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**CONSTITUTIONS
AND
STATUTES
OF THE
CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION**

**GENERAL CURIA OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION
ROME 1984**

**ENGLISH TRANSLATION
PHILADELPHIA 1989**

NOTES OF THE TRANSLATORS

1. Except where the context requires a more restrictive meaning, the terms "member" and confrere" designate every member of the Congregation of the Mission, that is, all priests and candidates for the priesthood, and all brothers and candidates for the brotherhood, from the time of admission into the internal seminary.

2. The Latin word "finis" has been translated "purpose."

3. The Latin word "Visitator" has been translated "provincial."

4. ABBREVIATIONS:

C = Constitutions

S = Statutes

CF = Common Rules

SV = Coste, *Saint Vincent*, 14 volumes

EN = *Evangelii Nuntiandi* of Paul VI

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DECREE

The Congregation of the Mission, founded by St. Vincent de Paul, has the special apostolic purpose of preaching the gospel to the poor and promoting the formation of the clergy.

Adhering to the norms of the Second Vatican Council and other regulations of the Church, the Congregation of the Mission has by assiduous work prepared a new text of Constitutions, which the superior general has presented to the Holy See for approval.

The Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes, therefore, having subjected the attached text of Constitutions to special examination, and considering the favorable vote of its commission, all things having been considered, by this Decree approves and confirms the text as it appears printed in Latin and preserved in its archives, all the required norms of law having been observed.

May God grant that all the members of the Congregation of the Mission, helped by divine grace, through the intercession of St. Vincent de Paul, and with a heart grateful to God, receive these new Constitutions as a firm means of progressing more and more in such a great work committed to them by the Church.

Given at Rome, from the office of the Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes, on the 29th of June, the feast of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, in the year of Our Lord 1984.

+Vincentius Fagiolo
Secr.

+Fr. Jerome Hamer, O.P.
Pro. Pref.

CURIAMISSIONE
Via di Bravetta, 159
00164 Rome

RICHARD McCULLEN
Superior General of the
Congregation of the Mission

to our beloved in Christ
Priests, Clerics, and Brothers

Greetings in the Lord

The approval of our Constitutions by the Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes is a significant event in the history of our Congregation. It is now just 30 years since Father Slattery promulgated our Constitutions after they had been revised in the light of the 1917 Code of Canon Law.

Now after 17 years of work, reflection, prayer, and the deliberations of three General Assemblies, the Holy See has given its approval to the Constitutions which I am happy to present to you. Allow me to make one observation about our new Constitutions. The measure of our fidelity to the spirit and letter of these Constitutions will largely determine the measure of our contribution to the life of the local Church where the Congregation is established. Within the covers of this book our identity as a Congregation in the Church is delineated. We must not be content to leave that delineation on paper alone. The text must now be imprinted on our hearts and lived out in our vocation to preach the gospel to the poor. For that purpose much reflective reading and prayer of our Constitutions is called for and it is my hope, and indeed the hope of us all, that these Constitutions will be the means that will enable us more effectively to love what Saint Vincent loved and practice what he taught.

In receiving these Constitutions from the Holy See, our minds will go back to that celebrated conference, which Saint Vincent gave to his Community on the occasion of the distribution of our Common Rules on the 17th of May 1658. The hope that Saint Vincent expressed on that occasion can be ours today:

"We ought to hope for all kinds of favors and blessings from the goodness of God for all those who shall faithfully observe the Rules he has given us: a blessing on their persons, blessings on what they undertake, blessings on all they carry out, blessings of God on all that concerns them . . . I have confidence in the grace of God and your own goodness that all of you will on this occasion renew the fidelity with which you have observed them . . . I hope that the fidelity with which you have kept these Rules in the past and the patience you have shown in waiting for them so long, will obtain for you from the good God the grace to observe them still more easily in the future."(SV, XII, 11)

In the love of our Lord Jesus Christ and of his Immaculate Mother, and with all my heart, I profess myself to be your most devoted confrere.

Rome, the 27th day of September 1984
The Solemnity of St. Vincent de Paul

[Signature]
Richard McCullen, C.M.

DECREE OF PROMULGATION

To all the members of our Congregation I transmit these Constitutions, examined and approved by the Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes on the 29th of June, and, the required time having elapsed for them to become effective, I decree that our Constitutions begin to oblige from the 25th of January 1985, the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul.

Rome, the 27th of September 1984
On the Solemnity of St. Vincent de Paul

[Signature]
Richard McCullen, C.M.

INTRODUCTION

Responding to the will of the church, and inspired by the Second Vatican Council, the Congregation of the Mission, founded by St. Vincent de Paul, has revised its own fundamental law in order to revitalize its apostolic activity and its life in the modern world.

The Congregation feels that it is living in a unique time of grace. It senses the action of the Spirit of the Lord coming upon it urging it to renewal, following the steps of St. Vincent.

The Congregation considers it necessary to go back to its roots, and to St. Vincent's lifelong conversion and original vision, so that it may continue to witness to its role within the Church. This is how it seeks to affirm more forcefully, and loyally maintain, its original identity and the spirit of its Holy Founder, and to draw greater inspiration from these sources. In this way, attentive to the will of God, it seeks to respond to its calling which is manifested in a special way, today as in St. Vincent's time, in the needs of the poor.

Vincent de Paul was born in the village of Pouy in 1581. As a boy he lived among the poor and experienced the conditions under which they lived. In 1600 he became a priest. For a time he sought to escape from the poverty of his origins, but with the help of spiritual directors he felt himself called to deeper holiness and, through the events of his life, was finally led by divine providence to a firm determination to dedicate himself to the salvation of the poor.

While he was exercising his ministry in Gannes and, on the 25th of January 1617, in Folleville, he saw that the evangelization of the poor was an urgent need. He himself held that this was the origin of his vocation, and of the Congregation of the Mission.

When, in August of the same year in Chatillon-les-Dombes, he founded "La Charité" [The Confraternities of Charity] to assist the sick who lacked all help, he discovered for himself, and showed others, the close link that exists between evangelization and the service of the poor.

Gradually his religious development led to contemplating and serving Christ in the person of the poor. The vision of Christ, sent by the Father to evangelize the poor, was central to his life and ministry.

Hearing the call of people in the world of his own day, learning to listen with an ever more intense love of God and of poor people who were burdened with hardships of all kinds, Vincent felt himself called to alleviate sufferings of every sort.

Among all his commitments he always had a special care for the Mission, and he gathered the first members to join with him in evangelization of the country people; this was set out in a contract dated the 17th of April 1625. They bound themselves to form a Congregation in which, living as a community, they would devote themselves to the salvation of the country poor; this was by an Act of Association which they signed on the 4th of September 1626.

While Vincent and his confreres were giving themselves to the evangelization of the poor, they clearly saw that the effectiveness of their mission to the people could not be sustained unless they also provided for the formation of the clergy. They began this work in 1628 in Beauvais when, at the request of the bishop, they held retreats for those being advanced to orders. In this way they were providing good pastors for the Church.

In order that he might better respond to a wide variety of needs, St. Vincent brought together as many people as he could, rich and poor, humble and powerful, and used every means to inspire in them a seminary to the poor, who are the privileged image of Christ. He moved them to help the poor, directly and indirectly. They made this voluntary and generous dedication their own. There followed the Company of the Daughters of Charity and the Confraternities of Charity founded by him, and other Associations derived from these as well as individuals who, up to our own day, have resolved to take on this same spirit.

His zeal for the poor developed further with the start of foreign missions when, in 1648, he sent confreres for the first time to Madagascar.

As it was growing, the Congregation as an Institute gradually clarified its vocation, its thrust, and its community life. It was also insistent on its secular character, even though its members grounded their stability in the Congregation by a special vow, and by the practice of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Such characteristics constitute the heritage of the Congregation even to our day.

In complete accord with the intentions of the Founder, all these things are formally set out in documents describing the origin and thrust of the Congregation. On the 12th of January 1633, in the Bull *Salvatoris Nostri*, Urban VIII decreed: "The principal object and special aim of this Congregation and its members is, by the grace of God, to work both for their own salvation and for the salvation of those living on farms; in villages, on the land, and in the poorer localities and towns; but in the cities and urban areas . . . they shall give retreats privately to those about to be advanced to orders, and instruct those preparing for orders." In the Brief *Ex Commissa Nobis*, dated the 22nd of September 1655, Alexander VII approved taking "simple vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience, as also of stability in the Congregation, with the object of devoting oneself all one's life to the salvation of poor country people. While these vows are being pronounced, no one shall assist with the purpose of accepting them in the name of the Congregation, or of Ourselves, or of the Roman Pontiff at the time." Moreover, he declared that "the Congregation of the Mission be exempt from the jurisdiction of the local Ordinaries in all things except for the persons who have been assigned to the missions by the Superiors of the Congregation . . . and those things which concern the missions. We establish also that the Congregation should not therefore be considered of the number of Religious Orders, but that it is of the body of the secular clergy."

St. Vincent took great care to form the Congregation in the spirit of the Lord and, after many years of experience, he gave it the Rules or Common Constitutions [traditionally called "The Common Rules"]. Here he offered from the gospel examples of holiness which might more deeply motivate the spirituality, apostolic activity, and fraternal life of his foundation. This came from his profound awareness of what the Lord did and taught in fulfilling the will of his Father who sent him to evangelize the poor.

At the beginning of the Common Rules, he sets out in more detail the vocation and mission of the Congregation, indicating at the same time how this is to be achieved:

We read in sacred scripture that our Lord, Jesus Christ, sent on earth for the salvation of the human race, did not begin by teaching; he began by doing. And what he did was to integrate fully into his life every type of virtue. He then went on to teach, by preaching the good news of salvation to poor people, and by passing on to his apostles and disciples what they needed to know to become guides for others. Now the little Congregation of the

Mission wants, with God's grace, to imitate Christ, the Lord, in so far as that is possible in view of its limitations. It seeks to imitate his virtues as well as what he did for the salvation of others. It is only right that if the Congregation is to do the same sort of work, it should act in the same sort of way This means that the whole purpose of the Congregation is: 'to have a genuine commitment to grow in holiness, patterning ourselves, as far as possible, on the virtues which the great Master himself graciously taught us in what he said and did; 'to preach the good news of salvation to poor people, especially in rural areas;' to help seminarians and priests to grow in knowledge and virtue, so that they can be effective in their ministry." (CR, I, 1).

In these words, St. Vincent entrusted to the confreres of the Congregation, his followers in the Lord, a unique vocation, a new kind of community life, and an exacting purpose that, with wisdom, should be continually adapted to each new age.

**THE CONSTITUTIONS
OF THE
CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION**

PART ONE

VOCATION

C.1.--The purpose of the Congregation of the Mission is to follow Christ evangelizing the poor. This purpose is achieved when, faithful to St. Vincent, the members individually and collectively:

1° make every effort to put on the spirit of Christ himself (CR I, 3) in order to acquire a holiness appropriate to their vocation (CR XII, 13);

2° work at evangelizing the poor, especially the more abandoned;

3° help the clergy and laity in their formation and lead them to a fuller participation in the evangelization of the poor.

C.2.--With this purpose in view, the Congregation of the Mission, faithful to the gospel, and always attentive to the signs of the times and the more urgent calls of the Church, should take care to open up new ways and use new means adapted to the circumstances of time and place. Moreover, it should strive to evaluate and plan its works and ministries, and in this way remain in a continual state of renewal.

C.3.--§1.--The Congregation of the Mission is a clerical society of apostolic life and of pontifical right, in which the members pursue their own apostolic purpose according to the heritage bequeathed by St. Vincent and sanctioned by the Church. They live in common as brothers by following their own rule of life, and they strive for perfect charity by observing the Constitutions.

§2.--The Congregation of the Mission, according to the tradition set forth by St. Vincent, carries on its own apostolate in close cooperation with the bishops and diocesan clergy. For this reason St. Vincent often said that the Congregation of the Mission is secular, although it enjoys autonomy which has been granted either by universal law or by exemption.

§3.--In order to accomplish in a more effective and enduring manner the purpose of the Congregation of the Mission, the members of the Congregation take vows of stability, chastity, poverty, and obedience according to the Constitutions and Statutes.

C.4.--In order that, with God's grace, it might achieve its purpose, the Congregation of the Mission, which consists of clerics and lay persons, strives to be filled with the sensitivity and attitudes of Christ, indeed with his very spirit which is particularly clear in the examples from the Gospels explained in the Common Rules.

C.5.--The spirit of the Congregation is a participation in the spirit of Christ himself, as proposed by St. Vincent: *"He sent me to preach the good news to the poor"* (Lk 4:18). Hence, *"Jesus Christ is the rule of the Mission" and shall be considered as the center of its life and activity* (SV, XII, 130).

C.6.--Therefore, the spirit of the Congregation comprises those intimate personal attitudes of Christ which our Founder recommended to the members from the

beginning: love and reverence towards the Father, compassionate and effective love for the poor, and docility to divine providence.

C.7.--The Congregation, furthermore, tries to express its spirit in five virtues drawn from its own special way of looking at Christ, namely, simplicity, humility, gentleness, mortification, and zeal for souls. Speaking of these five virtues, St. Vincent said: *"The Congregation should pay special attention to developing and living up to these five virtues so that they may be, as it were, the faculties of the soul of the whole Congregation, and that everything each one of us does may always be inspired by them"* (CR, II, 14).

C.8.--All the members should continually strive for a deeper knowledge of this spirit, by returning to the gospel and to the example and teaching of St. Vincent, mindful that our spirit and our ministries ought to nourish one another.

C.9.--Moreover, our vocation--that is, our purpose, nature, and spirit--should direct the life and organization of the Congregation.

PART TWO

LIFE IN THE CONGREGATION

CHAPTER I

Apostolic activity

C.10.--The Congregation of the Mission from the time of its Founder, and under his inspiration, sees itself called by God to carry out the work of evangelizing the poor.

In its own way, it can, with the whole Church, state of itself that evangelizing is to be considered its own grace and vocation, and expresses its deepest identity (cf. EN, 14).

