

FEATURE

Authority and Obedience

Presentation

by Julio Suescun Olcoz, C.M.

This issue of *VINCENTIANA* includes a number of articles around the theme of its title: Authority and Obedience.

In the summer of 2006, CIF (Center for International Formation) organized a workshop on “Servant Leadership.” It was addressed to the superiors of the CM. Satisfaction was such that the directors of CIF thought to organize another for Visitors and other persons with responsibility for governance at the highest level in the Congregation. This was done in the summer of 2008. The reader can find the goals and development of these workshops in the articles by Father Hugh O’Donnell. It is important to underline the interest of the Congregation of the Mission, through its Center for International Formation (CIF) in equipping people, to whom the service of leadership is confided, with new scientific techniques to enhance effectiveness. *VINCENTIANA* echoes that concern, knowing that reading some articles on the topic is not the same as the practical experience of a workshop.

On May 11, 2008, the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, published, signed by the prefect, Cardinal Rodé, C.M., and secretary, Archbishop Gianfranco Gardin, OFM, an Instruction entitled “Authority and Obedience.” At this point, the text of the Instruction is well known. However *VINCENTIANA* wanted to give it special attention in the reflection that was written by Father Lauro Palu, C.M.

Father Jaime Corera, CM offers in this issue of *VINCENTIANA* an analysis of the texts governing the exercise of authority and obedience in the Common Rules and in the texts of the Constitutions

of the CM from the post-Conciliar Assemblies of the Congregation. The conclusion is clear: *“Of course there is continuity between the vision that Saint Vincent had on obedience and authority and the vision offered to us by the constitution. ‘Of course’ because that is precisely what we intend in our various assemblies: to ensure the continuity of spirit between Saint Vincent and the Congregation today despite, or rather through, the changes inspired by the council document cited above: drafting new constitutions in the light of the ‘signs of the times’ of today while remaining faithful to the spirit of the founder”* (cf. *Perfectae Caritatis* 2.3).

Finally, not only the texts of the CM, and the texts of the Church but also the environment of society have changed their expression of feeling and talking about obedience and authority. That is the intent of the last article in this issue of *VINCENTIANA* on the new sensitivity in the relationship of authority-obedience since Vatican II.