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## Constitutions English: 1968-1974

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CONSTITUTIONS AND  
STATUTES

of the

CONGREGATION OF THE  
MISSION

Approved by the

Extraordinary General  
Assembly

1969

Revised by the 35th General Assembly,  
1974

Unofficial translation  
prepared by the Western Province, USA,  
Saint Louis, MO, 1969

Presentation by J. Rybolt, C.M., April 2006

New material is in red.

Revised material is ~~struck through~~.

## INTRODUCTORY LETTER OF THE SUPERIOR GENERAL

Reading this text given to him by our Extraordinary Assembly, a confrere is almost forced to consider our Congregation in its realistic aspect within the Church. For the Church, as a living sacrament of salvation, includes our society, however small it may be, and leads it today toward the fulfillment of the mission entrusted to it by Saint Vincent, The flock of Christ in various parts of the world begs of us the bread of the Gospel, the clergy called to the lot of the Lord shows us its multiple needs and welcomes our help, young Catholics seek in the life witness of the confreres an example of personal dedication to the saving work of Spirit.

The authors of this work sought their inspiration in the pages of the Gospel, in the conciliar declarations of the Spouse of Christ, in the constitutional documents addressed to the Congregation during the lifetime of Saint Vincent, and in the rules written and gathered together for us by our blessed founder, and in his other writings, as well as in what they considered to be our sound traditions shaped to the conditions of today's world. The readers are asked to take cognizance of the same sources so that they may come to the complete and unified sense of the articles in this little book, which is offered to the confreres as a lowly but vital element of renewal.

One can find here perhaps deficiencies and imperfections that come from the human quality of the work. Yet it must also be recognized that there is a higher quality here, the result of the prayers of the authors and of others, especially of the confreres and Daughters of Charity everywhere that have brought down God's blessing upon it. The preparation for the Assembly, its proceedings and its chief effects, recorded here, certainly did not lack the guidance of the Holy Spirit. If the reader is to find here the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he should take it up in a spirit of prayer and with a generous heart toward those who wrote these words.

One of the unfinished tasks of the Assembly is a more profound and very serious study of several matters that are touched in the chapters of this little book. All are invited to contribute to the study, each in his own way: with a careful reading of what is here, with questions and with brotherly participation in the total effort that is needed. More than anything else, an exemplification of the principles and the norms of these constitutions and statutes in real community life and work, done with a sense of fidelity and loyalty - this is the greatest need.

When Saint Vincent was forming the Common Rules of the Congregation, he put at the head of the first and of the last

chapter the example of Christ, the great Teacher, who "began to do and to teach". This is the example for confreres who receive this book: to do the good things that are found here. It is living the renewal that counts most of all. Without this living in Christ, in the spirit of Saint Vincent, the writing that has already been done and the further studies that may follow will be without real meaning.

May God grant the light and strength that all of us, recognizing that we are coresponsible, with firm strides may mark out paths of renewed holiness and apostolic activity in our houses, churches and in every place of our ministry, in such a way that the works of the members of the Congregation may express the meaning of our Vincentian vocation more clearly and effectively than the words printed in these pages.

Reinforced by the experiences of a number of years, the Congregation will eventually present the parts that have proven the best to the authority of the Church for a specific approval.

James W. Richardson, C.M.

Rome, 14 September 1969

**Editorial note:**

... Numbers appearing with an asterisk (\*) belong to the statutes, in the judgment of a particular commission.

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## I. THE PURPOSE OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION

1. Urged by the Spirit of Christ, Vincent de Paul chose to take part in the mission of Christ and of the Church, especially as it is directed to the evangelization and assistance of the poor.

Seeing the image of the poor Christ in the poor, he lovingly devoted himself to all who were afflicted with human weakness and strove to serve Christ in them. Alert to the needs of the people, he zealously worked for the formation and inspiration of good pastors and of laymen to go to the aid especially of those who were abandoned in the world.

2. To continue these works, he founded the Congregation of the Mission and gave it this end: 1) To strive for one's own perfection by exerting every effort to practice the virtues in which Christ has deigned to instruct us by word and example; 2) To evangelize the poor, especially those of the country; 3) To help clerics to acquire the knowledge and virtues required for their state of life.

3. With due regard for the differences of time and place, the Congregation of the Mission, insofar as its meager resources permit, intends to carry out faithfully this purpose, which it has received from its Founder, in accord with his charism and example.

4. Therefore the Congregation will take care to evaluate and to organize its pastoral works and ministries in the light of that mission and continually to renew itself in the same light.

Faithful to St. Vincent's special love for them, the Congregation will always be mindful of the poor. At the same time, it will look to the signs of the times and will come to know God's will in the more urgent needs of the Church and of the contemporary world.

5. Consequently, the evangelization of the poor and the promotion of their human and Christian progress will be like a standard in the Congregation to unite its members and to urge them on to the apostolate. (1)

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(1) In the 62nd Session on July 3, 1969 the Assembly by vote declared that the following propositions are true interpretations of the approved text "The Purpose of the Congregation": "1° - The evangelization of the poor and their human and Christian promotion is the preeminent but not unique purpose of the Congregation of the Mission. 2° - The evangelization of the poor and their human and Christian

promotion is in itself a sufficient, but not necessary criterion of selecting our works."

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## II. THE NATURE OF THE CONGREGATION

6. The Congregation sees itself as an apostolic society for the carrying on of the mission of Christ and of the Church. Established within the community of men by reason of its secular character, it carries out its active ministry amidst the conditions and changes of the world. Faithful to the intention of its Founder, it shares in the life and work of the local Church; however, in order to be more available for the good of the universal Church and to preserve better its own spiritual and apostolic unity, it remains subject only to the Holy See.

7. The members of the Congregation, both clerics and brothers, living and working in community, devote themselves to the pursuit of perfect charity through the practice of the evangelical counsels, and they strive to practice that same charity in genuine fraternal communion, in the service of God, and in their missionary activity for the salvation of men, especially of the poor.

## III. THE SPIRIT OF THE CONGREGATION

8. The Congregation of the Mission looks upon its spirit as a participation in the Spirit of Christ himself unceasingly at work within the Church, and cultivates it as the continued presence of the charism of its holy Founder.

9. Accordingly, the spirit of the Congregation consists in part of those interior dispositions of soul which St. Vincent continually and prayerfully studied in the Christ who preached the Gospel to the poor and which he recommended to his missionaries from the beginning as a means for better achieving the goal of their apostolic work: perfect charity and reverence toward the Father, an effective and compassionate love for the poor, and docility to divine Providence.

10. The Congregation seeks to give expression to that spirit in those five virtues which are likewise drawn from the Saint's special view of Christ: simplicity, humility, meekness, mortification, and zeal for the salvation of souls. Of these virtues, St. Vincent said: "the Congregation shall apply itself with special zeal to the cultivation and practice of them, so that these give virtues may become, so to speak, the faculties of the soul of the whole Congregation, and so that all the actions of each of its members may always be animated by them".

11. These virtues not only relate us properly to God but also help us greatly in the pursuit of perfect charity. Moreover, as times change, the Congregation will find in them the intrinsic,

living principle of continual conversion, of self-renewal, and of adaptation for the apostolate.

12. Although it is unlikely that we shall ever understand this spirit or be imbued with it in that perfection which we find in our holy Founder, all shall seek an ever deepening knowledge of it and strive daily with all our strength to grow in it. To this end, we shall continually have recourse to the Gospel as the source of the Christian life and to the example and doctrine of St. Vincent, especially as it is contained in the Common Rules.

We shall also be mindful that, in order to pursue the spirit of the Congregation, it is necessary to carry on our apostolic works out of a fervent love for God and neighbor, and out of a profound esteem for the human and Christian dignity of the sons of God whom we try to serve.

#### IV. THE LIFE OF THE CONGREGATION

13. Called by God, we strive to carry out his will in every facet of our life. This chapter treats of one, indivisible reality; and it seeks to persuade us to respond completely and faithfully to our Vincentian vocation in a way that is relevant to our own times.

##### 1. Our Apostolate

14. We are called to take an active part in the mission of Christ within the Church by proclaiming the revelation and the reality of God's love towards men.

15. Becoming all things to all men and sharing their lot like Christ who lived among us and took unto himself our human condition, we will strive to serve men in a spirit of openness, understanding, and dialogue.

16. Our pastoral activity should always be integrated into that of the local and universal Church in accordance with the instructions of the Ordinaries, of the Episcopal Conferences, and of the Holy See.

17. The Provinces themselves shall decide on the forms of apostolate with which they will respond to the needs of the local Church. Mindful, however, of our common responsibility, they shall pay due attention, to the extent their resources permit, to the Superior General when he seeks help for the work of the universal Church or of another Province, especially when it concerns the emerging nations.

18. By deepening our understanding of the contemporary world, of Christ's gospel, and of St. Vincent's spirit, we shall remain at one with the Church in a state of continuous conversion. We shall not hesitate to try the new or to

pioneer projects which realistically and concretely meet the changing conditions of men and society.

19. In all of our activities, we will find our unity and strength in the love of Christ which is the source of all apostolic activity.

20. We shall carry out our role in the pastoral activity of the Church in accordance with the charism of our Founder.

21. § 1. St. Vincent devoted himself to the service of the materially and spiritually poor. Consequently, we too regard the poor as our preeminent portion in the work of evangelization, so that we may proclaim to them the mystery of salvation, the leaven of liberation and of progress.

§ 2. From its very beginnings the Congregation has preached Missions to the People of God with great fruit. Today, however, we shall approach the work of preaching the gospel through new and different forms, adapted to the needs of each people, both for calling non-believers to the faith and for renewing and building up the true Christian community.

§ 3. Under the guidance of the Superior General, all of us shall respond promptly and diligently to the manifold needs of evangelization in those places where the Church is not yet established or where it is not yet self-sufficient.

Every confrere, no matter in what work he is engaged, should enjoy the opportunity of concretely contributing to our missionary works.

22. In these days of frequent and profound changes in pastoral and social conditions, we shall be of service to the priesthood by brotherly cooperation with priests in their lives and ministries, by fostering and nurturing vocations, and by preparing candidates for the priesthood.

23. In order that we might respond with due care to the more urgent needs of the Church and of the world in our apostolate, we shall be attentive to the "signs of the times". Conscious of the great importance of education, we shall engage in the work of teaching and educating where the need exists.

24. We shall collaborate in a special way with the Daughters of Charity, because our vocations share the same spirit. We shall gladly exercise our ministry among them whenever we are assigned to it by superiors, to aid them to grow in the love of God and the spirit of service toward the neighbor.

25. In order that our apostolate may bear greater fruit, we shall be prompt to collaborate with the diocesan clergy, members of other religious institutes, and the laity. We shall show

special concern for those associations of laymen which take their origin in the spirit of our Founder.

