can great weakness, grave failures, and repentant love coexist within the same person? Peter's story says *yes*.

3. As they tell us about Peter, the evangelists also offer us a dose of sober Christian realism in regard to those who exercise authority in the Church. History provides us with countless examples of authority figures who, like Peter, have been unfaithful. So, in reading the passion narratives' vivid account of Peter's denials, it is very important that we who exercise authority humbly acknowledge our own sinfulness. Are you surprised when you note evident faults in those whom the Lord has called to the service of authority? Christian realism teaches us that it has always been so, not just with Peter, not just with the other apostles who fled, but also with popes, bishops, provincials, and local superiors. The same is true of other authority figures in society, like parents, teachers, judges, doctors. The Church is populated by saints and sinners. In fact, there is a mixture of the saint and the sinner in each of us. Sin and grace struggle deep within the heart of every Christian, including those in authority. The gospels proclaim that, as in the case of Peter, grace will win out (even in us authority figures!) — if, of course, we are disposed to watch and pray.

Those are my thoughts this Lent. In the words of the second letter attributed to Peter in the New Testament, I ask the crucified and risen Lord to strengthen all of us in these days, so that we might keep our eyes fixed on him constantly as “on a lamp shining in a dark place until the first streaks of dawn appear and the morning star rises in your hearts” (2 Pt 1:19).

Your brother in St. Vincent,
Robert P. Maloney, C.M.
Superior General

Rome, 3 December, 2002

To the Visitors of the Congregation of the Mission

My very dear Confreres,

May the grace of Our Lord be always with you!

I write today to thank you for your support of and participation in so many recent projects that our Vincentian Family has undertaken, particularly the campaign against hunger which we are engaging in together and also last July's Vincentian Month for the advisors of the lay groups of our Family.

The campaign against hunger has evoked a remarkable response. I have received letters describing a huge number of creative projects that have been initiated in almost all the countries where our Family exists: breakfast programs for children who would otherwise go to school hungry; self-help projects focusing on agriculture, animal husbandry, and fish farms; the drilling of wells, the constructing of irrigation systems, the purchase of tools, etc.

I am delighted at such wholehearted participation in the campaign, not only because of the large number of projects that have been undertaken, but also because of the inventiveness with which the members of our Family have found ways to attack the problem. A number of groups have also raised significant amounts of money to help finance projects in poorer countries.

The Vincentian Month for the Advisors of our Lay Groups, held in Paris on July 7-26, received very positive evaluations. Besides the formal written comments made at the end of the session, I have received many letters of thanks from the participants speaking about the lively interchange among the advisors themselves, the quality of the conferences, and the warm hospitality. One hundred ten advisors took part, coming from 46 countries throughout the world. The conferences, homilies, and final synthesis have already been published in a double issue of *Vincentiana* 46 (No. 4-5; July-October 2002). I am most grateful to those who put so much labor into organizing the month, particularly Frs. Benjamín Romo, Orlando Escobar, Roberto Lovera, Sr. Margaret Barrett, and Mrs. Marina Costa.

At this meeting we also presented a new document entitled, "Role and Functions of Advisors in the JMV," a copy of which I am enclosing. It is available in English, Spanish, Portuguese and French. This document, as you will see upon reading it, arose at the request of many of the advisors who took part in the First General Assembly of JMV in August 2000. A committee composed of Benjamín Romo, C.M., Jesús María Lusarreta, C.M., Pedro Castillo, C.M., Sr. Pilar Ramo,

D.C. and Miss Edurne Urdampilleta patiently worked through various drafts, seeking input at each step from the National Directors of JMV and from the members of the International Council. I highly recommend it to you. Further copies can be obtained, if you should wish, from the Editorial La Milagrosa, at the address indicated within the booklet or on the enclosed form.

Recently, on October 31, November 1 and 2, we also held, here in Rome, our first meeting of the International Coordinating Council of the Association of the Miraculous Medal. Its members are Fr. Charles Shelby (International Coordinator), Sr. Marie-Yonide Midy (from Haiti, living in Paris), Fr. Janusz Zwolinski (from Poland, living in the Congo) and Señorita Martha Tapia (from Mexico). The Association, as you know, has in recent years spread rapidly to a number of countries. It will soon begin an international web site on which it will publish a trimonthly newsletter in three languages and a monthly catechesis focusing on a re-reading of the Miraculous Medal today.

With you, I thank the Lord for the many blessings that he is pouring out on our Vincentian Family and ask him to help us be generous, creative servants of the poor. I thank you too, the Visitors, for all that you do as animators within your province and within our Family.

Your brother in St. Vincent,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert P. Maloney, C.M." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Robert P. Maloney, C.M.
Superior General

Rome, December 20, 2002

To the Visitors of the Congregation of the Mission

My very dear Confreres,

May the grace of Our Lord be always with you!

As you know, last month the provincial treasurers took part in a week-long meeting here in Rome. At different times during the week, I was with them and sensed among them a deeply fraternal spirit. I also heard much positive feedback about the conferences and the discussions. During the meeting, a number of concrete suggestions emerged. I have just discussed these with the Treasurer General and the members of the General Council.

I am very happy that we were able to offer this ongoing formation experience and hope that it bears much fruit in the administration of the goods of your province, as well as in your future planning. I encourage you to continue to look for other ongoing formation programs for your provincial treasurer. I also urge you to prepare treasurers, on both the provincial and local levels, for the future. In light of the positive evaluations of this meeting, I foresee that similar meetings of all the Provincial Treasurers will continue to be held once every six years or so.

Last year the Treasurer General sent a questionnaire to all the provincial treasurers. In it he asked them if they thought it might be helpful to have regional meetings of provincial treasurers in the intervening years between international meetings. The overwhelming response was that such meetings would be beneficial. During last month's meeting, the treasurers reaffirmed this proposal. Having spoken with the members of the General Council and the Treasurer General, I find myself in agreement with the proposal and want to ask you to facilitate its implementation. Meetings on the regional level (paralleling the regions covered by the five Visitors' conferences) will allow the treasurers to treat regional economic concerns and questions in a way that cannot be done in a meeting of all the provincial treasurers of the Congregation.

While in Rome, the treasurers met in regional groups and began to explore concrete possibilities about when, where, and how such meetings might be held in the coming years. It was agreed that one of the provincial treasurers of each region will contact the President of each Conference of Visitors to report to you about this. Would you please, within your Conference of Visitors, assist in setting in motion the preparation for a future regional meeting of your Provincial Treasurers, particularly by naming a confrere or a small commission to begin

organizing such a meeting (in coordination with the schedule of the Treasurer General), by providing input on the topics that should be treated, and by assuring that your own Provincial Treasurer takes part.

It is my hope that these efforts will help us to continue to administer well the goods entrusted to us, which are the patrimony of the poor.

Your brother in St. Vincent,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert P. Maloney, C.M." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R' and 'M'.

Robert P. Maloney, C.M.
Superior General



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The Vincentian Solidarity Office (VSO) is a program of the General Curia of the Congregation of the Mission in Rome, Italy.

November 9, 2002

To the Visitors and Vice-Visitors of the Congregation of the Mission

Dear Confreres,

May the grace of Our Lord be always with us!

On October 20, 2002, our Superior General, Fr. Robert Maloney, C.M., wrote to all the members of the Congregation of the Mission to announce the creation of the Vincentian Solidarity Office (VSO) and my appointment as the first Administrator of the VSO. In his letter, Fr. Maloney mentioned that I would be writing to you to offer some detailed information about the VSO and to provide copies of the materials that I distributed at the Provincial Economes' Meeting in connection with my talk on the VSO.

Enclosed you will find the following materials:

- My Talk on the Vincentian Solidarity Office for the Provincial Economes' Meeting on November 8, 2002 (English, French or Spanish)
- VSO Brochure (English)
- VSO Project Application Form (English)

My talk on the VSO for the Provincial Economes' Meeting gives a detailed explanation on what the VSO is, why it was started, and how it works. The VSO Brochure is simply a summary of the major points of my talk on the VSO. The VSO Project Application Form is provided for those provinces or vice-provinces that wish to request VSO assistance for a project. Please fill out the application form, sign it and send it to me after January 1, 2003. If you need assistance in completing the application form, please get in touch with me.

If you have any questions about the VSO, please feel free to contact me. I look forward to working with you for the sake of our mission.

Fraternally in St. Vincent,

Bro. Peter A. Campbell, C.M.
VSO Administrator

PS: The local superiors of the international missions under the jurisdiction of the Superior General and his Council should fill out the application form and send it to Fr. Elmer Bauer, C.M. at the General Curia.

FEATURE: Provincial Treasurer's Meeting
Rome, 4-9 November 2002

Presentation

At the urging of the Superior General a meeting of all the Provincial Treasurers of the Congregation was organized and took place in Rome from November 4-9, 2002. This was the second meeting of all the provincial treasurers. The first meeting took place in Paris in May 1995. Since 75% of the current treasurers have been named since that meeting, it was felt that it was time to repeat the experience.

This meeting had several purposes. It was a chance for the treasurers to show mutual support in their important ministry for the community. Also, it was an opportunity for ongoing formation in their role as administrators of the community's goods. Finally, it was an opportunity for me, as treasurer general, to meet all the treasurers and discuss with them any questions or concerns they might have.

The session was organized by a Preparatory Commission consisting of: Fr. Teodoro Barquín (Facilitator), Fr. Stefano Anguili (Provincial Treasurer, Naples), Fr. José Luis Fernández (Provincial Treasurer, Peru), Fr. Bernard Meade (Provincial Treasurer, Ireland), and Fr. Elmer Bauer III (Treasurer General). This Commission chose the themes to discuss and the methods to follow in accordance with the information given by the provincial treasurers in a previously completed survey.

Many diverse topics were covered from the role, function, and relationships of the provincial treasurer to more technical aspects of the administration of the goods of the province. A complete list of topics can be found in the program of the meeting which is included in this issue. These topics were treated in a variety of ways from conferences and panel discussions to small group sharings and plenary sessions. Due to the size of this issue and the technical nature of some of the presentations, it is not possible to publish all the conferences. However, I would like to thank all the invited speakers and treasurers who shared their experience for their valuable contributions to the meeting.

At the time of the evaluation, all the provincial treasurers expressed a very positive opinion of the meeting. Though the treasurers came with a varied range

of experiences and knowledge, I think each one left with something valuable to further enrich his ministry in service of his province.

