

STATUTES AND PRACTICAL NORMS OF THE VINCENTIAN CONGREGATION



VINCENTIAN GENERALATE

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STATUTES AND PRACTICAL NORMS

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LETTER OF PROMULGATION

Dear Confreres,

We are all, as members of the community, greatly aware of the necessity of having our Statutes and Practical Norms renewed and adapted in accordance with the directives of the Church. We have been trying to do this during the last couple of years. And now, I am happy to present before you on this day of Pentecost the definitively approved *Statutes and Practical Norms of the "Vincentian Congregation"*.

Here below is a brief description of the history of the formulation of our Statutes and Practical Norms. In the light of the Decree *Perfectae Caritatis* of Vatican II and the *Motu Proprio "Ecclisiae Sanctae"*, the Constitution and Statutes of our Congregation were formulated, renewed and approved by the special General chapter held from September 27, 1969 to May 29, 1971. It was promulgated *ad experimentum* on July 3, 1971, and came into force on August 15, 1971.

The General chapters of 1972 and 1976 made some more changes and modifications in the text and the newly approved text was promulgated *ad experimentum* on December 8, 1976. The following General chapter of 1978, which lasted till January 1980, formulated the final draft and it was promulgated on November 1980 to be in effect till final approval from the Apostolic See could be obtained. This text of our Constitution and Statutes was approved by the Apostolic See on April 28, 1982 with some alterations. the text was promulgated on December 31, 1983.

The Congregation was divided into two Provinces and a Vice-Province on January 1, 1990. The special session of General Chapter of 1988 from 3.4.89 to 15.4.89 had formulated and prepared a final draft of Provincial Administration Rules of the Constitution and Statutes of the “Vincentian Congregation” and it was duly approved *ad experimentum* by the Apostolic See for a period of six years on September 6, 1989. The Apostolic See had also authorised the insertion of the articles of the provincial Administration into the text of the *Constitution and Statutes of the Vincentian Congregation*.

Consequently a new draft of the *Constitution and Statutes of the Vincentian Congregation* was prepared integrating the Provincial Administration Rules into the Constitution and Statutes approved in 1982. The draft was discussed and finalised by the General Synaxis held in April-May, 1997 and was sent to the Apostolic See for final approval. The Apostolic See gave a directive to adapt the submitted text of the *Constitution and Statutes of the Vincentian Congregation* in the light of the newly published *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches*. Rome had given some definite guidelines too. There were queries made on the text and explanations were given. Finally the Apostolic See definitively approved the text of the *Statutes and practical Norms of the “Vincentian Congregation”* in February 2001 (the title Constitution and Statutes being changed into Statutes and Practical Norms in conformity with the Code of Canon Law). At the same time Rome also suggested some minor amendments and recommendations regarding the text so that the text may fit well into the frame work of the new *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches* and that the Oriental nature of our Congregation be explicit in our Statutes and Practical Norms.

The General Synaxis held in April-May 2001 had discussed and finalised the necessary amendments in accordance with the directives given from Rome. Thus, now we have the final text.

As the Superior General of the “Vincentian Congregation” I hereby promulgate the *Statutes and Practical Norms of the “Vin-*

centian Congregation". This would come into force on July 3, 2002, the feast day of St. Thomas our Apostle. Let us pray that his desire for union with Christ and his zeal for the souls, be ours in the third millennium.

All the members of our Congregation are hereby earnestly exhorted to read, study, meditate and faithfully observe the norms given in the *Statutes and Practical Norms of the "Vincen-tian congregation,"* fully convinced that these rules are God-given means for our perfection. Only the observance of these norms would enable us to follow Christ more closely and to strive for evangelical perfection, surrendering ourselves as total self gift to Christ our Lord, to be fully available for God and His people. Let these Rules be close to our hearts - written in our hearts - so that we can lead a renewed Vincentian life in Christ.

Vincentian Generalate
Edappally, 19.05.2002

Fr. George Arackal VC
Superior General

LETTER FROM THE APOSTOLIC SEE

Via della Conciliazione, 34, 00193 Roma
Indirizzo Postale: 00120 Città del Vaticano

CONGREGATIO PRO ECCLESIIIS ORIENTALIBUS

Prot. N. 24/2001

2 February 2001

Dear Reverend Father General,

I write with reference to the renewed Statutes and Practical Norms of the Vincentian Congregation which have been under review at this Congregation after a series of observations had been made in the past several years by the Vincentian Congregation. It is the hope of this Congregation that a final draft of the Statutes and Practical Norms may be discussed at the date of the next General Chapter which will be held in Kerala in the spring of 2001.

To this end this Congregation includes several observations on the articles of the Statutes which had been the subject of discussion over the past years (Enclosure). After detailed study and due consideration, this Congregation is in a position to assure that the text in question will be found to be quite satisfactory.

All things duly considered, therefore, and in virtue of the powers granted it by His Holiness Pope John Paul II, this Congregation for the Oriental Churches hereby definitively approves the Statutes and Practical Norms of the Vincentian Congregation, on condition that the minor amendments and recommendations contained in the attached observations are held in due account

and that the relevant and appropriate changes are effected in the text submitted.

You are requested to communicate to this Congregation the final text of your Statutes as amended in accordance with our observation, at your convenience.

I assure you once more of my deep appreciation of your apostolic services and your prayerful commitment.

If you are in need of any further assistance prior to the General Chapter please be assured of the full co-operation of this Congregation.

With cordial regards and prayerful Best Wishes, I am

Yours sincerely in Christ,

Sd/.

Archbishop Miroslav S. Marusyn
Secretary

Sd/.

Ignace Moussa Card. Daoud
Prefect

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KEY TO THE ABBREVIATIONS

CCEO	<i>Codex Canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium</i>
CR	<i>Common Rules of the Congregation of the Mission</i>
DV	Dei Verbum (Vat. II)
LG	Lumen Gentium (Vat. II)
OT	Obtatam Totius (Vat. II)
PC	Perfectae Caritatis (Vat. II)
VC	Vita Consecrata (Encyclical of Pope John Paul II)

INTRODUCTION

Our Lord Jesus Christ who was sent by the Father and anointed by the Holy Spirit to preach the Gospel to the poor (Lk. 4: 18) continues His mission in the world through the Church. In conformity with the divine plan, communities which dedicate themselves to this mission rise up in the Church from time to time. Inspired by the spirit of God and desiring to lead a religious life in order to follow Christ more closely and to participate in the mission of the Church, especially the evangelisation of the poor, St. Vincent de Paul founded the Congregation of the Mission.