Furthermore, the members, individually and collectively, can rightly make use of the words of Jesus: *"I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God for which I have been sent"* (Lk 4:43).

C.11.--The love of Christ, who had pity on the crowd (Mk 8:2), is the source of all our apostolic activity, and urges us, in the words of St. Vincent, *"to make the Gospel really effective"* (SV, XII, 84).

According to the varying circumstances of time and place, our work of evangelization in word and action should strive for this, that all, through a process of conversion and celebration of the sacraments, should be faithful to *"the kingdom, that is to say, the new world, the new order, the new manner of being, of living, of living in community, which the gospel inaugurates"* (EN, 23).

C.12.--These are the characteristics to be kept in mind in this work of evangelization which the Congregation proposes to carry out:

1° clear and expressed preference for the apostolate among the poor, since their evangelization is the sign that the kingdom of God is present on earth (cf. Mt 11:5);

2° attention to the realities of present-day society, especially to the factors that cause an unequal distribution of the world's goods, so that we can better carry out our prophetic task of evangelization;

3° some sharing in the condition of the poor, so that not only will we attend to their evangelization, but that we ourselves may be evangelized by them;

4° genuine community spirit in all our apostolic works, so that we may be supported by one another in our common vocation;

5° readiness to go to any part of the world, according to the example of the first missionaries of the Congregation;

6° striving to live in a state of continuous conversion both on the part of each individual member and on the part of the whole Congregation, according to the mind of St. Paul, who counsels us: *"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind"* (Rm 12:2).

C.13.--The provinces themselves will decide the forms of apostolate to be undertaken so that, faithful to the spirit and example of St. Vincent, their apostolate may be incorporated into the pastoral activity of the local Church in conformity with the documents and instructions of the Holy See, the episcopal conferences, and the

diocesan bishops.

C.14.--Popular missions, so dear to the heart of our Founder, are to be earnestly promoted. Therefore we should undertake the work of the missions according to circumstances of time and place, searching for all possible means to give this work new vitality, both to renew and to build up a true Christian community and to awaken faith in the hearts of unbelievers.

C.15.--The formation of clerics in seminaries, a work of the Congregation from its beginnings, is to be effectively renewed where needed.

In addition, members should afford spiritual assistance to priests both in the work of their ongoing formation and in promoting their pastoral zeal. They should work to encourage in them the desire of fulfilling the Church's option for the poor. They should also devote themselves to motivating and suitably preparing lay people for the pastoral ministries necessary in a Christian community.

Finally, members should teach clerics and laity to work together and to support one another in the process of forming a Christian community.

C.16.--Among the apostolic works of the Congregation, the foreign missions and missions to people in a similar stage of evangelization have an honored place.

In building up a new ecclesial community, missionaries should pay special attention to the "*seeds of the word*" which may be found in the cultural and religious practices of the people (cf. EN, 53).

C.17.--Since the Congregation of the Mission and the Daughters of Charity share the same heritage, members should willingly give them assistance when asked, especially in the matter of retreats and spiritual direction.

They should also show a brotherly spirit of cooperation in those works which have been undertaken together.

C.18.--Following St. Vincent, who, like the Good Samaritan of the gospel parable (Lk 10:30-37), gave effective help to the abandoned, provinces and members should earnestly strive to serve those rejected by society and those who are victims of disasters and injustices of every kind. We should also assist those who suffer from forms of moral poverty which are peculiar to our own times.

Working for all of these and with them, members should endeavor to implement the demands of social justice and evangelical charity.

CHAPTER II

Community life

C.19.--St. Vincent brought confreres together with Church approval so that, living in a new form of community life, they might undertake the evangelization of the poor. The Vincentian community is, therefore, organized to prepare its apostolic activity and to encourage and help it continually. And so, members, individually and collectively, should strive to fulfill their common mission through a wholehearted spirit of renewal in fraternal union.

C.20.--The Church finds the ultimate source of its life and action in the Trinity. The Congregation, within the Church, does the same.

1° Gathered in community to announce the Father's love for all, we express that same love in our own life.

2° We follow Christ who called apostles and disciples and shared a fraternal life with them to evangelize the poor.

3° Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we build up a unity among ourselves to achieve our mission, and so offer credible witness to Christ the Savior.

C.21.--§1.--Community life has been a special characteristic of the Congregation and its usual way of living from its very beginning. This was clearly the will of St. Vincent. Therefore, members should live in a house or in a legitimately constituted community according to our own law.

§2.--This fraternal life together, continually fostered by the mission, forms a community which promotes both personal and community development, and renders the work of evangelization more effective.

C.22.--It is the gift of ourselves and of all that we have that will truly make us present to the Community. At the same time, however, due regard should be given to personal privacy and to the furtherance by the Community of individual worth. The initiatives of members should be evaluated in the light of the purpose and spirit of the Congregation. In this way the individuality and charisms of each member come together to foster community and make the mission effective.

C.23.--Each local community enjoys due autonomy so that it may truly be a place where a communal coordination of apostolate and life with the good of the Congregation at the provincial and universal levels is realized. The local community is thus a living part of the whole Congregation.

C.24.--We try to live our community life animated by love, particularly with the practice of *"the five virtues,"* so that it will be a support to our apostolate and a sign to the world of the newness of evangelical life. Therefore:

1° we should strive to live in harmony to fulfill our mission, by supporting one another especially in difficulties, and by sharing our joy in simplicity of heart;

2° we should become co-responsible, helped by the necessary services of authority and together with the superior, in seeking the will of God in our life and works, thus

engaging in active obedience. Moreover, we should foster mutual dialogue, and in this way overcome an excessively individualistic style of living;

3° we should pay close attention to the opinions and needs of each confrere humbly and fraternally, thereby working to overcome the difficulties involved in community life; we should use fraternal correction gently, and achieve reconciliation with one another;

4° with due care, we should try to create the conditions necessary for work, rest, prayer, and talking together, making prudent and moderate use of communication media. And having provided for the needs of our apostolate, we shall preserve some part of our house for community privacy.

C.25.--The Community is continually responsible for its own development, especially as we renew the principal elements of our way of living and acting. These are:

1° following Christ the Evangelizer as a community, which generates in us special bonds of love and affection; in this spirit we should, *"like good friends,"* (CR, VIII, 2) join reverence for one another with genuine esteem;

2° the evangelization of the poor, which gives to all our work a unity that does not stifle diverse talents and gifts but directs them to the service of the mission;

3° prayer, above all in the Eucharist, which becomes the source of our spiritual, community, and apostolic life;

4° holding our goods in common, after the mind of St. Vincent, and sharing them willingly.

In this way our life becomes truly a community of friendship, work, prayer, and goods.

C.26.--§1.--Sick, infirm, and aging confreres should have a special place in our hearts, since their presence is a blessing on our houses. Consequently, besides medical care and personal attention, we should provide for them the means to share in our daily lives and in our apostolate.

§2.--For members who have died, we should faithfully offer the suffrages prescribed in the Statutes.

C.27.--Each community should work at developing a community plan, according to the Constitutions, Statutes, and the provincial norms. We should use this plan as a means of directing our life and work, of fulfilling the recommendations we receive, and of examining periodically our life and activities.

CHAPTER III

Chastity, poverty, obedience, and stability

C.28.--Wishing to follow the mission of Christ, we commit ourselves as members of the Congregation to evangelize the poor for the whole of our lives. To fulfill this vocation we embrace chastity, poverty, and obedience according to the Constitutions and Statutes. And so, *"the little Congregation of the Mission... to work for the salvation of people, especially the rural poor... has judged that no weapons would be more powerful or more suitable than those which eternal Wisdom so tellingly and effectively used"* (CR, II, 18).

C.29.--§1.--Imitating Christ in his limitless love for all, we embrace, by vow, perfect chastity in the form of celibacy for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. We accept it as a gift given us by the personal and infinite goodness of God.

§2.--In this way we open our hearts more widely to God and neighbor, and our whole way of acting becomes a joyous expression of the love between Christ and the Church which will be fully manifested in the age to come.

C.30.--Intimate union with Christ, true fraternal communion, zeal in the apostolate, and asceticism supported by the experience of the Church, will enable our chastity to grow strong. Through a continual and mature response to the Lord's call, it is a living source of spiritual fecundity in the world, and it also contributes greatly to the attainment of human maturity.

C.31.--*"Christ himself, the Lord of all, lived in poverty to such an extent that he had nowhere to lay his head. He formed his apostles and disciples, his co-workers in his mission, to live in the same sort of way so that individually they did not own anything; . . . each confrere must try, weak as he is, to imitate Christ in developing this virtue of poverty"* (CR, 111, 1). In this way, members will show that they depend entirely upon God, and their evangelization of the poor will become more effective.

C.32.--§1.--In fulfilling his responsibilities according to the purpose of the Congregation and the community plan, each member should acknowledge that he is bound by the universal law of work.

§2.--The income from each one's work, or anything which comes to him in any way, as a member of the Congregation, after incorporation, such as pension, financial assistance, or insurance benefits, will become community property according to our own law, so that after the example of the first Christians we may live with a true community of goods and may help each other fraternally.

C.33.--Mindful of the conditions of the poor, we should have a style of life that reflects simplicity and moderation. Whatever we use for the apostolate, however modern and efficient, should not be ostentatious. Whatever is needed for the support and growth of members and for carrying out our work, should come principally from the joint effort of all. The Congregation, avoiding any accumulation of goods, should try to share its resources with the poor. In this way, freed from the

desire of riches, we would witness to a world enamored of materialism.

C.34.--By reason of our vow we need to have the consent of the superior according to the Constitutions and Statutes when we use or dispose of goods. But since his consent is scarcely enough to promote the spirit of poverty, each member must weigh what is more suitable and conformable to our life and ministry, according to the spirit of our Founder as expressed in the Common Rules.

C.35.--We should use our own goods, with the permission of the superior, according to the Fundamental Statute on Poverty in the Congregation, for works of charity and also for members, while avoiding distinctions among us.

C.36.--Conscious of human limitations and trusting in the saving action of Christ, who became obedient even unto death, we should generously try, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to be obedient to the will of the Father manifested to us in many ways.

C.37.--§1.--To participate in this mystery of the obedient Christ requires us all to seek, as a community, the will of the Father. We do this through mutual sharing of experience, open and responsible dialogue in which differences of age and outlook interact, so that common directions may surface and develop, and lead to making decisions.

§2.--Mindful of the words of St. Vincent, and in a spirit of co-responsibility, members should strive to obey superiors as promptly, joyfully, and perseveringly as they can. They should try by the light of faith to obey decisions of superiors even when they consider their own views better.

C.38.--§1.--By reason of our vow of obedience we are obliged to obey the pope, the superior general, the provincial, the local superior and their substitutes when they give us a command in accordance with our Constitutions and Statutes.

§2.--We should also obey the bishops in whose dioceses the Congregation is established, in accordance with universal law and the law of our Institute, following the mind and spirit of St. Vincent.

C.39.--By our special vow of stability we vow to spend our whole lives in the Congregation fulfilling its purpose, performing the works assigned to us by superiors according to our Constitutions and Statutes.

CHAPTER IV

Prayer

C.40.--§1.--Christ, the Lord, remaining always in intimate union with the Father, used to seek his will in prayer. That will was the sole aim of his life, mission, and giving of himself for the salvation of the world. He likewise taught his disciples to pray always in the same spirit, and never to lose heart.

§2.--We, too, sanctified in Christ and sent into the world, should try to seek out in prayer the signs of God's will and to imitate the responsiveness of Christ, discerning everything according to his mind. In this way our lives are changed by the Holy Spirit into a spiritual offering, and we become better disposed to participate in Christ's mission.

C.41.--*"Give me a man of prayer and he will be ready for anything."* (SV, XI, 83) According to the mind of St. Vincent, prayer is the living source of the spiritual life of a missionary; through it he puts on Christ, becomes steeped in the teachings of the gospel, discerns things and events as before God, and remains always in God's love and mercy. In this way the Spirit of Christ will always make our words and actions effective.

C.42.--Apostolic involvement with the world, community life, and the experience of God in prayer complement one another and make an organic unity in the life of a missionary. For, when we pray, faith, fraternal love, and apostolic zeal are constantly renewed; and in action, the love of God and neighbor is effectively manifested. Through the intimate union of prayer and apostolate a missionary becomes a contemplative in action and an apostle in prayer.

C.43.--The prayer of a missionary should be characterized by a filial spirit, humility, confidence in providence, and love of the goodness of God; thus we learn to pray as people who are poor in spirit, knowing for certain that our weakness is made strong by the power of the Holy Spirit. The same Spirit enlightens our minds to know more thoroughly the needs of the world, and strengthens our wills to respond to them more effectively.

C.44.--We should find a unique experience of prayer in the ministry of the word, of the sacraments, and of charity, and in the events of life. Likewise, in evangelizing the poor, we should find Christ and contemplate him in them. Finally, in exercising pastoral care for the people to whom we are sent, we ought to pray not only for them but also with them, sharing spontaneously, as it were, in their faith and devotion.

C.45.--We should cultivate liturgical prayer in a way which is both alive and authentic.

§1.--Our life should be directed towards the daily celebration of the Lord's Supper as towards its summit, for from the Eucharist, as from a living source, flows the power of our apostolic activity and fraternal communion. Through the Eucharist, the

death and resurrection of Christ are made present, we become in Christ a living offering, and the communion of the People of God is signified and brought about.

§2.--We should frequently approach the sacrament of penance so that we might achieve continuing conversion and authenticity of vocation.

§3.--In celebrating the liturgy of the hours, we unite our hearts and voices to sing the praises of the Lord, raise our prayer continually in his sight, and intercede for people everywhere. For this reason we celebrate morning and evening prayer in common, unless excused by reason of the apostolate.

C.46.--In community prayer we find an excellent way of animating and renewing our lives, especially when we celebrate the word of God and share it, or when in fraternal dialogue we share with one another the fruit of our spiritual and apostolic experience.