Of course this issue will be of particular interest to provincial treasurers, local treasurers, members of Provincial Finance Committees, and other confreres who assist directly in the administration of the goods of the community. However, it should also be of interest to a wider audience. The Constitutions of the Congregation of the Mission state clearly: “Since all goods are in common, members are co-responsible, according to the norm of law, for the acquisition, administration, and use of the temporal goods of the house and province to which they belong. This principle applies, on a proportionate basis, even to the goods of the entire Congregation.” (Const. 149) All of us, as members of the Congregation, share in the responsibility for the administration of its goods. The importance of this responsibility is heightened when we consider that we administer these goods not as owners, but rather as stewards of the patrimony of the poor. It is this reality which prompted the Editor and Editorial Staff of *Vincentiana* to compile these conferences of the *Meeting of Provincial Treasurers* in this issue and I am delighted to present them for your enrichment.

The Chronicle by Fr. Hugh O’Donnell gives a good idea of the program followed for the meeting and the many topics that were covered. He highlights certain elements of the program he found of particular interest and importance.

The conference of the Superior General, Fr. Robert P. Maloney, is both an encouragement and a challenge to all those involved in the administration of the community’s goods and, in particular, to the provincial treasurer. Through a reflection on St. Vincent and administration he draws out four fundamental convictions that guided St. Vincent’s administration and serve as challenge for us today. His examination of our Constitutions and Statutes provides us with nine principles that we should observe in our administration of goods. He concludes with some practical guidelines to encourage us in practicing good stewardship.

In his conference “The Spirituality and Sense of Mission of the Provincial Treasurer” Fr. Philippe Lamblin offers a number of “faces” (Joseph, Thomas, Martha and Mary, St. Vincent) which help us discover the underlying spirituality and attitude necessary for the ministry of treasurer. He also considers four virtues (temperance, justice, prudence, and courage) important to anyone who acts as steward.

Fr. Jaime Vergara’s treatment of the relationship between the Provincial Treasurer and the Visitor and his Council examines the pertinent Constitutions and Statutes to uncover the nature of this relationship. He then highlights a number of practical elements which should serve as the basis of a good working relationship: dialogue, confidence and support, mutual discernment,

transparency, healthy relationship with professional advisors, non interference, effectiveness and fidelity.

Fr. Marceliano Oabel offers us his own experience as provincial treasurer of the Province of the Philippines and its program for training local treasurers to address the topic “The Relationship between the Provincial Treasurer and the Local Treasurers, Formation of Local Treasurers.” He concludes that this relationship should be characterized by listening, witnessing, and caring.

The conference of Br. Peter Campbell introduces us to the Vincentian Solidarity Office. This new office of the Congregation offers to assist the poorer provinces and missions of the Congregation in seeking funding for their needs and works with the poor. Br. Campbell’s presentation outlines how this exciting new service will operate.

I hope you find these conferences as inspiring and helpful as we did at the Meeting of Provincial Treasurers.

Elmer Bauer III, C.M.
Treasurer General

Provincial Treasurers' Meeting
Rome, 4-9 November 2002

Participants

1. Treasurers

Family Name	First Name	Province
1. ADAMEC	Juraj	Slovakia
2. ANGIULI	Stefano	Naples
3. ATALLAH	Naoum	Orient
4. BAUER III	Elmer	Treasurer General
5. BERHE	Berhane	Eritrea
6. BIANCHI	Miguel Á.	Argentina
7. CIUOLI	Gilberto	Rome
8. CORBA	Gonzalo	Colombia
9. DÍAZ A.	Gerardo	Chile
10. DEVEUX	Prosper	Belgium
11. FERNÁNDEZ	José L.	Peru
12. GIRÁLDEZ	José	Salamanca
13. GROZIO	Stephen	USA East
14. HEINEN	Miles	USA South
15. HESS	Joseph	USA Midwest
16. JANSSEN	Piet	Ethiopia
17. KUNAY	Viktor	Hungary
18. KUO	Francis	China
19. LAMBLIN	Philippe	Paris
20. ŁOJEK	Edward	Sts. Cyril and Methodius
21. LÓPEZ R.	Alfredo	Mexico
22. LOVERA	Roberto	Turin
23. MAGNOUX	Hervé	Madagascar
24. MATA	Oscar	Costa Rica
25. MBATA	Cyril	Nigeria
26. MEADE	Bernard	Ireland
27. MORO	Justo	Cuba
28. MOUES	Leo	Holland
29. MROWKA	Chester	USA New England
30. MUCAVEL	Fernando A.	Mozambique
31. NOVAK	Pavle	Slovenia
32. OABEL	Marceliano	Philippines
33. OSENDORF	James	USA West
34. PALMA	Alfredo	Venezuela
35. PAMPLIEGA	Julio	Madrid
36. PEREIRA	Flavio	Central America
37. PERUGACHI	Segundo	Ecuador
38. PURACKAL	Varghese	Southern India
39. ROBSON	Philip	Australia

40. ROELOFS	Lino	Fortaleza
41. SAINT-SEVIN	Éric	Toulouse
42. SCHINDLER	Eugen	Austria
43. SOTEM	Joélson César	Curitiba
44. SUPARNO	Thomas	Indonesia
45. TEXEIRA DE SOUSA	Agostinho	Portugal
46. THOTTAMKARA	Joseph	Northern India
47. TUNDU E MPONGO	Félicien	Congo
48. VERGARA	Jaime	Puerto Rico
49. WAŁASZEK	Krzysztof	Poland

2. Other participants

50. BARQUÍN	Teodoro	Facilitator
51. BUDZYNA	Adam	Various services
52. CAMPBELL	Peter	Speaker
53. CUMMINS	Joseph	Translator
54. CURRAN	Eugene	Translator
55. DEL CASTILLO	Fernando	Translator
56. GARCÍA	Bernard	Translator
57. GROETELAARS	Victor	Speaker
58. ŁUCYSZYN	Józef	Translator
59. MIDY	Marie-Yonide, DC	Translator
60. O'DONNELL	Hugh	Chronicler
61. RAVOUX	Eric	Translator

Provincial Treasurers Meeting
Rome, 4-9 November 2002

Program

Monday, 4 November

- 6:45 Lauds and meditation, in language groups
Spanish: Justo Moro
English: Berhe Berhane
French: Felicien Tundu
- 7:30 Eucharist in common (Robert P. Maloney)
- 8:15 Breakfast
- 9:00 Welcome and Orientation (Teodoro Barquín)
- 9:30 **Talk by the Superior General** (Robert P. Maloney)
- 10:00 Large Group Discussion
- 11:00 Break
- 11:30 **Ministry of the Econome General** (Elmer Bauer III)
- 12:00 Large Group Discussion
- 13:00 Lunch
- 15:30 **Provincial Econome: Spirituality and Sense of Mission**
(Philippe Lamblin)
- 16:00 Discussion in Small Groups
- 17:30 Break
- 18:00 Large Group Discussion
- 19:45 Dinner

Tuesday, 5 November

- 6:45 Lauds and meditation, in language groups
Spanish: Oscar Mata
English: Joseph Thottamkara
French: Éric Saint-Sevin
- 7:30 Eucharist in common (Gonzalo Corba)
- 8:15 Breakfast
- 9:00 **Basic Principles of Investing** (Joseph Hess)
- 9:30 Discussion in Small Groups
- 11:00 Break
- 11:30 Large Group Discussion
- 13:00 Lunch
- 15:30 **Panel and Discussion: Alternative Investments**
(Flavio Pereira, Julio Pampliega, Varghese Purackal)
- 17:30 Break
- 18:00 **Panel and Discussion: Finance Committee**
(Cyril Mbata, Bernard Meade, Stefano Angiuli)

19:45 Dinner

Wednesday, 6 November

6:45 Lauds and meditation, in language groups

Spanish: José Santiago Giráldez

English: James Osendorf

French: Hervé Magnoux

7:30 Eucharist in common (Thomas Suparno)

8:15 Breakfast

9:00 **Record Keeping, Accounting and Accountability** (José Luis Fernández)

11:00 Break

11:30 Continue theme

13:00 Lunch

15:30 **Provincial Report to the Generalate** (Bernard Meade)

16:00 Discussion about the Provincial Report in with the coordinators in
Language Groups

Coordinators: English: Fr. Bernard Meade

Spanish: Fr. José Luis Fernández

French: Fr. Philippe Lamblin

17:30 Break

18:00 Continue working with coordinators in Language Groups

19:45 Dinner

Thursday, 7 November

6:45 Lauds and meditation, in language groups

Spanish: Joéilson César Sotem

English: Piet Janssen

French: Naoum Atallah

7:30 Eucharist in common (Fernando Abel Mucavel)

8:15 Breakfast

9:00 **Health Care, Social Security, and Retirement Issues**

(Victor Groetelaars)

9:30 Discussion in Small Groups

10:30 Large Group Discussion

10:45 Break

11:15 **Relationship between the Provincial Econome and the Visitor and his
Council** (Jaime Vergara)

11:45 Discussion in Small Groups

12:45 Large Group Discussion

13:00 Lunch

Afternoon Free

19:45 Dinner

Friday, 8 November

- 6:45 Lauds and meditation, in language groups
 Spanish: Alfredo López Rivera
 English: Miles Heinen
 French: Prosper Deveaux
- 7:30 Eucharist in common (Leo Moues)
- 8:15 Breakfast
- 9:00 **Applying for Aid, Fund-raising** (Br. Allen Sherry, FMS)
- 9:30 Large Group Discussion
- 11:00 Break
- 11:30 **Vincentian Solidarity Office** (Peter Campbell)
- 12:00 Large Group Discussion
- 13:00 Lunch
- 15:30 **Report of the Econome General to the Provinces** (Elmer Bauer III)
- 16:30 Meeting in Conference Groups
- 17:30 Break
- 19:45 Dinner

Saturday, 9 November

- 7:00 Lauds and meditation, in language groups
 Spanish: Gerardo Díaz Agurto
 English: Philip Robson
 French: Philippe Lamblin
- 7:30 Eucharist in common (Stephen Grozio)
- 8:15 Breakfast
- 9:00 **Relationship between the Provincial Econome
 and the Local Economies, Formation of Local Economies**
 (Marceliano Oabel)
- 9:30 Discussion in Small Groups
- 11:00 Break
- 11:30 Large Group Discussion
- 13:00 Lunch
- 15:30 **Panel and Discussion: Conservation and Alienation of Patrimony**
 (Philip Robson, Roberto Lovera)
- 17:30 Break
- 18:00 Evaluation and Summary Conclusions (Teodoro Barquín)
- 19:45 Final Dinner

Second Meeting of Provincial Treasurers of the CM
Casa Maria Immacolata – Rome 4-9 November 2002

Chronicle

by Hugh O'Donnell, C.M.
Province of China

Basic Foundations

The first day evidently has been designed to lay a broad and solid foundation for the work of the days to come. The Gospel of Luke today at the Eucharist gave us the evangelical challenge of inviting the poorest of the poor to our tables, which symbolically went to the heart of the matter. Fr. Robert Maloney presented four fundamental convictions of St. Vincent and nine principles of responsible stewardship drawn from the Constitutions and Statutes. He added a few comments touching on sensitive matters, stressing in particular the need personally to accept responsibility for the oversight and decisions involved in the office of provincial treasurer. The confreres were left with the impression of how solid and rich our tradition is in the important work of administering the patrimony of the poor. Fr. Elmer Bauer then shared with the confreres the broad lines of his responsibilities as Treasurer General. His sharing on the International Missions was especially specific and enlightening. He added five practical suggestions, which touched on real life situations in the province.