Mar Louis Pazheparambil, the then Vicar Apostolic of Ernakulam (1896-1919), was very much attracted and inspired by the life and activities of the Priests of the Congregation of the Mission. He wished to start a Congregation of the diocesan priests on the model of the Congregation of the Mission. He took steps to implement this desire. He sought the help of Nithirickal Mani Kathanar who himself had a desire to bring the priests of the Congregation of the Mission to the Malabar Church. (See V.C. George, *Nithirickal Mani Kathanar*, 2nd edition Kottayam, Pellissery Publications 1994, p.832). Mani Kathanar told Rev. Fr. Joseph Kariyapurayidathil and Rev. Fr. Mani Paramkulangara about the desire of Mar Louis Pazheparambil and that he intends to send them to Ernakulam for that purpose. Meanwhile, Fr. Joseph Kariyapurayidathil happened to meet Fr. Varkey Kattarath at Poonjar, who encouraged him and strongly supported the idea.

Rev. Fr. Varkey Kattarath, the then Vicar of St. Joseph's Church, Vaikom took the initiative to begin the first House of the "Vincentian Congregation" at Thottakom. It was blessed by Mar Louis Pazheparambil on 20th November 1904. It is Rev. Fr.

Varkey Kattarath who is the chief implementor or executor of the idea of founding a Congregation on the model of the Congregation of the Mission. He is the one who established the first House of the Congregation at Thottakom.

In the letter of Fr. Varkey Kattarath to the Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, dated 30 August 1928 we read, “I was burning with desire to serve the Lord more ardently by leading a life in common. In the year 1904 it seemed that the time mercifully assigned by the Lord has come.... As soon as I mentioned my desire to the Bishop Mar Louis, he gladly approved it and encouraged my proposal. ...with full approval and counsel of the Bishop, we – I along with three secular priests of the same mind and spirit – came together ... and built a small and temporary chapel and house that we could lead a community life. As regards the rules to be followed in our community life, our Bishop proposed to us the rules of the Congregation of the Mission. ...most kindly consider my case as a special one and grant me the privilege of taking the vows of the Congregation of the Mission ... Thus you will satisfy my most ardent and long preserved desire of dying as a son, though most unworthy, of St. Vincent de Paul, whom, since many years, I revere and venerate as my Patron”. (See Fr. G. Appasserry VC, *Historical Documents of the Vincentian Congregation*, Vincentian Generalate, Angamaly, 1983, pp. 141-143).

Fr. Varkey Kattarath felt that he was called by God to start a new religious family. He has defined the ends, the life style and the spirit of the Congregation by accepting the rules of the Congregation of the Mission. Thus we find that the essential traits that define a founder (See John M. Lozano, *Foundresses, Founders and their Religious Families*, Chicago 1983, p. 5) are fulfilled in the case of Rev. Fr. Varkey Kattarath.

After a few years of community life, Fr. Varkey Kattarath and the other Fathers were forced to leave Thottakom one by one due to various adverse circumstances. After some years Rev. Frs. George Mannara, Antony Pauvathil and George Vattamkandathil

expressed their desire to lead a religious life to Mar Augustine Kandathil, the then Archbishop of Ernakulam who directed them to revive the religious community once founded at Thottakom. Accordingly they revived it and began the community life at Thottakom, on 19th July 1927. They also were given the same copy of the common rules of the Congregation of the Mission.

In the light of the facts stated above, the General Synaxis of the Vincentian Congregation held in the year 1997 at the Vincentian Generalate, Edappally, declared that Rev. Fr. Varkey Kattarath is the founder of the “Vincentian Congregation” and that the date of the foundation is November 20th 1904, at Thottakom, Kerala, India.

Since the Congregation draws its spirit and distinctive character from the life and works, and Rules of St. Vincent de Paul, it is called the “Vincentian Congregation”, and St. Vincent de Paul is chosen as the Father and Patron of the Congregation.

STATUTES

CHAPTER ONE

VINCENTIAN VOCATION

i. PURPOSE

1. St. Vincent de Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit set out to follow Christ and to imitate Him more closely and devoted himself to the well being of the poor and the afflicted. He encountered Christ in the poor and served them. Sensitive to the needs of the people of God, he shared the mission of Christ and the Church in the evangelization and assistance of the poor and zealously worked for the formation of good pastors and lay apostles.
2. Called by God to the “Vincentian Congregation” each one of us adheres to the spirit and example of St. Vincent de Paul and commits oneself:
 - a. To strive for evangelical perfection by making every effort to practise those virtues which Our Lord has deigned to teach us by word and example
 - b. To preach the Gospel to the poor, especially the more abandoned and to help them in their integral development
 - c. To help seminarians and priests to grow in knowledge and virtue so that they can be effective in their ministry.

3. Christ, as revealed in the Gospel, is the fundamental and supreme law of our life. Hence the most important purpose of our consecrated life is the pursuit of perfect charity by following Christ more closely and by imitating Him more generously through the practice of the evangelical counsels of obedience, chastity and poverty.
4. The specific and pre-eminent purpose of our Congregation is the evangelization of the poor. It is realized in Popular Missions, retreats, missionary works among non-Christians as well as in the charitable, educational and social apostolate.
5. A whole-hearted commitment to the evangelization of the poor and their human and Christian advancement is the identifying mark of our Congregation. That is our Charism. We experience our vocation mainly in the desire to serve the poor. This desire is to be the compelling force behind all our activities.
6. We shall organize and evaluate all our activities in the light of our specific purpose and Charism, and continue to renew our Congregation in the same spirit. We shall consider the signs of the times and the urgent needs of the Church and of the contemporary world in discerning God's will for us.

ii. NATURE

7. a. The "Vincentian Congregation" is a clerical society of the Syro-Malabar Church, consisting of priests and Brothers. It comes under the category of the societies of Common Life according to the manner of religious ("*ad instar religiosorum*") (CCEO 554). It is of Pontifical Right ("*Status Juris Pontificii*") *.
- b. As a Society in the Syro-Malabar Church this Congregation integrates the Vincentian Charism with the liturgical, spiritual, disciplinary and theological heritage of our particular Church.

8. This Congregation is an apostolic society of common life for the carrying on of the mission of Christ and of the Church amidst the changing conditions of the world.
9. The members of the “Vincentian Congregation”, living in common and forming one family of God, devote themselves to the pursuit of perfect charity through the practice of the evangelical counsels. They strive to practise this charity in the service of God, in genuine fraternal communion and in the missionary activity for the salvation of all, especially the poor.

iii. SPIRIT

10. The spirit of the Congregation is the participation in the spirit of Christ, ever active in the Church, lived and recommended by St. Vincent - an intimate, personal love of the Father, docility to the divine providence and an ardent, compassionate love of the poor.
 - a. From a personal and intimate love of God flow a deep prayer life, an unshakable trust in the divine providence, a determination to give priority to God in all things, the diligence to do His will and an ardent desire to be conformed to Christ in all details of one’s life.
 - b. An ardent and compassionate love of the poor shall inspire us to work hard and to do our best to improve their conditions, and to share their lot by adopting a humble and simple life style.
 - c. Due importance must be given to the study of the Liturgies, Theology, Art and Canon Law of the Oriental Churches and to the study of the Oriental Fathers. These subjects should be dealt with in such a manner that they become a part of the Vincentian Way of Life.
11. All of us should try to understand the spirit of Christ and be imbued with it by having continual recourse to the Gospel as the source of Christian life and to the teaching

and example of St. Vincent, contained especially in the Common Rules.