C.47.--§1.--We should try, as far as possible, to spend one hour daily in personal prayer according to the tradition of St. Vincent, either in private or in common. In this way we are enabled to discern the mind of Christ and to find suitable ways of fulfilling his mission. Moreover, personal prayer prepares for, expands, and completes liturgical and community prayer.

§2.--We should faithfully make our annual retreat.

C.48.--As witnesses and heralds of the love of God, we ought to show special honor and devotion to the mysteries of the Trinity and the Incarnation.

C.49.--§1.--We should also show special devotion to Mary, the Mother of Christ and of the Church. According to the words of St. Vincent, she, more than all other believers, penetrated the meaning and lived out the teaching of the gospel.

§2.--We should express our love for the Immaculate Virgin Mary in many different ways, celebrating her feasts with devotion and praying to her frequently, especially through the rosary. We should make widely known the special message expressed through her maternal care by the Miraculous Medal.

C.50.--We should cherish devotion to St. Vincent and to the canonized and beatified members of the Vincentian Family. We should constantly return to the heritage of our Founder, expressed in his writings and in the traditions of the Congregation, that we may learn to love what he loved and practice what he taught.

CHAPTER V

Members

1. Members in general

C.51.--The members of the Congregation of the Mission are followers of Christ who have been called by God to continue his mission and have been admitted into the said Congregation. They strive, according to their abilities, to respond to their vocation by working according to the teaching, outlook, and instructions of St. Vincent de Paul.

C.52.--§1.--Among the members, all of whom share in the royal priesthood of Christ through baptism and confirmation, there are clerics and brothers, but all are known as missionaries.

1° Clerics, that is, priests and deacons, according to the order received and after the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is Priest, Shepherd, and Teacher, fulfill their vocation through the exercise of this three-fold function in every kind of apostolate which can contribute to achieving the purpose of the Congregation. Included, too, in this category are those members who are preparing to receive orders.

2° The lay persons, who among us are called brothers, are destined for the apostolate of the Church and the Congregation. They carry it out by the work which is appropriate to their status.

§2.--All of these are either only admitted members or are also incorporated members, according to the Constitutions and Statutes.

2. Admission into the Congregation

C.53.--§1.--A candidate is admitted into the Congregation when, at his request, he is received for making the period of probation of the internal seminary.

§2.--The right to admit candidates into the internal seminary belongs, established norms being observed:

1° to the superior general, after hearing his council, for the entire Congregation;

2° to the provincial, after hearing his council, for his province.

§3.--In regard to the requirements for admission, universal law must be observed.

C.54.--§1.--The total time in which preparation is made for incorporation into the Congregation should not be shorter than two years nor longer than nine years from the time of reception into the internal seminary.

§2.--One year after admission into the Congregation a member, according to our tradition, manifests by means of good purposes his intention of dedicating himself to the salvation of the poor for his entire life in the Congregation according to our Constitutions and Statutes.

§3.--The right to admit to good purposes belongs, established norms being observed:

1° to the superior general, after hearing his council and the director of the internal seminary, for the entire Congregation;

2° to the provincial, after hearing his council and the director of the internal seminary, for his province.

C.55.--§1.--Our vows are perpetual, nonreligious, and reserved, so that only the pope or the superior general can dispense them.

§2.--These vows must be faithfully interpreted according to the intention of St. Vincent as approved by Alexander VII in the briefs "Ex commissa nobis" (the 22nd of September 1655) and "Alias nos supplicationibus" (the 12th of August 1659).

C.56.--The right to admit to vows belongs, established norms being observed:

1° to the superior general, with the consent of his council and after consulting the candidate's moderators, for the entire Congregation;

2° to the provincial, with the consent of his council and after consulting the candidate's moderators, for his province.

C.57.--§1.--The permission to take vows given by the major superior after a request by the member brings with it, when the vows are taken, incorporation into the Congregation. Reception of the diaconate by a member brings with it incardination into the Congregation.

§2.--A member not yet incorporated into the Congregation cannot be admitted to orders. Incorporation of a member already a cleric incardines him into the Congregation.

C.58.--§1.--The taking of vows must be done in the presence of the superior or of a member appointed by him.

§2.--According to the custom of the Congregation, both the request for, and the attestation of, the taking of vows should be in writing. Furthermore, the superior general should be informed of the taking of vows as soon as possible.

Vows should be taken in the Congregation of the Mission according to one of these formulas:

- a) *Direct formula:* Lord, my God, I, NN., in the presence of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, vow that I will faithfully dedicate myself, in the Congregation of the Mission, for the whole time of my life, to the evangelization of the poor, after the example of Christ evangelizing. Therefore, with the help of your grace, I vow chastity, poverty, and obedience, according to the Constitutions and Statutes of our Institute.
- b) *Declarative formula:* I, NN., in the presence of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, vow to God that I will faithfully dedicate myself, in the Congregation of the Mission, for the whole time of my life, to the evangelization of the poor, after the example of Christ evangelizing. Therefore, with the help of God's grace, I vow to God chastity, poverty, and obedience, according to the Constitutions and Statutes of our Institute.
- c) *Traditional formula:* I, NN., unworthy (priest, cleric, brother) of the Congregation of the Mission, in the presence of the Most Blessed Virgin and of the whole heavenly court, vow to God poverty, chastity, and obedience to our

superior and his successors, according to the Rules or Constitutions of our Institute; I vow also that I will dedicate myself, in the aforesaid Congregation, for the whole time of my life, to the salvation of the poor country people. For this purpose, I humbly call upon Almighty God to help me with his grace.

3. Rights and obligations of members

C.59.--§1.--Unless the contrary is clear from the nature of the case, all members of the Congregation enjoy the rights, privileges, and spiritual favors granted to the Congregation according to the norm of universal law and our own law.

§2.--All members incorporated into the Congregation enjoy the same rights and are bound by the same obligations, according to the norm of universal law and our own law, with the exception of those things that involve the exercise of orders and the jurisdiction attached to it. However, those who are only admitted members of the Congregation enjoy rights and are bound by obligations according to the Constitutions, Statutes, and provincial norms.

C.60.--According to universal law and our own law, members incorporated into the Congregation enjoy the right of active and passive voice, unless they have lost it according to the norm of law.

C.61.--Members who have been incorporated into the Congregation for three years and who are twenty-five years of age enjoy the right of passive voice to all offices and duties, provided that the other conditions laid down in universal law and our own law are observed.

C.62.--The members of the Congregation, besides the obligations to which they are held according to our own law, are also bound by the common obligations of clerics as stated in the universal law in canons 273-289. Not only are the clerics bound to these canons, as is evident, and especially in regard to wearing ecclesiastical dress (canon 284) and to praying the liturgy of the hours (canon 276), but the lay members are also bound, unless the contrary is clear from the nature of the case or the context.

C.63.--All must observe the Constitutions and Statutes and other norms in force in the Congregation with an active and responsible obedience.

C.64.--In the same way, they should observe the norms promulgated by local ordinaries, without detriment to the right of exemption.

4. Attachment of members to a province or house

C.65.--Every member of the Congregation of the Mission should be attached to some province, and to some house or some group constituted as the equivalent of a house, according to the norm of our law.

C.66.--In a province, and in a house or a group constituted as the equivalent of a house, members have:

1° rights and obligations according to the Constitutions and Statutes;

- 2° their own immediate local and major superior;
- 3° the exercise of active and passive voice.

C.67.--§1.--A member who has obtained permission, either from the superior general or from the provincial with the consent of their respective councils, to live outside a house or community, should be attached to some house or community, so that he enjoys rights and is held to obligations in it according to the norm of the permission granted to him.

§2.--This permission, however, should be granted only for a just reason, and not beyond a year, except to treat an illness, to study, or to serve in an apostolate in the name of our Institute.

5. Departure and dismissal of members

C.68.--Universal law and our own law are to be followed in regard to the departure and dismissal of members.

C.69.--§1.--A member not yet incorporated into the Congregation can freely leave it, manifesting his intention to his superiors.

§2.--A member not yet incorporated can also, for just reasons, be dismissed by the superior general or by the provincial, after their councils and the member's moderators have been consulted.

C.70.--The superior general, with the consent of his council, can for a serious reason allow a member incorporated into the Congregation to live outside the Congregation, but not beyond three years, and with the obligations that can be compatible with this new way of life. A member in this situation remains under the care of the superiors of the Congregation but lacks active and passive voice. If, however, the member is a cleric, the consent of the ordinary of the place where he must reside is also required, and the member remains under the care of the ordinary and dependent upon him, according to the norm of canon 745.

C.71.--The superior general can, with the consent of his council and for a serious reason, grant to a member departure from the Congregation and dispense him from his vows according to the norm of canon 743.

C.72.--§1.--A member incorporated into the Congregation who dissociates himself from it and from the authority of his superiors should be sought out with concern by his superiors and given help by them, so that he may persevere in his vocation.

§2.--However, if the member does not return after six months, he is deprived of active and passive voice and, according to the norm of article 74, § 2, he can be dismissed by a decree of the superior general.

§3.--Besides those mentioned in canons 171, §1, nn. 3-4 and 1226, §1, n.2, and in articles 70 and 72 of the Congregation's Constitutions, those lack active and passive voice who are unlawfully absent from the Congregation or the Province or the house

in which they are bound to exercise their right, namely:

- a. those who are absent from the Congregation without due permission for a period exceeding six months;
- b. those who had due permission but failed to obtain a renewal when the specified time had elapsed (Const. Art. 72, §2);
- c. those who did not fulfill the conditions laid down by the Superior General or the Provincial when they were given permission to remain outside the community (cf. Const. Art. 67, §1);
- d. those who have extended this permission for beyond three years, excepting in cases of illness, or studies, or an apostolate carried out in the name of the Congregation (cf. Const. Art. 67, §2).

§4.--In cases of doubt, the Provincial, with the consent of his council, decides whether a member has the right of active and passive voice, due attention paid to his condition in the Province as well as the proper law of the Congregation and Provincial Norms.

§5.--What has been said of active and passive voice holds also when consultation is required by the proper law of the Congregation and Provincial Norms.

C.73.--§1.--A member is to be held automatically dismissed from the Congregation if he:

- 1° has notoriously abandoned the Catholic faith;
- 2° has contracted marriage or has attempted it, even civilly.

§ 2.--In these cases the major superior with his council, after gathering together the evidence, shall without delay make a declaration of the fact so that the dismissal is juridically established according to the norm of canon 694.

C.74.-- §1.--A member must be dismissed according to what is established in canons 695, 698, and 699, §1.

§2.--A member can be dismissed according to what is established in canons 696, 697, 698, and 699,

§3.--In a case of grave external scandal or of extremely grave and imminent harm to our Institute, a member can be immediately expelled from the house by the major superior or, if there is danger in delay, by the local superior, with the consent of his council, according to the norm of canon 703.

C.75.--The decree of dismissal should be immediately communicated to the member concerned and he should be given the option of having recourse to the Holy See within ten days from the reception of notification. The recourse has a suspensive effect. For the decree of dismissal to have force, canon 700 must be observed.

C.76.--§1.--By lawful dismissal, vows and rights and duties which a member had in the Congregation automatically cease. But if the member is a cleric, he is bound by the precepts of canons 693 and 701.

§2.--Those who lawfully leave the Congregation or are lawfully dismissed from it, cannot claim from it anything for work done in it.

§3.--The Congregation, however, should practice equity and evangelical charity toward a member who is separated from it, as is stated in canon 702.

CHAPTER VI

Formation

1. General principles

C.77.--§1.--Our formation, in a continuous process, should have as its purpose that the members, animated by the spirit of St. Vincent, become suitable to carry on the mission of the Congregation.

§2.--They should therefore grow daily in the knowledge that Jesus Christ is the center of our life and the rule of the Congregation.

C.78.--§1.--The time of formation, as well as our whole life, should be so ordered that the charity of Christ urges us more and more to attain the purpose of the Congregation. As disciples of the Lord, members will attain this purpose by self-denial and by continual conversion to Christ.

§2.--Members should be trained in the word of God, sacramental life, prayer both communal and personal, and Vincentian spirituality.

§3.--Moreover, in order to achieve the necessary knowledge, students should properly complete those studies which are prescribed by the law of the Church.

§4.--From the beginning, all should be trained, at suitable times, each according to his level of formation and ability, in pastoral practice, especially in association with their moderators, including going to the poor and experiencing their condition. In this way, each will be better able to discover his own specific vocation within the Community in accord with his own personal talents.

§5.--Pedagogical norms should be applied according to the age of the students in such a way that, while gradually learning self-discipline, they become accustomed to using freedom wisely and to working with initiative and diligence, thus reaching Christian maturity.

C.79.--Members, responding to the call of God within the Community, should learn to live a Vincentian community life during the time of formation. The Community should foster the personal initiative of each one throughout the whole process of formation.

C.80.--In the formation of our members, there should be a solid coordination of the different facets of training as well as an organic unity of the successive stages. All things should be so arranged that they converge toward the Congregation's own pastoral purpose.

C.81.--The formation of our members should be continued and renewed all through life.

2. The internal seminary

C.82.--To be admitted into the internal seminary, candidates should manifest, among the required conditions, signs by which they may be discerned as having the

aptitude to pursue the Vincentian vocation in community.

C.83.--§1.--The internal seminary is a time in which members begin their mission and life in the Congregation and, with the help of the community and their moderators, recognize more accurately their vocations, and prepare themselves by special formation for their incorporation into the Congregation with freedom.

§2.--The internal seminary should last at least twelve months either continuous or interrupted. If the months are interrupted, the provincial assembly has the right to determine the number of continuous months and to establish the time when the internal seminary may be inserted into the course of studies.

C.84.--Therefore, the whole thrust of this time should be that the seminarists will:

- 1° acquire greater maturity;
- 2° be progressively initiated into a proper understanding and experience of the apostolic mission and life of the Congregation;
- 3° come to an experience of God, especially in prayer.