26. We shall strive for ecumenical dialogue and shall cooperate in religious, social, and cultural endeavors with other Christians, with non-Christians, and with non-believers. To this end, we shall enter into relationships with national and international organizations.

27. Not only will we strive to respond to the innumerable demands of the work of evangelization, but we shall also seek to lead others to awareness of and action for the service of the poor.

28. The role of our apostolate within the Church demands that we constantly develop our spirit and continually perfect our methods.

Consequently, we shall learn more effective means from the experiences of others; we will promote inter-provincial meetings; and we shall make use of the modern means of mass communication.

## 2. Fraternal Communion

29. Just as the apostles lived with Christ, so we, too, in accord with the intention of St. Vincent, live together in true Christian fellowship. Together we form of a community of works, of prayer, and of goods, as a means of a more effective apostolate and of personal development.

30. With gratitude toward God, we shall strive to develop the talents we have each received from him. On its part, the community must provide a climate which will foster the development of the individual person. Living in the spirit of Christian liberty, we will find a sense of belonging, intimate friendships, and joy in our work. Insofar as possible, individuals shall be given the opportunity of preparing themselves for those works for which they manifest a special aptitude. In this way, when they have been assigned to these works they will be capable of a more effective apostolate.

31. All shall show due respect for the privacy of our confreres. Moreover, each of the confreres shall enjoy sufficient time for relaxation and study. In this way, his dignity as a person may find room to express itself in its own way. However, we shall always be ready to put at the disposition of the Community all that we are and have.

32. In building a true community, each confrere must recognize that he shares the responsibility for its life and apostolate. In arriving at decisions, in planning our life and work, in the execution of plans, in the periodic examination of the values contained in our life and activity, which is to be made

especially in the light the Second Vatican Council -- in all of these matters, we should make use of fraternal dialogue.

33. The fruits of our cooperation will be the richer the more intensely we pray together and live together in real Christian charity. We shall always respect the dignity and the opinions of our confreres, and show toward them understanding, trust, support, and forgiveness, according to the advice of our Common Rules.

34.\* When confreres must live alone, we shall be solicitous to maintain our contact with them so that they may overcome the dangers of loneliness.

35.\* The sick, the feeble, and the old shall be our heartfelt concern, as they were for St. Vincent. Besides providing them with medical care and a gracious living, we shall try to involve them in our common family life and apostolate as much as they are able. In good time we shall help those others who are laboring under other difficulties. We shall strive to maintain our friendship with those who have left us and, if the occasion offers, we shall try to help them since they were once our coworkers.

36.\* We shall gladly extend our fellowship to all those who are associated with us in our life and work. To those who work for us we shall not only give an adequate wage, but we shall also treat them with personal concern and make them a part of our working team.

37. We shall remain ever faithful to our duties toward our families. We shall share with our confreres the joys and sorrows of their families. We shall make our presence felt among our neighbors by becoming really involved in their lives. We shall receive our guests with an easy hospitality.

38. If we live the common life in this way, we shall really participate in the salvific mission of Christ and be a sign of his presence among us.

### 3. The Practice of the Evangelical Counsels

39. Since everybody has his own particular gifts from God (cf. I Cor 7,7), all of us embrace that (special) manner of following Christ which is expressed in chastity and celibacy (embraced) for the sake of the kingdom of heaven.

40. In pursuing the salvific mission of the Church we voluntarily renounce married life in order that we may be more open to the love for God and men.

41. Intimate union with Christ, true fraternal fellowship, zeal in the apostolate, an asceticism proved by the experience of the Church will make our chastity ever more fruitful. By a

continuous and mature response to the divine vocation, our whole way of living will be a joyful expression of that love between Christ and the Church which will be fully manifested in the world to come.

42. Since we are called to form an apostolic community, we shall spend our talents and material goods promoting apostolic work for the good of men, following the example of Christ in his evangelization of the poor, who became poor for us even though he was rich so that out of his poverty we might become rich. (2 Cor 8, 9; Mat 8,20).

Freed of too great concern about material things, we shall be able to sense the uneasiness and troubles of mankind and thus we shall be more ready to help them and more easily find God in them,

43. The earnings from each confrere's work belong to the Community so that we may establish a true community of goods and help each other.

44. We shall take an active part in the progress of human society and of our own communities. Each will in the performance of his own job will recognize that he is subject to the universal law of labor.

Whatever is needed for living expenses, the care of the confreres and the carrying out of our works will come from the common effort. We shall avoid accumulating goods and shall try to use some of them for other people's necessities.

45. All should remember that it is not enough in the use of material things to get the permission of superiors. Everyone must ponder for himself what is more suitable and conformable to our life and ministry, according to the mind and spirit of St. Vincent as expressed in the Common Rules.

Our way of living and our houses should be accommodated to the conditions and circumstances of place and persons whom we serve. The means of our apostolate, even though efficient and modern, should never be ostentatious.

We shall employ our own personal resources not only usefully for ourselves, but also, as much as possible, for the benefit of other confreres and works of charity, avoiding all distinctions between us.

46. The authenticity of our vocation and the existence of poverty in the world urges us frequently, both as individuals and as community, to examine our consciences about our way of living and working, how we use our goods and how we fulfill our obligations of charity and justice. Each province and local community should consider its own local circumstances and find a better way of observing evangelical poverty, holding for certain

that the practice of evangelical poverty is not only a bulwark of community, but also a condition of renewal and a sign of progress in our vocation toward the Church and the world.

47. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, all of us together, superiors and confreres, mindful that our human condition is limited, will strive in common concern to obey the salvific will of Christ which manifests itself to us in many ways.

48. Through the exchange of experiences in open and responsible dialogue, in which different ages and mental-attitudes react with one another, goals and aspirations mature and superiors will be helped in making decisions. We shall try to obey these decisions in the light of faith even though we may think our own opinion better.

49. Superiors will strive to exercise authority in a spirit of service, knowing well that each confrere has been called to building up the body of Christ according to his own charism and office. With confidence in the confreres they will promote initiative and collaboration among the confreres and in a special way strive to achieve unity in community since a fellowship of mind and heart helps much toward knowing and fulfilling the designs of God.

50. If we cling to the mystery of Christ, who became obedient even unto death, we shall strive to overcome individualism by the practice of obedience and so we shall be able to serve the Church in a better ordered and more efficacious way by showing our fidelity to the Pope and by participating in joint pastoral activity according to the prescriptions of the Bishops.

51. In response to our apostolic vocation, we give ourselves totally to God by dedicating our whole lives in the Congregation to work for the salvation of men, especially of the poor, in accordance with the spirit and example of our Founder. Moreover, embracing the practice of the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty and obedience, we give ourselves to the pursuit of perfect charity and thus give fuller expression to that consecration which is rooted in our baptism. This gift of ourselves, which must be renewed by continual conversion, we confirm by vows.

52. The only vows we take are perpetual. They are private; that is, they have effect only before God without the Church or the Congregation receiving them. They are reserved as the brief Ex Commissa Nobis says so that only the Pope or the Superior General in the act of dismissal can dispense from them. However, they are required for definitive **bond with incorporation** ~~incorporation into~~ the Congregation and they confirm this incorporation.

53. After the Novitiate has been completed, the confreres of the Congregation take vows according to the Constitutions at a time determined by the Provincial Assembly.

54. The formula for taking vows is:

"I ,... , vow to God that I will faithfully dedicate my whole life in the Congregation to the evangelization of men, especially the poor. In the footsteps of Christ the Savior I vow chastity, poverty and obedience according to the Constitutions of our Institute, and may the grace of God help me."

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#### TEMPORARY DECREES ON THE MATTER OF THE VOWS

~~1.~~ ~~Provisory norms on certain questions of poverty.~~

~~Since the Assembly does not wish to pass concrete norms about poverty valid for the entire Congregation, it has confirmed the first decree joined to article 54 with this meaning:~~

~~The provincial or viceprovincial assembly may adapt norms concerning the practice of poverty according to the Constitutions drawn up by the Extraordinary General Assembly (1968-1969) and in the spirit of the Fundamental Statute of poverty given to the Congregation by Alexander VII (*"Alias nos supplicationibus"*) and the Common Rules.~~

~~The Provincial or Viceprovincial. Assembly may adapt norms concerning the practice of poverty according to the fundamental statute of poverty given to the Congregation by Alexander VII (*Alias nos supplicationibus*, August 12, 1659), according to the Constitutions drawn up by the Extraordinary General Assembly of 1968-1969 and according to the spirit of the Common Rules.~~

~~2. Studies to be made concerning the vows and other matters. The Congregation of the Mission will undertake serious and profound studies under the leadership of the Superior General so that a theology of the Christian life, the purpose of the Congregation, the evangelical counsels, the vows in the community life and other fundamental questions pertaining to our life may be prepared before the next General Assembly~~

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#### 4. The Spirit of Prayer

55. We fulfill our Christian life through our Vincentian vocation, which gathers us together to serve Christ as he appears in men, especially in the poor, as the needs of the Church and the contemporary world reveal him. An honest and generous response to this vocation is our way of aspiring to holiness.

56. Because we know that communion with the Most Holy Trinity is the foundation of all spiritual life, we acknowledge and revere the love of God as shown forth to us in the Incarnate Word and the Easter Mystery. With special devotion we honor the Blessed Virgin Mary, who shared pre-eminently in the mystery of salvation and who was called by

God to give us the example of how we, too, might share in this mystery.

57. In the Congregation we learn from the tradition of St. Vincent how to see and discern all things and all men in Christ, and we strive to match what we will and what we do to what Christ wills and does by continuing his work in us and through us.

58. Since faithfulness to Christ cannot be separated from faithfulness to his Church, we must make every effort to think with the Church and to share in its life with all our resources. We will always respond eagerly to those aids to our progress which the Church either offers to us or requires of us.

59. Although every one of our actions done in the Spirit of Christ, and especially our service to the neighbor, strengthens our union with God, nevertheless certain specific acts are required to make this union more intimate.

60. We shall assiduously read and study the Sacred Scripture, where we learn the will of the Father and come to know his Son, Jesus Christ; and from time to time we shall discuss among ourselves the results of our reading.

61. The reading of Scripture should be complemented by daily mental prayer which, through the guidance of the Spirit, will enable us to perceive the presence of Christ and to find the ways in which we may communicate the Gospel to men. We shall try to read the signs of the times in the events of our own lives, where God is speaking to us and where he summons us to be made holy through our dealings with our fellow men. In friendly dialogue, as the opportunity presents itself, we will share with one another the fruits of our mental prayer.

62. The Eucharistic Mystery should be both the source and the culmination of our entire existence: here both the death and victory of Christ are represented, and the community of the People of God is both signified and effected.

63. We shall duly celebrate the Divine Office, in which we praise the Lord and pray for the salvation of the whole world.

64. Since we know that our spiritual life needs continual recourse to the Lord, we shall try to accomplish this especially through the sacrament of Penance and our annual spiritual retreats.