12. a. We should strive to give expression to the spirit of Christ resplendent in the five virtues – simplicity, humility, meekness, mortification and zeal for the salvation of souls – visualized by St. Vincent.
- b. Of these virtues St. Vincent said: “The Congregation shall apply itself with special zeal to the cultivation and practice of them, so that these five virtues may become, so to speak, the faculties of the soul of the Congregation, and all the actions of each one of its members, may always be animated by them” (CR 2,14).
13. We ought to realize that these virtues and maxims properly lead us to God and help us in the exercise of perfect charity. Moreover, we will find in them the intrinsic living principle of continual conversion, of self renewal, and of adaptation for the apostolate.
14. We shall carry on our apostolic works out of fervent love for God and neighbour, and out of profound esteem for the human and Christian dignity of the children of God whom we serve.

Note:

- * Sacra Congregatio Pro Ecclesiis Orientalibus, Decretum, “*Quadragesimo anno nuper expleto*”, Roma, Feb. 11, 1968.

CHAPTER TWO

VINCENTIAN WAY OF LIFE

15. Every Christian is called to perfection. Our Lord said: “You must, therefore, be perfect just as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Mt. 5:48). We are all the more bound to respond to this call and to give a collective witness to the holiness of the Church because of our special vocation to a dedicated life. This is accomplished through the exercise of perfect charity in our personal life and apostolic activities.

i. LIFE OF PRAYER

16. As we are totally consecrated to God, our Supreme Love, we have a greater obligation to achieve an intimate union with Him by enthusiastically fostering the spirit and the practice of prayer, and leading a life hidden with Christ in God.
17. St. Vincent, our heavenly Patron, bequeathed to his followers a spirituality based on a harmonious combination of contemplation with apostolic activities. Each one of us shall be a living symbol of this spirituality, spending our time generously in loving conversation with God, devoted service to the poor and other apostolic works.
18. A familiar and constant companionship with the Father through Jesus Christ, His Son, in the Holy Spirit is the foundation and goal of our spiritual life. Jesus Christ is the divine teacher, model and author of our holiness (Heb. 12:2). In His Paschal Mystery we find the pattern of our

life. The Holy Spirit through His constant inspiration helps us to be ever more conformed to Christ. We shall, therefore, try our best to have a personal relationship with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and to have a deeper knowledge of and reverence to the mysteries of Trinity and Incarnation and to the Paschal Mystery.

19. a. Our Savior instituted the Eucharistic Sacrifice of His body and blood as a perpetuation of the Sacrifice on the cross and the memorial of His death and resurrection. In its celebration we shall offer ourselves with Christ into the hands of the Heavenly Father and draw ourselves day by day into an ever closer union with God and each other. The Holy Eucharist is also a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a paschal banquet in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace and a pledge of future glory is given to us.
 - b. The celebration of the Holy Qurbana and the Divine Praises should be in keeping with the spiritual traditions of the Syro-Malabar Church realising that these are the primary means of glorification of God and the source of spiritual nourishment.
20. “Ignorance of the Scripture is the ignorance of Christ” (St. Jerome). Our Father St. Vincent had a special devotion to the Holy Scripture. He diligently read it and based his whole life on the teaching of the Gospel, considering it as the rule of Christian perfection. We shall, therefore, everyday zealously read and study the Sacred Scripture, the authentic source of spirituality (DV 25). In order to acquire the excelling knowledge of Jesus Christ, to learn the will of the Father and to participate in the mystery of redemption we shall diligently and prayerfully meditate on the Holy Scripture especially the New Testament.
21. The Divine Praises, the public prayer of the Church in which we praise the Lord and pray for the salvation of the

whole world, is a source of piety and nourishment for our personal prayer and spiritual life.

22. Blessed Virgin Mary, the mother of Christ, is also the mother of the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ. She shared pre-eminently in the mystery of redemption and showed us how we too might share in the same mystery. Therefore, we shall love her as our mother and honour her with a special devotion by imitating her virtues, especially her humility, charity and chastity, to the best of our ability. We shall look upon her as the pre-eminent model of Christian and religious life because of her faith, hope, charity and fidelity to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.
23. The frequent reception of the sacrament of reconciliation increases true self-knowledge, promotes Christian humility and offers the occasion of salutary spiritual direction and increase of grace. These would contribute to the rapid growth in virtue and would also be beneficial to the common good of the whole community.
24.
 - a. Our Lord even during His public ministry retired frequently into solitude to converse with His Heavenly Father in secret. Following His example we shall strive to live constantly in the presence of God, by prayerfully facing every issue that comes up during the day, blending thus our action and prayer into one yearning of the soul for God.
 - b. The habit of prayer, especially of mental prayer, should permeate our whole life. It will help us to lead a life of more intimate union with God, which is highly necessary for our apostolate.
 - c. Silence, interior recollection, mortification, penance, and control of senses are pre-requisites for prayer. In keeping with the tradition of the Syro-Malabar Church, fasting and abstinence should be given due importance in the “Vincentian Congregation”. We shall hold them in high esteem and earnestly endeavour to practise them.

25. Intimate union with Christ shall be fostered by earnestly making use of the spiritual aids, especially, those recommended in our Statutes and Practical Norms.
26. Our spiritual life needs earnest application for other efficient spiritual means, especially examination of conscience, spiritual guidance, annual retreat and other pious practices which are in harmony with the liturgical spirit and conducive to our growth in holiness.
27. Besides the prescribed common prayers and spiritual exercises we shall try to find some time for personal prayer to grow stronger in our love and union with Christ.

ii. FRATERNAL COMMUNION

28. Love and union in the most Holy Trinity is the basic exemplar of fraternal communion. The source of fraternal communion is the love of God diffused in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. It has pleased God to make people holy and save them not merely as individuals but as members of community. The Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, is the sacrament of communion between God and people, and people among themselves. By our fraternal communion we should be able to project the real image of the Church, which is above all a communion of persons united in Christ. The first Christians who shared everything and were of one heart and one soul (Acts 2:42; 4:32) provide the best example of a community life. Moreover, the unity of the brethren is a valuable symbol and pledge of heavenly life. Therefore, being mindful of the communitarian nature of our vocation and of the repeated insistence of our Father St. Vincent on fraternal communion, we shall give primacy of place to community living based on mutual love and esteem and sharing of goods and one another's burdens.
29. We are gathered together by God as a praying community. Our Lord has said; "when two or three are gath-

ered together in my name there I am in their midst” (Mt. 18:20). Holiness can never be considered a mere individual pursuit. Prayer in common and community exercises are means and expressions of our belonging to one family of Christ. Therefore, our confreres shall have great esteem for common spiritual exercises and other community acts.

