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## International Statutes of MISEVI

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# International Statutes of MISEVI

## 0. Basic principles

0.1. The Association of Lay Vincentian Missionaries (MISEVI) sets out to develop an organized presence of lay people within the Church's missionary role "ad gentes" (to the peoples), especially in missions attached to the Vincentian Family. Juridical links are being established between the lay branches; bonds with the Congregation of the Mission and the Company of the Daughters of Charity are spiritual, charismatic, and collaborative in character.

0.2. The principal aim of this Association is the basic moral or spiritual support and coordination of the lay missionaries. Obtaining funds to realize missionary projects is a secondary aim.

0.3. The Association will have a missionary Vincentian spirituality which will take direction from the present social teaching of the Church, and will be founded upon the specific virtues that St. Vincent entrusted to his missionaries. This will be elaborated in a special document.

0.4. This Association comes into being as a development of the missionary dimension of the Vincentian Marian Youth, previously the Association of the Children of Mary Immaculate.<sup>1</sup>

0.5. The Association will link together the members of Vincentian groups and movements who have been sent on mission; the members of MISEVI will continue to belong to their original associations which would remain committed to their support.

0.6. Contact and collaboration will be sought with the Vincentian Family, especially on the local level, whether at the point of origin of the missionary enterprises, or at the locations of missionary service and within the possibilities of each concrete situation.

## 1. Nature

1.1. The International Association of Lay Vincentian Missionaries (MISEVI) is canonically erected as a Public Association of Faithful with an autonomous, full juridical personality, and consequently it can possess, administer, and dispose of every class of goods and rights; it can take on all kinds of obligations and take action in defense of its interests, before every class of persons, authorities, and jurisdictions.

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<sup>1</sup> This Association was approved by the rescripts of His Holiness Pius IX of 20 June 1847 and 19 July 1850.

## **2. Ends**

2.1. The Association is formed to promote, facilitate, support, and coordinate the presence and missionary work of the laity on missions "ad gentes" entrusted to the Vincentian Family or animated by it.<sup>2</sup>

2.2. Among the ends of the Association are the following:

2.2.1. to offer human, moral, spiritual, formative, and economic backing to missions linked to the Vincentian Family, by sending lay people to work in the missions and by material assistance to the different projects;

2.2.2. to be a channel of communion and exchange among the lay missionaries who form part of the Association;

2.2.3. to promote the spiritual life and communal sharing among the lay members who are engaged in missions "ad gentes";

2.2.4. to facilitate the involvement and presence of the Vincentian laity who work within the coordinating structures of Vincentian associations according to their specific norms;

2.2.5. to support the bonds between the lay missionaries and the communities of origin which have sent them on mission;

2.2.6. to welcome the missionaries on return from their labors "ad gentes" and to offer them human, formative, spiritual, and economic support according to what is set down in their Internal Rule.

## **3. Extent**

3.1. The Association is international in scope. In agreement with its aim, it extends to other mission countries.

## **4. Seat**

4.1. The international seat of the Association and its Permanent Secretariat are based in Madrid.

## **5. Members**

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<sup>2</sup> Thus, it is included in the context of Non-Governmental Organizations dedicated to human development (NGO).

5.1. The Association is comprised of lay Vincentians, whether preparing to live, living, or having lived in missions "ad gentes," or are linked in some way to the missionary work of the Vincentian Family in their communities of origin.

5.2. The members of the Association can be:

5.2.1. **Members in Formation:** youth or adults of different Vincentian Associations:

- whether they are in preparation to undertake missionary activities in different Vincentian associations and wish to learn more of the character of our Association with a view to become a part of it;

- or they are in the first years on missions "ad gentes."

5.2.2. **Collaborative Members:** all persons who desire to collaborate with the Association by taking on concrete commitments of service.

5.2.3. **Honorary Members:** those who had been full members but now have not been incorporated in a mission for more than five years and wish to maintain a bond with this Association within their country of origin.

5.2.4. **Members with full right:** those laity, with a minimum of a previous two years missionary work "ad gentes," who renew their commitment to this Association every three years, without any limit to their renewals.

5.3. Enrollment and Withdrawal from Membership:

5.3.1. Those who aspire to be members with full right should be accepted in writing by the Coordinating Team after completing two years of lay ministry on the missions, and having come to know sufficiently the proper character of this Association and with a prior written application.

5.3.2. The members with full right on mission will renew their commitment to belong to the Association every three years in writing. They rescind that missionary commitment, when they consider it suitable and following dialogue concerning the reasons for their decision with some member of the Coordinating Team. In each case, in order to facilitate the organization of the ongoing missionary responsibilities, notice will be given six months in advance.

5.3.3. Members with full right lose this status if they pass more than five successive years without going on mission "ad gentes" work for at least one year's duration. To become honorary members they must make a request in writing.

5.3.4. The expulsion of members, with full right following dialogue with the person concerned, requires the agreement of an absolute majority of the Coordinating Team and the confirmation of the Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission and of the Daughters of Charity, or of his Delegate.