The afternoon's presentation by Fr. Philippe Lamblin emphasized the spirituality that is integral to the work of the provincial treasurer. He used Martha and Mary to reveal the dynamic poles of the treasurer's incarnational challenge. He then showed how concrete were the questions which Vincent addressed with Mathurin Gentil who was the first treasurer of Saint Lazare.

Investments — Finance Committee

The presentations by Brother Joseph Hess in the morning and the panel in the afternoon were clear and stimulating, based as they were on the actual experience and performance of the four provinces represented. The discussion groups and the general sessions revealed large differences among the provinces. Some provinces invest in the market, have well developed structures and procedures and rely on the advice of experts. Quite a few provinces have alternative investments principally in real estate and rental properties. Some provinces are able only to meet current expenses and perhaps also depend on support from the Curia, other provinces, funding agencies or benefactors. This last group was encouraged and challenged to begin to set something aside for future needs, no matter how modest the sum. These provinces also wondered

about the possibility of investing as a group through the Curia in Rome. Fr. Bauer said this possibility already exists.

The afternoon presentations by Frs. Cyril Mbata, Stefano Angiuli and Bernard Meade on the role and function of the Finance Committee seemed to address a vital issue for the provinces and were met by evident appreciation. The scope of the Committee's responsibilities and the mode of operation seemed especially useful.

Brother Hess ended his presentation in the morning by highlighting the importance of diversity in investment strategies. The events of the day underlined the correspondingly diverse situations of the provinces themselves.

Accounts — Reports

The theme for the morning was “Record Keeping, Accounting and Accountability” presented by Fr. José Luis Fernández. Each confrere received a booklet that corresponded to the presentation and can be used as a handbook and guide at home. The material as presented was thorough and professional.

In the afternoon Fr. Meade explained the *Provincial Report to the General Curia*, which was followed by discussion in language groups. The Report has a chart of accounts that is considered realistic and appropriate to the situation of the provinces. There was a full discussion of the use of software programs for bookkeeping, accounting and reporting and how to introduce and use them effectively. Some have used software programs that are set up to relate closely to the demands of the annual report to the General Curia. The experience shared by the participants seemed to have been very helpful.

Health Care/Retirement Issues — Relationship with the Visitor

The schedule was adjusted for today, so that the two presentations planned for the day were made in the morning to free up the afternoon for visiting Rome. Fr. Victor Groetelaars presented the experience of the Dutch Province on the topic of “Health Care, Social Security and Retirement Issues.” The Netherlands has excellent social and medical insurance programs available through the government on condition of paying the premiums. The Dutch Province has a distinguished mission history and they care for the missionaries returning from these missions as well as for the confreres living in Holland. In collaboration with the Daughters of Charity, the Dutch confreres have renovated their old seminary to care for elderly and sick Vincentians and Daughters. In this facility they are also able to provide temporary care up to a total of 600 days. They recognized the problem they would face with their aging population and early on took up the challenge. They worked creatively and steadily to provide for the

elderly and returning missionaries and in this way have set a standard and example for others. The discussions which followed in small groups showed the by now usual difference between young and old provinces. This question is not yet an immediate and pressing concern for the younger provinces. Notable in the reports was the theme of resistance to retirement and to entering houses and facilities provided by the provinces for sick and elderly confreres.

At the end of the morning Fr. Jaime Vergara presented the theme of the Relationship of the Provincial Treasurer with the Visitor and his Council. It is clear that the Provincial Treasurer has a proper office and is not just a vicar. He is responsible for the administration of the goods of the province. The Visitor certainly is the one ultimately responsible for the well-being of the province and for the decisions that govern the province. Communication is essential and so is mutual trust. In the discussions that followed, the informal reports indicated general support for a *Practical Guide for the Provincial Treasurer*, but there was also a consensus that most of the work may already be done by other communities and they should be consulted. There is some feeling that the treasurer should be a member of the council, but if he is not he should be present for all important decisions. No serious difficulties between the treasurers and Visitors surfaced in the informal evaluation.

Applying for Aid — VSO

Brother Allen Sherry FMS was invited as an outside expert to address the theme, “Applying for Aid, Fund-Raising.” He is the Director of the International Bureau of Solidarity as a service to the Marist Brothers Worldwide. His expertise and fraternal openness in sharing his experience and suggesting practical guidelines was met with enthusiasm on the part of all. He particularly emphasized two points: first, be realistic, recognize and accept the procedures, guidelines and peculiarities of each donor, because they have the money which we are seeking; and, secondly, be aware of the crucial importance of communication, personal relationships and ongoing contact with the donors on the progress and status of the project.

Against the broad background of Brother Sherry’s presentation, Brother Peter Campbell, whom Fr. Maloney recently appointed as Administrator of the Vincentian Solidarity Office, presented the reason for establishing the VSO and explained the procedures and guidelines it would follow. It will also have its own website. Its purpose is to help poorer provinces obtain funding for specific projects from donor agencies. In this regard Brother Peter identified the operational criteria for submitting projects. English is the language to use in submitting projects and in subsequent communications. The interest level among the treasurers indicated that this is a needed and timely initiative.

In the afternoon Fr. Bauer explained how to understand the report he sends to each province, including the key concept that a positive total on the report indicates what the province owes and a negative total on the report indicates the amount credited to the account of the province.

Local Treasurers — Provincial Patrimony

Fr. Marceliano Oabel's presentation on the theme, "The Relationship between the Provincial Treasurer and the Local Treasurers and the Formation of Local Treasurers" was clear, concise and thorough, and was backed up by an impressive PowerPoint presentation. He said that the provincial and local treasurers share the same vision of "involvement," namely, a provincial commitment to the integral liberation of the poor, which led them to a sense of managing the goods of "their masters." Formation of local treasurers takes place on a regular basis and is complemented by training high school graduates as bookkeepers. This has been a valuable initiative for the province and offers a model to others. From a relational point of view, Fr. Oabel emphasized the value of *listening, witnessing and care*. In the small groups confreres mentioned difficulties in two areas in particular: receiving surplus funds from the houses and receiving reports on time. Regular communications with the local treasurers and a pattern of consistency have helped provincial treasurers in some provinces. In general, there was a sense of ongoing and significant progress wherever the provincial treasurer communicated regularly with the local treasurers.

In the afternoon Frs. Philip Robson and Roberto Lovera spoke on the conservation and alienation of patrimony. Each spoke of the development and care of the patrimony of his own province. It was clear that the unique history, the decline in vocations and the changed actuarial situation of each province have given prominence, if not urgency, to the question of patrimony and underlined the pressing importance of attending to the patrimony of the province. Key elements mentioned were: actuarial studies, a board with professional members, care of all relevant documents, a strategic plan and renovation of buildings to insure income. Attention to patrimony and its central importance for the future mission of the provinces and Congregation has moved to the center of community consciousness in recent years and this afternoon's presentations gave patrimony increased importance. The following discussion was lively and interesting. In particular the issue of the historic patrimony of the Congregation as contained in letters of St. Vincent and other invaluable documents (which are sometimes neglected, sold or lost) was raised. Tangentially the crying need for attention to the documents in the Archives in Paris was touched upon as perhaps a responsibility of the whole Congregation.

The final session dealt with evaluation and recommendations. The participants and organizers were all thanked for their contributions to the success of the meeting.

originale

Provincial Treasurers

*by Robert P. Maloney, C.M.
Superior General
4.XI.2002*

Let me begin by thanking you for your services as Provincial Treasurers in the Congregation of the Mission. I am most grateful for your generosity in accepting and working hard at this office. The task of the Provincial Treasurer is difficult. I say that for three reasons especially:

1. Your job is many-faceted. At times you must be bookkeeper, accountant, administrator, counselor, investor, legal representative, lawyer, and insurance agent.
2. Many of you have very little formal preparation for these tasks, even though you often perform them remarkably well. Few of you took courses in accounting. Few of you have degrees in economics. Most of you have learned what it means to be Provincial Treasurer because you accepted the job out of obedience and worked hard to figure out what it entailed.
3. Being a Provincial Treasurer today is much more complex than in the past. The world has become computerized, so economic transactions take place rapidly, especially in the field of investments. Society has become more litigious, so there are endless laws and bureaucratic procedures that at times frustrate even the most large-hearted man.

So, I say to you with great sincerity: thank you for taking on this difficult office.

I St. Vincent and Administration

Let me say a few words to you today about St. Vincent and administration. You know most of what I will say already, but recollection and meditation on our roots help us live more vitally in the present and confront the future with greater responsibility. I offer you four fundamental convictions that guided St. Vincent's administration.

1. *He believed that, without a solid economic base, the Congregation cannot carry out its mission.*

St. Vincent was realistic, practical. He said that he never accepted the proposal of “persons who have only the desire and do not wish to meet the costs”!¹ If the missionaries were to perform their services *gratis*, then they had to count on a financial base in the form of some kind of a fund or a source of regular income.

Here is a list of his foundations (I speak here only of the Congregation of the Mission):

¹SV VII, 208.