C.85.--In order to achieve this, the seminarists should take special care:

- 1° to acquire a suitable and concrete understanding of people, especially the poor, of their needs, their desires, and their problems;
- 2° to reach an understanding of the special character, spirit, and functions of the Congregation by returning to the sources, especially to the life and works of St. Vincent, to the history and traditions of the Congregation, and to an active and fitting participation in our apostolate;
- 3° to cultivate an ever deepening study of and meditation on the gospel and all sacred scripture;
- 4° to participate actively in the mystery and the mission of the Church, the community of salvation;
- 5° to understand and to live the evangelical teaching as proposed by St. Vincent, especially chastity, poverty, and obedience.

C.86.--Seminarists should be an integral part of the provincial and local community in which they live, where their formation is a common responsibility under the direction and animation of the director of the internal seminary.

3. The major seminary

C.87.--§1.--The time of the major seminary should be so organized toward complete preparation for the Vincentian ministerial priesthood that the students, after the example of Christ the Evangelizer, will be formed for the preaching of the gospel, the celebration of divine worship, and the pastoral care of the faithful.

§2.--According to the spirit of St. Vincent and the tradition of the Congregation, the formation of our students should be directed principally to the ministry of the word and the practice of charity towards the poor.

C.88.--The formation of our students should not lose sight of the reality of society, so that their studies will lead to the acquisition of a vision of the modern world and critical judgment of it. The students, through a conversion of heart, should begin to

involve themselves in Christian work for the restoration of justice; more and more they should become conscious of the roots of poverty in the world and lay bare the obstacles to evangelization. All of this should be done in the light of the word of God and under the direction of their moderators.

C.89.--There should be fostered in the students emotional maturity and missionary qualities, such as the ability to call into being and to direct communities, responsibility, the capacity to judge and its exercise, prompt generosity, and the strength to bind themselves firmly to carry out the purpose of the Congregation.

C.90.--The provincial must establish a fitting length of time for students, after completing their theological studies, to exercise the order of diaconate before they are prompted to priesthood.

4. The formation of brothers

C.91.--§1.--Special care should be taken to assure that our brothers receive the formation they need to fulfill their mission in the Congregation faithfully. Everything stated in the Constitutions and Statutes regarding formation applies also to the training of brothers.

§2.--Therefore, their formation in the internal seminary should be the same as that of the other members, unless special circumstances indicate otherwise.

§3.--With regard to the formation of those brothers who are to be promoted to the permanent diaconate, provincial norms should be observed.

C.92.--The brothers should be gradually introduced into the apostolate, so that they learn to view, to judge, and to do all things in the light of faith, and, through their actions, to develop and perfect themselves with the others.

5. Moderators and teachers

C.93.--The whole provincial community should recognize that it is responsible for the formation of our members so that individual members provide help for this work.

C.94.--Since the formation of students depends primarily on suitable educators, moderators and teachers should be prepared with solid doctrine, suitable pastoral experience, and special training.

C.95.--§1.--Moderators and students should form a true educative community by being open to mutual understanding and trust and by maintaining a constant and active contact with each other.

§2.--This educative community, while profiting from contributions from other groups, should subject its own goals and activities to continual review.

§3.--The moderators should act collegially; however, the special and immediate care of the seminarists and students should be committed to an individual confrere or, if the case warrants, to several confreres.

PART THREE

ORGANIZATION

Section I--GOVERNMENT

General principles

C.96.--All members, since they have been called to labor for the continuation of the mission of Christ, have the right and responsibility, according to the norms of our own law, of working together for the good of the apostolic community and of participating in its government. Consequently, members should cooperate actively and responsibly in accepting assignments, undertaking apostolic projects, and carrying out commands.

C.97.--§1.--Those in the Congregation who exercise authority, which comes from God, and those who have part in this exercise of authority in any way, even in assemblies and councils, should have before their eyes the example of the Good Shepherd, who came not to be ministered to but to minister. Hence, conscious of their responsibility before God, they shall consider themselves servants of the community for furthering its own purpose according to the spirit of St. Vincent in a true communion of apostolate and life.

§2.--They should, therefore, engage in dialogue with members, while retaining the authority to decide and command what is to be done.

C.98.--All members, in accepting assignments given to them by the community, have the authority necessary to carry them out. For this reason, those matters which can be managed by individual members or lower levels of government should not be referred to higher levels of government. That unity of government which is necessary to achieve the purpose and good of the entire Congregation must, however, be preserved.

C.99.--By special grant of the Roman pontiffs, the Congregation of the Mission, its houses, its churches and all of its members enjoy exemption from the jurisdiction of local ordinaries, except in those cases expressly provided in law.

C.100. --The General Assembly, the superior general, provincials, and superiors of houses and of legitimately established communities have over members that authority defined by universal law and our own law. They have, moreover, ecclesiastical authority of government or jurisdiction both in the external and internal forum. Superiors, therefore, must be in sacred orders.

Chapter I. - Central administration

1. The superior general

C.101.--The superior general is the successor of St. Vincent, and together with the whole Congregation he carries on, for the service of the universal Church, the mission of the Founder adapted to diverse circumstances. He shall, accordingly, govern the Congregation with such care that the charism of St. Vincent will always stay alive in the Church.

C.102.--The superior general, the center of unity and coordination of the provinces, should also be a source of spiritual animation and apostolic activity.

C.103.--The superior general governs all the provinces, houses, and individual members of the Congregation with ordinary power according to the norm of universal law and of our own law. The superior general, however, is subject to the authority of the General Assembly, according to the norm of law.

C.104.--The superior general can give only usual interpretations of the Constitutions, Statutes, and Decrees of the General Assembly.

C.105.--§1.--The superior general is elected by the General Assembly according to article 140 of the Constitutions.

§2. --For the validity of the election of the superior general, the conditions required by universal law and by our own law must be fulfilled.

§3.--The superior general is elected for a six year term and can be reelected for a second six year term according to the norm of the Congregation's own law.

§4.--The six year term is considered to have been completed at the moment when his successor accepts office in the subsequent ordinary General Assembly.

C.106.--§1.--The superior general ceases to hold office:

1° by his successor's acceptance of office;

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

3° by deposition decreed by the Holy See.

§2.--If the superior general becomes manifestly unworthy or incapable of discharging his office, the assistants should judge the matter collegially, inform the Holy See, and follow its directives.

C.107.--Besides the faculties granted him by universal law or by special concession, it is the function of the superior general:

1° to work with great solicitude that the firm and fervent spirit of our Holy Founder be fostered everywhere, that the apostolic activity and renewal of the Congregation be continually promoted, and that the Constitutions and Statutes be applied in as fitting a manner as possible;

2° with the consent of his council, to make general ordinances for the good of the Congregation;

3° having consulted the interested members, and with the consent of his council, to set up, join, divide, and suppress provinces, observing the norms of law;

4° to convoke the General Assembly, and to preside over it, and, with the consent of the Assembly, to dismiss those convened;

5° for a serious reason, having heard the consultors of the province, and with the consent of his council, to remove a provincial from office;

6° having heard those concerned, and with the consent of his council, according to the norm of canon 733, §1, to erect houses and to establish local communities, and to suppress them, with the authority of the provincial being respected;

7° for a serious reason, having heard the interested provincials, and with the consent his council, to erect a house of one province in the territory of another province;

8° for a just reason, and with the consent of his council, to erect houses which depend on no province and are governed by a local superior directly dependent on the superior general; and to name the superiors of these houses;

9° with the consent of his council, to give members permission to take vows and to admit them to orders; and, for a serious reason, to dispense from vows, either in the case of lawful departure or in the act of dismissal;

10° to dismiss members from the Congregation according to the norm of universal law and of our own law;

11° in extraordinary cases and for a serious reason, and with the consent of his council, to dispense from the Constitutions;

12° with the consent of his council, to approve norms enacted by provincial assemblies.

2. The vicar general

C.108.--The vicar general helps the superior general and substitutes for him when he is away or impeded, according to the norm of our own law.

C.109.--The vicar general is elected by the General Assembly according to the norm of our own law. The one elected vicar general automatically becomes also an assistant general.

C.110.--In the absence of the superior general, the vicar general has the authority of the superior general unless the superior general has reserved some matter to himself.

C.111.--If the superior general is impeded, the vicar general substitutes for him with full authority until the impediment ceases. The judgment concerning the impediment is made by the general council, without the superior general, but with the vicar general present.

C.112.--When the office of superior general is vacant for whatever reason, the vicar general automatically becomes the superior general until the completion of the six year term; with the consent of his council, and having heard at least the provincials and vice-provincials, he shall as soon as possible appoint a vicar general from among the assistants.

C.113.--If for any reason whatsoever there should cease to be a vicar general, the

superior general, having heard at least the provincials and vice-provincials, and with the consent of his council, shall as soon as possible appoint a vicar general from among the assistants.

C.114.--The vicar general ceases to hold office according to the norm of universal law and of our own law.

3. Assistants general

C.115.--The assistants general are members of the Congregation who constitute the council of the superior general and help him by their labor and advice in the government of the Congregation in order to promote the unity and strength of the Congregation, to assure the effective implementation of the Constitutions and decisions of the General Assembly, and to foster collaboration among all the provinces in advancing the works of the Congregation.

C.116.--§1.--The assistants general are elected by the General Assembly according to the norm of our own law.

§2.--The assistants general, at least four in number, from different provinces, are elected for six year terms, and can be reelected once. At the end of a second consecutive six year term, they cannot immediately be elected vicar general.

§3.--Their six year term is considered to have been completed at the time of the acceptance of office on the part of their successors in the subsequent ordinary General Assembly.

C.117.--The assistants general cease to hold office according to the norm of our own law.

C.118.--§1.--If one of the assistants ceases to hold office, a substitute is appointed by the superior general with the deliberative vote of the other assistants; the substitute has the same rights and duties as the other assistants.

§2.--But if a General Assembly is due to be held within six months, the superior general is not obliged to appoint a substitute.

4. Officers of the general curia

C.119.--§1.--The secretary general, the treasurer general, and the procurator general at the Holy See are appointed by the superior general with the consent of his council, and may not be chosen from the number of assistants general.

§2.--They remain in office at the desire of the superior general with the consent of his council; by reason of their office they belong to the house of the general curia.

§3.--They can participate in the general council whenever called by the superior general, but without vote, except in the cases dealt with in the Statutes.

§4.--They participate in the General Assembly with the right to vote.

Chapter II. - Provincial and local administration

1. Provinces and vice-provinces

C.120.--The Congregation of the Mission, according to the norm of our own law, has divisions called provinces.

C.121.--The Congregation also has divisions, according to the norm of our own law, called vice-provinces.

C.122.--A province is a union of a number of houses, circumscribed by territorial boundaries and presided over by a provincial with ordinary power, according to the norm of universal law and our own law.

2. The provincial

C.123.--§1.--The provincial is a major superior and an ordinary, with proper ordinary power, who is put in charge of a province to govern it according to the norm of universal law and our own law.

§2.--The provincial, striving for the active participation of all the members in the life and apostolate of the province, should allocate members and resources for the service of the Church according to the purpose of the Congregation, should foster the ministry of the houses, should show that he is solicitous for the personal development and activity of each confrere, and thus procure life-giving unity.

C.124.--The superior general, with the consent of his council, according to the norm of our own law, either appoints the provincial after consultation of the province, or confirms him after an election.

C.125.--It is the function of the provincial:

- 1° to promote the observance of the Constitutions, Statutes, and provincial norms;
- 2° with the consent of his council, to enact ordinances for the good of the province;
- 3° with the consent of his council, and having consulted the superior general, to establish houses and constitute local communities within the boundaries of his province, and to suppress them, according to the norm of canon 733, §1;
- 4° having consulted the members, and with the consent of his council, to appoint superiors of houses, and to notify the superior general about these appointments;
- 5° having consulted the interested parties, and with the consent of his council and the approval of the superior general, to establish a regional superior with delegated power;
- 6° to visit the houses and the members frequently, and to make official visitations at least every other year;
- 7° to convoke and preside over the provincial assembly according to the norm of our own law, to dismiss those convened with the consent of the assembly, and to promulgate the provincial norms;
- 8° to admit candidates to the internal seminary, to good purposes, and to vows, in accord with the Constitutions and Statutes;

9° having consulted the superiors and moderators of the candidates, to admit members to ministries and, with the consent of his council, to orders;

10° to present members for orders and to issue dimissorial letters for their ordination;

11° having consulted their moderators, and having heard his council, to dismiss members not yet incorporated into the Congregation.

3. The assistant provincial

C.126.--To help him in the government of the province, the provincial can have an assistant who meets the conditions required by articles 61 and 100. It is the function of the provincial assembly to decide whether or not there should be an assistant provincial.

4. The council of the provincial

C.127.--The consultors, who constitute the council of the provincial, help him by their labor and advice in the government of the province in order to advance its unity and strength, to assure the effective implementation of the Constitutions and of decisions of the provincial assembly, and to foster collaboration among all the houses and members in advancing the works of the province.

5. The provincial treasurer

C.128.--In each province there must be a treasurer to administer the goods of the province under the direction and vigilance of the provincial and his council, according to the norm of canon 636, §1 and of our own law.

6. Offices of local administration

C.129.--§1.--The Congregation forms itself particularly in the individual local communities.

§2.--The superior, as the center of unity and animator of the life of the local community, should promote the ministries of the house and show that he and the community are concerned for the personal development and activity of each confrere.

C.130.--§1.--The local superior is appointed for a three year term by the provincial after consultation with the members of the house or local community. Under the same conditions he can be reappointed in the same house or local community for a second three year term. If after the second three year term there be a need, recourse should be had to the superior general.

§2.--The provincial assembly can establish another method of designating the local superior.

§3.--The local superior should meet the conditions required by articles 61 and 100.

C.131.--According to the norm of law, the local superior has ordinary power in the internal and external forum for members and others living in his house day and night; he can delegate this power to others.

C.132.--§1.--If the conditions for the establishment of a house are lacking, or if some particular work makes it desirable, the provincial, with the consent of his council, can constitute a group of members as the equivalent of a house according to provincial norms.

§2.--One of the members of the group designated by the provincial according to the norm of law has the responsibility of a superior.