65. Because God has commanded everyone to watch over his neighbor, and because holiness in the Congregation can never be considered a merely personal gift, the common life of confreres

carries with it the obligation of charity, whereby each of us must be prepared both to help his brothers and to be helped by them.

66. Since, however, the circumstances and localities in which the Congregation finds itself throughout the world are so diverse, it is left to the Provinces to decide whatever statutes are necessary to carry out these principles and govern the spiritual activities of the confreres, always taking into account the needs and capabilities of each individual house.

## V. MEMBERSHIP IN THE CONGREGATION

### 1. General Norms

67. Members of the Congregation, Clerics and Brothers, are disciples of Christ who have been called by God to continue Christ's mission and have been received into the Congregation and so strive with all their strength to respond to their vocation by laboring according to the teaching, the mind, and the purposes of Saint Vincent de Paul.

68. Following the example of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Priest, Shepherd, and Teacher, Clerics fulfill their vocation by the exercise of this threefold function in all forms of the apostolate which can serve to achieve the end of the Congregation.

69. Brothers, who already participate in the royal priesthood of Christ through Baptism and Confirmation, and are deputed by God Himself to the apostolate of the whole Church, share together with the clerics the apostolic vocation of the Congregation which they fulfill by works proper to their lay and consecrated state.

70. Brothers may be promoted to the permanent diaconate where it is judged necessary and following the prescriptions of both common law and our own particular law, **and attending to the norms of each Episcopal Conference.**

71. § 1. One is first incorporated into the Congregation when he has manifested in writing his intention of dedicating himself to the attainment of the end of the Congregation according to our Constitutions and Statutes, and is in turn declared to be admitted by a written statement of the legitimate superior.

**§ 2. This incorporation takes place at the beginning of the period of formation or at some other more convenient time, as will be determined for each province by its Ratio Formationis.**

**§ 3. A member of the Congregation of the Mission is bound to it at the moment of incorporation until the provisional definitive bond and the time proper to each Province.**

§ 4. After receiving the required formation of the Novitiate, one acquires full membership when he is permanently united to the Congregation by a definitive bond.

§ 53. One is definitively incorporated into the Congregation by means of a promise made to the superior. Moreover, this promise, which is to be put in writing and is to be signed by both the superior and the confrere, presupposes the taking of vows as ultimate requirement of the Constitutions.

§ 64. The Provincial Assembly determines the practical modalities of entering into both provisory and definitive incorporation into the Congregation.

## 2. Rights and Obligations of Members

72. All members of the Congregation of the Mission, unless the very nature of the matter militates against it, enjoy the rights and privileges and spiritual favors granted to the Congregation according to the norms of the common law and our own particular law.

73. § 1. All members of the Congregation who are incorporated by a definitive bond enjoy the same rights and are bound by the same obligations. The exception to this rule are the rights and obligations connected with the exercise and jurisdiction of Orders.

§ 2. All members joined to the Congregation by a definitive bond therefore enjoy the right of participation in consultations and assemblies according to the Constitutions and Statutes.

§ 3. Further, all offices and duties are to be assigned on the basis of the suitability and aptitude of each member.

74. Members are able to send and to receive letters without these being subjected to any inspection.

75. Members of the Congregation of the Mission are bound by the common obligations of clerics unless the very nature of the matter militates against it.

76. All are bound to observe the Constitutions, Statutes, and other norms in force in the Congregation with an active and responsible obedience.

77. All are to observe the norms promulgated by the local Ordinaries, saving our right of exemption.

78. Members who are not yet incorporated into the Congregation by a definitive bond, in addition to the

privileges and spiritual favors granted to the Congregation, enjoy only those rights and are bound by those obligations determined for them in the Constitutions and Statutes and Provincial norms. They also have the right to whatever is required in order that they might be prepared effectively for their definitive incorporation.

79.\* The Congregation should secure appropriate legal documents which it registers in the civil courts to insure that the rights of both Congregation are fittingly protected in the case in which the Community of his own free choice or is dismissed.

80.\* § 1. It is each member's right to have suffrages offered for him throughout the entire Community upon his death. Therefore:

§ 2. Every month each member, according to his state, will offer a Mass which will embrace the following intentions: for all the deceased of the double Vincentian family and for its benefactors; for the families of the members and for those who have been affiliated with the Congregation; for the conservation of the primitive spirit of the Congregation.

§ 3. And, each one will offer another Mass for the members of the whole Congregation who have died during the past month.

§ 4. Further determinations are to be made by each Province.

### 3. Affiliation of Members to a Particular Province and House

81.\* § 1. Each member of the Congregation of the Mission should be affiliated with a particular province and house, **or a work "ad instar domus."**

§ 2. However, as far as juridical effects are concerned, the Superior General, the Assistants, Secretary and Economic Generals, and the Procurator General to the Holy See do not have a province.

§ 3. This also applies to others who are attached to the house of the Generalate, except that these others retain both active and passive voice in their own provinces.

82.\* § 1. A member of the Congregation of the Mission is affiliated with the province in which superiors legitimately admitted him to the Congregation. This is called the province of origin.

§ 2. A member acquires a new affiliation by transfer from one province to another made legitimately by superiors. The

province with which the member is newly affiliated is called the province of destination.

83.\* The only requirement for a member to leave one province and join another is that competent major superiors agree between themselves after consulting the member involved. Of course, the Superior General's authority must be respected. If the member is unwilling to change provinces, the transfer cannot be effected without the approbation of the Superior General.

84. After completing his term of office, the Superior General is free to choose the province to which he will belong.

85.\* Affiliation with the province of destination can be for either an indefinite or a definite time. At the duration of a filiation made for a definite time, the member is immediately reaffiliated with the province of origin unless the competent superiors, after consulting with the member, agree otherwise, according to the norms of the Statutes.

86.\* Documents of transfer are to be drawn up and preserved in the archives of the province concerned. The major superior of the province of origin should send notice of a member's new affiliation to the Secretary General.

87.\* A member is affiliated with a house or a work "ad instar domus" by a transfer made by the legitimate superior.

88. Members have spiritual bonds with the house or a work "ad instar domus" and province with which they are affiliated. In this same situation, the members also have juridical bonds from which they obtain:

- § 1. a proper and immediate local and major superior;
- § 2. the exercise of active and passive voice; and
- § 3. other rights which pertain to the spiritual, ministerial, and material life, according to the norms in force in the Congregation.

#### 4. General Principles of Formation

89. § 1. Our formation program ought to be so aimed that each member -- cleric or brother -- animated by the spirit of Saint Vincent and leading a community life in the Congregation, becomes fit for carrying out the work of the apostolate.

§ 2. It is necessary, then, that each member comes daily to a deeper appreciation of the fact that Jesus Christ and His mystery is the center of our life and the fundamental law of the Congregation of the Mission.

90. § 1. The time of formation -- and indeed our whole life -- should be so focused that the love of Christ impels us more and more to the accomplishment of the end of the Congregation. As disciples of the Lord, the members cannot attain this end

without the abnegation of themselves and a continuous conversion to Christ.

§ 2. The norms of discipline should be applied according to the age of the members so that while they gradually learn to govern themselves and to use their liberty wisely, they will become accustomed to act freely and energetically and will develop into mature persons.

91. Personal initiative is of great importance in all the affairs of human life. This is especially true in the decision by which each one responds to God calling him to the Community. So the Community ought to protect and nourish this initiative in the whole process of formation, and especially when there is question of a member's definitive incorporation or his advancement to Orders.

92. In the formation of our own members, there should be a thorough coordination among the diverse programs of training. Further, there is to be an organic unity among the successive stages of preparation. Finally, the entire program should be aimed and orientated toward the attainment of the pastoral end of our community.

93. Our Trainees fulfill the apostolic end of the Congregation by their proper activity at every step of formation. Nevertheless all are to be trained progressively, according to the individual's formation and potential, from the beginning in pastoral practice, especially in working with other associates.

94. Besides that formation which will be common to all, insofar as possible there is to be given to each of our members a specific and professional formation which will render him apt to exercise effectively the work of the apostolate of the Congregation most suited to himself.

95. We must be careful to see that as many qualified confreres as necessity demands are available in the houses of formation to serve as Confessor and Spiritual Director. The trainees should avail themselves of the services of these men regularly so that the candidates might advance in the way of the Lord.

96. The formation of our own -- especially the pastoral aspect -- must be cared for not only during the first years of apostolic labor but must be continued and renewed during the whole time of life.

## 5. Promotion of Vocations and Apostolic Schools

97. Members should manifest apostolic zeal in promoting and cultivating vocations, and they will take a special interest in encouraging candidates for the Vincentian life.

In Apostolic Schools or Minor Seminaries, where such exist, the candidates are to be initiated into the life of the

Congregation by means of a special religious formation, most important by suitable spiritual direction, and are to be taught the disciplines consonant with their age.

Our members should keep in mind that the best recommendation for our Congregation is the example of our Christian and apostolic life.

## 6. The Novitiate

98. The Novitiate is a time of more intensive and specific formation for the life and mission of our Congregation for the candidate who believes that he is called and is preparing himself for full and free incorporation into the Congregation with the help and approval of the Community.

99. Therefore, the whole program of this period ought to be so directed that the Novices:

§ 1. acquire a greater human and Christian maturity;

§ 2. are progressively initiated into an appropriate knowledge and experience of the life and apostolic mission of the Congregation; and

§ 3. are gradually, prepared for a life of consecration through the practice of the evangelical counsels; so that, after being prepared they might be suitable to assume freely in due time the obligations inherent in this life.

100. To accomplish all of this, the Novices should zealously seek:

§ 1. eagerly to develop the study of and meditation on the Gospel and the whole of Scripture;

§ 2. by the more apt means to participate in the mystery and life of the Church;

§ 3. through the evangelical counsels to know and live the doctrine of the consecrated life;

§ 4. to acquire a knowledge of the special character, spirit and functions of the Congregation by having recourse to the sources -- especially to the life and writings of Saint Vincent and the history and traditions of the Congregation -- and by an active and appropriate participation in our apostolate;

§ 5. to acquire a suitable and concrete knowledge of the men of their time and of their needs and problems.

101. The Novices are to be integrated with the particular Community among which they live, and they are to be formed in a responsible way by this Community even though the special and immediate care of forming and guiding them is committed to the Director of the Novitiate.

102. It is the right of each province to draw up its own formation program which, according to diverse circumstances, should harmonize with the principles stated here and with the documents and norms promulgated by the Church.

103.\* while observing what is necessary, the right of admitting candidates to the Novitiate pertains to:

§ 1. the Superior General, after hearing his Council, for the entire Congregation; and

§ 2. the Provincial Superiors, after hearing their councils, for each one's province.

104.\* It is the right of the Provincial Superior, after consulting with his Council, to dismiss Novices for just and reasonable causes. Insofar as it is possible, the cause of the dismissal should be made known to the member in a kindly discussion.