1625	Collège des Bons Enfants à Paris	1635	Toul	1643	Marseille	1654	Turin
		1637	Aiguillon		Cahors		Agde
			La Rose		Sedan	(1671)	
		1638	Richelieu	1644	Saintes	1658	Meaux (to 1661)
1632	St. Lazare		Lucon		Montmirail	1659	Montpellier (to 1661)
			Troyes	1645	Le Mans		Narbonne
			Alet (to 1641)		Saint Charles (Paris)		
		1641	Annecy		Genoa		
		1642	Crécy		Tunis		
			Rome	1646	Algiers		
				1648	Madagascar		
					Tréguier		
					Agen		
				1650	Périgueux		
				1651	Poland		
				1652	Montauban (Notre Dame de Lorm)		

As you can see, he founded, on the average, about a house a year between 1635 and 1659. That was a remarkable pace for someone who by all accounts moved slowly and never “stepped on the heels of providence.”² But what is all the more remarkable is that he set up a foundation for the support of each of these houses. It is interesting to note that the geographical distribution of these foundations follows principally the locations of the pastoral and financial interests of St. Vincent’s most important contacts. He was a good beggar and a good negotiator.

2. *He was inventive in gathering funds, from a wide variety of sources, for the setting up of foundations.*

St. Vincent was remarkably creative in putting together foundations in order to support houses, missions, and other works.³ Funds for supporting our mission and our missionaries came from benefices, from the rights to claim taxes and duties, from wills, from properties, from donations, from coach-route businesses, and other sources.⁴ Among his most generous benefactors were King Louis XIII and his widow, as well as the Duchess d’Aiguillon. Strange as it may sound to us today, the main source of income for the missions in Algeria and Tunis was coach-route businesses in Chartres, Rouen, Orleans, Soissons, and Bordeaux.

This creative attitude of St. Vincent is quite relevant today as traditional sources of funding are drying up. As many treasurers have certainly experienced, Mass stipends are dwindling, funding agencies tell us that they have less money, private donors are suffering from the stock market turndown of the last several years, and in many provinces the income from confreres’ salaries is now considerably less than in the past. This lessening of traditional sources makes creativity all the more imperative.

3. *While he forcefully urged the members of the Company to live a simple lifestyle, at the same time he wanted administrators to be careful to supply the needs of the confreres.*

In a delightful letter, he tells Antoine Colée, Superior at Toul:

I have heard that your bread was not well made. Please have it

²SV I, 68.

³Román, José María, “The Foundations of Saint Vincent de Paul” in *Vincentian Heritage*, 9 (1988), 134-160.

⁴José María Román, *St. Vincent de Paul, A Biography*, translated by Sr. Joyce Howard, (London: Melisende, 1999), 293-295.

*done by a baker, if you can find one, for the most important thing is to have good bread. It would also be well to vary the food sometimes...to relieve the strain on poor nature which tires of seeing the same things all the time.*⁵

In 1649, after making some rather veiled threats to Mathurin Gentil, who was the treasurer of the seminary at Le Mans, he states:

*Make an effort to serve good bread and good meat and not to sell the better wine so as to serve what is inferior, nor to expose the community to complaints of miserly treatment.*⁶

4. *Of course, the context for all of this, in St. Vincent's mind, is that the goods of the Company are "are from the patrimony of Jesus Christ, from the sweat of the poor."*⁷

For that reason he states:

*We shall render a very exact account in this matter before God. Our goods belong to God and to the poor. We are only their stewards, not their owners.*⁸

What the Congregation possesses, it possesses only for this end: that we might live in the Company as servants of the poor and the clergy.

II Some Principles in Our Constitutions and Statutes Concerning Administration

There are many articles in our Constitutions that deal directly with the administration of temporal goods. They provide a series of principles that are very helpful for all of us to meditate on.

1. *The principle of the apostolic purpose of ownership (148 §1).*

The goods which the Company owns are the patrimony of the poor; their

⁵SV I, 387.

⁶SV III, 505.

⁷SV XI, 201.

⁸SV XI, 30; cf. also SV X 305, 309, 316-17; cf. C 148 §1.

purpose is to support our “giving ourselves to God in the service of the poor.”⁹ Our goods serve our missionary goals, as St. Vincent often notes.¹⁰ All members should live in close solidarity with the poor.

2. *The principle of the communitarian form of evangelical poverty (148 §2).*

Like the community of the Acts of the Apostles,¹¹ we hold all the goods of the Company in common. There are no private owners of the community’s goods. St. Vincent puts it very clearly in the Common Rules: “Members of the Congregation, individually and collectively, should understand that, following the example of the first Christians, all our belongings are common property.”¹²

3. *The principle of co-responsibility (149).*

Since our goods are held in common, all share in responsibility, in varying degrees, for their acquisition, administration, and use. This co-responsibility requires good communication in regard to the administration of goods. All have a right to be informed about the administration of the goods of the Congregation, and have a corresponding obligation to be transparent in accounting for their use of those goods. All have a right to receive adequate formation and health care at the various stages of their lives, and have a corresponding obligation to use well the goods provided by the Congregation.

4. *The principle of subsidiarity (150 §1).*

The acquisition and administration of temporal goods takes place on various levels through various juridical persons (houses, provinces, the General Curia), whose mutual responsibilities are described in the Constitutions, Statutes, and Provincial Norms. Each level has its autonomy within the framework of the norms of the Congregation.

5. *The principle of solidarity (151 and 152).*

But even though there are distinct juridical entities within the Congregation (houses, provinces, the General Curia), provinces which have more should help those that are less fortunate. Houses within a province should help

⁹Cf. SV I, 185; II, 64; III, 149; IV, 15, 67, 117, 126, 138, 156, 233, 280, 361, 577, 596; V 83, 107, 233, 326, 425, 584, 634; VII 13, 38, 369; IX 13, 26, 29, 221; *Entretiens* (1960) 37, 471, 550, 562, 569, 571, 583, 586, 742, 743, 775, 776, 811, 825, 831, 835, 888, 916, 944.

¹⁰Cf. CR III, 2.

¹¹Acts 2:44; 4:32.

¹²CR III, 3.

one another. In a worldwide community like ours, this principle is becoming more and more important. In fact, I am very grateful to the many provinces which have so generously helped other provinces.

6. *The principle of entrustment (153).*

Though all are co-responsible, nonetheless, the Congregation entrusts the administration of its temporal goods in a special way to treasurers, under the direction and oversight of superiors and their councils. This principle places a very special responsibility in your own hands, as well as in the hands of the local treasurers. Others should help you bear this responsibility, as I will mention later, and the Provincial and his council should provide direction and oversight. Still, the administering of the goods of the Province is, primarily, your responsibility.

7. *The principle of stewardship (154).*

Administrators are not the owners of the goods of the Congregation. They are stewards; on the deepest level, our goods are the patrimony of the poor. Under the direction of superiors, treasurers should willingly, and with good grace, distribute the goods of the Congregation for the legitimate uses of the confreres and for the apostolic goals of the Company. They should be careful that there is equity in the distribution of the goods to the confreres.

8. *The principle of required permission (155).*

For the alienation of the goods of the Company and other transactions that affect our patrimony adversely, the written permission of the competent superior, with the consent of his council, is required. Many of the problems that reach the Superior General would be avoided if this principle were carefully observed.

9. *The principle of accountability.*

Our Constitutions and Statutes require that all treasurers render an account of their stewardship. The Provincial Treasurer, for example, must, twice a year, give to the provincial and his council an account of the receipts and expenditures of the province as well as a report on the status of the patrimony of the province (S 103 § 2). Provincial Treasurers should also give to the members of their province a general report of their administration of the patrimony of their province, according to the Provincial Norms (S 103 § 7).

Treasurers should strive always to be completely transparent in their relationships with superiors, helping them to understand even complicated matters so that they might make good decisions about the use of the Company's goods. A treasurer should never be an obstacle in the decision-making process of

the provincial and his council.

III Some Delicate Practical Guidelines

Every phase of the life of the Province passes through the treasurer's office: from initial formation to the care of the aging, from clothing the confreres to building a church, from paying insurance for the living to processing wills for the dead. The scope of your work is very broad. Let me suggest a few practical guidelines that, experience teaches, are very important:

1. *While it is imperative to depend on others for advice and help, you yourself must accept a primary responsibility in the administration of the goods of the Congregation.*

There are two parts to this guideline. In the first part, I recommend that you get abundant advice. In a world which becomes increasingly complicated in terms of laws and financial structures, no one person can understand and administer everything. It is unreasonable to expect that. As the General Ordinance of July 1, 2001,¹³ states, each province should have a financial committee to help you with input. The second part of the guideline, however, says that you must not place responsibility for administering the goods of the Congregation in the hands of someone else, not even a financially experienced confrere, nor a trusted lay friend, nor a professional investor. All these may help you, but you yourself are responsible for the administration of the Company's goods. Some of the worst financial problems that we have had in the Congregation have occurred when treasurers abdicated their own responsibility so that it fell into the eager grasp of others.

2. *While you must be "professional" in the carrying out of your administrative responsibilities, you must also always remain fully a priest or brother in the Congregation.*

There are two parts to this guideline too. The first part says that you must become as competent as possible in your office as treasurer. This is surely not easy, since many of you have had little professional training. Actually, I admire how much so many of you have learned and the competency with which you carry out the duties of your office. I also encourage you to continue to seek ongoing formation for your ministry as treasurers. Taking some accounting or finance courses, learning different computer programs that would be useful in the treasurer's office, or participating in associations with other religious treasurers could be very helpful ways to strengthen your "professionalism" and your service. The second part of the guideline, however, says that you must, even in

¹³ In *Vincentiana* 45 (2001) 447-448.

your professionalism, remain a priest or brother of the Mission. Make time, to the extent possible, for other forms of ministry — preaching and the sacraments; make time for prayer; make time for continuing your own theological and spiritual formation. Remain simple in your lifestyle, even if you administer large sums of money. Be gentle and warm with confreres and others whom you serve, even though at times you might have much larger concerns on your mind than the small matters that they bring to you.

3. *While it is important for you to protect and increase the resources of the province, you must not allow that to be an end in itself.*

This guideline also has two parts. The first part says that the resources of the province are the foundation for our works in the service of the poor. We must protect them, and even increase them, since the demands on our resources will undoubtedly be greater in the future than they are in the present. The second part of the guideline, however, says that the growth of our resources must never become an end in itself. In other words, we must be willing to spend, and even substantially, when the needs of the poor or the confreres demand it. Our goods are ultimately in the service of the poor, the Community, and the wider Church.

4. *While you must provide clear, abundant information to those who have ultimate responsibility for decision-making (provincials and their councils, the Superior General and his council), you must also be quite circumspect with those who have no right to know about the business of the Congregation.*

This guideline also has two parts. The first part says that simplicity is the rule of the Congregation, especially in our dealings with superiors. The treasurer must be clear in the information that he provides and in the advice that he offers. He must recognize that he himself is not the final decision-maker in many important economic questions. He must therefore provide the information necessary, and clear advice, to those who have the final responsibility in decision-making. The second part of this guideline says that the treasurer must be very discreet. Lots of people will be curious about the assets of the Congregation. He should provide only what information is necessary in a given context.