§3.--A group constituted as the equivalent of a house has the same rights and duties as a house.

C.133.--The local superior can be removed whenever it seems to the provincial that there is a just and proportionate reason and he has the consent of his council and also the approval of the superior general.

C.134.--§1.--Under the guidance of the superior, and with the help of the members in dialogue and common concern, the treasurer administers the goods of the house according to the norm of universal law and the law of the Congregation and the province.

§2.--When the provincial, with the consent of his council, judges it necessary for a particular house, he shall establish a house council; the house consultors, who help the local superior in the administration of the house, should be designated according to the provincial norms.

Chapter III - Assemblies

1. Assemblies in General

C.135.--Assemblies of the Congregation of the Mission, the task of which is to preserve and promote the spirituality and apostolic vitality of the Congregation, are of three kinds: general, provincial, and domestic.

C.136.--§1.--No one can have a double vote.

§2.--Conditions attached to a vote before an election are to be considered as not having been attached.

§3.--Election imposes on the one elected an obligation of participating in an assembly or of accepting an office, unless excused for a serious reason. If it is a matter of participation, the serious reason is approved by the competent superior, who afterwards seeks from the assembly its confirmation; if it is a matter of accepting an office, the serious reason is to be approved by the assembly itself.

§4.--No one of his own will is able to substitute another for himself in assemblies.

§5.--The majority of votes is to be computed from the valid votes only. Blank votes are invalid.

2. The General Assembly

C.137.--The General Assembly, immediately representing the entire Congregation, as the supreme authority of the Congregation has the right:

1° to protect the heritage of the Institute and to foster appropriate renewal in accord with that heritage;

2° to elect the superior general, vicar general, and assistants general;

3° to enact laws or Statutes, and Decrees, for the good of the Congregation, with due regard for the principle of subsidiarity. Statutes which are not explicitly abrogated remain in force. Decrees must be explicitly confirmed in order to remain in force;

4° by a two thirds vote to request changes from the Holy See in the Constitutions approved by it;

5° to interpret authentically the Statutes; the authentic interpretation of the Constitutions, however, belongs to the Holy See.

C.138.--A General Assembly, convoked by the superior general, is to be held as:

1° an ordinary General Assembly, for electing the superior general, vicar general, and assistants general, and for the transaction of the business of the Congregation;

2° an extraordinary General Assembly, when it is convoked by the superior general according to the norm of our own law.

C.139.--The following are to be present at the General Assembly:

1° the superior general, the vicar general and assistants general, the secretary general, the treasurer general, and the procurator general at the Holy See;

2° provincials, and delegates of the provinces elected according to the norm of our own law.

C.140.--§1.--The procedure for the election of the superior general is as follows: 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 are to be held in the same way.

After the fourth inefficacious balloting, a fifth should be held, in which an absolute majority of votes, discounting the invalid ones, is required and suffices.

After a fifth inefficacious balloting, a sixth should be 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 this case, these also have passive voice in the sixth balloting, in which a relative majority of votes, discounting the invalid votes, is required and suffices. In the event of a tied vote, the candidate who is senior by vocation or age shall be considered elected.

§2.--After the election is legitimately completed, and the one elected has accepted office, the decree of election is drawn up, and the one presiding shall proclaim in a clear voice the one elected. But 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.

§3.--The one elected should not refuse the burden committed to him except for a serious reason.

§4.--When the election is completed and thanks given to God, the ballots should be destroyed.

§5.--If the newly elected is not present, he should be summoned, and the Assembly can deal with other business of the Congregation until he arrives.

C.141.--The vicar general is elected under the same conditions as the superior general and in the manner prescribed in article 140, §1.

C.142.--§1.--When the elections of the superior general and vicar general are finished, the General Assembly proceeds to the election of the other assistants in distinct ballotings.

§2.--Those will be considered elected who, discounting the invalid votes, receive an absolute majority of votes; these should be proclaimed by the president of the Assembly as elected.

§3.--If in the first and second balloting no one is elected, then in the third balloting he is elected who receives a relative majority of votes, and in case of a tie, the senior by vocation or age.

3. The provincial assembly

C.143.--The provincial assembly, as a gathering of members who represent the province as delegates, has the following functions:

1° to establish norms for the common good of the province, within the limits of universal law and our own law, which obtain obligatory force after being approved by the superior general with the consent of his council;

2° as a consultative organ of the provincial, to deal with matters which can

promote the good of the province;

3° to act on proposals which in the name of the province are to be presented to the General Assembly or the superior general;

4° to elect delegates to the General Assembly, when required;

5° to make norms for domestic assemblies, within the limits of universal law and our own law, and these do not need the approval of the superior general.

C.144.--§1.--The provincial assembly is to be held twice every six years, once before the General Assembly and once at some intermediate time.

§2.--If it is necessary, the provincial with the consent of his council, and having heard the local superiors, is able to convoke an extraordinary provincial assembly.

C.145.--It pertains to the provincial to convoke the provincial assembly, to preside over it, to dismiss the members with the consent of the assembly, and to promulgate its norms.

C.146.--Unless something else is provided in provincial norms, the following are to participate in the provincial assembly:

1° by reason of office, the provincial, the provincial consultors, the provincial treasurer, and the superiors of each of the houses of the province;

2° in addition, delegates elected according to the norm of our own law.

4. The domestic assembly

C.147.--§1.--The domestic assembly is convoked by the superior of the house or by the assistant who is exercising the total office of superior, and is held to prepare for the provincial assembly.

§2.--All those having active voice are to be called to the domestic assembly.

§3.--It is the function of the domestic assembly to deal with those things which the house wishes to propose to the provincial assembly as well as those things which the preparatory commission for the provincial assembly has proposed for discussion, and to deliberate about proposals.

Section II--TEMPORAL GOODS

C.148.--§1.--The Congregation of the Mission possesses temporal goods for pastoral and community needs. It uses them as support for the service of God and the poor, according to the spirit and practice of its Founder; it administers these goods, however, as the patrimony of the poor, with solicitude, but with no attempt to grow rich.

§2.--The Congregation of the Mission embraces a communitarian form of evangelical poverty in that all goods of the Congregation are held in common, and the Congregation uses them to pursue and attain its own purpose more successfully.

C.149.--Since all goods are in common, members are co-responsible, according to the norm of law, for the acquisition, administration, and use of the temporal goods of the house and province to which they belong. This principle applies, on a proportionate basis, even to the goods of the entire Congregation.

C.150.--§1.--Houses, local communities, provinces, and the Congregation itself are capable of acquiring, possessing, administering, and alienating temporal goods. When the case requires it, superiors at the various levels are the legal representatives, even before the civil authority, unless it has been provided otherwise.

§2.--The sources of temporal goods are the work of the members and other legitimate means of acquiring goods.

C.151.--For the sake of the common good, houses must support provinces in what is needed for good administration and for providing general needs; the same is to be said about provinces with respect to the general curia.

C.152.--§1.--Provinces and houses should share their temporal goods with each other so that those who have more help those in need.

§2.--The Congregation, provinces, and houses should, from their own goods, willingly provide for the necessities of others and the support of the indigent.

C.153.--§1.--Members assigned to the management of temporal goods administer them in a way that makes provision for the appropriate support of members, and supplies adequate means for their apostolic activities and for charitable works.

§2.--The goods of the community are to be administered by the respective treasurers under the direction and vigilance of superiors with their councils, within the limits of universal law and our own law, and according to the principle of subsidiarity.

C.154.--§1.--Administrators should remember that they are only stewards of the goods of the Community. Consequently, they should expend these goods only for uses suitable to the status of missionaries. Moreover, they should always act according to just civil laws, as well as according to the norms and spirit of the Congregation.

§2.--Administrators should provide willingly for the needs of members in all matters which concern their life, particular office, and apostolic work. Such a use of goods is an incentive for members to promote the good of the poor and to lead a truly fraternal life.

§3.--These administrators should, in addition, observe equity in the distribution of goods because they ought to promote community life among the members. They should provide for the individual needs of members according to the norms enacted by the provincial assembly.

C.155.--For the validity of alienation and any other transaction in which the patrimonial condition of a juridic person can be affected adversely, there is required the written permission of the competent superior with the consent of his council. If, moreover, it concerns a transaction which exceeds the highest amount defined for a given region by the Holy See, or items given to the Church in virtue of a vow, or items of precious art or of historical value, the permission of the Holy See is also required.

DOCUMENTS ON THE VOWS

**THE VOWS
WHICH ARE TAKEN IN
THE CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION**

**POPE ALEXANDER VII
for the future remembrance of the matter**

Because of the responsibility given to Us by the Supreme Shepherd of the Lord's flock, We willingly devote Ourselves to those matters which We judge, as occasion arises, to be in the best interests of the status of Congregations of ecclesiastical persons founded for the greater glory of the Divine Name and the salvation of souls.

Accordingly, We wish to remove some doubts that have arisen in regard to the status of the Congregation of the Mission, begun in France and subsequently approved by the Apostolic See. We also wish to treat Our beloved son Vincent de Paul, Superior General of this Congregation, with special favors and kindness, absolving him and declaring him to be absolved from any ecclesiastical sentences, censures, and penalties of excommunication, suspension, and interdict *a jure vel ab homine*, whatever the occasion or cause of imposition, if he be in any way bound by any of these, but only for the purpose of obtaining the effect of this letter.

Taking into consideration the petition humbly submitted to Us in his name, and on the advice of Our Venerable Brothers the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, interpreters of the Sacred Council of Trent, to whom We have referred the matter for examination, by Our Apostolic Authority and by the tenor of this letter, We confirm and approve the Congregation of the Mission, already begun and approved in the manner We have stated, with the taking, after two years of probation, of simple vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience, as also of stability in the Congregation, with the object of devoting oneself all one's life to the salvation of poor country people. While these vows are being pronounced, no one shall assist with the purpose of accepting them in the name of the Congregation, or of Ourselves, or of the Roman Pontiff at the time. Only the Roman Pontiff shall have the [power to dissolve these vows so taken, as well as the Superior General of the Congregation when dismissing anyone from the Congregation. No other person, even in virtue of any Jubilee or Bull of Crusade or other Privilege or Indult, or other Constitution or Concession whatsoever, shall have power to dissolve, commute, or dispense from them, if there be not therein special mention of these vows taken as above in the Congregation.

We further establish that the Congregation of the Mission be exempt from the jurisdiction of the local Ordinaries in all things except that the persons who have been assigned to the missions by the Superiors of the Congregation will be subject to the Ordinaries, but only in regard to the missions and to those things which concern the missions. We establish also that the Congregation should not therefore be considered of the number of Religious Orders, but that it is of the body of the secular clergy.

We decree that this letter is and always shall be firm, valid, and efficacious, and

that it shall be approved and inviolably observed by all whom it concerns and will concern in the future; that it must be judged and defined by all judges, whether ordinary or delegated, even by auditors of the cases of the Apostolic Palace, according to what is stated above; and that any action to the contrary, whether done knowingly or in ignorance, by anyone or on any authority, is null and void; notwithstanding Apostolic Constitutions and Ordinances, even conciliar, or even, if the case should arise, ordinances of the said Congregation, even fortified by oath, by apostolic confirmation, or by any other strengthening whatsoever; and notwithstanding statutes, customs, privileges, or apostolic indults and letters, if contrary to what is stated above, no matter how granted, confirmed, or innovated. From all and each of these We at this time specially and expressly derogate, considering their contents as if this present letter were fully and sufficiently expressed and inserted in them in order to achieve the effects of this letter, other things to the contrary notwithstanding.

We wish further that the same acceptance, both in and outside of court, be granted to transcripts and printed copies of this letter, if signed in the hand of a public notary and stamped with the seal of a person constituted in ecclesiastical dignity, as would be granted to the present letter itself if it were exhibited or presented.

Given at Rome, at St. Mary Major, under the ring of the Fisherman, the twenty-second day of September 1655. the first year of Our Pontificate.

THE FUNDAMENTAL STATUTE ON POVERTY

POPE ALEXANDER VII for the future remembrance of the matter

On a former occasion, in willing response to the petitions of our beloved son, Vincent de Paul, Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, We approved the said Congregation, according to the manner and form then expressly confirmed by Us, and also the pronouncing of simple vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience as well as stability in the said Congregation with the object of devoting oneself for his entire life to the salvation of poor country people, these vows to be made after two years of probation.

When these vows are pronounced no one shall assist by way of accepting them in the name of the Congregation, or of Ourselves, or of the Roman Pontiff at the time. Only the Roman Pontiff and the Superior General of the said Congregation in the act of dismissal from the Congregation, may dispense from these vows. The said Congregation is not, however, on this account to be considered of the number of the Religious Orders, but is of the body of the secular clergy.

We have written more fully about this on a former occasion in a letter in the form of a Brief like this one, which was issued on the twenty-second day of September 1655. The tenor of that former Brief we wish to be considered as properly and sufficiently expressed herein.

More recently, the aforesaid Vincent has represented to us that many difficulties could arise concerning the observance of the aforementioned simple vow of poverty in the said Congregation, difficulties which might disturb the Congregation unless opportunely provided for by Us. Wherefore the aforesaid Vincent earnestly desires that the Fundamental Statute on Poverty of the said Congregation be strengthened by our Apostolic confirmation, the text of the Statute being as follows:

“All and everyone received into our Congregation, having pronounced the said four vows, who possess immovable goods or simple benefices or will possess them in the future, though they retain dominion of all of them, shall not have free use of them; therefore, they may neither retain the fruits of such goods or benefices, nor turn them to their own use without the permission of the Superior, but are held to dispense these fruits in pious works, with the permission and according to the judgment of the Superior. If, however, they have parents or relatives in need, the Superior shall see to it in the Lord that their needs are relieved from these fruits before all else.”

We wish to treat Vincent, the Superior General, with special favors and kindness, absolving him and declaring him to be absolved absolving him and declaring him to be absolved from any ecclesiastical sentences, censures, and penalties of excommunication, suspension, and interdict *a jure vel ab homine*, whatever the occasion or cause of imposition, if he be in any way bound by any of these, but only

for the purpose of obtaining the effect of this letter.

