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Postulates Presented to the 40th General Assembly (2004)

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Vincentiana, July-October 2004

Decisions of the 40th General Assembly

Postulates Presented to the 40th General Assembly (2004)

The following text gathers the synthesis of what the 40th General Assembly (2004) treated and decided with regard to the 39 postulates which were presented to it. The General Assembly made different decision about them and, consequently, they will be listed in diverse categories.

- I. Postulates which were approved by the Assembly and which *require action* by the Superior General (with his council): 32 and 33.
- II. Postulates which the Assembly *submitted to the attention* of the Superior General with his council: 3, 5, 9, 21, 24 and 28.
- III. Postulates which the Assembly *submitted to the Superior with his council, with a view toward the next General Assembly*, and which are related to Chapter III of the second part of the Constitutions: 7, 8, 10, 11, 15, 16, 17, 22, 23 and 29.
- IV. Postulates *not approved by the Assembly, but which should be taken into account in the context of postulate 33*: 2, 4 and 37.
- V. Postulates which the Assembly *submitted for the consideration of the corresponding Visitors' Conferences*: 1, 14, 18, 19, 20 and 30.
- VI. Postulates which the Assembly, for various reasons, decided not to take into consideration, following the recommendation of the Postulate Commission: 6, 12, 13, 25, 26, 27, 31, 34, 35, 36, 38 and 39.

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- I. **Postulates which were approved by the Assembly and which require action by the Superior General (with his council): 32 and 33**
32. **(Fr. Robert Maloney):** *The Superior General with his council will devise, in consultation with the Visitors, a method of consultation in preparation for the election of the Superior General at the next General Assembly. The purpose of this method will be to provide to the members of the next General Assembly a list of those suggested for the office of Superior General, as well as information about*

these persons and their availability. The members of the General Assembly will always remain free to vote for other confreres.

This postulate was approved as a decree (cf. Decree 5).

- 33. (Fr. José Ignacio Fernández H. de Mendoza):** That the Superior General name a commission in order to modify (redo) the Statutes of the Congregation of the Mission in the next General Assembly.

II. Postulates which the Assembly submitted to the attention of the Superior General with his council: 3, 5, 9, 21, 24 and 28

- 3. (Vp. Nigerae):** To enhance our universal character, and in keeping with our missionary objectives, solidarity among provinces is required in areas of exchange of personnel and resources.
- 5. (P. Chilensis):** That the Congregation always manifest itself, on an official level, in the face of great events of a worldwide nature which affect the life of the poor, and indicate clearly its position rejecting the unjust action of the powerful (individuals, institutions or countries).
- 9. (P. SAF Occidentis Centralis):** A statute should be added addressing the status of laymen who live in our community houses and share our lives, but do not profess vows. (These men have been called “oblates” in English or “donados” in Spanish.)
- 21. (P. Italica Romana):** We ask that Folleville and other principal Vincentian sites be re-enhanced as a living memory of the Vincentian spirit, even through forms of international cooperation.
- 24. (P. Poloniae):** The enhancement and the pastoral care of Vincentian sites, especially Folleville and Châtillon-les-Dombes.
- 28. (COVIAM):** Establish in Rome an office for Africa.

III. Postulates which the Assembly submitted to the Superior with his council, with a view toward the next General Assembly, and which are related to Chapter III of the second part of the Constitutions: 7, 8, 10, 11, 15, 16, 17, 22, 23 and 29

There were a number of postulates which, since they requested a modification in the text of the Constitutions, the Assembly decided, as proposed by the Postulate Commission, not to discuss them, nor vote on them, but rather to submit them to the Superior General with his council with a view toward the next General Assembly. **These are the following postulates: 7, 8, 10, 11, 15, 16, 17, 22, 23 and 29.**

The opinion of the Postulate Commission (1st solution), and that the General Assembly approved, was this:

That the GA 2004 would not proceed with modifying the texts of the Constitutions, as requested by postulates nos. 7, 8, 10, 11, 15, 16, 17, 22, 23, 29. The Commission feels that changes to the texts of the Constitutions should take place after a particularly careful study on the part of the local communities and the provinces. For that reason it proposes that the Assembly not discuss and vote on these postulates, but refer them to the Superior General and his council in view of the next General Assembly. It is possible, among other things, that a deeper study might show the need for or appropriateness of changes in other points within the Constitutions.