5. *While you are not ex-officio a member of the provincial council, you have a right to be heard on all matters that have significant economic implications.*

This guideline also has two parts. The first part says that the treasurer is not automatically a member of the council (though he may be by some other title: election, the choice of the provincial, the provincial norms). There may be many occasions, therefore, when the provincial does not consult you about important

matters (for example, some personnel matters). On the other hand, the visitor and his council surely have an obligation in prudence to consult you on all matters that have significant financial implications, even though they themselves bear the final decision-making responsibility in these matters. The problem, of course, is that sometimes a council may not recognize the financial implications of a decision, even if the financial component may not be the primary factor in the decision. The key here is good mutual communication.

My brothers, I want to encourage you. To you, as good stewards, is entrusted the patrimony of the Congregation. This patrimony is the fruit of the work of those who have labored before us, but it is also the seed for the future. This patrimony nourishes our formation programs and provides care for our sick and elderly. It supports our mission as well as our missionaries. In this room are gathered those confreres, you, who in some way influence all the material goods of the Community.

And so I offer you this encouragement and challenge:

- Your ministry is important, do it well for the sake of the Gospel.
- Your experience is important, share it with each other openly and humbly.
- You yourselves are important. Continue to grow in faith in the gospel and in enthusiasm for the mission of the Community.

Let me conclude with a prayer from St. Vincent:

*O my God, we give ourselves entirely to you. Give us the grace to live and die in a perfect observance of true poverty. I ask this of you for all here present. We give ourselves to you, my God, in order to honor and serve for our whole life, our lords the poor, and we ask this grace of you by your holy love.*¹⁴

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¹⁴SV IX, 26.

Spirituality and Sense of Mission of the Provincial Treasurer

*by Philippe Lamblin, C.M.
Province of Paris
4.XI.2002*

- Is there a spirituality specific to the mission of the Provincial Treasurer?
- Does our service as treasurer have meaning?
- Do we need spirituality in order to exercise our responsibility?

Such are the questions that may be posed to us, by ourselves or others.

When we discover management courses given today in the major universities or in advanced institutes of commerce, there is often a course or some research entitled: “**Spirituality, Ethics and Paths of Meaning,**” as I read recently in the course outlines for a university in Montreal.

So, we are not the only ones to pose the question about meaning in the management of economic affairs and other questions which touch on the fundamental human attitudes which management requires.

Some faces may help us discover a spiritual path, an attitude towards our responsibility.

The faces are of those closest to Jesus, among his parents, friends and the group of apostles.

1. I think first of the face of **Joseph**, husband of Mary, father of Jesus, called ‘the Just,’ he appears first as a man who listens, in the account of the annunciation to him in chapter one of Matthew. Must we not also be listening men? A craftsman carpenter, he was in charge of a small business. In a certain sense, do we not also direct a business, with salaries, production, plans, undertakings? Did he not also, like us, have worries, in ordering things, managing his co-workers, paying insurance, dealing with bad clients, etc.
2. I also think of the face of **Thomas**: a concrete man, who demanded that he touch what was promised to him. The day after Christ’s burial, he is not there. Sometimes it strikes me to think that he was occupied with administrative tasks. This is my interpretation; I imagine that the group of apostles, now that they no longer had Judas, had given him responsibility for provisions: he had at least

12 people to feed, after the sad events like those involving Jesus. Had Thomas, perhaps, the courage to walk abroad in Jerusalem and the knowledge to haggle prices with the shopkeepers? The gospel tells us nothing of these abilities of Thomas.

3. I think of the faces of **Martha and Mary**. One is absorbed by the tasks involved in order to welcome her visitor well; the other is absorbed by thoughts and dialogue with their friend Jesus. I will return to these two women.
4. The face of **St. Vincent** could not be forgotten from this picture. Does not the man who sought an honest retirement reveal himself as an admirable superior wise in the business of this world in order, at the same time, to follow issues which touch on the temporal concerns of the community and responses to reach out to the poor of his time who were hungry, who were sick, displaced, in prison, forgotten by those in power etc.? What might he teach treasurers?

I return now to the faces of **Martha and Mary**:

As a preamble, I wish to underline that the reflections which follow are not those of specialist in economics; they are not founded exclusively on the observation of economic facts; they are inspired rather by general considerations.

They do not seek to offer a model. They raise questions about the attitudes which are desirable in management, by looking to the faces of Martha and Mary. In this, they join with many questions which come from eminent economists who admit with humility and perceptiveness that their science is in question. Even politicians have taken up the baton, like the former French Prime Minister who published an article entitled: "Disarray in economic thinking."

a. **To unite the qualities of both Martha and Mary**

The difficulty, in economics, is that the subject is multiform. It is made up, above all, of concrete, practical, palpable things: goods, which consist of buildings and securities, merchandise, often books published by confreres but also stocks of commodities, consumable goods, national and foreign currencies, etc.

but also of imponderables: the appreciation of the value of a thing, forecasts, the geopolitical context, etc.

And there are ideas which tend towards the infinite: What is the general interest? What idea is worth following up? What is the end purpose of the society into which we have been sent?

From all of this comes my suggestion to mediate often on one of the most intimate scenes of the gospel, which sets before us the two sisters of Lazarus: Martha and Mary, the two charming friends of Jesus.

We have, in our mission, to take into account the basic concerns of Martha as well as the contemplation of Mary.

On the one hand, as active participants, actors in a micro-economy — that of solidarity with the poorest — in supplying the missionaries who ask it of us with the means to a certain efficacy, we provincial treasurers, always missionaries, have both by nature and necessity the concern, not always exclusive but primordial, for that which is practical and immediate. On the other hand, others, those who make provincial policy, the Visitor and his council, are more attentive, by their function, to larger and loftier considerations, which will require time for reflection.

But it is important to take into account, obviously, that as provincial treasures, we are very often in the position of being both Martha and Mary at the same time, because economics, due to the many factors which influence it, relies as much on Mary as on Martha.

- b. **Also, in order to live out courageously the service which is asked of us, it is important that we try to practice four virtues, while always contemplating them in our prayer.**

Practice **Temperance**: we need to know how to modify appetites, perhaps at table but also in the consumer society which continually provokes us. It requires us to have an attitude of moderation: not consuming everything, not spending everything, not having everything, leaving “the everything at once” in order to prepare for the future. This fits well with our activity as treasurer.

Practice **Justice**: this consists in giving to each his due, particularly to those who work with us, those in our pay, our lay or religious collaborators. Justice consists in a mutual exchange of respect.

Practice **Prudence**: before acting on a given issue, it is important to consider one or several feasibility plans, and to organize the goal, objectives and means.

Practice **Strength**: the task of the Provincial Treasurer may occasionally appear thankless, sometimes unpleasant. It requires courage since many activities are on the go at the same time and require great availability. All of which means that we have to build up a capital of perseverance, endurance, self-control, before seeking to accumulate goods, which will be used up in time.

The time has doubtless come to value again these four virtues, which seem to me to be the only ones capable of aiding us in the face of the brutality of certain human powers, in face of the excess of misery, in face of technological dangers, in face of psychological fragility, in face of environmental uncertainties. Yes, in face of the flows and wild hazards of the world, these four virtues can allow us to regulate our forces. We have to be attentive that none of our actions leads to an evil action elsewhere, through uncontrolled bouncing, like a rugby ball, tossed without direction. And it is necessary for us, without a shadow of a doubt, to believe that the fact of an honest action somewhere may lead to others elsewhere. It is a new opportunity for the world, it is a missionary collaboration which we can bring, it is a form of positive ricocheting which leads others on surer paths to respond to the immense needs of the poor.

I return to the face of St Vincent de Paul:

Our founder, Vincent de Paul, is a witness and a counsellor for us, as provincial treasurers, to take up our responsibility. I have reread the 16 letters of St. Vincent with Mathurin Gentil, who entered the Congregation at the age of 35.

One can consider him as one of the first treasurers of House of St. Lazare in Paris. In 1645, he was sent 200 kilometres from Paris to the Major Seminary at Le Mans, where he continued in this role and where he died in 1673.

This is what M. Jolly, second successor of St. Vincent, said of him:

All his happiness was to be unknown and detached from this world. He suffered for many years, with patience, scorn and affronts. He was transported with joy when he saw in the houses where he lived that everything went smoothly in good order and with regularity.

Here are the topics on which Mathurin sought advice or the matters St. Vincent asked him to settle:

- the lease of a building (Coste III, 234)
- the payment of the purchase of fertilizer, natural manure, and the use of the gardens of the seminary (Coste III, 234)
- the exchange of one house for another (Coste III, 235)
- the sending post by express (Coste III, 313)

- the overseeing of dinners offered to externs (Coste III, 313)
- the share to be returned to the family as the inheritance of a deceased confrere (Coste III, 388)
- the repurchase of fishponds (Coste III, 388)
- the role of procurator of the Congregation in matters concerning chapels (Coste III, 388)
- the reminder concerning Masses for the dead (Coste III, 389)
- the distribution of funds and official papers (Coste III, 389)
- the contract of association between different establishments (Coste III, 495)
- the renting of 100 beds for the ordinands' retreats at Le Mans (Coste III, 496)
- the quality of the food for feeding those residing in the Seminary (Coste III, 504): "Give good bread, good meat, do not sell good wine in order to serve a worse one, do not expose the community to complaints of miserly treatment."
- the works of repairing and permission to request (Coste III, 578)
- the diocesan taxes (Coste III, 578)
- the reserves and working capital before an important event (Coste III, 620)
- the reimbursement of a half-pension (Coste III, 620)
- the management of the granaries (Coste III, 623)
- the analytical management of the accounts of the Seminary (Coste IV, 54)
- the setting the price of board and lodging at the Seminary (Coste IV, 54)
- the getting the advice of the superior in smaller works and of the general in larger repairs (Coste IV, 272).

This list may seem somewhat fastidious. It is, nevertheless, a testimony given to us to establish good relations with our Provincial Visitor and those who have given us the task of provincial treasurer.

Fr. Félix Contassot, who was Assistant General of the Congregation during the mandate of Fr. William Slattery, published in 1964 a book entitled: *Saint Vincent de Paul, guide des supérieurs*. The last chapter of this work is concerned with temporal administration. It is very interesting for provincial treasurers because it gives a certain number of extracts from the letters or conferences in which St. Vincent gives his opinion on our role, our mission.