We, in willing response to the petitions humbly presented to Us in his name, and with the counsel of our venerable Brothers, the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, interpreters of the Sacred Council of Trent, by means of the apostolic authority of his letter, confirm and approve the Statute quoted above, applying to it the force of an inviolable apostolic stability and supplying for every defect of law or fact should they in any way arise.

We decree that this present letter is and always shall be firm, valid, and efficacious, and that it shall be approved and inviolably observed by all whom it concerns and will concern in the future; that it must be judged and defined by all judges, whether ordinary or delegated, even by auditors of the cases of the Apostolic Palace, according to what is stated above; and that any action to the contrary, whether done knowingly or in ignorance, by anyone or on any authority, is null and void. Former provisions and all prescriptions of Our former letters and anything else to the contrary notwithstanding.

We wish further that the same acceptance, both in and outside of court, be granted to transcripts and printed copies of this letter, if signed in the hand of a public notary and stamped with the seal of the Superior General of the same Congregation or of some other person constituted in ecclesiastical dignity, as would be granted to the present letter itself if it were exhibited or presented.

Given at Rome, at St. Mary Major, under the ring of the Fisherman, the twelfth of August, sixteen hundred and fifty-nine, the fifth year of our Pontificate.

S. Ugolinus

**STATUTES
of the
CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION**

PART ONE

VOCATION

[There are no Statutes at the present time.]

PART TWO

LIFE IN THE CONGREGATION

CHAPTER I. APOSTOLIC ACTIVITY (C 10-18)

S.1. -- We are gradually to withdraw from those apostolic works which, after due reflection, no longer seem to correspond to the vocation of the Congregation at the present time.

S.2.--In the modern world, atheism and materialism strongly challenge the faith and the traditional methods of evangelizing. Therefore, members should carefully study the causes of this phenomenon, realizing that in this situation they are called upon to give witness to a stronger personal faith in the living God and also to seek out new ways of fulfilling their vocation to evangelize.

S.3.--In apostolic initiatives, provinces and individual houses should willingly work in fraternal cooperation with each other, with the diocesan clergy, with religious institutes, and with the laity.

S.4.--Members should seek ecumenical dialogue; but they should also actively participate in religious, social, and cultural affairs with Christians and non-Christians.

S.5.--In regard to the work of the foreign missions, the following norms should be observed:

1° in a spirit of co-responsibility, provinces, whether on their own initiative or at the invitation of the superior general, should give mutual assistance;

2° individual provinces, or several provinces together, should take on at least one mission territory to which they send members as workers in the Lord's harvest;

3° members should be offered the possibility of helping the work of the missions in a practical way, even to the extent of volunteering to undertake the work of evangelization there;

4° members should be urged to share in the universal and local Church's promotional work for the missions. The promotional work for the Congregation's own missions should be properly organized.

S.6.--Those sent to the foreign missions should be carefully prepared to undertake the special works there by knowledge of the reality of the region where they will labor, so that the pastoral work which they take on may effectively meet the needs of the local Church.

S.7.--§1.--Lay associations founded by St. Vincent and those which are inspired by his spirit should be of special concern to our members, since they have the right to our presence and to our support.

§2.--Although all members should be willing to undertake this work, it is necessary for some to be more skilled in it.

§3.--It is important that this animation have a spiritual, ecclesial, social, and civic dimension.

S.8.--Inter-provincial meetings should be fostered for the purpose of deepening our

knowledge of the vocation of missionaries and of those pastoral methods which more effectively meet the actual conditions and changes of situations and people.

S.9.--§1.--It pertains to provinces, according to circumstances, to establish norms governing social action, and to determine concrete means for hastening the coming of social justice.

§2.--Members should also, according to circumstances of time and place, cooperate with associations that are concerned with the defense of human rights and the promotion of justice and peace.

S.10.--§1.--Parishes are included among the apostolic works of the Congregation, provided that the apostolate which the members exercise there is in accord with the purpose and nature of our Institute, and provided also that the small number of pastors requires it.

§2.--These parishes of the Congregation should consist, for the most part, of the really poor, or should be attached to seminaries where confreres give pastoral formation.

S.11.--§1.--Recognizing the great importance of education for both youth and adults, members should take up this work of teaching and educating where it is needed to achieve the purpose of the Congregation.

§2.--This work should be carried out, however, not only in schools of various kinds, but also within the family circle, in places of work, and across the whole spectrum of society, wherever young people and adults spend their time.

§3.--Schools, colleges, and universities should, according to local circumstances, admit, and promote the development of the poor. All the students, however, should be imbued with a sensitivity for the poor, according to the spirit of our Founder, while the confreres affirm the value of Christian education and provide a Christian social formation.

S.12.--Among the means to be used by the Congregation in its work of evangelization, a suitable place should be given to technical media of social communication, with the purpose of spreading the word of salvation more widely and more effectively.

CHAPTER II. **Community life (C. 19-27)**

S.13.--Our sick and aging confreres, united in a special way with the suffering Christ, cooperate with the rest of us in evangelizing the world. We should try to take care of them in the house which enjoyed the benefit of their labors. The provincial, however, having weighed all the circumstances, should provide whatever is best for them.

S.14.--§1.--Confreres who are obliged to live alone in works entrusted to them by the Congregation, should take care to spend some time with other confreres, so that they might experience the benefits of community. We, however, should remain close to them to ease their loneliness, and we should invite them with solicitude to share our fraternal and apostolic life from time to time.

§2.--We should strive with brotherly and timely concern to help confreres who are struggling with problems.

S.15.--§1.--We should faithfully fulfill our responsibilities to our parents, observing the balance necessary to fulfill our mission and to preserve community life.

§2.--We should try to receive confreres, priests, and other guests in our houses with hospitality.

§3.--We should be liberal to those in need who ask our help by seeking to alleviate their difficulties.

§4.--We should willingly extend our friendship to all those associated with us in life and

work.

CHAPTER III. **Chastity, poverty, obedience and stability (C 28-39)**

S.16.--The community plan which each community draws up for itself as far as possible at the beginning of its work year, should include all of the following: apostolic activity, prayer, the use of goods, Christian witness where we work, ongoing formation, times for group reflection, necessary time for relaxation and study, and an order of day. All these should be revised periodically.

S.17.--The provincial assembly should adapt its norms concerning the practice of poverty to the Constitutions, and to the spirit of the Common Rules and of the Fundamental Statute on Poverty given to the Congregation by Alexander VII ("Alias Nos supplicationibus").

S.18.--Individual provinces and local communities, paying attention to the diversity of place and circumstances, should look into ways of observing evangelical poverty and review them periodically, knowing for certain that poverty is not only a rampart of the Community (cf. CR III, 1), but also a condition for renewal and a sign of progress in our vocation in both the Church and the world.

CHAPTER IV. **Prayer (C. 40-50)**

S.19.--We should fulfill the following spiritual practices, traditional in the Congregation, according to the community plan: first of all, reading sacred scripture, especially the New Testament; devotion to the Holy Eucharist; mental prayer made in common; examination of conscience; spiritual reading; annual retreat; and the practice of spiritual direction.

CHAPTER V. **Members**

1. Admission into the Congregation (C 53-58)

S.20.--§1.--The internal seminary begins for each member when he is declared by the director or his substitute to have been received according to the provincial norms.

§2.--At an appropriate time the Congregation should take measures, valid also in civil law if necessary, to safeguard the rights both of the member and of the Congregation, in case the member leaves of his own accord or is dismissed.

S.21.--Good purposes are made in the Congregation of the Mission by means of either a direct or a declarative formula:

1° *Direct formula:* Lord, my God, I, NN., declare my intention of faithfully dedicating myself in the Congregation of the Mission, for the whole time of my life, to the evangelization of the poor, after the example of Christ evangelizing. Therefore, I propose to observe, with the help of your grace, chastity, poverty, and obedience, according to the Constitutions and Statutes of our Institute.

2° *Declarative formula:* I, NN., declare my intention of faithfully dedicating myself in the Congregation of the Mission, for the whole time of my life, to the evangelization of the poor, after the example of Christ evangelizing. Therefore, I propose to observe, with the help of God's grace, chastity, poverty, and obedience, according to the Constitutions and Statutes of our Institute.

S.22.--§1.--The making of good purposes should be done in the presence of the superior or

a member designated by him.

§2.--Further determinations regarding the making or renewing of good purposes and any form of temporary bond that may possibly be added, and also the rights and obligations which members have between admission into the Congregation and incorporation into it, should be provided by the assembly of each province.

S.23.--Further determinations regarding the time when vows are taken pertain to the provincial assembly of each province.

S.24.--In special circumstances, a provincial assembly may propose for the approval of the superior general, with the consent of his council, its own formula for making good purposes or taking vows, preserving the essential elements of the established formulas.

2. *Rights and obligations of members (C 59-64)*

S.25.--The following lack both active and passive voice:

1° those who by indult live outside the Congregation according to the Congregation's own law and any clause contained in the said indult;

2° members who have been ordained bishops, or even only appointed, during the time of their office; and even after the time of their office, unless they shall have returned to community life;

3° vicars, prefects, and administrators apostolic, even if they are not bishops, during the time of their office, unless they are at the same time superiors of some house of the Congregation.

S.26.--§1.--It is the right of each member to have suffrages offered for him throughout the Congregation when he dies.

§2.--Every month each member, according to his status, should offer Mass for the living and dead of the entire Vincentian family as well as for parents, relatives, and benefactors, adding a special intention for the preservation of the original spirit of the Congregation.

§3.--In the same way he should offer another Mass for the members of the entire Congregation who have died during the preceding month.

§4.--Further determinations should be made by each province.

S.27.--It is the right of each incorporated member of the Congregation to be granted each month the celebration of a certain number of Masses according to his intention and without a stipend. Norms regarding the number and manner of the celebration of these Masses are to be laid down by each province.

3. *Attachment of members to a province or house (C 65-67)*

S.28.--§1.--During their terms of office, the superior general, the assistants, the secretary general, the treasurer general, and the procurator general at the Holy See do not have a province as far as juridical effects are concerned.

§2.--The same is true of others assigned to the house of the generalate, except with regard to the right of active and passive voice, which they retain in their provinces.

S.29.--§1.--A member of the Congregation of the Mission is attached to the province for which the superiors lawfully admit him into the Congregation. This province is known as the province of origin.

§2.--A member acquires a new attachment by assignment from one province to another, lawfully done by superiors. This province is known as the province of assignment.

S.30.--In order that a member may leave one province and be attached to another, all that is required is that, the authority of the superior general always respected, the competent major superiors should agree between themselves after consulting the member involved. However, if the member is unwilling, the transfer to another province cannot be made without the approval of the superior general.

S.31.--At the end of his term, the superior general is free to choose his own province.

S.32.--Attachment to a province of assignment can be for an indefinite or definite period of time. If the assignment is for a definite period of time, when this has elapsed, the member is immediately reattached to the province from which he came, unless the competent superiors, after consulting the member, shall have agreed otherwise between themselves, according to the norms of the Statutes.

S.33.--Documents of assignment must be drawn up and kept in the archives of each province. However, the provincial of the province from which the member comes should send notification of his new assignment to the secretary general.

4. Departure and dismissal of members (C 68-76)

S.34.--A member is attached to a house or a group constituted as the equivalent of a house by appointment made by a lawful superior.

S.35.--The authority to readmit someone into the Congregation pertains:

1° to the superior general, after consulting his council, for everyone;

2° to the provincial, after consulting his council and the provincial of the province from which the member has left or been dismissed, for those who have not yet been incorporated into the Congregation.

CHAPTER VI. FORMATION

I. PROMOTING AND SUPPORTING VOCATIONS

S.36.--Concern for promoting vocations demands of us constant prayer (Mt 9:37) and the authentic, full, and joyful testimony of apostolic and community life, especially when adolescents and young people, for the development of their own faith, are working with us in the Vincentian mission.

S.37.--§1.--Provinces, houses, and individual members should actively engage in encouraging candidates for the Vincentian mission.

§2.--Provinces should seek out the more effective means of promoting and supporting vocations, and draw up a provincial plan suitable for this.

§3.--The provincial in consultation with his council should appoint a promoter of vocations to coordinate the efforts for the promotion of vocations in our works.

S.38.--Candidates who want to enter the Congregation should already have made an option for the Christian life, a commitment to apostolic work, and the choice of working within the Vincentian community; otherwise, they are to be gradually helped toward these choices in pastoral-action youth groups, or in apostolic schools where they are available.

S.39. --The formation of candidates, in accordance with their age, should comprise above all fraternal life, frequent use of the word of God, liturgical celebrations, apostolic activity undertaken with their moderators, personal orientation, study, and work.

II. FORMATION OF OUR MEMBERS

1. *General principles (C 77-81)*

S.40.-- In addition to the common formation, each of our members should receive, in so far as possible, a special and professional formation, which will prepare individuals to carry on effectively the works of the apostolate which have been assigned to them by the Congregation, and which are more in accord with their abilities.

S.41.--§1.--Each province should have its own formation program which, with due allowances for the different circumstances of place, conforms to the principles here stated as well as to the documents and norms of the Church.

§ 2.--The provincial should establish a formation commission to draw up and revise the formation program and to deal with all those things which pertain to the entire course of training.

S.42.--Individual provinces, through the help of their formation commission, should organize and promote both common and personal continuing formation.

2. *The internal seminary (C 82-86)*

S.43.--The internal seminary can be made either in one or in several houses chosen by the provincial with his council.

S.44.--In special circumstances, and with regard for the degree of human and Christian maturity of the seminarists, the provincial can make suitable adaptations.

3. *The major seminary (C 87-90)*

S.45.--§1.--As need demands, the house of the major seminary can be either proper to an individual province or common to several provinces.

§2.--Our students can be sent to another province or to a properly approved institute to complete the curriculum of their ecclesiastical studies. In this latter case, care should be taken that they lead a common life according to the custom of the Congregation, and that they receive a suitable Vincentian formation.