## **6. Commitments of the members**

6.1. **The members in formation** will endeavor to attain the attitudes and content proper to an integral missionary preparation. Also, they will be formed in a lifestyle proper to members with full right. MISEVI will help to coordinate and set the minimum requirements for this initial formation with the highest possible quality.

6.2. **Collaborative members** will have available to them needed information on the projects of the Association and will support the mission's well-being by way of prayer, management of projects, fund-raising, social awareness, help with formation, and payment of dues.

6.3. **Honorary members** will be informed in detail about the Association's projects and will cooperate with their own means to bring them to completion in the best possible manner. They will try to:

6.3.1. live a concrete commitment of service/evangelization of the poor;

6.3.2. be in communion with the mission by their prayer;

6.3.3. be concerned about permanent formation and collaborate in the preparation of the formation of members;

6.3.4. live out the sharing of goods with economic contributions according to the Internal Rule.

6.4. **Members with Full Right** will offer their highest interest by collaborating in the ends of the Association. More concretely, they will endeavor to:

6.4.1. give themselves generously to the missionary tasks defined in their mission commitment and in the communal pastoral projects;

6.4.2. try and deepen their Vincentian spirituality by a life of prayer, to bring their service into prayer along with a knowledge of Vincentian doctrine and witnesses;

6.4.3. offer suggestions and initiatives for the progress of the Association's identity;

6.4.4. be ready to join the Coordinating Team of the Association;

6.4.5. offer to the common fund the economic rewards of their mission according to the Internal Rule and the Common Project of each community.

## **7. Organization**

7.1. The **General Assembly** is the highest level of the Association's participation and government. All the members have the right of voice and vote.

7.1.1. Ordinarily it will meet every four years; its role is to review the Association's progress, give guidelines on a program for future activity, and review the financial accounts and the budget.

7.1.2. An extraordinary gathering will take place by agreement of the Coordinating Team, or by request of a third of the members with full right.

7.1.3. The General Assembly is validly constituted when it has been convoked by the Coordinating Team and two-thirds of the members are present. Decisions will be reached by an absolute majority on the first vote, or by a simple majority on the second, the exception being those for which the present Statutes indicate the need for another form of majority.

7.1.4. Members of the General Assembly:

- Ex Officio, the Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission and of the Company of the Daughters of Charity or his Delegate, and members of the Coordinating Team.

- By election, a representative of the members with full right, who work in each missionary district/diocese, elected by all the lay missionaries of the same district/diocese by secret vote and by simple majority.

- By election, once the results of the previous elections are known, five members with full right chosen as a slate from among all the members of full right not previously elected, by mail and by a simple majority.

- By election, a representation of one of the honorary members, another of the collaborative members, and another of the members in formation, elected among each category of members by internal secret ballot by mail and simple majority; the number of delegates for each representation will be decided by the Coordinating Team so that the total of the representatives does not exceed 25% of all members of the Assembly.

7.2. The **President** of the Association has the duty to:

- animate and coordinate the Association's life;
- represent it in civil and ecclesial situations;

- convoke the meetings of the Coordinating Team and plan the agenda;
- determine the distribution of functions of secretary, treasurer, and committee members on the Coordinating Team, after having consulted the members of this team;
- maintain contact with and accompany the missionary communities;
- maintain relations with the other branches of the Vincentian Family and other missionary movements.

7.2.1. The President will be chosen by the General Assembly in a secret ballot by the members with full right. An absolute majority is needed in the first two ballots; in case no one receives it, a third ballot is taken of the two who have obtained the highest vote, the one receiving the majority of votes is then elected.<sup>3</sup>

7.2.2. The election of the *President* must be confirmed by the Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission and of the Company of the Daughters of Charity.

7.3. The direction of the Association will involve a **Coordinating Team**.<sup>4</sup> It will act in accordance with the Statutes, the Internal Rule, the Spirituality Document, and the guidelines of the General Assemblies. Special attention will be given to the pastoral and community projects of the missionary communities.

7.3.1. The Coordinating Team will apply internally the functions of secretary, treasurer, and committee members in accordance with the decision made by the President.

7.3.2. The Coordinating Team will meet at least three times a year according to the plan established by the President and with the assurance of the presence of two-thirds of the members at the first convocation, and half at the second. Decisions will be made by an absolute majority.

7.3.3. This team will be composed of the President, three lay members, a Daughter of Charity, a Priest of the Congregation of the Mission, and two representatives of the Vincentian Family lay Associations who have members in MISEVI. At least three of them will reside geographically near the Permanent Secretariat.

7.3.4. The General Assembly, after the presentation of the possible candidates, will elect in three successive ballots the three lay members of the Coordinating Team. Any member of the Association with full right or any member of the General Assembly are eligible to be elected. These elections will be by secret ballot and will require an absolute majority on the first two ballots and a simple majority on the third.

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. Canon 119.

<sup>4</sup> The members of the Coordinating Team are the "Major Officials" of the International Association; cf. Canon 318.

7.3.5. The Priest of the Congregation of the Mission and the Daughter of Charity are nominated by the Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission and of the Daughters of Charity after prior consultation with the Visitors and Visitatrices of the interested provinces.