105.\* In our Community, only those impediments are in force which are legislated by the common law for admission to the novitiate of Religious, concerning the validity and liceity of admission to the Novitiate. This is true even though we are not Religious.

106.\* § 1. Before they are admitted, candidates must present documents of Baptism and Confirmation as well as sufficient testimony concerning life and fitness.

§ 2. The judgment concerning their human and spiritual maturity for entrance into the Novitiate pertains to the Provincial Superior after consulting with his Council.

107.\* The Novitiate begins for each one when the individual is declared received by the Director himself or by someone taking his place.

108.\* The Novitiate can be made in one or in many houses of the Congregation selected by the Provincial Superior with the consent of his Council.

109.\* § 1. The Novitiate is to last at least twelve months and this time may be either continuous or interrupted. If the time is interrupted, it is the right of each Province to determine the number of continuous months.

§ 2. It also falls to each Province to establish the point of time at which this period is to be inserted in the curriculum of studies.

110.\* For those who seek to enter the Congregation at an advanced age, fitting adaptation can be made by the Provincial

Superior in accord with the human and Christian maturity of the candidate.

## 7. The Major Seminary

111. In the Congregation, the time of the Major Seminary is so ordered to give a complete formation for the ministerial priesthood so that the candidates, following the example of Christ, will be formed as true pastors of souls for preaching the Gospel, celebrating divine worship, and nourishing the faithful.

112.\* § 1. As necessity requires, the house of the Major Seminary can be proper to each province or common to many provinces.

§ 2. Our students can be sent to another province or to another approved center in order that they might pursue their ecclesiastical studies. Care must be taken in this last case, however, that our students lead a common life according to the custom of the Congregation and that they receive appropriate Vincentian training.

§ 3. Wherever our students dwell, familial life ought to flourish and at the same time a fellowship among the members of the same province ought to be developed; with good reason, where the students are many they can be separated into smaller groups so that better provision can be made for the personal formation of each one.

113.\* § 1. Our members, both Moderators and students, should constitute a true educative community. They should have a mutual understanding and trust and a constant and active relationship.

§ 2. Therefore, the Moderators should strive to proceed collegially, which implies that they will also meet often with the students.

§ 3. The special and immediate care of the students is committed to a particular confrere, or, if the situation requires it, to many confreres.

§ 4. Because the training of the students depends so much on the suitability of the educators, our Moderators and professors ought to be prepared by solid doctrine, congruous pastoral experience and special spiritual and pedagogical formation.

§ 5. In a special way, using all means available, the Moderators and professors must undergo continual renewal.

114.\* Each province should have its own program of instruction adapted to diverse circumstances. This program should deal, over and above the Constitutions and Statutes of our Congregation,

both with the documents concerning priestly formation of the Second Vatican Council, and with the particular norms of the Holy See and of the Episcopal Conferences.

115.\* § 1. During the process of formation, the Provincial Superior, after hearing the Moderators and his own Council, can, for a just cause, grant our students interruptions of studies and permission to live outside a community house.

§ 2. Further, the Provincial Superior can extend the age limit demanded by common law for Sacred Orders, and require that after the students have completed the theological curriculum, they exercise the Order of the Diaconate for an appropriate time before they are promoted to the Priesthood.

116.\* A mutual acquaintance between the students of different provinces of the Congregation should be encouraged.

## 8. Formation of the Brothers

117. There should be special care to see that the Brothers are formed for the faithful fulfillment of their mission in the Congregation.

118. Their whole formation should be human and spiritual, doctrinal and practical, and so accommodated to the talents and conditions of each one that they will be prepared to exercise the apostolate effectively.

119. § 1. The special cultural and technical formation of the Brothers can be accomplished through the regular curriculum in schools where fittingly they can acquire a degree or diploma.

§ 2. The training of the Brothers in the Novitiate ought to be the same as for clerics unless special circumstances would persuade one otherwise.

120. Because the formation for the apostolate cannot consist only in theoretical instruction, it should gradually involve the Brothers in the apostolate so that they will learn to view all things under the light of faith, to judge and to act, and to form and perfect themselves through acting together with others.

121. The progress and renovation of the Brothers should be continued eagerly after they have been appointed to their duties.

## 9. Departure from the Congregation

122.\* After the completion of the time of temporary **bond profession**, the members can freely leave the Congregation.

(1)

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(1) what is legislated in articles 55-57 is valid for those who have already taken temporary vows, and, making the necessary adjustments, for those who will be incorporated into the Community by means of a non-definitive bond.

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123.\* § 1. When a member of the Congregation who is bound by temporary ~~bond profession~~ requests a **dissolution of dispensation** from vows for just and reasonable causes according to the norm of common law and our own law, the Provincial Superior can grant the dispensation with the consent of his Council.

§ 2. A cleric who does not wish to be promoted to Orders but does wish to remain in the Congregation as a Brother, should not be excluded from renewing temporary ~~bond profession~~ or from making perpetual **bond profession** provided he is suitable.

124.\* According to the norms of our own law and for just cause, Superiors can exclude a member from either temporary or perpetual ~~bond profession~~. He cannot do this, however, by reason of infirmity unless there is certain proof that the infirmity was deceitfully concealed or disguised before the profession.

125.\* A member who has obtained from the Holy See or from the Superior General an indult to live outside the Congregation temporarily:

§ 1. remains bound by the vows and the other obligations of his profession which can be harmonized with his state;

§ 2. provides for his own sustenance and necessities; however if he is found to be in need, the Congregation ought to help him;

§ 3. during the time of the indult enjoys only the spiritual privileges of the Congregation; and

§ 4. does not have the right to active or passive voice in our assemblies unless the Superior General explicitly grants this to him.

126.\* The Provincial Superior is to warn the member concerning the expiration time of the indult so that the member may either obtain a new indult or return to the Congregation. The Provincial should then notify the general secretariate of the matter.

127.\* Members who have legitimately departed, or who have been dismissed and dispensed from vows according to the norm

of law, are separated from the Congregation and are freed from all obligations arising from the vows. If these members are clerics, they are governed by the common law of clerics.

Toward these men, the Superiors and confreres should exercise solicitude and Christian charity.

128.\* Members who depart illicitly from the Congregation are subject to the norms of common law. However, Superiors ought to enquire after them with solicitude and, should they sincerely return, receive them kindly.

129.\* What is stated in common law must be observed with regard to the dismissal of members.

129 bis. The authority to reincorporate someone into the Congregation belongs:

1. to the Superior General for those who have had definitive bond;
2. to the Provincial Superior for those who have had temporary bond.

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#### ~~DECREE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY~~

~~The right of the Superior General of permitting experimentation, even contrary to the norms laid down for the formation of our members, remains in effect until either the indult from the Holy See permitting experimentation expires, or a General Assembly definitively approves the Constitutions and Statutes.~~

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### VI. GOVERNMENT

#### 1. General Principles

130. All the confreres, since they have been called to labor for the continuation of the mission of Christ, must realize that they have both the responsibility of working together for the good of the whole apostolic Community, and the duty and right of participating effectively in the government of the Congregation, according to the norm of our particular law. (1)

They shall, therefore, cooperate by an active and responsible obedience in the fulfillment of assignments and the carrying out of commands.

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- (1) ~~The commission on government in the drafting of the texts deliberately chose not to distinguish between what~~

~~pertains to the Constitutions and what ought to be placed in the Statutes.~~

In the judgment of the commission on government, those articles, paragraphs and numbers marked with an asterisk (\*) are to be regarded as Statutes.

131. All in the Congregation who exercise authority, which is from God, shall have before their eyes the example of the Good Shepherd, who came not to be ministered to but to minister.

They shall for this reason consider themselves as servants of the Community for the promotion of our end according to the spirit of St. Vincent in a true communion of life and apostolate.

132. All members should have sufficient power to carry out their duties. For this reason, affairs which can be cared for by individual members or by lower levels of government shall not be recalled to a higher level of government.

On the other hand, that unity of government necessary for the pursuit of the end and good of the whole Congregation is to be preserved.

133. The Congregation of the Mission, with its houses and churches, and all the members possess ~~the privilege of~~ exemption from the jurisdiction of local ordinaries by special concession of the Holy See, except in cases provided for by law.

134. The General Assembly, the Superior General, the Provincial and Viceprovincial Superiors, and Superiors of houses, besides dominative or domestic authority and that which flows from the vow of obedience, possess also ecclesiastical jurisdiction for both the internal and the external forum, to be exercised according to the norm of common law and our particular law.

## 2. Offices in the Central Administration

### The Superior General

135. The Superior General, as the successor of St. Vincent, together with the whole Congregation, shall continue the mission of the Founder, adapted to different circumstances, in the service of the universal Church. Consequently, he shall govern the Congregation with such solicitude that the charism of St. Vincent may be ever alive in the Church.

136. As the center of unity and coordination of the Provinces, the Superior General should be also the principle of spiritual animation and apostolic action.

137. The Superior General governs with ordinary power the whole Congregation; that is, all Provinces and Viceprovinces, houses,

and individual members, according to the norm of common law and our particular law. He is, however, subject to the authority of the General Assembly according to the norm of law.

138. The Superior General can give only a usual interpretation of the Constitutions and the Statutes and Decrees of the General Assembly.

139.\* § 1. The Superior General is elected by the General Assembly with a two-thirds majority vote, according to the norm of our law, for a term of six years to be computed according to norm of § 2, and may be reelected for a second term of six years.

§ 2. The six year term is computed to end with the acceptance of election by his successor in the next ordinary General Assembly.

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In the judgment of the commission on government, the words "The Superior General is elected by the General Assembly" belong to the Constitutions.

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140.\* § 1. For validity of the election, the one elected Superior General must have the qualifications stated in Common Law.

2. From our particular law, in addition to the prescription of article 189 of the Constitutions, it is also required for validity of election that the candidate be not a Bishop nor hold the office of Vicar Apostolic, Prefect Apostolic or Administrator Apostolic.

141. § 1. The Superior General ceases to hold office:

1° by acceptance of the office by his successor;

2° by his resignation accepted by the General Assembly or by the Holy See;

3° by his removal decreed by the Holy See.

§ 2. Should it happen that the Superior General has become manifestly unworthy or unsuited to fulfill his office, it shall then pertain to the Assistants to judge the matter collegially and to inform the Holy See. The mandates of the Holy See are to be followed.