§3.--In houses of formation a family lifestyle should flourish, and a fraternal spirit should be fostered among students of the same province. If, however, there are many students, they may be organized in a suitable way into smaller groups to make better provision for the personal growth of individuals.

S.46.--During the process of formation, the provincial can, in consultation with the moderators and his own council, and for a just reason, permit students to interrupt their studies and live outside of a house of formation.

S.47.--Steps should be taken that students from different provinces of the Congregation can come to know each other.

4. *The formation of brothers (C 91-92)*

S.48.--Special cultural and technical training should be available for brothers by means of an approved curriculum of studies leading to a suitable degree or a diploma.

5. Moderators and teachers (C 93-95)

S.49.--The major seminary, as the center of formation, should provide help for the members engaged in different works. The moderators and teachers themselves should be actively engaged in the works of the apostolate.

S.50.--In houses of formation, care should be given to provide suitable confreres who will function as confessors and spiritual directors, as the need demands.

PART THREE
ORGANIZATION

SECTION I. GOVERNMENT

CHAPTER I. **Central administration**

1. The superior general (C 101-107)

S.51.--Besides the faculties granted him by universal law or by special concession, it is the function of the superior general:

1° to exercise for vice-provinces the same powers which he has for provinces;

2° without prejudice to his right to make a canonical visitation whenever one is needed, to visit the provinces and vice-provinces at least once during his time of office, either personally or by a delegate, in order to animate them and be informed about how their members are doing;

3° having heard those concerned, and with the consent of his council, to accept missions offered to the Congregation by the Holy See, and to give up missions entrusted to the Congregation;

4° to grant to provincials the faculty of accepting or giving up missions given them by local ordinaries outside the territory of any province of the Congregation;

5° at an opportune time before holding a General Assembly, having heard the provincials and the vice-provincials, and with the consent of his council, to appoint a preparatory commission;

6° to promulgate as soon as possible all the enactments of the General Assembly;

7° with the consent of his council, to enter into contracts of major importance, observing the norms of law;

8° for a serious reason, having heard the provincial, the consultors and, if time allows, as many members of the province as possible, and with the consent of his council, to take over for a brief time the government of a particular province; this is to be exercised through an administrator with faculties delegated by the superior general himself;

9° having heard the interested provincials and members, and with the consent of his council, to transfer members from one province to another;

10° to grant members who have been legitimately separated from the Congregation those suffrages that are customary for our deceased members;

11° in particular cases, for a just reason, and with the consent of his council, to dispense from the Statutes and Decrees of the General Assembly;

12° having consulted the interested provincials, and with the consent of his council, to appoint provincial directors of the Daughters of Charity; (Note: The superior general exercises in regard to the Daughters of Charity that authority which has been granted to him by the Holy See and which is explained in their Constitutions.)

13° to grant affiliation to benefactors and friends of the Congregation, informing them of the spiritual benefits they receive.

14° The Superior General and his Council can compel the Provinces to participate in international missionary responsibilities (works, engagements).

S.52.--The superior general has his domicile in Rome. He should not change it without the consent of the General Assembly and without having consulted the Holy See.

S.53.--General ordinances enacted by the superior general remain in force until the following General Assembly, unless the superior general himself or his successor provides otherwise.

S.54.--For the sake of good order, superiors, provincials, and other officers of the Congregation, as well as provincial directors of the Daughters of Charity, when the time of their assignment has been completed, continue in office until they are replaced by their successors.

2. The vicar general (C 108-114)

S.55.--§1.--The vicar general ceases to hold office:

- 1° by his successor's acceptance of office;
- 2° by resignation accepted by the General Assembly or by the Holy See;
- 3° by deposition decreed by the Holy See.

§2.--If the vicar general becomes manifestly unworthy or incapable of discharging his office, the superior general should, with his council but excluding the vicar general, judge the matter, inform the Holy See, and follow its directives.

S.56.--A vicar general who has taken over the government of the Congregation as superior general can immediately, at the end of the six year term, be elected superior general, and he can be reelected.

3. Assistants general (C 115-118)

S.57.--One of the assistants general has special responsibility for the foreign missions.

S.58.--The assistants must reside in the same house as the superior general. In order to constitute a quorum in the general council, besides the superior general or the vicar general, there must be present at least two of the assistants.

S.59.--When, however, the number of assistants absent for a just reason is such that there are not enough to constitute a quorum for council, the superior general can call into council, with the right of voting, one of the officers of the general curia in this order: the secretary general, the treasurer general, or the procurator general at the Holy See.

S.60.--The assistants general cease to hold office:

- 1° by their successors' acceptance of office;
- 2° by resignation accepted either by the superior general with the consent of the other assistants or by the General Assembly;

3° by deposition decreed by the superior general with the consent of the other assistants, and with approval of the Holy See.

4. Officers of the general curia (C 119)

S.61.--§1.--The secretary general:

- 1° assists the superior general in those things which are to be written for the whole Congregation;
- 2° attends the general council meetings by reason of his office in order to take minutes, but without a vote;
- 3° can propose for appointment by the superior general the names of confreres, according to the norm of our own law, as co-workers under his own direction to manage the archives, edit publications, and write letters.

§2.--If the secretary general is impeded from fulfilling his duties, the superior general can temporarily appoint in his place one of the assistants or officers or co-workers.

S.62.--§1.--The treasurer general, by reason of his office and under the guidance of the superior general with his council, administers the goods of the Congregation and other goods entrusted to the general curia, according to the norm of universal law and our own law.

§2.--With the approval of the superior general, he visits provincial treasurers and, in particular circumstances, even local treasurers or administrators of works of major importance.

S.63.--§1.--It is the function of the procurator general at the Holy See:

1° to take care of requests for ordinary faculties from the Holy See;

2° with the consent of the superior general, and having heard the interested provincials, to take up with the Holy See the business of the Congregation, provinces, houses, and members.

§2.--The procurator general at the Holy See, by written mandate of the superior general, can exercise in the Roman curia the office of postulator general of the Congregation, according to the norm of law.

CHAPTER II. **Provincial and local administration**

1. Provinces and vice-provinces (C 120-122)

S.64.--Although each province is circumscribed by territorial boundaries, there is nothing to prevent a house of one province being located within the territory of another province, according to the norm of article 107, 7° of the Constitutions.

S.65.--§1.--A vice-province is a union of a number of houses circumscribed by territorial boundaries which, in accord with a contract with a province, depends on that province and forms one whole with it, and is presided over by a vice-provincial with proper ordinary power, according to the norm of universal law and our own law.

§2.--It is also possible to set up a vice-province which does not depend on any fully constituted province, but depends directly on the power of the superior general, and which is presided over by a vice-provincial with proper ordinary power.

§3.--A vice-province by its nature is transitory and is changed into a province when the required conditions are met.

§4.--What is stated in the Constitutions and Statutes of the Congregation in regard to provinces applies, relevant conditions having been met, to vice-provinces, unless it is expressly stated otherwise in the Constitutions and Statutes themselves, or in the norms and contracts of the individual vice-province.

S.66.--§1.--When a province is divided and a new province is set up, all the goods which are destined for the benefit of the province as well as the debts contracted by the province must be divided proportionately and equitably by the superior general with his council, safeguarding the wishes of pious founders and donors, lawfully acquired rights, and the particular norms by which the province is regulated.

§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.

2. The provincial and the vice-provincial (C 123-125)

S.67.--What is stated in the Constitutions and Statutes in regard to the provincial applies also to the vice-provincial, unless it is expressly stated otherwise in the Constitutions and Statutes themselves or in the norms and contracts of each vice-province.

S.68.--§1.--The provincial is appointed for a six year term by the superior general with the consent of his council after consultation with at least those members of the province having active voice. In the same way and under the same conditions the provincial can be confirmed once by the superior general for a three year term.

- 1° the election must be for a term of at least three years and not more than six years;
- 2° the provincial elected should not be in office for more than nine continuous years;
- 3° that in two prior ballots an absolute majority of electors is required, not counting the null votes; however, in the third ballot, only the two, or more in the case of a tie, who received the greatest number of votes in the second ballot enjoy passive voice. However, in the case of a tie the candidate who is senior by vocation or age is elected.
- 4° the method election should provide for a way to break a tie.

§4.--For the one elected or re-elected to assume the office of provincial, the confirmation of the superior general with the consent of his council is required.

S.69.--It is the function of the provincial:

- 1° in accord with the provincial norms and with the consent of his council, to establish the provincial plan;
- 2° with the consent of his council, and having consulted the superior general, observing the norms of law, to establish or suppress a major work of some house;
- 3° having consulted as far as possible the interested parties, and having heard his council, to assign members to individual houses according to the needs of these houses. In more urgent cases, however, the provincial is obliged at least to inform his council;
- 4° in accord with provincial norms, and with the consent of his council, to appoint the provincial treasurer, the director of the internal seminary, and the director of the major seminary;
- 5° to approve the community plan of each house prepared by the local superior and his community;
- 6° to send the superior general reports about the affairs of the province and about official visitations of houses which he has made;
- 7° with the consent of his council, to enter into necessary and useful contracts, observing the norms of universal law and our own law;
- 8° having heard his council, to appoint in plenty of time the preparatory commission for the provincial assembly;
- 9° to be able to break a tie vote, in accord with the norm of law;
- 10° to notify the superior general as soon as possible about vows taken by members and their incorporation into the Congregation, as well as about orders received by them;
- 11° to take care of the provincial archives either personally or through competent people;
- 12° to approve members and grant them jurisdiction both for the hearing of the confessions of members and, safeguarding the rights of ordinaries, for preaching the sacred word of God, and also to delegate these same faculties to others;
- 13° in particular cases and for a just reason, and with the consent of his council, to dispense from provincial norms.

S.70.--A vice-provincial has the same rights, faculties, and obligations as a provincial, unless it is expressly stated otherwise in the Constitutions and Statutes themselves.

S.71.--The ordinances of a provincial remain in force until the next provincial assembly, unless another provision has been made by the provincial or his successor.

S.72.--§1.--When the office of provincial becomes vacant, the government of the province passes temporarily to the assistant provincial. But if there is no assistant, it passes to the provincial consultor who is senior by reason of appointment, vocation, or age, unless the superior general has provided otherwise.

§2.--The provincial assembly can propose for the approval of the superior general, with the consent of his council, its own way of providing temporarily for the government of the province in case of the death of the provincial or his cessation from office.

3. The assistant provincial (C 126)

S.73.--§1.--The assistant provincial is one of the provincial consultors and is elected by the consultors with the provincial, unless the provincial assembly has provided otherwise.

§2.--In the absence of the provincial, the assistant has the authority of the provincial, except in those matters which the provincial has reserved to himself.

§ 3.--When the provincial is impeded, the assistant replaces him with full authority until the impediment ceases. The provincial council, without the provincial, passes judgment on the impediment and as soon as possible informs the superior general, whose directives are to be followed.

4. The council of the provincial (c. 127)

S.74.--§1.--The consultors are appointed for a three year term by the provincial after a consultation with at least those members of the province who have active voice. In the same way, and under the same conditions, the consultors can be confirmed for a second and a third term of three years, but not for a fourth.

§2.--The provincial assembly can propose for approval by the superior general, with the consent of his council, its own method of appointing or electing the consultors, as well as their number, the time when they take office, and their term of office. The provincial must inform the superior general about the designation of the consultors.

§3.--For a serious reason, a provincial consultor can be removed from office by the superior general at the request of the provincial, with the consent of the other consultors.

§4.--Where there is no assistant provincial, what is stated about the assistant provincial in article 73, §2 and §3, applies also to the provincial consultor who is senior by appointment, vocation, or age, unless the provincial norms provide otherwise.

5. The provincial treasurer (C 128)

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

S.76.--If the provincial treasurer is not a consultor, he participates in the provincial council when called in by the provincial, but without vote.

S.77.--It is the function of the provincial treasurer:

1° to see that the goods of the province are held by proper title in the Church and the state;

2° by his advice and his labors, to help the local treasurers in the discharge of their duties, and to watch over their administration;

3 ° to see to it that each house contributes the required amount for the expenses of the province, and to send to the treasurer general at the proper time the tax for the general fund;

4° to see to it that the employees of the Congregation are paid a just wage, and that the

civil laws concerning taxes and social security are exactly obeyed;

5 ° to keep accurate and up-to-date records of expenditures and receipts, and to preserve other documents;

6 ° to make a report of his administration to the provincial and his council, according to the norm of article 103.

6. Offices of local administration (C 129-134)

S.78.--The local superior has the right and duty;

1 ° to keep the provincial informed about the state of the house entrusted to him;

2 ° to assign to members of the house those tasks and offices the assignment of which is not reserved to major superiors;

3 ° to convoke and direct the domestic assembly;

4 ° together with his community, to work out the common plan for his house and present it for the approval of the provincial;

5 ° to keep the archives and the seal of the house;

6 ° to inform members about the decrees and news of the Congregation;

7 ° to see to it that Mass obligations are fulfilled.

S.79.--§1.--The local superior administers the house with the collaboration of all the members, especially the assistant and the treasurer, who are named in accord with provincial norms.

§2.--In the absence of the superior, the assistant takes over with full authority according to norms enacted in our own law.

§3.--Meetings of the members of the community, after the fashion of a council, should be held frequently.

CHAPTER III. Assemblies

1. Assemblies in general (C 135-136)

S.80.--Superiors and members should prepare for the assemblies, earnestly participate in them, and faithfully observe the laws and norms established by them.

S.81.--§1.--In elections at least three tellers are required.

§2.--By law the tellers are the two youngest members of the assembly by reason of age along with the president and secretary after his election.

§3.--At the beginning of the assembly there is an election of a secretary, whose function is:

1 ° to fulfill the task of first teller;

2 ° to draw up the minutes and documents of the sessions.

S.82.--Before and during the assembly there is to be fostered free communication of information regarding the matters to be decided and the qualities of those to be elected.

S.83.--When the business is finished, the acts of the assembly approved by the participants are to be signed by the president of the assembly, by its secretary, and by all participants, and, having had the seal affixed, are to be preserved diligently in the archives.