30. The concelebration of the Divine Liturgy, shared prayers, sharing of thoughts and feelings, spirit of dialogue, readiness to forget and forgive, mutual love, respect, trust and understanding and community acts will help us to promote fraternal communion among us.
31.
 - a. We shall live together in true Christian fellowship as it is a means for personal development and effective apostolate. The community should provide those conditions which are favourable to the development of each one’s God-given talents. Individuals shall be given the opportunity to prepare themselves for the works of our Congregation for which they manifest a special aptitude so that they may fulfil the apostolate of the community more efficiently.
 - b. Charisms and talents are given by God for the community and therefore, they are to be developed as the common property of the Congregation according to the norms and principles laid down by the Statutes, Practical Norms and by the decisions of the General and Provincial Synaxes.
32. Fraternal communion requires of us that we nourish a sense of community and co-responsibility. We should always give preference to the good of the community, even sacrificing our own interests. Thus we will be constantly prepared to render service to our confreres.
33. Fraternal collaboration, especially in pastoral and apostolic endeavours, unites the will and efforts of the brethren for the service of God and of the Church. It also contributes to the strengthening of the bond of the communion.

The members, therefore, should be instructed and trained in the methods of teamwork.

34. a. Brotherly dialogue fosters mutual understanding, confidence and co-operation. It helps us to exchange our opinions and views and to know the will of God. It should, therefore, be effectively practised among us.
- b. The more faithfully we take part in the community acts and the more intensely we practise Christian charity, the richer will be our fraternal communion.
- c. We should hold in high esteem the virtues such as honesty, justice, sincerity, kindness and courage, without which there can be no true Christian life.
35. a. Following the example of St. Vincent, special solicitude and fraternal affection should be extended to our brethren who are sick and aged. Besides providing them medical care, we shall try to involve them in our household affairs and apostolate as much as they are able.
- b. We shall render timely help to the confreres who are in difficulties and sufferings.
- c. All who are sick and aged shall lead a life of commitment in a spirit of prayer and penance (VC 44).
- d. Our confreres who are sick shall preach by their example of suffering, the Christian virtues, especially patience and conformity to the will of God.
36. With great discretion and charity we shall keep secrecy in matters which are not expedient to be revealed, by their very nature or by circumstances.

iii. THE EVANGELICAL COUNSELS

37. Being incorporated into the Mystical Body of Christ by baptism (1Cor. 12:13) and strengthened with the power of the Holy Spirit by the sacrament of chrism, we are called by God the Father for a greater manifestation of our baptis-

mal consecration through the profession of the evangelical counsels.

38. This religious consecration grounded in perfect charity, enables us to free ourselves from the obstacles which might draw us away from the fervour of charity and perfection of divine worship (LG 44) and to place our heart and soul at the disposal of our community for serving God and our neighbour.
39. This consecration grows in perfection since, by virtue of firmer and steadier bonds it serves as a better symbol of the unbreakable link between Christ and His Spouse, the Church (LG 44, 2).
40. By the practice of the evangelical counsels, voluntarily undertaken for the sake of the Kingdom of God, we seek an intimate, personal and experiential friendship with Our Lord necessary for a fruitful apostolate. They are of great advantage to us in leading a holy and detached life after the example of Jesus Christ and His Mother.
41. The members of the “Vincentian Congregation” profess obedience, chastity and poverty. These vows are private (CCEO 889 § 4).¹

A. OBEDIENCE

42. After the example of Jesus Christ who came to the world to do the will of the Father (Jn. 4:34) and was obedient even unto the death on the cross (Phil. 2:8), all of us mindful of our human limitations, shall strive in common under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to obey the salvific will of Christ which manifests itself to us in many ways.
43. Through the profession of obedience we surrender fully our own will as a sacrifice to God and are united permanently and securely with His salvific will. So we subject ourselves to the Superiors whom faith presents as God’s representatives to us (PC 14,1).

44. We are called to manifest the obedience of Our Lord in our life. Through obedience our works are co-ordinated and united, and thus the welfare of the Church, as well as that of the Congregation, is promoted. Therefore, we have to obey our Superiors in accordance with our Statutes and Practical Norms.
45. Let each one in a supernatural spirit submit himself not only to the Superiors, but even to the other confreres, in matters pertaining to their office. All shall, therefore, co-operate through an active and responsible obedience to fulfil the assignments.
46.
 - a. Obedience is not a mere passive carrying out of orders but a free and generous acceptance of God's salvific will for each one, for the community and for mankind.
 - b. Obedience does not in any way diminish the dignity of the human person, but leads to maturity as a consequence of that enlarged freedom which belongs to the children of God.
 - c. In the execution of commands and in the discharge of assignments, let each one actively and with a sense of responsibility employ the powers of his intellect and will and the gifts of nature and grace (PC 14, 2).
47. By the practice of obedience we serve the Church in a more efficacious, orderly and united way, obeying our Superiors. We are subject to the Supreme Pontiff as our Supreme Superior, whom we are obliged to obey by our sacred bond of obedience.
48. When we are asked to do some work, we shall do it gladly, fully convinced that we are serving the community and doing the will of God. We shall willingly go wherever we are sent. But we are allowed to express frankly the difficulties we feel as regards the work we are asked to do or the place we are asked to go.

49. Superiors will strive to exercise authority in a spirit of love and service, knowing well that each confrere has been called to building up the Body of Christ according to the gifts of nature and grace. With confidence in the confreres they will promote initiative and collaboration among the confreres and in a special way strive to achieve unity in the community.
50. The confreres who ask for the permission and the Superior who grants it should judge the matter and circumstance objectively without prejudice and selfish motives.
51. When a Superior denies a permission we have the right to approach the higher Superior for the same. But we have to inform him of the denial by the lower Superior and the reason thereof, if known. Ordinarily without hearing the Superior who has denied it, the higher Superior shall not grant the same.
52. Through the exchange of experiences and in an open and responsible dialogue in which different ages and mental attitudes react with one another, goals and aspirations mature and Superiors are helped in making decisions. We shall try to carry out these decisions in the light of faith even though we may think that our own opinion is better. Thus mutual understanding and union of hearts between Superiors and confreres will be fostered.

B. CHASTITY

53. By the vow of chastity undertaken voluntarily for the Kingdom of God we renounce the married life so that we may be able to open our hearts more widely for making prompt response to the love of God and ensure our total availability for the apostolate (PC 12,1).
54. The life of celibacy, a special gift of God, by which we give ourselves to God, does not stifle affection nor diminish personality but sublimates them to fuller charity and liberates the human heart in a unique way so that it may

be more concerned with God and His cause in order to please Him.