142. In addition to the faculties granted to him from common law or from special concession, the following are the rights and duties of the Superior General:

1° To exercise all care that the spirit of the Founder be fostered constantly and fervently everywhere, that the apostolic activity of the Congregation and its renewal be unceasingly promoted, and that the Constitutions and Statutes be most fittingly applied;

- 2° with the consent of his council, to establish general ordinances for the good of the Congregation, which shall remain in effect until the next General Assembly, unless the Superior General or his successor shall make different provisions;
- 3° with the consent of his Council, and having consulted the members, ~~heard the interested parties,~~ to constitute Provinces and Viceprovinces, and to unite, divide, and suppress them, with the observance of legal prescriptions;
- 4°\* In addition to the right of making a canonical visitation if the case demands, to visit at least once during his term of office, personally or through another, the Provinces and Viceprovinces, in order to be informed about their condition and that of their members;
- 5°\* with the consent of his Council and having heard the interested parties, to accept Missions offered to the Congregation by the Holy See and to relinquish those entrusted to us;
- 6° To convoke and preside over the General Assembly and to dismiss its members with the consent of the Assembly;
- 7°\* with the consent of his Council and having heard the Provincials and Viceprovincials, to appoint a preparatory commission at an opportune time before the celebration of the General Assembly;
- 8°\* To promulgate as soon as possible everything decreed by the General Assembly;
- 9°\* with the consent of his Council to enter into contracts of major importance, observing legal prescriptions;
- 10°\* For a grave cause, with the consent of his Council and having heard the Provincial, the Consultors and as many members as possible, to assume for a brief time the government of a Province, to be exercised through an administrator with faculties delegated by the Superior General;
- ~~11° To see that there is a due proportion in the number of houses and members among the Provinces, and in a proper case to divide those which are too large and to unite those which are too small;~~
- ~~11~~12°\* For a grave reason, with the consent of his Council and having heard the Provincial Consultors, to remove a Provincial from office;
- ~~12~~13°\* To erect and suppress houses with the consent of his Council, observing legal prescriptions and having heard the interested parties;
- ~~13~~14°\* For a grave reason, with the consent of his Council and having heard the interested Provincials, to erect a house of one Province in the territory of another;
- ~~14~~15°\* For a just cause and with the consent of his Council, to erect houses which depend on no Province and are governed by a local Superior in direct dependence on the Superior General; and to appoint Superiors of these houses;
- ~~15~~16°\* To transfer members from one Province to another, with the consent of his Council and having heard the interested Provincials and members;
- ~~16~~17°\* with the consent of his Council, to admit members to vows, to definitive bond and ~~sacred~~ Orders, to dissolve

**definitive bond** and for a grave cause to dispense them from vows either in a case of lawful departure or in an act of dismissal;  
~~17~~<sup>18</sup>\* To dismiss professed members, with the consent of his Council and according to the norm of common law and our particular law;  
~~18~~<sup>19</sup>\* To grant the usual suffrages for the deceased to exclaustrated members;  
~~19~~<sup>20</sup>\* The Superior General cannot accept ecclesiastical dignities except at the command of the Holy See;  
~~20~~<sup>21</sup>\* He may not change his residence without the consent of the General Assembly and prior consultation of the Holy See.  
~~21~~\* **with the consent of his council, in extraordinary cases and for a grave reason, to dispense from the Constitutions; and from the statutes of the General Assembly in particular cases for a just reason;**  
~~22~~\* **with the consent of his council and having consulted the interested Visitors, to name provincial directors of the Daughters of Charity.**

### The Vicar General

143. The Vicar General assists the Superior General and takes his place according to the norm of our particular law when he is absent or impeded.

144.\* The Vicar General is elected by the General Assembly **according to the same conditions as the Superior General and following the method laid down in article 196, 4** ~~with a two-thirds majority vote in the same manner and with the same qualifications as the Superior General,~~ and may be reelected once. The one elected Vicar General is by that fact an Assistant.

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**In the judgment of the commission on government, the words “The Vicar General is elected by the General Assembly” belong to the Constitutions.**

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145.\* In the absence of the Superior General, the Vicar General has the authority of Superior General, **unless** the Superior General has reserved **something** to himself.

146.\* When the Superior General is impeded, the Vicar General takes his place with full right until the cessation of the impediment. The General Council, without the Superior General but with the Vicar General, passes judgment on the impediment of the Superior General.

147.\* In the event that the office of Superior General becomes vacant for any reason, the Vicar General by that very fact becomes Superior General and remains in office until the

completion of the six-year term of office. With the consent of his Council and having heard at least the Provincial and Viceprovincial Superiors, he names a Vicar General from the number of the Assistants as soon as possible.

148.\* In the event of the vacancy of the office of Vicar General for any reason, the Superior General, with the consent of his Council and having heard at least the Provincial and Viceprovincial Superiors, names a Vicar General from the number of the Assistants as soon as possible.

149. § 1. The Vicar General ceases to hold office:

1° through the acceptance of election by a new Vicar General; ~~however, he will retain his right of voting in the remaining sessions of the Assembly;~~

2° through his resignation accepted by the General Assembly or by the Holy See;

3° through his removal decreed by the Holy See.

§ 2. Should it happen that the Vicar General has become manifestly unworthy or unsuited to fulfill his office, it will then pertain to the Superior General with his Council, excluding the Vicar General, to pass judgment on the matter and to inform the Holy See, whose mandates are to be followed. ~~The Vicar may, according to the dispositions of the Holy See, remain an Assistant General.~~

150. The Vicar General who has taken over the government of the Congregation as Superior General may, at the expiration of the six-year term, be immediately elected as Superior General, and even reelected.

#### Assistants General

151. § 1. The Assistants General constitute the Council of the Superior General. They assist him by their work and counsel in the government of the Congregation, for the promotion of the unity and vigor of the Congregation, the effective realization of the Constitutions and the decisions of the General Assembly, and the collaboration of all Provinces in the promotion of the works of the Congregation.

§ 2. One of the Assistants General will have special care for the missions "ad Gentes."

152.\* § 1. There are four Assistants General, who are elected for six years by the General Assembly and may be reelected once. ~~At the conclusion of his second consecutive six-year term, they cannot immediately be elected Vicar General.~~

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~~In the opinion of the commission on government, the words: "There are ... Assistants General, who are elected ... by the General Assembly," pertain to the Constitutions.~~

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§ 2. The six years are computed so as to terminate with the acceptance of election by their successor in the next ordinary General Assembly.

153.\* The Assistants General can be elected from the number of confreres either present at the Assembly or absent. They must be from different Provinces.

154.\* § 1. After the election of the Superior General and the Vicar General, the General Assembly proceeds to the election of the other Assistants in separate elections.

§ 2. They shall be regarded as elected who obtain an absolute majority of the votes, the null votes being discounted, and shall be proclaimed elected by the President of the Assembly.

§ 3. If on the first and second ballots no one is elected, whoever obtains a relative majority on the third ballot will be elected; in the event of a tied vote, the senior by reason of vocation and age shall be elected.

155.\* The Assistants must reside in the same house with the Superior General. There must always and necessarily be present at least two Assistants with the Superior General or the Vicar General to form the General Council. See the following below to be placed among the "Interpretations."

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### Concerning the officials of the General Curia

*Footnote to be placed after art. 155 of the Constitutions:*

The Assembly decided that an experiment contrary to art. 155 of the Constitutions done by the Superior General, according to the *Motu Proprio Ecclesiae Sanctae* (Sect. II, part I, n. 7) could be continued until the General Assembly of 1980: namely supplying the place of one or other of the Assistants General who is absent by one of the three constitutional officials of the Curia to fill up the "quorum" in the council.

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156. The Assistants General cease to hold office:

1° through acceptance of election by their successors. ~~However, they retain the right to vote in the subsequent sessions of the Assembly;~~

2° through resignation accepted by the Superior General or by the General Assembly;

3° through deposition decreed by the Superior General with the consent of the other Assistants and approved by the Holy See.

157.\* § 1. If the office of an Assistant is vacant, a substitute is appointed by the Superior General with the deliberative vote of the other Assistants. The substitute has the same rights and obligations as the other Assistants.

§ 2. If a General Assembly is to be held within six months, the Superior General is not obliged to appoint a substitute.

#### Officials of the General Curia

158. The Secretary General, the Econome General, and the Procurator General at the Holy See are appointed by the Superior General with the consent of his Council. They are not to be chosen from the number of the Assistants, and they remain in office at the will of the Superior General.

159. These officials must be solicitous for the good of the Congregation and skilled in the matters pertaining to their offices, which they perform under the direction of the Superior General, according to the norm of common law and our particular law.

160.\* They are present at the General Assembly with the right of voting. By reason of his office, the Secretary General is present at meetings of the General Council, but without vote, as are the Econome and the Procurator when called by the Superior General.

161.\* The Procurator, by written appointment of the Superior General, can function as Postulator General of the Congregation in the Roman Curia, according to the norm of law.

### 3. Offices in Provincial Administration

#### Provinces and Viceprovinces

162. § 1. A Province is the union of several houses with each other within prescribed territorial limits, which constitutes a part of the whole Congregation and is presided over by a Provincial Superior with ordinary and proper power, according to the norm of common law and our particular law.

§ 2.\* Although each Province has its own defined territorial limits, the existence of another Province in the same territory is not excluded.

163.\* § 1. A Viceprovince is the union of several houses with each other within defined territorial limits, which is dependent on and forms a total entity with a Province according to contractual agreement with it, and is presided over by a Viceprovincial Superior with ordinary and proper

power, according to the norm of common law and our particular law.

§ 2. A Viceprovince can also be constituted which is dependent on no fully constituted Province, but directly on the authority of the Superior General, and is presided over by a Viceprovincial Superior with ordinary and proper power.

§ 3. A Viceprovince is by its nature transitory and becomes a Province if the requisite conditions are present.

§ 4. What is set forth in the Constitutions and Statutes for Provinces applies in similar manner for Viceprovinces, unless it is expressly stated otherwise in the Constitutions and Statutes or in the particular statutes and contractual agreements of each Viceprovince.

164.\* § 1. When a province is so divided that a distinct Province is erected, all the goods which were destined for the benefit of the Province, as well as debts contracted for the Province, must be divided by the Superior General with his Council in due proportion according to what is good and equitable, safeguarding the wills of pious founders and donors, rights lawfully acquired, and the particular norms by which the Province is governed.

§ 2. The division of the archives of the Mother Province is reserved to the decision of the Superior General, after he has heard the interested Provincials.

#### ~~4. Offices in the Provincial Administration~~

##### The Provincial and Viceprovincial Superior

165. § 1. The Provincial Superior, who is also called the Visitor, is a major Superior and Ordinary, with proper ordinary power, who is placed over a Province to govern it, according to the norm of common law and our particular law.

§ 2. The Provincial shall be solicitous for the active participation of all members in the life and apostolate of the Province and shall place its members and resources at the service of the Church, according to the end of the Congregation. He should encourage the ministry of houses and be solicitous for the personal welfare and activity of individual confreres, bringing about a vital union.

166.\* § 1. The Provincial is appointed for a term of six years by the Superior General with the consent of his Council, after having consulted at least those members of the Province who have an active vote. In the same way and under the same conditions the Provincial can be confirmed for one more term of three years.