In Volume XII of Coste, pages 110-111, St. Vincent comments on the Common Rules, Chapter I, Articles 2 and 3, which are dedicated to the different offices in the Congregation. Here is a little passage where St. Vincent alludes to the obligation of having some confreres who are in charge of temporal matters:

O my God! necessity obliges us to have perishable goods and to preserve for the Company what the Lord has given it; but we must apply ourselves to this as God applies himself to producing and preserving created things as ornament of the world and as food for his creatures, in such a way that he takes care even of a worm; which in no way hinders his interior workings, by which he engenders his Son and brings forth the Holy Spirit; these he does and does not omit the others. As it is thus God's pleasure to provide for the needs of plants, animals and humans, so those who have responsibility in this small universe of the Company must also provide for the needs of those who are members of it. It is absolutely necessary, my God; otherwise, all that your Providence has given for their maintenance would be lost, your service would cease and we would not be able to go freely to evangelise the poor.

Our service allows, firstly, that missionaries may go to evangelise the poor. That is the objective which we must keep before ourselves in our work and the purpose which we can give to it each day.

But for St. Vincent the best means of working in the temporal matters of the Congregation is to work in cooperation with the superior, be he local or general. Numerous times, he recalls this in letters, as to Mathurin Gentil or in more general advice:

To Mathurin Gentil, he writes;

Do not undertake any building project, or major renovations without an express order from the General; for minor repairs the permission of the local superior is required. This is in conformity with the Rules and customs of the Company (Coste IV, 272).

To Superiors, he gives this advice:

It happened in one of our houses that, in the absence of the superior, the assistant and the consultors spent a large amount of money. Granted, it was for good things, but they were extraordinary things. It is of this that I am advising you, and I ask you to tell the members of your house that no building should be done, no lawsuits initiated, and no extraordinary expense incurred which exceeds six écus, without the order of the Superior General (Coste IV, 258).

In particular, he calls for prudence in business matters and in particular in investments, sometimes a hazardous thing.

He wrote once to Bernard Codoing, superior at Annecy, who had invested money without having notified St. Vincent:

It would have been well for you to have sent me both the proposals and then the reasons for and against, on which to base my judgment. I had a hard time consenting to a few unduly difficult clauses in the contract. That is why I beseech you, Monsieur, never to do anything like that again without writing to me about it ... I think you had been advised to send me the draft before signing. That is what everybody in the Company has always done everywhere and what is done in every well-regulated company. You will object that I take too long, that you sometimes wait six months for an answer that can be given in a month and that, meanwhile, opportunities are lost and everything stands still ... Please, then, correct yourself of your hastiness in deciding and doing things, and I shall work at correcting myself of my slowness.
(Coste II, 207)

The mission of the provincial treasurer is, without any doubt, a mission in the shadow of superiors. In order to respond better and with quality, it seems to me important to cultivate the call of the Gospel in it:

- with **ardour** like Martha
- with **reflection** like her sister Mary
- with **courage** like Thomas
- and also to cultivate the flowers of **trust** in Providence and of **cooperation**, to which the advice of St Vincent de Paul calls us.

(EUGENE CURRAN, C.M., translator)

The Relationship between the Provincial Treasurer and the Visitor and his Council

*by Jaime Vergara, C.M.
Treasurer of Puerto Rico
7.XI.2002*

1. Number 128 of our Constitutions says that the Provincial Treasurer administers the goods of the province “under the direction and vigilance of the provincial and his council (cf. also C. 153, § 2; Canon 636). Statute 75 indicates, along the same lines, that the Provincial Treasurer “is named by the provincial with the consent of his council.”

The spirit of our norms establishes as a basic presumption that the Visitor (with his council) has the primary responsibility for the administration of the temporal goods of the province. Nevertheless, for the efficient fulfillment of this administrative function, he should value and make use of the Provincial Treasurer.

We must clarify that in no way does the Provincial Treasurer serve a mere vicarious function, but rather, according to Number 128 of our Constitutions, he and no one else is the true administrator of the temporal goods of the province.

Despite this fact, the Visitor is not exempt from being fully informed of the economic situation of the province since he has the final responsibility.

2. So the Provincial Treasurer’s job has no sense except “along side of” the Visitor and his council. Likewise, we can say the Visitor cannot exercise his administrative function without the indispensable help of the Provincial Treasurer.

3. Although it may sound a bit strong, the norm allows us to capture the “subordinate” character of the Provincial Treasurer’s job in relation to the Visitor and his Council. If we follow what Statute 75 says, the primary and immediate relationship is with the Visitor: it is he (the Visitor) who “names” the Treasurer, and the Council “consents” or gives its *placet* to the Visitor’s decision.

What must be underlined are the two terms the Constitutions use: “under the direction and vigilance.” That is to say, there is an external control over the Provincial Treasurer (viz., the Visitor and his Council), and this external control must be attentive to be “vigilant” with regard to the Provincial Treasurer in the exercise of his office.

But what is the real extent of the “vigilance” or “monitoring” the Visitor and his Council should observe with regard to the office of Provincial Treasurer? Or better, what are the “nuances” that should be pointed out in this “direction and vigilance”? The answer to this question should get to the essence of the Provincial Treasurer’s function: he exercises his function in the context of a particular province, which is part of a whole, the Congregation of the Mission, which, as Constitution 148, § 1 says, administers its goods “for the service of God and the poor.”

Consequently, we may say the Provincial Treasurer is, in a few words, “a delegate.” It is the Visitor who delegates to him everything concerning the financial administration of the province.

4. In this same line, Statute 77, 6° points out that the Provincial Treasurer should “make a report of his administration to the provincial and his council.” The question here should be: When? How? The immediate response is whenever the Visitor and his Council so decide. Even though the Provincial Norms (or the Provincial Project) should stipulate previously the manner and the moments this report should be made.

The main point to be emphasized is that the function of the Provincial Treasurer is in no way “independent,” since he should always report, whenever the Visitor and his Council ask him, about any financial movements. This will guarantee the transparency of his office or service, to say nothing of the greatest discretion in his exercise of it.

5. Finally, it may be important to ask about the possible areas of conflict in this relationship we have been describing. If any conflict is possible, then it is also important to visualize concrete ways of resolving these areas of conflict.

One element that may be a cause of friction is the reality of the “autonomy.” Here we mean the “limits” or boundaries between the essence of the role/service rendered to the province and the demands or attributions the “other” may permit himself with regard to this function. When freedom of action or opinion is suffocated, the normal reaction is self-defense, which is normally accompanied by a certain anxiety or internal disquiet, which, in the majority of cases, turns into confrontation. This must be kept in mind. On the other hand, it is worth noting that the Provincial Treasurer is in no way a “peon” at the Visitor’s service. His function has a specific weight and essentiality that are unavoidable, even though he should carry it out under the guidance of the Visitor and his Council.

Necessary Bases for a Good Relationship

The **dialogue** that should exist between the Visitor/Council and the Treasurer is an essential element for good administration, and should be seen as a normal process. Given the importance and responsibility the Provincial Treasurer has, it is only common sense that the Provincial Council call him whenever matters related to his office are treated. The Visitor's real Counselor in financial matters is the Provincial Treasurer, even though he may not be a member of the Provincial Council.

The **confidence and support** that the Visitor demonstrates to his Treasurer come not only from listening to his opinion, but also from studying, in Council, the proposals the Treasurer may make to him, and from seeking sound advice together. The Visitor and the Treasurer must form a consensus when the time comes to name the members of the Provincial Finance Committee (cf. "Ordinance of the Superior General about the Finance Committee" [Rome, July 1, 2001], in *Vincentiana* 45 (2001) 447-453).

Mutual discernment at decision-making time is essential. It is a good idea, unless the Visitor judges otherwise, that financial decisions be made in the presence of the Treasurer so he may hear the ideas of the whole Council and, in that way, may be able to clarify the final decision. Long and short range planning of provincial finances should be done taking into account the advice of the Treasurer: investments, closing/opening of works, formation of missionaries, health and retirement insurance, attention to the aged and infirm, special contracts of missionaries for other provinces, aid/help sought for other necessities. The Treasurer should take care not to try to "impose his criterion" because of good administration.

Transparency must be evident in every activity carried out and in all the information presented at the Council table by both sides. This same transparency, always by mutual accord, should exist in the information the Treasurer presents to the Assemblies or the different communities of the province. It inspires confidence in the members of the province when they see the Visitor and the Treasurer giving combined reports, visiting houses together, seeking advice together, etc.

A close and healthy relationship with professional advisers, by the Visitor as well as the Treasurer is advisable. It is a good idea that both maintain "a certain distance" from their advisers. They should never see conflicting opinions between the Visitor and his Council and the Treasurer. "Old-boy systems" do not inspire confidence and much less the interference of family members.

Non-interference in each other's functions supposes respecting each other's area. In reality, today, the Visitor is responsible for the goods, but not for

their direct administration. The Provincial Treasurer should be very respectful of the financial direction established by the Visitor and his Council, always in consonance with the orientations of General and Provincial Assemblies.

Effectiveness and fidelity must be evident when it is time to implement the financial decisions made by the Visitor and his Council. The Treasurer, like any other Council member, must take on with special interest the assignments delegated to him by the Visitor so that there may be a correct and effective provincial administration. The Treasurer should have the vote of confidence so he can carry out his job without the need for continuous consultation.

All these elements contribute positively to an active collaboration in the joint responsibility of handling correctly the patrimony of the poor.

Finally, I bring to your consideration the need or the clear usefulness of preparing and editing a “Practical Guide for the Provincial Treasurer” just as the Visitor has for the exercise of his ministry.

Some Inspiring Texts

“It is the Superior’s job not only to look after spiritual things, but he must also concern himself with temporal things; since the men he directs are made up of body and soul, he must see to the needs of the one and the other” (SV XI, 350).

“He should not dedicate himself only to what is most elevated, such as those functions which concern spiritual things; it is necessary that the Superior, who in a certain way represents all the extension of God’s power, also attend to the smallest temporal needs” (SV XI, 350).

“In each province there must be a treasurer to administer the goods of the province under the direction and vigilance of the provincial and his council” (C 128).

“The treasurer is named by the provincial with the consent of his council, or by some other way enacted in the provincial norms” (S 75).