55. By continuous and mature response to the divine vocation, our whole way of living will be a joyful expression of that love between Christ and the Church, which will be fully manifested in the world to come. It thus reveals to all how the Kingdom of God prevails over every other earthly consideration.
56. Since the observance of total continence intimately involves the deeper inclinations of human nature (PC 12, 3), we have to employ all natural and supernatural means to keep it intact and fruitful.
57. Intimate union with Christ, true fraternal communion, zeal for the apostolate, and an asceticism proved by the experience of the Church will make our chastity secure and even more fruitful.
58. Celibacy being a surpassing gift of grace and an expression of an undivided love for God, we shall earnestly ask for it everyday in our vocal and mental prayers, and be united to God as intimately as possible.
59. Emotional and psychological maturity is very necessary in the observance of chastity. Therefore, adequate knowledge about celibate life consecrated to God, is to be acquired.
60.
 - a. Everyone, especially the Superiors, shall remember that chastity has stronger safeguards in the community where fraternal love thrives among the members and the basic needs of intimate love, recognition and joy are met (PC 12).
 - b. We shall always keep watch over our inclinations and passions, and try to sublimate them. With a certain spiritual instinct we should spurn everything that would likely imperil chastity.

- c. We shall keep a vigilant control over the internal and external senses. Let us gladly accept all burdens and turmoils of our daily life and the obstacles that confront us in the fulfilment of our duties and keep ourselves always engaged in some useful works.

C. POVERTY

61. Christ though rich became poor for us so that out of His poverty we might become rich. By our vocation we are bound to bear witness to the poverty of Christ both collectively and individually. We, by the vow of poverty, free ourselves from all undue concern for riches and material goods, and rely on divine providence (PC 13).
62. Since we are called to form an apostolic community following the example of Christ in His evangelization of the poor, we have to engage ourselves in the service of the poor and spend our talents and goods for promoting the apostolic works, for the needs of the Church and for the betterment of the people. Being fully conscious of the miseries of the people and seeing God in them we should be solicitous to help them.
63.
 - a. As the law of labour is universal, every one of us should labour earnestly to contribute his share to the concerted work of the Congregation. Since we are members of one and the same family, the fruits of our labours shall be common to all of us (PC 13, 3).
 - b. We shall employ our own personal resources not only for ourselves, but also, as much as possible, for the benefit of our confreres avoiding all distinctions among us.
 - c. Communities themselves (Provinces and Houses) renouncing their own advantages, should be united to one another by a strong bond of solidarity (PC 13, 5).
64. Our poverty should become a sign of charity, a fortress of our community and a mark of authenticity of our vocation in the Church and in the world.

65. We shall be satisfied with the food, clothing, books, furnishings of the room and other necessary things which are given to us. No one can dispose of or give away these things without the permission of the Superior.
66. We shall not have things in our possession without the permission or knowledge of the Superior. One shall be always willing to renounce them if so asked by him.
67. We shall not appropriate the things of the community, much less give them to others without the consent of the Superior.
68. All of us shall remember that in the use of material goods it is not sufficient just to have the permission of the Superiors, but it is necessary that each one should judge whether it is expedient and suitable to our state of life and ministry, according to the mind and spirit of St. Vincent.
69. The following goods belong to the Congregation:
 - a. All movable or immovable goods or their equivalents given to it or for its works, or acquired by it legally, and all income from these goods. Equivalent to immovable goods are all modern profit producing goods, as well as the rights to profit (such as titles, bonds, shares, annuities, fixed deposits, chitty or other profitable investments)
 - b. Movable goods or money given to the members on any title or by any one except one's own relatives, as they are presumed to be given for the apostolic works of the Congregation
 - c. The earnings of the members, the fruits of their work or talent
 - d. Movable goods and money of the members after their death
 - e. Stipend for the Holy Mass or any other priestly ministry.
70. a. We, the members, are presumed to retain dominion of immovable goods or their equivalents, which we now pos-

sess or will possess in future by hereditary right, legacy, or other legal means of acquiring property saving Statutes no. 69.

- b. We are obliged to apply the yield of our goods to pious works and to the service of the poor, since we have dedicated ourselves and our goods to the ministry of evangelizing the poor and helping them in their needs. This is the principal and positive norm of poverty for us, Vincentians.
 - c. The duties of piety and justice demand that, in the first place we provide for our needy parents and relatives from this income, with the permission of the Superior.
 - d. Since evangelical poverty is not only of spirit, but also of goods, we can not keep the yield of our goods, nor convert them into immovable goods or their equivalents, which is equal to ‘capitalizing’ by accumulating yield and capital.
 - e. We can, with the permission of the Superior, use the yield of our goods for our own personal needs. This is only a permissive norm, clearly by way of concession, and in no way positively recommended, considering the communal dimension of our poverty.²
71. Private money or movable goods owned by the members either by inheritance or legacy, or by donation from one’s own relatives, can be used only with the permission of the Superior and in the spirit and for the purpose mentioned in Statutes no. 70.

iv APOSTOLIC ACTIVITIES

72. a. As a chosen part of the Mystical Body of Christ, we have a special role to play in the mission of the Church. We are called to take an active part in the mission of Christ in the Church by proclaiming the revelation and reality of love of God towards all.

- b. To do our apostolic activities successfully we have to make use of suitable and efficacious means in accordance with our laws.
73. Our apostolic activities should spring from an intimate union with Jesus Christ. They shall be based on the principles of the Gospel and the spirit of St. Vincent, which give them unity and dynamism.
74. The entire religious life of the members should be permeated by an apostolic spirit as their entire apostolic activity should be animated by a religious spirit.
75. In imitation of Christ, who assumed our human condition and dwelt among us, we shall “become all things to all” (I Cor.9:22) sharing their lot and serving them in a spirit of openness, understanding and dialogue.
76. The members shall dedicate themselves to apostolic activities in a spirit of service and labour without any desire for worldly gain, renouncing their own conveniences and “seeking above all the kingdom of God and His justice” (Mat.6:33). They shall bear witness to Christ by a truly evangelical life in much patience, long suffering, kindness, unaffected love, and if need be, even by shedding their own blood.
77. Envisaging the good of the universal Church and feeling one with her, we shall engage ourselves in the apostolic activities in co-ordination with those of the local and the universal Church. With a spirit of co-responsibility all should be willing to serve the Church.
78. We should accommodate our varied apostolic activities - charitable, educational and social - according to the more urgent needs of the Church and the country.
79. In order that our apostolate in the Church may be more effective and fruitful:

- a. We shall labour with pleasure in fraternal co-operation with the Local Hierarchs, diocesan clergy, the religious institutes and the laity.
 - b. We shall share the better experience of others and also employ the technological media of social communication. The methods of our apostolate, even though efficient and modern shall never be ostentatious.
80. Not content with our own instrumentality in the work of evangelization we shall instill in others the awareness and the spirit of serving the poor. We shall also acknowledge and promote the role of the laity in the mission of the Church.