In case the Assembly had decided to examine some of these postulates (2nd solution) and to proceed with the modifications requested, the Postulate Commission invited it to consider them in three groups and for each group it formulated its opinion. It would be useful to keep the Commission's opinion in mind when the occasion arises. The Commission "agreed to the petitions" of postulates 7, 10, 16, 17, 22 and advised not to accept postulates 8, 11, 15, 23 and 29.

7. **(P. Mexicana):** Enrich the wording in the Constitutions with respect to the vow of stability, taking into account the most recent studies that have been done on it.
8. **(P. Mexicana):** That the titles of the Constitutions make explicit reference to the mission. For example, "Vocation for the Mission," "Life in Community for the Mission," "Missionary Apostolic Activity," "Formation for the Mission."
10. **(P. SAF Occidentis Centralis):** Paragraphs 28 to 39 of the Constitutions should be revised to reflect the understanding of our vows, as they are described in our community's document, *Instruction on Stability, Chastity, Poverty, and Obedience* (1996), which itself was mandated by the 38th General Assembly (1992).
11. **(P. Venezuelana):** That the CM go back to its unique end, as St. Vincent recorded it in the Common Rules, substituting it for that which the present Constitutions, in number 1, have expressed.
15. **(P. Indiae Meridionalis):** To create a global Vincentian thrust and collaboration the Superior General could be constitutionally empowered
 - i) to pool together human and material resources to be shared among the Provinces
 - ii) to promote global Vincentian formation especially of the financially poor Provinces

iii) to facilitate ongoing formation and specialization of the Confreres.

16. **(P. Philippinarum):** That the title of Part II Chapter III of the Constitutions be changed from “Chastity, Poverty, Obedience and Stability” to “Stability, Chastity, Poverty and Obedience.”
17. **(P. Philippinarum):** That (in view of Postulatum no. 16) Article 39 which reads, “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” will come after Article 28.
22. **(P. Italica Taurinensis):** Modify Art. 34 of the Constitutions by adding the following text: “Non peccat contra votum paupertatis qui, sine licentia superioris, disponit inter vivos de bonis suis immobilibus.”
23. **(P. Italica Taurinensis):** Modify Art. 61 of the Constitutions in the following manner: “Ut sodales ad omnia officia et munera valide eligantur aut nominentur, requiritur ut saltem a triennio Congregationi sint incorporati et vigesimum quintum annum expleverint, firmis aliis condicionibus a iure universali et proprio statutis.”
29. **(Fr. Martiniano León):** Complete Article 134, § 2 of the Constitutions by filling the existing vacuum, indicating the cases in which:
 - A) It is sufficient that the local superior hear his council.
 - B) The local superior must follow the majority opinion of his council.

IV. Postulates *not approved by the Assembly, but which should be taken into account in the context of postulate 33: 2, 4 and 37*

2. **(Vp. Nigeriae):** Our work with the poor calls for increased collaboration of the CM with the other branches of the Vincentian Family. This requires a provision in our constitution.
4. **(P. Chilensis):** Add at the beginning of Statute 7:

“The missionaries will promote unity and collaboration among the various branches of the Vincentian Family in order to carry out together the service and evangelization of the poor, according to the Vincentian charism.”
37. **(Fr. Jesús María Lusarreta)**

Text of the Statutes No. 7	New Text No. 7
<p>§ 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.</p>	<p>§ 1. The missionaries will take special care to create and promote in our own works or in those entrusted to us the lay associations founded by St. Vincent or that spring from his spirit, for as such they have a right to be part of the Vincentian Family.</p>
<p>§ 2. Although all members should be willing to undertake this work, it is necessary, for some to be more skilled in it.</p>	<p>§ 2. All missionaries have the right to receive adequate formation in order to render this service to the Associations of the Vincentian Family.</p>
<p>§ 3. It is important that this animation have a spiritual, ecclesial, social and civic dimension.</p>	<p>§ 3. It is important that this animation, as a communicating of one's own faith experience, have a spiritual, ecclesial, missionary and social dimension, according to our own charism.</p>

V. Postulates which the Assembly submitted for the consideration of the corresponding Visitors' Conferences: 1, 14, 18, 19, 20 and 30

