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Meeting of the Visitors Animation of the Local Communities

Proposals

At the conclusion of the first week of the meeting, the Visitors, guided by their conversations and shared experiences, formulated by groups a few proposals intended to facilitate the service of the Visitors as animators of their local communities.

These proposals were synthesized by the group secretaries of the nine work groups and presented to the entire group.

1. It seems to be necessary to clarify what the Congregation of the Mission understands today by **community life**: what is the end of our community (we are not only priests like diocesan priests). The Superior General could offer some reflections and orientations for the entire Congregation.

2. As to the possibility of editing a *Practical Guide for the Local Superior*, the main proposals of the groups have been:

- That a Guide for the Local Superior, patterned after the Guide for the Visitor, be drawn up.
- That this Guide consist of two parts: the first on the duties and rights of the local superior; the second on spiritual, missionary, and apostolic animation.
- That it be not exactly a Guide, but rather some orienting criteria touching on the diversity of communities in the Congregation.
- That it not be a book, but a formation handbook which could help all the members of the Congregation, not just the superiors.
- That a Committee be formed to do the job.
- That it be proposed by the Superior General, but adapted concretely in each province.
- That the Visitors and provinces each edit a possible Guide for the Local Superior, and that the Superior General extract their common elements for presentation to the entire Congregation.

3. The groups have insisted on the importance of **formation** of those who enter the Community as well as of the local superiors.

- To progressively instruct our younger members on the values of community life (some of these come to us thinking about becoming

- priests or missionaries, but have difficulty in adapting to community life, many of them coming from families of only one or two children).
- To take care in the preparation and celebration of provincial meetings on the formation of local superiors.
 - To promote meetings for the formation of superiors on an interprovincial level.
 - To make formation for community life a topic in every community meeting.
 - To encourage sharing of experiences of community life of the provinces that they may serve as orientation for others, utilizing *Vincentiana* or other means of information.
 - That the Superior General animate our communities by means of letters or reflections based on the realities of each community.

4. About the **Community Project** the groups proposed:

- Work so that the Community Project will be accepted by all missionaries and communities as a necessary instrument for community life.
- In communities and provinces where Community Projects are being elaborated to take care that they do not remain only written, but be lived.
- That the Community Project be related to the Provincial Project and that the Visitor see to it that the communities work every year on one of the objectives of the Provincial Project.
- That the Provincial Project offer clear criteria for drawing up Community Projects.
- That each community be asked to send the Visitor a report on the evaluation of the Community Project.
- That each province technically train people who can help the communities draw up their Community Project.
- That each province teach its younger members from the beginning of their formation about the dynamics of a Community Project.
- That *Vincentiana* publish some Community Projects that could serve as models for other communities; and that Community Projects be shared on a regional level.
- One group proposes that the Community Project be drawn up for three years, with periodical evaluations.

5. Some Visitors and groups of Visitors expressed their **concrete commitment** to the proposals of this meeting:

- The Visitors of the U.S., from provinces in the process of reconfiguration, will directly check on the life of each one of their communities during the coming year.
- A group of Visitors will begin the animation of its communities by taking into account the criteria shared during this meeting.
- Another group of Visitors plans to visit its local communities more frequently.

Dublin, 9.VI.2001