

# GENERAL CURIA

Rome, 5 April 2006

## *To the Visitors of the Congregation of the Mission*

Dear Brothers,

May the grace and peace of Our Lord Jesus Christ fill your hearts now and forever!

As I communicated to you in my circular of 15 March, the Commission for Confreres in Difficulty held its first meeting during our last *tempo forte*. It worked hard to specify the objectives and criteria of its service to the Congregation.

After different meetings with the members of the General Council, the Commission placed before us, for our consideration and approval, the letter and questionnaire that I am sending you.

The replies to this questionnaire will be a first step in the process of preparing the international session, which we will hold in Rome, from 9-17 January 2007. The information gathered from all the provinces will be essential for the work and reflection of the Commission, which will meet again at the General Curia in the beginning of October in order to put the finishing touches on the preparations for the international session.

I believe, confreres, that we are taking the steps necessary to find direction and practical resources that will help us live our missionary vocation with greater fidelity and will serve confreres who are undergoing difficult experiences to overcome them and to be happy in carrying out their ministry.

I invite you, then, to participate in this survey, assuring the collaboration of the former Visitors who are able to do so and, above all, the confreres whom you consider to be living, at present, separated from our fraternal communion.

Your brother in St. Vincent,

G. Gregory Gay, C.M.  
Superior General

Rome, 5 April 2006

*To all Visitors of the Congregation of the Mission*

Dear Confreres:

May the grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ be always with us!

We have been asked by the Superior General and his Council to prepare a workshop about our confreres in difficult situations. It is not an easy task. We are aware that many of those confreres are really our confreres. To prepare ourselves and all who will be present, we propose to you a few questions.

We hope not to burden you with an impossible task but to learn from your experience, even the painful experiences. Please answer the questions consciously and carefully. We hope that your advice can be of great help to our confreres who have to care for confreres in difficult situations and those confreres themselves.

We ask you to have the formators in your province complete the questionnaire and return it. Please assist us by copying the questionnaire and give it to your formators.

We are sending this letter to current Visitors and their predecessors to obtain a perspective for a longer period of time. We hope that everyone will answer personally these questions from his own experience.

Perhaps you know confreres who have left the community. It could be helpful if they give us their ideas as well. Please send the enclosed questionnaire for members who have departed to them.

We ask you to return the completed questionnaire to Father Varghese at the General Curia no later than June 30.

Thank you for your assistance in this difficult task. Our hope is that this work will result in serenity and happiness for our confreres in these situations and help to you in your ministry.

The Commission for Confreres in Difficult Situations

Varghese Thottamkara (Procurator General)

Wiel Bellemakers (Holland), Carlos Albeiro Velásquez (Colombia)  
and Michael Joyce (USA - Midwest)

## **Questionnaire for Visitors, Previous Visitors, and Formators**

The Commission for Confreres in Difficult Situations is trying to learn about these confreres so that we can assist the Visitors in working with such confreres. The Commission asks the following people to answer the questionnaire:

1. The Visitor,
  2. The previous Visitor,
  3. Formators.
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1. How many cases did you have of confreres in difficult situations during your mandate?
  2. What are the reasons that confreres left the community during your mandate?
  3. What the most difficult cases you experienced in finding a solution?
  4. When did the confrere begin to experience difficulties?
  5. When a confrere began to experience difficulties, to whom did he go for help, with or without the knowledge of the Visitor?
  6. Do confreres in difficult situations participate in the regularly scheduled spiritual exercises of the Province?
  7. What attempts did the community make to help the confrere at the local level and at the provincial level?
  8. How does ongoing formation assist confreres who are living and working in difficult situations to avoid having major problems?
  9. In your ongoing formation program do you have someone who accompanies young confreres as a mentor?
  10. How has your mentoring program helped confreres from developing major problems?
  11. Do you ask confreres about their use of a spiritual director during your canonical visitation?
  12. What kind of knowledge does the Visitor or local superior have about confreres' use of spiritual direction?
  13. How many confreres in difficult situations are on a legitimate leave of absence or exclaustation?
  14. How many confreres in difficult situations are illegitimately absent?
  15. What action is being or was taken in the Province during your mandate about those who are illegitimately absent?

16. Do you or one of the confreres have contact with the absent members?
17. How do you facilitate confreres who are absent to normalize their situation either by returning to the community or by seeking a canonical process for departure?
18. What suggestions do you have about preventing confreres from developing major problems?

***Please Return by June 30***

The Commission for Confreres in Difficult Situations

Varghese Thottamkara (Procurator General)

Wiel Bellemakers (Holland), Carlos Albeiro Velásquez (Colombia)  
and Michael Joyce (USA - Midwest)

## **Questionnaire for Members who Have Departed and for Confreres in Difficult Situations**

The Commission for Confreres in Difficult Situations is trying to learn about these confreres so that we can assist the Visitors in working with such confreres. This questionnaire is being sent to

1. Members who have left and whose situation has been regularized,
  2. Members who are currently experiencing difficulties.
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1. What was helpful for you as you were leaving the community?
  2. What kind of guidance did you seek as you were making the decision to leave the community?
  3. Please identify the main reason that motivated you to leave the community.
  4. To whom did you turn for help when you began experiencing the difficulty that led to your departure from the community?
  5. Are you happy in your present situation?
  6. Are you grateful to or angry with the community about the process it used if it legalized your situation canonically?
  7. What kind of help should the community offer to those who are thinking of leaving the community?
  8. Do you have other suggestions for the community regarding its approach to confreres who are having difficulties with their vocation in the community?

***Please Return by June 30***

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