A. EVANGELIZATION.

81. a. In places where the Gospel has not yet been preached or the Church is not yet well established, all of us, under the direction of the Superior General, should be ready to respond to the manifold requirements of evangelization.
- b. Evangelization is an Ecclesial act according to the mandate of Jesus Christ (Mt. 28:19-26). As a Society in the Syro-Malabar Church the “Vincentian Congregation” shares the missionary responsibility to preach the Gospel, preserving the identity and the spiritual heritage of this particular Church.
82. As St. Vincent dedicated himself to serve the poor materially and spiritually, we too shall regard the poor as our pre-eminent lot in the work of evangelization so that we may proclaim to them the mystery of salvation and help them in their needs. We shall engage ourselves in the process of empowering the poor.
83. Let our missionaries realize that they have no other aim but building up the Church of Christ and spreading by word and deed His message, among the people for whom they are sent. Therefore, every one according to his abili-

ty, charism and appointed task, shall willingly spend oneself for the sake of the Gospel.

84. The missionaries shall bear in mind that the success of their mission depends on the holiness of their life and personal union with God. Therefore, our missionaries shall take care to fulfil all the spiritual exercises that are required by our Statutes and Practical Norms.
85. When there is no possibility to preach the Gospel directly and immediately, the missionaries shall at least bear witness to Christ by prayers, charity and works of mercy with all patience, prudence and great confidence. Thus they will prepare the way of the Lord.
86. The missionaries shall remember that in the mission field they represent the Congregation and shall always foster their attachment to it, preserving the religious identity in their mode of life and conduct.
87. Besides the general missionary orientation that has to be given to all, those who opt for the mission should have many occasions to keep their missionary interest alive and active.

B. POPULAR MISSION

88. Popular Mission is our specific form of preaching the Word of God. Following the example of St. Vincent, the Congregation shall lay great stress on preaching Popular Missions and retreats and on teaching catechism to the people adopting diverse methods suited to the times and places. Thus we shall enkindle faith in their hearts and help them towards their renewal and building up of a true Christian community.
89. Popular Mission is a distinctive work of the Congregation from its very beginning. All of us shall be prepared for it. Adequate training, both theoretical and practical is to be given to our confreres from their Novitiate onwards.

C. ECUMENISM

90. We shall engage ourselves in ecumenical activities and shall co-operate with other Christians and non-Christians in socio-religious and cultural matters.
91. We shall conduct ecumenical meetings and dialogues wherever possible to promote Christian unity. To this end we shall enter into relationship with the local, national and international organizations.

D. CHARITABLE AND SOCIAL WORKS

92. The fundamental principle of our social and charitable activities is the social message of Jesus revealed in the Sacred Scriptures and practised by St. Vincent de Paul. As the purpose of those activities is to bring the people to the Kingdom of God they are not mere humanitarian works. The words of our Lord in the description of the last judgement, “Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of my brethren you did it to me” (Mt. 25:40), should inspire us in particular.

E. EDUCATIONAL AND LITERARY ACTIVITIES

93. Through educational works, we are fulfilling the duty of forming worthy children for the Church and responsible citizens for the State. Therefore, our educational institutions must distinguish themselves by their spiritual, intellectual and cultural excellence.

Notes:

1. By ‘private’ it is meant that these vows are not ‘accepted’ by the Superior / his delegate in the name of the Church but the Superior / his delegate acts as a witness of the profession made by the members.
2. St. Vincent de Paul, foreseeing many difficulties in the observance of poverty in his Congregation, considered as a body of secular priests, opportunely provided the following ‘fundamental statute of poverty’

of the Congregation of the Mission and got it approved by Pope Alexander VII in 1659.

“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 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 judgement 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” (Constitutions and Statutes of the Congregation of the Mission, Rome, 1984, P. 96).

CHAPTER THREE

MEMBERSHIP IN THE CONGREGATION

94. All of us, priests and Brothers, who are made partakers of the royal priesthood of Christ by the Sacraments of baptism and chrism, and having a specific vocation are incorporated into the “Vincentian Congregation”. We have to respond to our vocation by living according to the teachings, ideals and examples of St. Vincent de Paul, our Father. Moreover, priests participate in the ministerial priesthood of Christ, who is priest, shepherd and teacher.
95. Incorporation into the Congregation takes place in three stages:
 - a. Initial incorporation – when one is admitted into the Novitiate
 - b. Temporary incorporation – when one makes the temporary profession of the three evangelical counsels after the completion of the Novitiate
 - c. Perpetual incorporation – when one makes the perpetual profession.

i. RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS

96. All the members who have made at least the temporary profession have the rights and obligations as specified in our Statutes and Practical Norms.
97. a. In a spirit of active and responsible obedience all of us shall observe the Statutes, Practical Norms and other directives of the Congregation.

- b. We shall regard them as God-given means for our salvation and for acquiring the perfection proper to our vocation.
98. All of us shall have high esteem and veneration for the Common Rules given by St. Vincent de Paul as they constitute the foundation of the Statutes and Practical Norms of our Congregation.
99. All priest members shall take care to live according to the common obligations of clerics (CCEO 561).
100. All perpetually professed members¹ have the right of voting (active voice). Priests after one year of pastoral experience and Brothers who have completed ten years after the first profession shall have the right to be elected (passive voice).
101. The following persons lack both active and passive voice:
- a. Those who have an indult of exclauration (CCEO 491)
 - b. Our members who have been raised to Episcopal dignity or even nominated during as well as after the fulfilment of the office
 - c. Those who have ecclesiastical dignity with jurisdiction.

ii PROVINCIAL ENROLMENT

102. By the profession of the evangelical counsels, one is incorporated into the Congregation and is enrolled into a particular Province. One gets the local enrolment when he is given a stable assignment to a House by the competent authority.
- 103.a. The Provincial enrolment of a member can be changed with the consent of the Provincial Superiors concerned with the consent of their Councils and with the permission of the Superior General.
- b. In case a member approaches the Provincial Superior with a request to change his provincial enrolment and

permission is denied, the Superior General may, as circumstances warrant it, intervene and enrol him to a Province willing to accept him.