§ 2. The Provincial Assembly can propose for the approbation of the Superior General with the consent of his Council its own method of designating or electing the Provincial and the duration of his term of office.

167. The following **belong to the** ~~are the rights and duties of~~ the Provincial Superior:

1° To promote the observance of the Constitutions, Statutes, ~~and Rules~~ **and Norms**;

2° To establish, with the consent of his Council, ordinances for the good of the Province. These ordinances will remain in effect until the next Provincial Assembly, unless a contrary provision is made by the Provincial or his successor;

3° To erect and suppress houses within the limits of his Province, with the consent of his Council, according to the prescriptions of law, **and having consulted the Superior General**;

4°\* To provide houses with the necessary confreres and to transfer them from house to house. Insofar as possible a transfer is to be made after consultation with the confrere; and the Consultors are to be heard, except in a more urgent situation, in which case they are to be notified of the transfer.

5°\* With the consent of his Council and after having **consulted** ~~heard~~ the confreres **and informing the Superior General** to appoint local Superiors who must then be confirmed by the Superior General.

6°\* With the consent of his Council to appoint the Provincial Econome, the Director of the Novitiate and of the Scholastics,

7°\* To approve the order of the day presented by the local Superior with his community;

8°\* To visit houses and confreres frequently and to make an official visitation every second year;

9°\* To **send reports** ~~fulfill accurately mandates received from the Superior General, and to send him at the time and in the manner prescribed a report~~ **to the Superior General** of the affairs of the **Province houses and the Province** and of **official visitations of houses** ~~canonical visitations~~.

10°\* With the consent of his Council to enter into necessary and useful contracts according to the norm of common law and our particular law;

11°\* **Having heard his Council, to name in good time a preparatory commission for the Provincial Assembly;** ~~To have a vote in the General Assembly.~~

12°\* To preside at the Provincial Assembly, which he must convoke according to our particular law **and to dismiss it with the assent of the Assembly itself.**

13°\* To have the prerogative of deciding a tied vote **according to law;** ~~which is not a secret vote;~~

14°\* To admit candidates to the Internal Seminary, having heard his Council;

15°\* Having heard his council, to admit to temporary incorporation and bond; with the consent of his council, to admit to vows and definitive bond, having consulted with the superiors and directors of the candidates. ~~with the consent of his Council, to admit members to first and perpetual profession of vows; and having heard his Council, to temporary renovation of vows. In these matters the Superiors and Moderators of the Novitiate or the Scholasticate are to be consulted. (1)~~

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~~(1) The numbers which are marked \* (15, 18, 19) refer to temporary vows and are to be considered as transitory norms since the new Constitutions, article 52 decided that there are to be only perpetual vows in the Congregation. Editorial note.~~

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16°\* After previous consultation with the Superiors and Moderators of the candidates, to admit members to ministries and among the candidates for diaconate and priesthood; and with the consent of his council, to admit to orders. ~~After consultation with the Superiors and Moderators of the Scholasticate, to admit candidates to orders. The consent of the Council is required for admission to major orders;~~

17°\* To present candidates for orders and to grant dimissorial letters for their ordination;

18°\* To dissolve temporary bond in case of a legitimate departure and, with the consent of his council, in case of dismissal.

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~~with the consent of his Council to dispense subjects from temporary vows. (This statute needs the approbation of the Holy See.) (2)~~

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~~(2) After consultation with the Holy See, the response was given to the Superior General that approbation of this matter is not fitting. Superior General.~~

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19°\* To inform the Superior General as soon as possible of the admission of candidates to vows, to definitive bond and major orders ~~and of dispensations from vows;~~

20°\* To have charge personally or through other qualified persons of the provincial archives;

21°\* To approve our confreres and grant them jurisdiction for confessions of our subjects and for preaching the word of God, safeguarding the right of the local Ordinary. He may delegate the same faculties to others.

22°\* With the consent of his council, to dispense from provincial norms for a just cause in particular cases.

168.\* The Viceprovincial Superior has the same rights, faculties, and obligations as the Provincial, unless there are limitations placed by the Constitutions or Statutes.

169.\* ~~When the office of Provincial becomes vacant, on the death of the Provincial or his cessation from office, the interim~~

government of the Province falls to the Assistant Provincial; if there is no Assistant, to the senior Consultor by reason of **institution, nomination**, vocation, or age, unless the Superior General has provided otherwise.

#### The Assistant of the Provincial Superior

170.\* § 1. The Provincial can have an Assistant, so that he may be partially freed from the excessively burdensome duties of his office and be helped in the government of the Province.

§ 2. The Assistant is one of the Consultors and is elected by the Consultors and the Provincial, **unless the Provincial Assembly has decided otherwise.**

§ 3. In the absence of the Provincial, the Assistant has the same authority as the Provincial, except in matters which the Provincial has reserved to himself.

§ 4. In the event of an impediment on the part of the Provincial, the Assistant takes his place with full right until the cessation of the impediment. The Provincial Council, with the Assistant and without the Provincial, judges the impediment.

171.\* The Provincial Assembly can determine whether or not an Assistant of the Provincial is to be had.

#### The Provincial Council

172. The Consultors constitute the Council of the Provincial Superior. They shall assist him by their labor and counsel in the government of the Province, for the promotion of its unity and vigor, the effective realization of the Constitutions and the decisions of the General and Provincial Assemblies, and the collaboration of all houses and confreres in the promotion of the works of the Province.

173.\* § 1. The Consultors are appointed for a term of three years by the Provincial, after consultation of at least all the members of the Province with active vote, and with the confirmation of the Superior General. In the same manner and with the same conditions, the Consultors can be confirmed for a second and third term of three years, but not for a fourth.

§ 2. **A provincial consultor may be removed from office by the Superior General for a grave cause, on the proposal of the provincial superior, with the consent of the other consultors.**

The Provincial Assembly can propose for the approbation

of the Superior General with the consent of his Council the Province's own method of designation or election of Consultors and the time of selection and duration in office.  
The Provincial Econome

174.\* In each Province there shall be an Econome for the administration of temporal goods, who is appointed at will by the Provincial, with the consent of his Council.

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In the judgment of the commission on government, the words: "In each Province there shall be an Econome for the administration of temporal goods," belong to the Constitutions.

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175. The Provincial Econome administers the goods of the Province under the direction and vigilance of the Provincial ~~with his and the~~ Council, according to the norm of common law and our particular law.

176.\* If he is not also a Consultor, the Econome is present at the Provincial Council when he is called by the Provincial, but without a vote.

177.\* The duties of the Provincial Econome are:  
1° To care for the proper possession of all temporal goods according to ecclesiastical and civil law;  
2° By advice and assistance, to help local economies fulfill their duties and to exercise vigilance over their administration;  
3° To see that each house pays the assigned sum for the expenses of the Province, and especially for the formation of our members, and to send the tax for the general fund to the office of the General Econome at the stated time;  
4° To see to the payment of just wages to our employees and the observance of civil laws concerning social insurances;  
5° Always to keep in order the various accounts of income and expenditures, and other documents;  
6° To render an account of his administration to the Provincial and his Council.

### *Regional Superior*

177\* bis. The provincial superior may, with the consent of his council and having consulted the interested parties, and with the approval of the superior general, a regional superior, even with vicarial power.

### ~~45. The Local Community and its Offices in the Local Administration~~

178. § 1. The Congregation is realized particularly in each local communities, in which the members live in fraternal union, carry out the purpose of the Congregation, and form a community of works, prayer and good deeds. Thus, whatever is determined in

the Constitutions and Statutes concerning the end and ministries of the Congregation is implemented especially by the Superior with the local Community.

§ 2. The Superior is the center of unity and the animator of local community life. He should foster the ministries of the house and offer himself for the advancement of each one and be solicitous for activity with the community.

179.\* After consultation with the members of the house, the local Superior is appointed for a term of three years, and, after the members of the house have been heard, can be reappointed in the same house for a second three-year term, and even a third if there is need.

180.\* The Superior has ordinary power in the internal forum for his subjects and others living night and day in the house. He can delegate this power to others according to the norm of law.

181.\* It is the right and duty of the Superior:

~~1° To see that all members of the house live in a fraternal community and make progress in their devotion;~~

1° To inform the Provincial of the condition of the house entrusted to him.

2° To entrust to the confreres of the house the functions and offices not reserved to major Superiors for assignment;

3° To convoke and direct the Domestic Assembly when it is ordered by the Provincial;

4° To propose, together with his community, the order of the day of the house for the approval of the Provincial;

5° To have archives and a seal of the house;

6° To make known to the confreres decrees and news of the Congregation.

7° To see to the fulfillment of Mass obligations.

182.\* The local Superior can be removed whenever for a just and proportionate cause it seems good in the Lord to the Provincial, with the consent of his Council and the approbation of the Superior General.

183.\* The local Superior is assisted in the administration of the house by all the confreres according to the function of each one, especially by the Assistant, the Consultors and the Econome.

183\* bis. - Meeting of the members, acting as a community council, should be held often to promote the life and apostolate of the community.

## 56. Assemblies

### Assemblies in General ~~General Norms~~

184. § 1. Three kinds of Assembly are held in the Congregation of the Mission, namely, General, Provincial, and Domestic. The function of these Assemblies is the preservation and promotion of the spirituality and apostolic vitality of the Congregation.

§ 2.\* All Superiors and members shall prepare the Assemblies, earnestly carry them to completion, and then faithfully observe the laws and norms established by them.

185.\* § 1. In elections three tellers of votes are required.

§ 2. The tellers are, by law, the two youngest members of the Assembly by reason of age, along with the President and the Secretary after his election.

§ 3. At the beginning of an Assembly the election of a secretary is held. His duties are:

- a) to perform the function of first teller;
- b) to write the minutes and documents of the sessions.

186.\* Before and during an Assembly, free communication of information concerning the matters to be decided and the qualities of persons to be elected is to be fostered.

187.\* § 1. No one can have a double vote in Assemblies.

§ 2. Conditions attached to a vote before an election are considered not to have been attached.

§ 3. Election obligates the one elected to attend an Assembly or to accept an office, unless a grave cause approved by the Assembly excuses.

§ 4. No one can of his own will substitute another in his place at an Assembly, but only according to the norm of law.

§ 5. A majority of votes is computed from the valid votes only. Blank votes are null.

188.\* § 1. All members have the right of active voice after they have been admitted into the Congregation with definitive bond, unless they have lost the right according to the norm of law.

§ 2. All members have the right of passive voice after three years of definitive membership in the Congregation and the completion of the twenty-fifth year of age, other conditions of common law or our particular law for different offices or functions being present.

189.\* The following lack the right of active and passive voice:  
1° Those who have an indult to live outside the Congregation, according to our particular law and any clause contained in the indult.

2° Our members who have been raised to episcopal dignity, or even only nominated, during as well as after the fulfillment of office, **unless they return to community life.**

3° During their term of office, Vicars, Prefects, and Administrators Apostolic, unless they are at the same time Superiors of some particular house of the Congregation.