2. The General Assembly (C 137-142)

S.84.--The General Assembly has the right of making declarations which have doctrinal force

and the character of an exhortation.

S.85.--§1.--An ordinary General Assembly must be held in the sixth year after the last ordinary General Assembly.

§2.--An extraordinary General Assembly is held as often as the superior general, with the consent of his council, and having heard the provincials, thinks that it should be held.

§3.--Provincial assemblies must precede the holding of a General Assembly.

S.86.--§1.--The superior general with the consent of his council should determine the time and place for holding the General Assembly.

§2.--However, in the sixth year, for a just reason, the holding of a General Assembly, by a decree of the superior general with the consent of his council, may be anticipated or delayed for six months from the day on which the preceding ordinary General Assembly began

S.87.--§1.--The superior general, the vicar general, and the assistants general who are going out of office remain members of the assembly in the subsequent sessions of the same assembly.

§2.--Besides those who must be present by reason of office at the General Assembly according to the norm of our Constitutions, there should be present one delegate from each province and vice-province for the first one hundred members having active voice; if, however, there are more than one hundred members having active voice, there will be another delegate for each seventy-five members or part thereof.

The number of delegates to the General Assembly is to be computed according to the number of members having active voice on the day of the election of delegates in the provincial assembly.

§3.--If the office of provincial is vacant, the one who holds the interim government of the province goes to the General Assembly.

If the provincial is legitimately impeded from going to the General Assembly, the one who substitutes for him in office goes in his place. If, however, the latter was elected a delegate, the first elected alternate goes to the General Assembly.

S.88.--§1.--Before the convocation of the General Assembly, the superior general, with his council, having heard the provincials and paying attention to different regions and works, should appoint a preparatory commission at an opportune time.

§2.--With ample faculty being left to the superior general with his council to determine the work of the preparatory commission according to the circumstances of the time, the tasks of this commission can be the following:

1° to inquire from the provinces and from individual members what, in their judgment, are the more urgent problems and what method should be used to deal with them in the General Assembly;

2.° after receiving the answers, to select, when necessary, the matters that are more universal and more urgent, to collect sources and prepare studies, and to send everything to the provincials in plenty of time before the holding of domestic assemblies.

3° to receive the proposals or postulata of the provincial assemblies, the studies made by provinces, and the postulata proposed by the superior general after hearing his council;

4° to organize all this material, and from it to draw up a working document; to send all this material out in plenty of time so that members of the assembly and the alternates can have it all in hand two whole months before the beginning of the General Assembly.

§3.--Once the assembly has begun, the task of this commission ceases; the chairman of

the commission, however, personally or through another should, if it seems opportune, present an account of the work of the commission.

S.89.--§1.--On the day of the election of the superior general, the electors should offer Mass for a successful election and, after a brief exhortation, begin the session at the appointed hour under the direction of the president.

§2.--On prepared ballots the electors should write the name of him whom they choose for superior general.

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

S.90.--The directory approved by one assembly remains in force until it is changed or abrogated by another assembly.

3. The provincial assembly (C 143-146)

S.91.--Norms made by the provincial assembly are general rules applicable to all cases described in them. These norms, nevertheless, do not affect the authority of the provincial as this is described in universal law or our own law, nor his executive power necessary for carrying out his office. They remain in force until they are revoked by a subsequent provincial assembly or by the superior general.

S.92.--It pertains to the provincial, having heard his council, to set the date, and to designate the house in which the provincial assembly is to be held.

S.93.--The superior general should communicate to the provincial a decision about the provincial norms within two months after receiving them.

S.94.--Taking part in the provincial assembly there should be, unless something else is established by the provincial norms, as many delegates elected from the one provincial body consisting of all the members with passive voice, as there are delegates who must be present by reason of office, plus one delegate for every twenty-five members with active voice or part thereof.

S.95.--From this one provincial body, those are to be considered as elected who have received the greater number of votes, and in case of a tie, those who are senior by reason of vocation or age; the same number are substitutes according to the order of a majority of votes.

S.96.--If the superior of a house is impeded from going to the provincial assembly, the assistant of the house should go in his place. If, however, the assistant has been elected as a delegate, then one of the alternates should replace him.

S.97.--The provincial assembly can propose for the approval of the superior general, with the consent of his council, its own method of representation in the provincial assembly, in such a way, however, that the number of elected delegates is greater than the number of those who are to participate in the assembly by reason of office.

S.98.--It is the responsibility of each province to establish in assembly its own norms of procedure, that is to say, a directory, within the limits of universal law and our own law.

S.99.--The provincial assembly is to proceed to the election of delegates and alternates for the General Assembly in separate ballotings, in which there is needed an absolute majority

of votes

If in the first and second balloting no one is elected, then in the third balloting he is elected who obtains the greater number of votes, and in case of a tie, the senior by vocation or age.

SECTION II. TEMPORAL GOODS (C 148-155)

S.100.--The Congregation should conscientiously reflect on, wholeheartedly embrace, and faithfully and firmly practice the following principles:

- 1° a unanimous effort to restore that simplicity of life-style which, by example more than by words, and in the name of the poverty of Christ, contends against the avarice which arises from an affluent society, and against a greed for wealth which is ruining almost the whole world (CR, III, 1);
- 2° an effective care to use its goods to promote social justice;
- 3° the alienation of superfluous goods in favor of the poor.

S.101.--Within the bounds of equity and with the consent of his council, the superior general has the right to impose a tax on provinces; similarly, with the consent of his council, the provincial has this right with respect to houses of his province.

S.102.--Goods which are entrusted to the Congregation only for their management are to be administered under the direction and vigilance of superiors with their councils.

S.103.--§1.--Treasurers must give an account to superiors and keep the members informed of their administration.

§2.--With respect to the treasurer general, an accounting of receipts and expenditures and a report on the status of the patrimony are to be examined once a year by the superior general with his council; for the provincial treasurer, twice a year by the provincial with his council; for the treasurer of a house, each month by the local superior. A signature of approval, moreover, is to be affixed to the accounting or report provided it is found to be accurate.

§3.--Members entrusted with the administration of special works of either a province or a house should submit an accounting of receipts and expenditures to their respective superiors at the time and in the manner determined by provincial norms.

§4.--If, however, there are goods which do not belong to the Congregation but are entrusted to it for management, accounting for them should be submitted both to their owners and to the superiors of the Congregation.

§5.--The treasurer general should give a general accounting of his administration to provincials at the end of each year; to the General Assembly every six years.

§6.--Provincials should submit a financial accounting for their provinces to the superior general at the end of the year.

§7.--Provincial treasurers should give to the members of their province a general report of their administration and of the patrimony of their provinces, according to provincial norms.

S.104.--All administrators, both superiors and treasurers, can act in the name of the Congregation only within the limits of their office and the norm of law. For this reason the Congregation, a province, and a house are responsible only for the administrative acts performed according to the aforesaid norms. As for other acts, those who perform illicit or invalid ones will be held responsible for them. If, however, any juridic person of the Congregation shall have contracted debts or obligations on its own, even with permission, it will be held responsible from its own resources.

S.105.--§1.--The General Assembly can determine the sum beyond which the superior general cannot make extraordinary expenditures.

§2.--Provincials can make expenditures according to norms enacted by the provincial assembly.

§3.--Local superiors can make expenditures within the limits determined by provincial norms.

S.106.--Superiors must not allow debts to be contracted unless it is certain that the interest on a debt can be paid off from ordinary revenues, and that the amount received as a loan can be repaid within the agreed time by legitimate payment of the annual installment.

S.107.--§1.--Laws regarding work, security, and justice, in favor of persons working in houses and works of the Congregation, should be exactly observed.

§2.--Superiors should act with the greatest prudence in accepting pious foundations which create long-term obligations. Obligations in perpetuity must not be accepted.

§3.--Gifts should not be made from the goods of the Community except according to the norm of the Constitutions and Statutes.

§4.--In accepting goods which come to the Congregation, a province, or a house by way of bequest or gift, the wishes of the donor in regard to the ownership and use of the goods should be respected.

§5.--Social security should be acquired for the members by the Congregation, the bishop, or those for whom they work. Moreover, houses, provinces, and the general curia itself should have adequate insurance against dangers of various kinds.

APPENDIX

**INTERPRETATION
of the
FUNDAMENTAL STATUTE
on
POVERTY
[1980]**

(A) CONTENTS OF THE STATUTE:

In the fundamental statute these normative elements can be noted:

1. It is presumed that members retain dominion of immovable goods or simple benefices which they possessor will possess in the future.
2. Members are obliged to apply the yield of their goods to pious works. This is the principal and positive norm arising from the Vincentian orientation by which we dispose of ourselves and our goods in the ministry of evangelizing the poor; this is the excellent, shining, and evangelical value of the Statute. The duties of piety and justice demand that, in the first place, needy parents and relatives be provided for.
3. Members cannot keep the yield of their goods. This is a negative norm forbidding us to "capitalize" by accumulating yield and becoming rich; it has its source in evangelical poverty which is a poverty not only in spirit but also in reality.
4. Members can, with the permission of the Superior, use the yield of their goods for their own purposes. This is a permissive norm. It is clear that here there is question of concession only, and in no way of a positive recommended orientation(cf. SV, XII, 382).
5. Members do not have free use of their goods, in so far as they must depend on superiors. This norm flows from the communal dimension of our poverty.

(B) EXPLANATION OF THE STATUTE

1. The Statute considers immovable goods and simple benefices as sources of yield. Therefore, today, all other goods which are truly productive, as well as rights entitling one to receive yield, can be considered the equivalent of immovable goods, according to common estimation of various places.
2. The Statute says nothing about movable goods which are not the yield of productive goods; but, according to its spirit, such movable goods are not exempt from the special and positive norm which obliges us to dispose of them in the ministry of evangelizing the poor directly or through the community, and are not exempt from other norms either.
3. The Fundamental Statute is not the only source of the norms by which our vow of poverty is regulated.
4. In order to understand better the spirit of the Fundamental Statute, it will be useful to consider other principles of Vincentian poverty, for example:

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

DECREES

DECREES of the THIRTY-SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY (1980)

1. The General Assembly declares that the present Constitutions, Statutes, and Decrees constitute the total proper law of the Congregation now in effect.

If, as a matter of fact, any lacuna is discovered, provision can be made in accord with the norm of universal law, or, if the situation warrants, of our own previous law.

2. The Constitutions enacted by this General Assembly and promulgated by the superior general should be submitted at an appropriate time by the superior general to the competent authority for definitive approval.

3. Provincial norms approved by the superior general retain their force until the next provincial assembly.

Anything in such norms contrary to the Constitutions and Statutes should be changed by the next provincial assembly so that they conform with these Constitutions and Statutes; otherwise they lose their force.

If any doubt arises before the next provincial assembly is held, recourse should be had to the superior general.

4. The General Assembly commits to the superior general with his council the consideration of the appropriateness of preparing and printing a book of prayers and meditations for use throughout the entire Congregation.

5. The superior general with his council should provide for drawing up a program of formation or directory for the internal seminary common to the entire Congregation.

6. The monetary fund for the foreign missions and poor provinces should be continued. The growth of this fund is left to the judgment of the superior general.

7. The limits for extraordinary expenses that can be contracted by the superior general:

a) On his own authority the superior general can contract extraordinary expenses up to U.S. \$25,000.

b) Having heard his council the superior general can contract extraordinary expenses up to U.S. \$150,000.

c) With the consent of his council the superior general can contract extraordinary expenses up to U.S. \$1,500,000.

d) With the unanimous consent of his council the superior general can contract extraordinary expenses over U.S. \$1,500,000.

8. To assure the participation of brothers in the next General Assembly, the Thirty-sixth General Assembly decrees:

1. Taking account of the number of brothers in the Congregation at that time, there should be one delegate from their number for every one hundred of them and

one for any remainder.

2. If the number of brothers elected according to the norm of article 87, 2 of the Statutes is less than this representation, it should be filled by the superior general with his council.

3. The method of making this selection is left to the superior general himself with his council, in such a way, however, that brothers should be called from different provinces.

4. Brothers participating in the next General Assembly by virtue of this Decree will have the same rights and be held to the same obligations as other delegates, according to the norm of the Constitutions and Statutes.

**CONFIRMATION OF DECREES
of the
THIRTY-SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

1. The Thirty-seventh General Assembly (1986) confirmed Decrees 1, 6, and 7 of the Thirty-sixth General Assembly (1980).

2. The Assembly did not confirm Decree 8, with the understanding, however, that although the Decree is abrogated, care must be taken that the brothers have representation in the Assembly, and that it be left to the superior general with his council to find a better solution for achieving this representation and for solving other cases in which representation in the Assembly is important but a legitimate elections becomes impossible.

**FORMULA
for the
ATTESTATION OF THE TAKING OF VOWS**

I, _____, unworthy _____
(first, middle, last name) (priest, deacon, brother, etc.)

of the Congregation of the Mission, born in _____
(place)

in the Diocese of _____ on the _____,
(name) (day, month, year)

son of _____ and _____, received into the
(father's name) (mother's name)

internal seminary at _____ in _____ on the
(name of institution) (name of place)

_____, took the vows of the Congregation according to its
(day, month, year)

Constitutions, which I understood well, at _____
(name of institution)

in _____, on the _____, in the presence of
(name of place) (day, month, year)

Father _____, who is a member of the same Congregation.
(first, middle, last name)

(Signature of the one vowing)

(Signature of the witness)

Ordinance from the Superior General

1. All of our students, during the time of formation, will study a second language (English, French, or Spanish) with the goal of being able to understand and speak it.
2. In each province of the Congregation of the Mission a finance committee will be established. It shall be presided over by the provincial superior or his delegate. It shall be composed of the provincial treasurer and at least three other members, knowledgeable in financial matters and the related portions of civil law, some of whom may be lay persons. It shall have an advisory role, offering recommendations to the provincial and the members of his council. The members of the finance committee shall be appointed by the provincial for a three-year term, which is renewable.

The Very Reverend Robert Maloney, C.M.
July 1, 2001