- 104.a. The services of a member may be lent to another Province for a fixed period with the consent of the Provincial Superiors concerned, and with the knowledge of the Superior General.
 - b. When circumstances demand it, either of the Provincial Superiors with the concurrence of the Superior General may recall or send back the member even before the expiry of the stipulated period.
 - c. Likewise the Superior General, having informed both the Provincial Superiors, can ask the member to return to his original Province.
 - d. A member from another Province can be elected or appointed under postulation to hold any office in the Province. The consent of the Superior General as well as the Provincial Superior of the member must be obtained.
- 105.a. The provincial enrolment of the Superior General, and the General Councillors will remain suspended during their term of office.
 - b. When a member of a Province is assigned a work in the Generalate or in any institution or mission directly under the Generalate he retains his Provincial enrolment. He will have local enrolment in the House to which he is assigned by the Superior General.
 - c. When the service of a member is lent to another Province or when a member habitually stays in another Province on an assignment given by the Superior General, his original Provincial enrolment shall be retained, and he shall be given local enrolment in the House to which he is assigned and he will be subject to the provincial authorities of the place, as regards religious discipline.

iii. FORMATION

106. The formation programme should be such that:
- a. Each member, cleric or Brother, comes daily to a deeper appreciation of the fact that Jesus Christ and His Mystery is the centre of his life and the fundamental law of our Congregation.
 - b. All of us, animated by the spirit of St. Vincent de Paul and leading a community life in the Congregation, become fit for carrying out its specific works of apostolate.
107. As grace does not destroy, but perfects nature, our formation aims at human maturity which serves as a solid foundation of the Christian and consecrated life.
108. The period of formation shall be planned in such a way that the candidates are enabled to accomplish the apostolic mission. This requires of us the spirit of sacrifice and the continuous encounter with Christ.
- 109.a. The disciplinary norms are to be regarded not only as a strong protection for community life and charity, but also as a necessary part of training. Its purpose is to inculcate self-control, to promote solid maturing of personality and the formation of those other traits of character, which are most useful for the orderly and fruitful activity of the Church.
- b. The disciplinary norms shall be applied according to the age and psychology of the candidates so that they may gradually learn to govern themselves, to make wise use of their freedom, to accustom themselves to act responsibly and thus grow into human and Christian maturity and to work along with their confreres and others.
110. Personal responsibility and conviction, which are of great importance in all human affairs, should shine forth in the decision by which one responds to the divine call to the

Congregation. Therefore, we should preserve and foster that sense of personal responsibility and conviction in the whole process of formation, especially in the case of perpetual incorporation or reception of Sacred Orders.

111. In the formation of our members there shall be a thorough co-ordination among the diverse programmes of training. Further, there ought to be an organic unity running through the successive stages of formation. The entire programme should be aimed at and co-ordinated towards the attainment of the goal of our community.
112. The formation period is not only a remote preparation but also an initiation into the apostolic work of our Congregation. So even during the formation, members are to be given opportunities to participate in our apostolic works according to each one's training and circumstances.
113. It is of great importance that the personal endowment of each member be well utilized for the efficient accomplishment of our apostolate. Therefore, besides the common formation, specific and personal training should be given to all, as far as possible, taking into account their talents and the needs of the apostolate.
114. Our formation, especially the pastoral oriented, is to be continued and renewed throughout our whole life.
115. There shall be special directories for each stage of formation according to our Statutes, Practical Norms and the directives of the Church. They shall give the disciplinary rules, pious practices and customs, curriculum of studies and directions for other extra curricular activities.

A. PROMOTING VOCATIONS

116. Remembering the Words of Our Lord, "the harvest indeed is great but the labourers are few" (Mt. 9:37), all of us shall take great care in cultivating and fostering genuine vocations for our Congregation.

117. We shall not forget that our good example of a true Christian and apostolic life affords the highest recommendation for our community and the most appealing invitation to embrace our way of life.

B. MINOR SEMINARY

118. The Minor Seminary which is to nurture the seeds of vocation is of great importance. Candidates who are admitted to the Minor Seminary shall be initiated into the life of the Congregation by a special religious formation, primarily by spiritual guidance and by teaching them to follow Christ the Redeemer with a generous and pure heart (OT 3), according to the example of St. Vincent de Paul.

C. NOVITIATE AND PROFESSION

119. In the Novitiate, the candidates who are preparing themselves for the formal incorporation into our Congregation shall be given an intense and specific training as regards the practice of the evangelical counsels and the life and mission of our Congregation.
120. Care shall be taken that:
- a. The novices acquire greater maturity, human, Christian and Vincentian.
 - b. They may be gradually made fit for a consecrated life through the practice of the evangelical counsels and prepared to undertake freely, in due time the obligations rising from such a life, in the “Vincentian Congregation”.
 - c. They may be gradually and progressively initiated, into the proper knowledge and experience of the life and apostolic works of the Congregation.
121. The Major Superior concerned with the consent of his Council shall admit the candidate to the Novitiate (CCEO 519). For the validity and liceity of admission, the candidates should have completed the 17th year of age. In re-

- spect of other requirements the prescription of the Canon Law shall be observed (CCEO 517).
122. The right to dismiss novices on account of just and reasonable cause belongs to the Provincial Superior. He, with the consent of his Council, after considering the reports of the master of novices, takes the decision (CCEO 525 § 1).
 123. At least twelve months are to be spent in the Novitiate. In individual cases the Provincial Superior after consultation with the master of novices, may allow an interruption, not exceeding three months, which is to be made up if it exceeds 15 days (CCEO 523).
 124. The novice master shall instruct and form the novices according to the principles stated in our Statutes and Practical Norms. He shall take special care to teach them the principles of spiritual life, especially based on the Sacred Scripture, the particular nature of our Congregation, obligations of consecrated life, teachings of St. Vincent de Paul, etc. If necessary, an assistant to the master of novices may be appointed (CCEO 524).
 125. At the completion of twelve months in the novitiate the candidates, if they are found fit, are allowed on application in the prescribed form, to make the temporary profession. Otherwise they shall be sent away. If some doubts about the fitness of a certain novice remain, the period of Novitiate may be extended. However, the extension shall not exceed six months (CCEO 461 § 2).
 126. The candidates make temporary profession annually for the first five years after the Novitiate (CCEO 526).
 127. The period of the temporary profession may be extended or shortened by the Superior General with the consent of his Council. This period shall last for no less than three years and not more than six years, counting the time continually (CCEO 526 § 2).

- 128.a. After the period of temporary profession they make the perpetual profession of the evangelical counsels .
- b. When one has made the perpetual profession he becomes a full-fledged member.

D. MAJOR SEMINARY

129. The period of training in the Major Seminary is meant to give a comprehensive formation to the scholastics (OT 4). This ought to enable them to become true shepherds of souls after the model of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who is teacher, priest and shepherd (LG 28).
130. The scholastics shall be given spiritual, pastoral, intellectual and cultural training in accordance with the directives of the Church (OT 4).
- 131.a. Priority should be given to spiritual formation of the seminarians so that they live according to the Gospel and grow strong in faith, hope and charity. Care must be taken that during the period of formation they lead a common life according to the custom of our Congregation and that they receive appropriate Vincentian training.
- b. The seminarians shall carefully study and earnestly practise whatever is said on the life of prayer in our Statutes and Practical Norms.
- c. It is strongly recommended that every seminarian shall approach his spiritual director once a month for receiving appropriate direction.
- 132.a. Seminarians desiring to receive holy orders have to submit applications to the Provincial Superior.
- b. Their fitness shall be evaluated by the Rector, who sends the report to the Provincial Superior.
- d. The Provincial Superior with his Council takes the final decision and promotes those who are fit.

133. After having completed their clerical studies, our priests shall continue the studies of Sacred Sciences and related secular topics (CCEO 372).