190.\* When the business of an Assembly has been transacted, the Acts of the Assembly as approved by the members are to be signed by the President, by the Secretary, and by all the members. With the seal affixed to them, they are to be carefully kept in the Archives.

### The General Assembly

191. The General Assembly, immediately representing the entire Congregation, as its highest authority, has the right:

1o To elect the Superior General, the Vicar General, and the Assistants General;

2o To enact laws or statutes for the good of the Congregation, with due regard for the principle of subsidiarity;

3o To confirm statutes enacted by another General Assembly, so that those not explicitly confirmed are considered abrogated and lose their force.

4o To interpret authentically the Constitutions and Statutes.

192. § 1. The General Assembly is held for various reasons:

a) An Ordinary Assembly, six years after the last ordinary Assembly, for the election of the Superior General, the Vicar General, and the Assistants General and the transaction of the business of the Congregation.

b) An Extraordinary Assembly, outside the above stated times, as often as the Superior General, with the consent of his Council and having heard the Provincial Superiors, judges that it should be held.

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**In the judgment of the commission on government, the words: "six years after the last ordinary assembly," and "outside the stated times," pertain to the statutes.**

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§ 2. The Provincial or Viceprovincial Assembly must precede the holding of the General Assembly.

193.\* § 1. The Superior General, or the Vicar General, decides the time and place of convocation of the General Assembly.

§ 2. With the recurrence of the sixth year, the Ordinary Assembly can be anticipated or delayed up to six months from the day of the preceding one, for a just cause and by decree of the Superior General with the consent of his Council.

194. § 1. The following must be present at the General Assembly:

a) The Superior General, the Vicar General, the Assistants General, the Secretary General, the Econome General, and the Procurator General at the Holy See; when the Superior General, the Vicar and the Assistants General leave office, they remain members of the assembly in the following sessions of the same assembly.

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In the judgment of the commission on government, the second part of § 1 a) and b), belong to the statutes.

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b) Provincial and Viceprovincial Superiors, and one delegate for Provinces and Viceprovinces, whose number of members with active voice does not exceed one hundred; after that number, there shall be one delegate for each seventy-five members or part thereof. The number of deputies to the general assembly is to be counted according to the number of members having active voice on the day of their election in the provincial assembly.

§ 2. If the office of Provincial or Viceprovincial is vacant, the one who holds the interim government shall attend the General Assembly.

If a Provincial or Viceprovincial is legitimately impeded from coming to the General Assembly, the one who replaces in his office shall attend in his place. If, however, he had been elected as a deputy by the Provincial or Viceprovincial assembly, the first substitute shall attend the general assembly.

195.\* § 1. ~~Before the convocation of a general assembly, the superior general or the vicar general, with his council, and having heard the visitors and having taken into account various regions and works shall, at an opportune time, name a preparatory commission. After the convocation of a General Assembly and before its celebration, the Superior General or the Vicar General with the consent of the Council, at an opportune time, appoints the Preparatory Commission of the General Assembly. Its task is to provide sources and put in order the wishes of the members and the proposals of the Provinces, and to send them, with the addition of the proposals made by the Superior General with the advice of his Council, to the Provincial Superiors for the examination of all the members, especially the delegates to the General Assembly.~~

§ 2. while leaving to the Superior General, with his council, complete liberty of deciding, when needed, on the work of the preparatory commission, the duties of the same commission will be:

a) To ask the provinces and each member what, in their judgment, the more urgent problems are, and in which way they should be handled in the general assembly;

b) After the answers have been received, to select those issues, according to the needs of the time, that are more urgent and more general, to prepare studies and to look for sources,

and to send all of these to the visitors, in due time, before the celebration of the domestic assemblies;

c) To receive the propositions, or postulata, of the provincial assemblies and the studies made by the provinces and those asked by the superior general, having heard his council;

d) If possible, to put everything in order, and to draw up from them a working document, so that all the deputies and substitutes will have everything in their hands at least one full month before the beginning of the general assembly.

~~For every ordinary General Assembly the Preparatory Commission must prepare and propose for discussion and judgment the materials which are very urgent because of the necessities of time or circumstance, so that they can be deliberated by all confreres in the Provinces and formulated into postulata for the General Assembly.~~

~~§ 2. This Commission shall see that all delegates have knowledge of the proposals no later than one month before the beginning of the General Assembly.~~

~~The Provincial Superiors shall transmit all documents for examination before the General Assembly to the delegates and substitutes of the Provinces immediately, and as soon as possible to all the confreres.~~

§ 3. The function of this Commission ceases with the beginning of the Assembly.

196.\* § 1. On the day of the election of the Superior General, all the electors shall gather and offer Mass for a successful election, and, after a brief exhortation, the session shall begin at the stated hour under the direction of the President.

§ 2. On prepared ballots, the electors shall write the name of him whom he chooses for Superior General.

§ 3. The ballots are counted, and if the number is greater than the number of electors, the procedure is null and new ballots are to be written.

§ 4. If on the first balloting no one receives two thirds of the votes, a second balloting is to be held in the same manner as the first. If no one receives the required majority in the second balloting, a third and a fourth is to be held. After the fourth inefficacious balloting, a fifth shall be had, in which an absolute majority of votes, discounting the null ones, is required and suffices.

After a fifth inefficacious balloting, a sixth is held, in which only the two candidates who had the greater number of votes, even though equal, in the fifth balloting shall have passive voice, unless several had an equal number of votes in first or second place; in the latter case, these too have

passive voice. In the sixth balloting a relative majority of the votes, the null votes being discounted, is required and suffices. In the event of a tied vote, the senior by reason of vocation or age shall be considered elected.

§ 5. After the legitimate election and acceptance by the one elected, the decree of election is drawn up, and the one presiding shall proclaim in a clear voice the one elected. If the President himself has been elected Superior General, the Secretary of the Assembly shall draw up the decree and the Moderator shall proclaim the one elected.

The one elected shall not refuse the burden committed to him except for a grave cause.

When the election has been completed and thanks given to God, the ballots shall be destroyed.

If the newly elected is not present, he shall be summoned, and the Assembly can continue to treat of the other affairs of the Congregation until his arrival.

197.\* The Directory approved by one Assembly remains in force until it is changed or abrogated by another Assembly.

#### The Provincial and Viceprovincial Assembly

198. The Provincial Assembly, which is a gathering of members who represent the Province as delegates, has the following functions:

1° To treat of matters which can promote the welfare of the Province as an advisory board to the Provincial Superior;

2° To have a special care for the promotion of our apostolate and its proper integration into the pastoral plan defined by Episcopal Conferences;

3° To establish norms with obligatory force for the common good of the Province within the limits of common law and our particular law; *Cf. the following footnote to be placed among the "Interpretations."*

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The competence of the provincial assembly.

*Authentic declaration to be placed as a footnote to art. 198,3 of the Constitutions:*

The norms in art. 198, 3 are to be understood "ad instar legis seu statuti," which do not touch the executive or administrative office of the provincial superior as it is described in the C.M. Constitutions and Statutes; the provincial superior, however, falls under the authority of the provincial assembly according to the norm of common law and our particular law.

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4° To act on proposals to be presented in the name of the Province to the General Assembly and to the Superior General;  
5° To elect delegates to the General Assembly.

199.\* § 1. The Provincial or Viceprovincial Assembly is to be held every third year; that is, before the General Assembly and in the time between General Assemblies.

§ 2. As necessity occurs the Provincial or Viceprovincial Superior with the consent of his Council after having consulted the local Superiors, can convoke an extraordinary Provincial or Viceprovincial Assembly.

200. It is the right and duty of the Provincial or Viceprovincial Superior to convoke and preside over the Provincial or Viceprovincial Assembly, to determine the time and designate the house in which it is to be held and to promulgate the norms.

201. The norms of the Provincial Assembly must be communicated to the Superior General and need his approbation with the consent of his Council. The Superior General must communicate his decision to the Provincial Superior within two months.

202.\* The following must be present at the Provincial Assembly, unless it is otherwise provided by provincial norm:

§ 1. As delegates ex officio, the Provincial Superior, the Provincial Consultors, the Provincial Econome and the Superiors of houses of the Province.

§ 2. As many elected delegates as there are ex officio delegates with the addition of one delegate for each twenty-five members with the active voice or any remaining part thereof. These delegates are elected from the one Provincial group of those having passive voice in the Province.

203.\* Those of the one Provincial group who receive the greater number of votes are the elected delegates. In the event of a tied vote the seniors by vocation and age are elected. The same number according to the order of majority of votes are substitutes.

204.\* If the Superior of a house is impeded from attending the Provincial Assembly, the Assistant shall go in his place. If the Assistant has already been elected as a delegate, he is in turn substituted for from the list of substitutes.

205.\* The Provincial Assembly can propose for the approbation of the Superior General with the consent of his Council the Province's own method of representation in the Provincial Assembly, in such a way, however, that the number of elected delegates shall exceed the number of ex officio delegates.

206.\* It is, moreover, the prerogative of each Province in Assembly to draw up its own norms of procedure, or Directory, within the limits of common law and our particular law.

207.\* The Provincial Assembly proceeds to the election of delegates and substitutes to the General Assembly in separate elections, by absolute majority. If no one is elected on the first and second ballotings, then on the third ballot the one who receives a relative majority will be elected, and in case of a tied vote the senior by vocation and age.

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~~TEMPORARY DECREES: For the first Provincial Assembly to be held after this extraordinary General Assembly.~~

~~1. The delegates to the Provincial Assembly will be those enumerated in article 202, that is, according to the general norm.~~

~~2. The Provincial Superior may with the consent of his Council and having held a consultation of at least all the members of the Province with active voice, set up the Province's own method of representation for the first Provincial Assembly after this extraordinary General Assembly.~~

~~3. The Provincial Superior can, with the consent of his Council, establish norms for preparing the Assembly, for conducting the elections of delegates, and holding Domestic Assemblies before the Provincial Assembly, within the limits of common law and our particular law.~~

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#### Domestic Assembly

208. § 1. The Domestic Assembly is convoked by the Superior of the house or by the Assistant who exercises fully the office of Superior. It is held in preparation for the Provincial Assembly.

§ 2. However, all who have active voice are to be convoked.

209. It pertains to the Domestic Assembly to treat of those matters which the house wishes to propose to the Provincial Assembly, and those which the Preparatory Commission of the Provincial Assembly proposes for discussion, and to determine proposals.

210.\* The Provincial Assembly can establish norms for Domestic Assemblies, within the limits of common law and our particular law. These norms do not need approbation of the

Superior General.

## VII. The Administration of Temporal Goods of the Congregation

### 1. General Principles

211. § 1. The Congregation of the Mission embraces a communitarian form of evangelical poverty in such a way that all the goods of the Congregation are in common and the confreres may thus reasonably enjoy them for better pursuing and attaining the purpose of the Congregation.