7.3.6. The two representatives of the Vincentian Associations will be nominated according to their own directional procedures and the guidelines of the Coordinating Team.

7.3.7. All the members of the Coordinating Team are elected or nominated for four years and can be renewed for a maximum of two more terms. The time given to this service will not be so reckoned as to forfeit the status of member with full right. The duration of the nominations of the Daughter of Charity and Vincentian Priest will be flexible, adapted to times set for other functions of coordination liable to unfold in the Vincentian Family, and for a maximum length of 12 consecutive years.

#### 7.4 **National Associations**

7.4.1. The consent of the International Coordinating Team is required to erect a **National Association**. The juridical erection of the said National Association and the approbation of its Statutes pertains to the competent ecclesial authority.<sup>5</sup>

7.4.2 The National Association has its own Statutes in conformity with universal Canon Law and the present International Statutes.

7.4.3 The National Statutes establish the particular norms which are considered appropriate for the country with regard to the organization of members, their rights and obligations, and the missionary work which the Association proposes to do.

7.4.4 The National President and the two Vincentian councillors (a priest of the Congregation of the Mission and a Daughter of Charity) will be elected or appointed according to the determination of the proper Statutes. The election or appointment must be confirmed by the Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission and of the Daughters of Charity.

7.4.5. The other appointments for the different offices of the Association will be made in conformity with the Common Law of the universal Church and the proper Statutes. The duration of the charge of the said offices is determined in the proper Statutes.

7.4.6 The National President informs the Permanent International Secretariat of the appointments made in his/her country.

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. Canons 303 and 312.



## 8. Finances

8.1. The Association is a non-profit organization; its goods are for the poor. The usual way of collaboration will be voluntary and without remuneration, except in those special cases approved by the General Assembly. No members become employees of the Association.

8.2. The Association will help to generate among the different social groups and institutions with whom they collaborate sufficient financial backing to enable each one of the missionaries to provide for basic needs such as room and board, clothing, travel, and recreation according to the local circumstances of the mission where he/she is working.

8.3. Funding for the Association can come from:

- contributions and gifts from well-wishers or institutions,
- dues from Association members,
- revenue obtained from any stipends received for the work of lay missionaries,
- contributions from institutions for services rendered,
- other appropriate means.

8.4. An account will be set up with the primary purpose of reserving and investing some resources to help defray the insurance costs and for the return to the country of origin of those members with more than three years duration as members with full right.

8.5. The Coordinating Team has the duty of determining the criteria for and keeping account of all expenditures. The Treasurer will present an annual report of the accounts for the approval of the Coordinating Team. The Coordinating Team has the task of drawing up and approving the proposed budget, balance, and reports of the Association which will be sent annually to the Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission and of the Company of the Daughters of Charity.

## 9. Relations with the Vincentian family

9.1. The Association, with the independence of its full juridical personality and autonomy, is linked to the Vincentian charism and its spirituality; therefore, in the context mentioned, it recognizes the supreme authority of the **Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission and of the Company of Daughters of Charity**.<sup>6</sup> It is for him to:

9.1.1. give guidelines for living the Vincentian charism,

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<sup>6</sup> In virtue of the pontifical rescripts conceded by His Holiness Pius IX on 20 June 1847 and 19 July 1850, the Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission and the Daughters of Charity is the Director General of the Association of the Children of Mary Immaculate, presently known as the Association of Vincentian Marian Youth. In an analogous way, MISEVI asks that he exercise a similar mission, since it has common historical and charismatic roots.

9.1.2. see to the integrity of missionary expertise,

9.1.3. name the Priest of the Congregation of the Mission and the Daughter of Charity who form part of the Coordinating Team,

9.1.4. confirm the Presidents elected by the General Assembly and by the National Assemblies,

9.1.5. propose possible commitments, mission areas, and themes for study.

9.2. The follow-up and formation in the Vincentian charism of all Association members requires collaboration with the Daughters of Charity and the Priests of the Congregation of the Mission, as among the members of the Vincentian lay Associations, or persons and institutions reflecting Vincentian charism; this spiritual accompaniment will be animated chiefly by the Priest of the Congregation of the Mission and the Daughter of Charity on the Coordinating Team.

## **10. Reform of the statutes, amalgamation, and dissolution of the association**

10.1. The reform of the Statutes and the amalgamation of the Association with others who pursue the same ends must be agreed at the General Assembly and will require a majority of two-thirds of the valid votes as well as approval by the Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission and of the Company of the Daughters of Charity before being presented to the Holy See for its approbation.

10.2. The General Assembly may request of the Holy See the dissolution of the Association with the agreement of two-thirds of the valid votes accepted in extraordinary session, and ratified by the Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission and of the Daughters of Charity.

10.3. With the dissolution of the Association, the remaining financial holdings coming from the liquidation will be handed over to a non-profit making cause, as designated by the Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission and of the Company of Daughters of Charity, as proposed the General Assembly from among those who follow similar ends to those of the defunct Association and which have provided in their Statutes for a like disposal of their goods in case of dissolution.