“In each province of the Congregation of the Mission a finance committee will be established. It shall be presided over by the provincial superior or his delegate. It shall be composed of the provincial treasurer and at least three other members, knowledgeable in financial matters and the related portions of civil law, some of whom may be lay persons. It shall have an advisory role, offering recommendations to the provincial and the members of his council. The members of the finance committee shall be appointed by the provincial for a three-year

term, which is renewable” (“Ordinance of the Superior General about the Finance Committee,” Rome, July 1, 2001, in *Vincentiana* 45 (2001) 447.

Some documents to bear in mind

1. Constitutions and Statutes of the C. M.
2. Notes from the meeting of Fr. Patrick J. Griffin, C.M. with the Provincial Treasurers, (Paris, summer of 1995)
3. Practical Guide for the Visitor (Nos. 240-247 and 309)
4. Meeting of the Visitors of the C. M., Salamanca, 1996: “Profile of C.M. Visitor as Administrator. An Econome’s Perspective,” by Patrick J. Griffin, in *Vincentiana* 40 (1996) 266-273.
5. “Ordinance of the Superior General about the Finance Committee” (Rome, July 1, 2001), in *Vincentiana* 45 (2001) 447-453.

(JOSEPH CUMMINS, C.M., translator)

The Relationship between the Provincial Treasurer and the Local Treasurers

Formation of Local Treasurers

*by Marceliano Oabel, C.M.
Province of the Philippines
9.XI.2002*

When I was aspiring to become a Vincentian, one very concrete inspiration that attracted me to join the Little Company was the spirit of **involvement**.

This same spirit now enshrined in our new Provincial Mission and Vision Statement says that "...we *commit ourselves* and our *resources* to a renewed integral evangelization of the poor."

In my Internal Seminary formation, reading the conferences of St. Vincent, I was made to understand that our resources are the resources of the poor. Consequently we are simply administrators of our "masters" resources.

Managing effectively our "masters" resources entails good provincial structure to support our mission and vision. This is precisely one of the reasons why in each province there is a treasurer to administer the goods of the province under the direction and vigilance of the Visitor and his Council. The treasurer is named by the Visitor with the consent of his council mainly to assist them in the administration of the goods of the province; in particular, in the ways in which these goods must be maintained and produced for the needs of the ministry and the welfare of the missionaries.

On the local level, this same structure must be duplicated to assist the local superior in managing community resources. Therefore, in each local house there must be a local treasurer to administer the goods of the house under the direction of the local superior.

Working Relationship: Provincial Treasurer and Local Treasurers

In the area of administration of goods of the community, the local treasurers as administrators of goods must give an account to the Provincial Treasurer and keep the superior and members informed of their administration. An accounting of receipts and expenditures and report on the status of the patrimony are to be examined each year by the Provincial Treasurer. The local

treasurers shall submit their financial reports each year and subject them to a regular annual audit to check the accuracy of the report and good administration. The local treasurers also submit a yearly inventory report of all assets and liabilities to the Provincial Treasurer's Office for proper accounting.

The local treasurer shall prepare for his community and the Provincial Treasurer's Office the following:

A. Monthly

1. Summary of Income and Expenses
2. Current cash flow
3. Photocopy of Bank Book reflecting the entire month's transactions
4. Photocopy of Bank statement
5. VAT-able (value added tax) receipts of purchases

B. Year-End

1. Inventory of Assets
2. Inventory of Properties and Equipment
3. Advances/Loans Subsidiary ledger
4. List of employees/workers and their salary and benefits

Formation of Local Treasurers

Acknowledging the heavy responsibilities of the local treasurers coupled with the lack of professional training in accounting and management, our province initiated avenues to supplement what is lacking in a form of ongoing formation.

1. Formulation and publication of a *Provincial Handbook on Financial Administration*
2. Computerization of Accounting Systems (provincial and local levels)
3. Training and ongoing formation of lay staff (provincial and local level)
4. Sending confreres to formal studies in Accounting and Management Courses (MBA)
5. Conduct training and ongoing seminars on "Accounting for Non-Accountants"
6. Attending regular training sessions and seminars conducted every year by the Philippine Association of Religious Treasurers (P.A.R.T.) on:

- a. Philippine Taxation
 - b. Social Security Service Seminar
 - c. Human Relations Seminar
 - d. Insurance Policy Seminar
 - e. Basic Bookkeeping Seminar for Non-Accountants
 - f. Seminar on Wages and other Benefits
 - g. Seminar on Labor Code
 - h. Seminar on Handling People
 - i. Quarterly Spiritual Recollection
 - j. Seminar on Hiring and Firing Employees
 - k. Special Skills Training Seminar
7. Procurement and distribution of books on “Accounting for Non-Accountants”
 8. Appointment and training of local lay bookkeepers to assist the local treasurers
 9. Regular meeting with local treasurers on budget preparation and budget performance evaluation
 10. Training of local lay bookkeepers (local level)

Training of Local Lay Bookkeepers

In 2001, after listening to the stories and concerns of our local treasurers, our province launched a training program for *local lay bookkeepers* of different houses. This was in view of eliminating some work of the local treasurers so they can attend to other equally important tasks of their ministry. Most of our recruits were high school graduates but highly trainable for the tasks. So far the program has helped us improve regular and accurate reporting by the local treasurers. Above all, we discovered one very important truth: that we Vincentians are not only serving the poor but also being served by the poor. This realization changed our attitude towards them and made us humbler in working with them. From this initial experience we explored further the involvement of our graduates and graduating student assistants to manage our farm, school canteen, water-purifying station, net centers and other business ventures of the province. Happily, our student assistant program and the local lay bookkeepers became the vital source of trained personnel for the province.

(Note: The Student Assistants Program is a scholarship program for young people working with and for us in exchange for free board and lodging, free tuition fees, transportation allowance, book allowance, project allowance and other miscellaneous expenses. Most of the grantees are recruits from our apostolates who have no other access to good education.)

Personal Relationship: Provincial Treasurer and Local Treasurers

In my two years stay in the office of the Provincial Treasurer there were absolutely a lot of things to learn and unlearn. The following three points are just a humble insight on improving the relationship between the Provincial Treasurer and Local Treasurers:

1. Listening. I thought that listening is only good for counseling, but I realized that some of the problems I encountered in the Office of the Provincial Treasurer were problems in listening. Confreres who came from remote parishes, mission centers, formation houses and schools, need not only material help, but listeners to their stories: stories of rich pastoral importance that need to be shared and listened to. This perspective made me realize that the office of the Provincial Treasurer is not only a ministry of giving, but of receiving; not only a ministry of spending money, but of spending time with the confreres; not only making accounts for depreciation, but showing appreciation; not only inventory of assets, but collections of stories. To improve the working relationship between the Provincial Treasurer and Local Treasurers is to improve the much-neglected personal ministry of listening.

2. Witnessing. After my ordination in 1992, I remember a Daughter of Charity told me that the most important ministry of a treasurer is **witnessing**; concretely, **simplicity of lifestyle**. How the Office of the Provincial Treasurer affects our lifestyle is a paramount importance into which we need to look. This is an area that we, Provincial Treasurers, are invited to consider seriously in order to improve our relationships with confreres and local treasurers.

3. Care. Fraternal care is a key to the office we are holding. Decisions and actions made by the Provincial Treasurer's Office should be expressions of fraternal care, especially toward those in poor areas. St. Vincent took care of the poor. We are entrusted with the task of taking care of our confreres who take care of the poor. Good relationships are established when confreres and local treasurers feel they are cared for by the province.

*... all our possessions derive their meaning from our evangelization and service of the poor.**

originale

* Miguel Pérez Flores, C.M. and Antonino Orcajo, C.M., *The Way of St. Vincent is Our Way*, English translation edited by Charles T. Plock, C.M. (Eastern Province, Congregation of the Mission: Philadelphia, 1995) 410.

Vincentian Solidarity Office

*by Peter A. Campbell, C.M.
VSO Administrator
8.XI.2002*

Opening Remarks

Good morning! I am very happy to be here with you today. This morning I will speak about the newly established Vincentian Solidarity Office or VSO. As you know, our Superior General, Fr. Robert Maloney, C.M., and his Council appointed me as the first Administrator of the VSO. I am grateful to them for the opportunity to serve in this new ministry for the Congregation of the Mission. I will do my best.

My talk is divided into four parts:

I. What is the VSO?

Why was the VSO started?

II. How does the VSO work?

III. Some other practical matters about the VSO

The basic outline and content of my talk is summarized in the *VSO Brochure*. (You received a copy of the *VSO Brochure* at the beginning of my talk.) After my presentation, there will be time for you to ask questions about the content of my talk. I will also be available after the session, if you would like to speak with me about the services of the VSO.

I. What is the VSO?

The VSO is a new office of service established by the Superior General and the General Council of the Congregation of the Mission on June 15, 2002. The goal of the VSO is:

To assist the poorer provinces, vice-provinces and missions of the Congregation of the Mission with writing successful grant proposals to funding organizations for their works and needs.

The word “missions” in the goal statement refers to both the poorer foreign missions of provinces and to the new international missions under the jurisdiction of the Superior General and his Council.

The VSO serves as an intermediary between a province, vice-province or mission and various funding organizations for the application and awarding of grant funds for a project.

The VSO is an optional service in the Congregation of the Mission that a province, vice-province or mission can use. Since it is not the intention of the General Curia to centralize all grant proposals through the VSO, a province, vice-province or mission is free to continue to send grant proposals for projects directly to funding organizations or to donors.

The VSO is a program under the jurisdiction of the Superior General and his Council. The staff of the VSO consists of myself, as the Administrator. The VSO Administrator is appointed by and accountable to the Superior General and his Council. Simply stated, the job description of the VSO Administrator is to serve as an international grant writer for the Congregation of the Mission.

The VSO is located at St. Vincent's Seminary in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA, which is the Motherhouse of the Eastern Province of the Congregation of the Mission in the United States. You are most welcome to come and visit the VSO at anytime.

II. Why Was the VSO Started?

The VSO was created to help solve a problem. The context of the problem is that some of the provinces, vice-provinces and missions of the Congregation of the Mission, particularly those outside of Western Europe and the United States, do not have adequate financial resources to support their apostolates and the needs of their members. In addition, in many of these areas of the world the Congregation is growing.

The General Curia has responded to this situation through the annual Mission Fund Distribution, Special Needs Fund, establishing the International Mission Funds and promoting the setting up of Patrimony Funds. Despite these efforts, the General Curia cannot satisfy all the petitions it receives for financial assistance, especially those for construction projects.