§ 2. The Congregation possesses and the confreres administer these goods as the patrimony of the poor, without excessive solicitude for themselves, having confidence in divine providence.

212. § 1. The houses, Provinces and the Congregation itself are capable of acquiring and possessing temporal goods. **where needed, their legitimate superiors are their legal representatives even in civil law, unless otherwise provided.**

§ 2. The sources of temporal goods, apart from the labor of the confreres, are all other licit means of acquiring goods.

213. The Congregation, the Provinces and the houses possess and the confreres deputed for this administer the temporal goods to provide suitable living for the confreres and for supplying apt means for our apostolic activity and works of charity.

214. Since all goods are in common, confreres are all coresponsible according to the norm of law in the acquisition, administration and use of the temporal goods of the house and Province to which they belong; in due proportion this principle is valid even relative to the goods of the Congregation itself.

215. § 1. For the common good houses must help the Province in those matters which are necessary for suitable administration and care of general necessities; in like manner the Provinces in relation to the General Curia.

§ 2. Therefore, the Superior General with the consent of his Council has the right of imposing a tax on the Provinces equitably, likewise, the Provincial Superior with the consent of his Council on the houses of his Province.

216. § 1. Provinces and houses **will** ~~should~~ share with others their temporal goods so that those who have more help others who suffer need.

§ 2. The Congregation, the Provinces and the houses should gladly give some of their temporal goods to provide for the needs of others and for the livelihood of the needy.

### 2. Administration

217. § 1. The goods of the Congregation, Provinces and houses should be administered by their respective Economes under the direction and vigilance of the Superiors ~~with~~ and their Councils within the limits of common law and our own particular law.

§ 2\*. The econome general, by reason of his office, and with the consent of the superior general, may visit the provincial economes and even, in particular cases, the economes of houses or the administrators of more important works.

218. It is left to the Provinces to determine the administration of temporal goods according to the principle of decentralization and subsidiarity.

### 3. Norms of Administration

219.\* § 1. Administrators should be mindful that they are not owners but only dispensers of the goods of the Community; hence they should pay careful attention lest these goods be spent on uses alien to our state or lest they act contrary to civil law.

§ 2. Administrators should willingly provide for the necessities of the confreres in all matters which concern their life, their particular office and their apostolic labor. Such a use of goods is an incentive for the confreres to foster the good of the poor and to lead a truly fraternal life.

§ 3. The members who administer special works of either provinces or houses will show the accounts of income and expenses to their respective superiors at a time and in a way determined by provincial statutes.

§ 4. They should observe equity in the distribution of goods since they ought to foster community life among the confreres.

220.\* § 1. Economes ought to give an account to their Superiors and inform the confreres about their administration.

§ 2. The accounts of receipts and disbursements must be examined once a year by the Superior General and his Council in the case of the General Econome; twice a year by the Provincial Superior and his Council in the case of the Provincial Econome; each month by the local Superior in the case of the Economes of the house. The account books shall be signed if the accounts are found to be exact.

§ 3. The Econome General will give a general account of his administration to the Provincial Superiors at the end of each year; in the same way, Provincial Superiors will

transmit to the Superior General after the end of the year an accounting for their Provinces.

221. All administrators, both Superiors as well as Economes, cannot act in the name of the Congregation except within the limits of their office and according to the norm of law. Therefore, the Congregation, the Province and the house are responsible only for administrative acts performed according to the aforesaid norms; for the rest, those who perform illicit or invalid acts will be held responsible. If any moral person of the Congregation shall contract debts or obligations even with permission, it alone will be held responsible for them at its own expense.

222.\* If it is a question of alienating goods which are valuable by reason of material, art, history or antiquity, or of other goods whose value exceeds the sum decided by competent authority, or of contracting debts or obligations beyond the indicated sum, the contract lacks force unless permission in writing has previously been obtained from competent authority according to the norm of common law and of our particular law.

223.\* § 1. The General Assembly can determine the maximum limit beyond which the Superior General cannot make extraordinary expenditures.

§ 2. Provincial Superiors can make expenditures according to the norm of the Provincial Assembly with the approbation of the Superior General.

§ 3. Local Superiors can make expenditures within the norm decided within the Province.

224.\* Superiors should not allow debts to be contracted unless it is certain that they can be paid off from the usual revenues and that loans can be paid off from annual revenue within the time foreseen.

225.\* § 1. Labor contracts: labor laws, social security and social justice must be observed in regard to the people who work for us.

§ 2. Onerous contracts: Superiors should proceed with very great caution in accepting pious foundations whose obligations must be fulfilled over a long term. Those which are in perpetuity should never be accepted.

§ 3. Gratuitous contracts:

a) Gifts from the goods of the houses, Provinces and Congregation should not be given except according to the norms of the Constitutions and Statutes.

b) As far as the goods which come to the Congregation, the Province or the houses through a will or donation, the will of

the donors must be respected both in regard to ownership and use.

§ 4. Under the care of the Congregation or of the Bishops or others for whom we work, provision must be made for social security for our employees and adequate insurance for materials things in each house, Province and also in the General Curia.

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DECREES:

1. ~~It is for the Superior General to establish~~ A fund will be established for the Foreign Missions and also for poorer Provinces (by decree of the General Assembly).
  2. The limits for extraordinary expenses contracted by the Superior General are:
    - a) The Superior General can on his own authority contract extraordinary expenses to the sum of ~~\$10,000~~ 15,000 U.S.
    - b) The Superior General can, having heard his Council, contract extraordinary expenses to the sum of \$100,000 U.S.
    - c) The Superior General with the consent of his Council can contract extraordinary expenses to the sum of \$1,000,000 U.S.
    - d) The Superior General can with the unanimous consent of his Council contract extraordinary expenses beyond \$1,000,000 U.S.
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VIII. Temporary Decrees

I. The Constitutions and Statutes approved by this General Assembly are promulgated by the Superior General and begin to be in force immediately ad experimentum until the next General Assembly.

II. ~~The Assembly has approved the following Temporary Decrees:~~

~~1. By mandate of the General Assembly, the Superior General with the consent of his Council, shall follow the norm of the Motu Proprio "Ecclesiae Sanctae" relative to experiments both contrary to common law, namely: to give permission willingly according to "Ecclesiae Sanctae" and according to the mind of the General Assembly. (It is to be noted that for experiments contrary to common law prior permission of the Holy See is required.)~~

~~2. The mandate of the visitors and vicevisitors continues until the completion of the six years for which they were appointed. The same applies to Provincial Consultors.~~

~~3. Those who have already been in the Novitiate for a year can be allowed by the visitor or vicevisitor to finish this~~

~~period of formation at the time to be determined by the Provincial Superior with his Council.~~

~~4. What is established in the chapter de Sodalibus and in the section on the Novitiate can have retroactive force, if it shall seem opportune and fitting to the Superior General with the consent of his Council after he has heard the interested Provincials.~~

~~5. Those who have taken temporary vows remain with temporary vows until the time has elapsed for which these vows were taken. At the expiration of this time, they can either take perpetual vows or, after talking with their Moderators and with the approval of the Provincial with his Council, remain in the Congregation under promise or some other bond until the time decided on for taking perpetual vows.~~

~~6. From the Ordinances of the Superior General, only two are renewed:~~

~~a) Concerning jurisdiction in the Congregation for confessions;  
b) Concerning confirmation of Superiors and Officials (Cf. Ordinations nn. 1 and 12 in the Vincentiana XII [1968] 6, pp. 234 and 236).~~

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In the Motu Proprio "*Ecclesiae Sanctae*" in Section II, Part I, the following is established:

"The General Chapter has the right to change certain norms of the Constitutions ad experimentum, provided the purpose, nature and character of the Institute are preserved. (Experiments contrary to the common law, to be made prudently will be freely permitted by the Holy See as occasion arises.) These experiments can be until the next ordinary General Chapter, but not continued beyond another Chapter immediately following." (n.6)

"The same faculty belongs also to the General Council the time between these Chapters, according to conditions to be determined by these chapters..." (n.7) "The definitive approval of Constitutions is reserved to the competent authority." (n.8)

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III. The general assembly declares that the present Constitutions and Statutes are the entire general law of the Congregation now in force and valid until the next general ordinary general assembly. If in fact some lack is comes to light, it may be provided for according to the norm of our previous law. In order to take away doubts and anxieties, the extraordinary General Assembly of the Congregation of the Mission declares that it has so composed and integrated previous and present Constitutions (that is, the norms changed ad experimentum), that in the documents of the same extraordinary General Assembly (that is, the Constitutions with the annexed Statutes) is found the total presently existing law of the

~~Congregation, which will be in force until the next ordinary General Assembly. It will pertain to the next ordinary General Assembly to decide on the continuation of the changed norms in whole or in part until the subsequent General Assembly.~~

~~Therefore, the norms of the previous Constitutions not found explicitly in the documents of this extraordinary Assembly are considered to be suspended until such time as both the General Assembly and the Holy See shall provide according to the prescriptions of the Motu Proprio "Ecclesiae Sanctae." If de facto some lacuna is detected provision can be made according to the preceding Constitutions.~~

~~At times in the documents of the General Assembly there is mention of "decrees" of the Assembly. Since decrees of their nature are subject to the decision of the need of the subsequent Assembly, there is no need of any special declaration on them.~~

~~The power of the Superior General to establish Ordinances for the good of the whole Congregation, according to the norms already proclaimed by the extraordinary General Assembly, is neither taken away nor restricted by this declaration.~~

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## INTERPRETATIONS AND RESPONSES

### A. *The Fundamental Statute of Poverty*

[as in the Constitutions of 1980]

### B. *The Object of the vow of stability*

1. The object of the vow of stability in the Congregation of the Mission is found clearly defined and expressed in the formula for the taking of vows (art. 54 C&S); "I ,.., vow to God that I will faithfully dedicate my whole life in the Congregation to the evangelization of men, especially the poor."

2. From this formula the complete object of the vow of stability can be seen to consist in two elements:

a) the evangelization of men, especially the poor, and  
b) a faithful dedication to this evangelization for the whole of one's life in the Congregation.

3. The fundamental and primary object of the vow of stability is the evangelization of men, particularly the poor.

4. Consequently, the vow of stability should be called better the "vow of evangelization" of men, particularly the poor.

### C. *The competence of the provincial assembly* (cf. Art. 198, 3, Constitutions)

### D. *The officials of the general curia*

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(cf. Art. 155, Constitutions)

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**DECREES**

*On Poverty*

(Cf. Art. 54)

*On preparing for the general assembly of 1980*  
[omitted]

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Sources:

“Conventus Generalis XXXV,” *Vincentiana* 18:5 (Sept.-Oct. 1974): 303-52.

“XXXV Assemblea Generale della Congregazione della Missione,” *Annali della Missione* 81 (1974).

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[John E. Rybolt, C.M., 04-06]