1. **(Vp. Nigeriae):** Conscious of the increase in vocations in Africa and some other parts of the world, it would be most expedient to regionalize the formation of formators and personnel, for the Vincentian mission. This requires the establishment and support of a central funding for the growing provinces.
14. **(P. Venezuelana):** That our CM Provinces commit themselves, even more in the coming years, to encourage "Youth - Vocational" Promotion, dedicating personnel and resources, especially in the animation of JMV, in order to evangelize the young and share our charism with them.
18. **(PP. Austriae et Germaniae):** The Superior General may provide for a better personal and financial, in case of necessity international, set-up of institutions and houses of our community in Islamic countries, specifically in the Middle East, in order to enable a good Vincentian witness in those places.
19. **(PP. Austriae et Germaniae):** In order to act appropriately to changing conditions of the western world and to enable a real dialogue with Muslims, the guidelines for formation in the

Congregation of the Mission should be adapted, so that the study of Islam is stronger included in our formational education of confreres.

- 20. (PP. Austriae et Germaniae):** In Europe many non-Christian immigrants who are interested in the Christian faith have only little contact with regular parishes. The St. Justin Institute of the Austrian Province has a long experience with a catechumenate for Muslims in Europe and in the formation of catechists. The Superior General may provide for a structure to enable and encourage the exchange of experience of similar institutions and of interested confreres.
- 30. (Fr. Myles Rearden):** That the CM general, provincial, local and individual levels do whatever is possible to promote and support the ministerial priesthood in the Church.

VI. Postulates which the Assembly, for various reasons, decided not to take into consideration, following the recommendation of the Postulate Commission: 6, 12, 13, 25, 26, 27, 31, 34, 35, 36, 38 and 39

Even though the General Assembly decided not to take these postulates into consideration, the Postulate Commission recommended that, at an upcoming General Assembly, attention be given to postulates 27, 34 and 36 (on the Assistants General).

- 6. (P. Colombiae):** Ask the Superior General and his Council to write an instruction on the five virtues of the Congregation of the Mission.
- 12. (P. Venezuelana):** That the General Assembly (by means which it considers most suitable, e.g., by decree...), restore the office of admonisher on all levels: Superior General, Provincial Superiors, Local Superiors, all the local communities of the C.M.
- 13. (P. Venezuelana):** We ask the General Assembly to pronounce on the conflictive situations of “interprovincial” fraternal living together and to determine a way of proceeding — for the entire Congregation — which gives a solution, by decree or by obligatory Statute for all the Provinces of the C.M., and defines the rights and obligations of the missionaries who return to their Province of Origin, after some years of service in the provinces to which they were assigned by their legitimate superiors.
- 25. (P. Poloniae):** The preparation of the new prayer for vocations, common for the entire Congregation (the “Hope of Israel” is considered as from “another epoch”).
- 26. (COVIAM):** Develop, on the level of the Congregation, a formation “ad gentes” program.

27. **(COVIAM):** Name an African Assistant General for Africa.
31. **(P. Salmantina):** Revise the formulation of the active and passive voice of the members of the international missions, in such a way that they can have active voice for certain questions in their province of origin and for other questions in the province and community to which the mission belongs.
34. **(Fr. Antonius Sad Budianto):** Add a new paragraph to Statute n° 57 which will read: There shall be five Assistants General who shall represent the five major regions in which the Congregation works.
35. **(Fr. Antonius Sad Budianto):** The election of the Superior General must be prepared well before the Assembly, so that the Assembly has a good knowledge of the possible candidates.
36. **(Fr. Antonius Sad Budianto):** The election of the Assistants General must be prepared well before the Assembly, so that the Assembly has a good knowledge of the possible candidates who represent the five major regions in which the Congregation works.
38. **(Fr. Luis Huerga Astorga):** That an authorized and competent group draft an explanation on our obedience — vow and virtue — like the *Instruction on the Vows of the Congregation of the Mission, with an introduction by Fr. Maloney (CEME 1996)*, or like the much older *Statute on the Vow of Poverty*, of Alexander VII, or again like the recent norms for the Visitors, regarding chastity.
39. **(Fr. Eugenio Schenato):** I ask if the CM General Assembly can decide to take into consideration the request that the Blessed Virgin made to St. Catherine Labouré 174 years ago: “Have a medal struck *on this model...*” A medal on the requested model, with respect to the image and the symbols, at least as still appear in the documents and writings of St. Catherine.