

## APPENDIX

### INTERPRETATION OF THE FUNDAMENTAL STATUTE ON POVERTY

#### A) CONTENTS OF THE STATUTE

In the fundamental statute these normative elements can be noted:

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

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

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

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

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

#### B) EXPLANATION OF THE STATUTE

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

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

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

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

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

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