The problem is that some of the poorer provinces, vice-provinces and missions of the Congregation of the Mission do not apply for or are not successful at receiving grant monies from international funding organizations

because they do not know where to seek grant funds or do not know how to write successful grant proposals for projects.

To address this problem, the Superior General and his Council established the VSO to assist needy provinces, vice-provinces and missions with writing successful grant proposals to funding organizations for their provincial apostolates and the needs of their confreres.

III. How does the VSO Work?

The province, vice-province or mission, the VSO and the various funding organizations form a partnership to provide grant funds for a project that benefits the needs of the confreres or the people they serve.

The responsibilities of the province, vice-province or mission for the project are:

- To design, plan and implement the project.
- To manage the grant funds awarded to the project.
- To prepare the financial and evaluation reports required by funding organizations for the project.

The responsibilities of the VSO for the project are spelled out in the eight objectives for accomplishing the goal of the VSO. I would like to read each objective and then make some brief comments about the tasks that will be done to carry out the objective.

1. *To select projects submitted by the Visitors or Vice-Visitors and their Councils for VSO assistance based on criteria approved by the Superior General and his Council.*

The Visitor or Vice-Visitor and his Council determine the provincial priorities for projects in a province, vice-province or mission.

They are responsible for approving and sending the *VSO Project Application Form* to the VSO Administrator. (*You received a copy of the VSO Project Application Form at the beginning of my talk.*) The questions on the application form focus on the major areas of a basic grant proposal for a project. These areas are the problem statement, goal and objectives, method, budget and evaluation.

After receiving the application form, the VSO Administrator applies the *VSO Project Criteria* approved by the Superior General and his Council to the

request for VSO assistance. The project must satisfy all six criteria before the VSO Administrator will accept the project for service. The criteria are:

1. *The Visitor or Vice-Visitor and his Council approve and send the VSO Project Application Form to the VSO Administrator.*
2. *The VSO Project Application Form is properly filled out.*
3. *The province, vice-province or mission submitting the project is economically poor.*

One measure for determining economic poverty are those provinces, vice-provinces and missions that currently receive financial assistance from the General Curia.

4. *The project is a work of the Congregation of the Mission and benefits the needs of the confreres of the province, vice-province or mission or the people they serve.*
5. *There is a reasonable chance of securing grant funds for the project.*
6. *The VSO has the resources to work on the project.*

2. *To investigate funding sources for projects*

The VSO Administrator conducts research on funding sources for the project.

The VSO Administrator will also learn about available funding sources for projects by:

- initiating and maintaining good working relationships with funding organizations through personal visits;
- developing and fostering collaborative relationships with others who do international grant writing for religious communities; and

- joining associations and/or attending workshops on grant writing and fundraising.

3. *To provide assistance with writing grant proposals for projects*

After a project is selected for VSO assistance, the Visitor or Vice-Visitor designates a confreere from his province, vice-province or mission to be the Project Coordinator. The Project Coordinator is the person that the VSO Administrator works with to review all aspects of a project. At the request of the VSO Administrator, the Project Coordinator supplies needed information for writing grant proposals for the project.

If it is warranted, the VSO Administrator conducts an onsite visit to see the project first-hand, for example, an expensive construction project.

Based on his research and contacts, the VSO Administrator determines which funding organizations are appropriate for the project. If it is necessary, he breaks down the project into a number of smaller grant proposals.

Then the VSO Administrator writes the grant proposals for the project according to the proposal guidelines of the various funding organizations. These grant proposals are based on the information supplied by the Visitor or Vice-Visitor on the *VSO Project Application Form*, provided by the Project Coordinator at the request of the VSO Administrator, or gathered during an onsite visit.

4. *To submit grant proposals for projects to the appropriate funding organizations*

The VSO Administrator sends the grant proposals for the project to the various funding organizations.

5. *To keep track of grant proposals submitted to various funding organizations for projects*

The VSO Administrator monitors the status of all grant proposals submitted to funding organizations for the project.

He also inquires about the status of grant proposals for the project when making personal visits to funding organizations.

6. *To handle all communication and correspondence with funding organizations regarding these grant proposals for projects*

The VSO Administrator receives all communications and correspondence from funding organizations regarding the grant proposals for the project.

The VSO Administrator keeps the Project Coordinator informed about the status of the grant proposals for the project.

He also sends copies of all communications to and from funding organizations about the project to the Project Coordinator.

If the Visitor or Vice-Visitor or the Project Coordinator have any questions, concerns or new information about the project, they should contact the VSO Administrator.

7. *To distribute grant funds awarded by funding organizations to projects with the assistance of the Treasurer General*

If funding organizations award grant funds to the project, they are sent to the VSO and deposited in the appropriate bank accounts.

In consultation with the Project Coordinator, the VSO Administrator sets up the schedule for sending grant funds to the project.

The VSO Administrator then works with the Treasurer General to release the funds according to the schedule.

If the Visitor or Vice-Visitor or Project Coordinator have any inquiries about the distribution of grant funds to a project, they should contact the VSO Administrator.

8. *To make sure that evaluation and financial reports for grants are filed on time with funding organizations*

The VSO Administrator reminds the Project Coordinator when the interim and final financial and evaluation reports for grants are due.

The Project Coordinator then prepares and sends the reports to the VSO Administrator.

After reviewing them, the VSO Administrator sends the required follow-up reports for grant funds awarded to projects to the funding organizations in a timely manner.

IV. Some Other Practical Matters about the VSO

1. English as the Working Language of the VSO

The working language of the VSO is English for two reasons. First, grant proposals can be submitted in English to almost all funding organizations around the world. Second, I, as the VSO Administrator, speak only English.

This means that the *VSO Project Application Form*, the grant proposals for a project, the financial and evaluation reports for grant funds for a project and all written and verbal communication with the VSO Administrator must be in English.

2. Startup Date for the VSO

The VSO will officially open on January 1, 2003. The Visitor or Vice-Visitor can send the completed *VSO Project Application Form* to me after that date. The address, telephone number, fax number, e-mail address and website address for the VSO are printed on the *VSO Brochure*.

3. VSO Website

The VSO will have a website at famvin.org/vso starting on January 1, 2003. You can go to the website to look up information about the VSO, for example, the VSO Goal and Objectives, the *VSO Project Criteria*, news updates on the VSO, etc. You will also be able to print out the *VSO Project Application Form* from the website.

Originale

Vincentian Bibliography

CELESTINO FERNÁNDEZ

Sacramento y profecía

Las Hijas de la Caridad en el mundo y para el mundo de hoy
CEME, Salamanca, Spain, 2002, 375 pages

“As you see, the general title — *Sacramento y Profecía* (Sacrament and Prophecy) — which is also the title of a chapter of the book, may seem a bit new as applied to the Daughters of Charity. It is taken from an expression which is becoming more and more familiar in language describing consecrated life. Though, in these pages it is not a simple statement of fact of what the Daughters of Charity today “*are becoming.*” The title is a call to witness, to consistency, to meaning, and to credibility that is urgent and must be addressed. After all is said and done, it is a series of hammer blows so that the Daughters of Charity never forget that their life and their mission has two inseparable, but complementary poles: *to be a visible sign of God’s tenderness and goodness and to announce effectively God’s predilection for the poor and thus to denounce the perverse mechanisms which disfigure and conceal the face of God in the poor.*” (Taken from the author’s presentation).

EDWARD UDOVIC, C.M.

Jean-Baptiste Étienne and the Vincentian Revival

Vincentian Studies Institute, Chicago, Illinois, USA, 2001, 350 pages

“This long-awaited study looks at the pivotal and controversial role of Jean-Baptiste Étienne in the Vincentian Revival, following the chaos and destruction of the French Revolution and Napoleonic eras. Étienne served as the 14th Superior General from 1843-1874, and presided over the reestablishment of the Congregation of the Mission and the Daughters of Charity according to what he described as the “primitive spirit” of St. Vincent of Paul. Étienne recreated the Vincentian communities to meet the needs of the 19th-century world of revolution, democracy, empire and industrialization. As a man of his age, he was conservative, paternalistic, authoritarian, pietistic and Gallican, with a passion for absolute uniformity, obedience and order. Contemporarily described as the “second founder,” this title appears to be appropriate, but was earned at great cost.”

Collection

Asociación de la Medalla Milagrosa

Una nueva Imagen para un nuevo Milenio

Editorial La Milagrosa, Madrid, Spain, 2002, 247 pages

This book collects most of the conferences presented at the First International Meeting of the AMM, held in Rome in October 2001. Also published here is the Final Document of that meeting, which indicates the path for the AMM throughout the world to follow in the coming years. In the same way, it makes known the International Statutes of the AMM and two previously published articles on the spirituality of the Miraculous Medal. It is the first time that what we might consider a “synthesis” of the spirituality, charism, and mission of the AMM has been printed. Members of the AMM and those who work in the accompaniment of this Association will find here valuable material for acquainting themselves with the fundamentals and the reality of the AMM. In addition, those who are looking for reflections on the Miraculous Medal itself from different perspectives will discover here a rereading of the medal from the point of view of modern times, of the poor, and even from a traditional approach.

ANIMATION VINCENTIENNE (No. 79-80)

Vincentiens aujourd’hui

Essai sur la mission en France

Toulouse, France, 143 pages

The team of the “Fiches Vincentiennes” has written a special issue on the understanding of the mission and missionary practices. The authors invite us to look at once again the beginnings of our foundations and their history. They reveal a style of the Vincentian mission at present, in France. This book does not claim to give us recipes for evangelization. It is rather an invitation to take up today the challenge of proclaiming the gospel in a world which throws many challenges before us. The team of the “Fiches” invites us to renew ourselves to the point of opening new paths of mission and service, indicating possible routes for us, in particular that of taking up the challenges of a real collaboration with the Vincentian Family.

JUVENTUD MARIANA VICENCIANA

Rol y tareas de los asesores en J.M.V.

Editorial La Milagrosa, Madrid, Spain, 2002, 24 pages

This short document is the result of a request made by of the National Directors and other Advisors who took part in the First General Assembly of the Vincentian Marian Youth (Rome, 2000). It was approved by the Vincentian Marian Youth International Council on May 25, 2002, and presents the profile of the Advisor, a description of his/her mission in the Vincentian Marian Youth, some characteristics of the pedagogical style that the Advisors of the Association are being asked to use, a list of some of the concrete functions of the Advisor, and a section containing some practical aspects. Fr. Maloney, Director General of the

Association, recommends this document for the study and use of all Advisors to the Vincentian Marian Youth.

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