E. FORMATION OF BROTHERS.

134. The formation of Brothers should comprise of the human, spiritual, doctrinal and practical aspects of the Vincentian way of life. It must be accommodated to their natural talents and to the needs of our apostolate.
135. The formation of Brothers should be such that, as full-fledged members of our community, they shall be able to participate in all our activities, in the service of the Body of Christ by helping in the pastoral ministry and working in temporal and social fields of our apostolate, including the administration of the temporalities of the House and other needs of the community.
136. The training of Brothers in the Novitiate ought to be of the same pattern as that of the clerics, unless special circumstances demand a change.
137. Aspirants to Brotherhood shall undergo a period of postulancy under a director appointed by the Major Superior before they are admitted to the Novitiate. The period of postulancy shall normally be two years. During the postulancy, the aspirants are to be given a special spiritual orientation. They shall be initiated into the life of our Congregation.

iv. DEPARTURE AND DISMISSAL

138. With regard to the departure and dismissal of members all the prescriptions of the Canon Law should be strictly observed.
139. At the completion of the term of temporary profession, one is free to leave the Congregation (CCEO 546 § 1).
140. When one requests dispensation from temporary profession for a just and reasonable cause, the Superior General can grant it with the consent of his Council (CCEO 546 § 2).

- 141.a. On account of grave reasons, such as lack of religious spirit, the Superior General with the consent of his Council can dismiss a member who is bound by temporary vows (CCEO 552).
 - b. The dismissed member can appeal to the Apostolic See with a suspensory effect within ten days from the notification of the dismissal (CCEO 552 § 3).
 - c. Infirmary is not a sufficient reason for dismissal unless it is proved with certainty that it was deceitfully concealed before the first formal incorporation (CCEO 547 § 2).
- 142.a. By the very fact of dismissal the obligations of the temporary profession cease.
 - b. If he is a cleric, the Canon Law is to be followed (CCEO 498 § 3; 500-503 & 562 § 3).
143. The Superior General is the competent authority with regard to the dismissal of a perpetually professed member (CCEO 553).
- 144.a. The dismissal of a member who is bound by the perpetual profession must necessarily be preceded by three offenses with a double admonition and failure to amend (CCEO 500 § 2).
 - b. Grave external scandal, serious imminent danger to the community, and incorrigibility after repeated, serious and formal warnings, are sufficient reasons for dismissal (CCEO 498 § 1).
145. As regards the obligations of the perpetually incorporated members after their dismissal, the norms of the canon (CCEO 502) are to be followed.
146. A member shall be held dismissed from the Congregation by the law itself, who has publicly rejected the Catholic faith or has contracted or attempted marriage, even if only a civil one (CCEO 497 § 1).

- 147.a. One who lawfully departs or who was lawfully dismissed from the Congregation cannot claim anything from it for any kind of work performed therein (CCEO 503 § 1).
- b. The congregation, however, shall extend equitable and evangelical charity toward a member who is being separated from it (CCEO 503 § 2).

Note:

- 1 Seminarians who are still in the formation period, though perpetually professed, do not enjoy the right of voting (active voice).

CHAPTER FOUR

ADMINISTRATION

I. ADMINISTRATION OF THE CONGREGATION

148. All the confreres are called to the Congregation to continue the mission of Christ. They must realize that they have both the responsibility to work together for the good of the whole community, and the right and duty to participate effectively in the government of the Congregation according to the norms of our Statutes and Practical Norms (PC 14; CR 11,3).
149. Those who exercise the God-given authority shall set before the confreres the example of Christ who came not to be served but to serve (Mt. 20:28). Let them, therefore, serve the community in the spirit of Christ. It will promote a true communion of life and apostolate of our Congregation (PC 14).
150. They shall enter into dialogue with the confreres and encourage them to co-operate generously for the well-being of the Congregation and the Church. However, they retain the authority to decide and command what is to be done.
151. We shall observe the principle of subsidiarity throughout the administration. Affairs which can be cared for by individual members or at lower levels of administration shall not be taken over at a higher level. On the other hand, the unity of the administration necessary for the pursuit of the aims and the good of the Congregation must be preserved intact.

152. The faithful observance of our Statutes and Practical Norms is to be urged by the Superiors. Christ who has entrusted to them grave obligations will one day require of them an account of their stewardship (Heb. 13:17; PC 14).
153. There are three levels of administration in the “Vincentian Congregation” – General, Provincial and Local.
154. The General Synaxis, the Superior General, the Provincial Synaxis, the Provincial Superiors and the Superiors of the Houses exercise over the confreres that power defined by the Common Law of the Oriental Churches and our own Statutes and Practical Norms (CCEO 511 § 1).
155. The term Major Superiors shall mean the Superior General, the Provincial Superiors and the assistant Superior General and the assistant Provincial Superior, when they act as Major Superiors (CCEO 418 § 1).

i. GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

156. By the General Administration we mean the overall governance of the whole Congregation by the highest authority in the Congregation with due respect to the subsidiarity of authority at different levels.
157. The administration of the Congregation is done ordinarily by the Superior General with his Council and extra-ordinarily by the General Synaxis (CCEO 511).
158. For the better administration and more efficient apostolate, the “Vincentian Congregation” is divided into Provinces or Vice-Provinces, Regions or Missions according to the norms of law.

ii. PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION

159. A Province is a part of the Congregation, consisting of several Houses ruled directly by a Major Superior (CCEO 508 § 1). It constitutes a major administrative unit within

- a fixed territory and is canonically erected by an act of the General Synaxis.
160. A Province normally should be self-sufficient in personnel and finance. Special circumstances such as diversity of languages, wide territorial differences etc., may demand exceptions.
 161. A Province enjoys freedom of internal administration subject to the overall supervision of the Superior General with his Council.
 162. a. The General Synaxis by a decree may erect, divide or suppress a Province or Vice-Province or alter their boundaries or combine several of them together, with a two third majority of votes.
 - b. The Superior General with the consent of his Council, however, is empowered to alter the boundaries of Provinces at the request of the Provincial Synaxes concerned.
 163. Unless, otherwise stated explicitly, any provision in our law regarding the Provincial administration is equally applicable to the administration of a Vice-Province.
 164. a. When a Province is divided and a new Province is set up all the assets and liabilities shall be divided proportionately and equitably safeguarding the wills of the pious founders and donors, lawfully acquired rights, and our particular law. In case of disputes the Superior General with his Council decides the matter.
 - b. The division of the archives of the mother Province is reserved to the decision of the Superior General after he has heard the Provincial Superiors concerned.
 165. a. Although each Province is circumscribed by territorial boundaries, it is possible for a House or Centre of one Province to be erected within the territory of another Province with the permission of the Superior General with his Council and with the consent of the concerned Provincial Superior with his Council.

- b. If the common good requires it, the Superior General with the consent of his Council, may erect anywhere a House, residence or institution. If, however, it is within the territory of a Province, he may do so after having consulted the Provincial Superior concerned.

II SYNAXES

- 166.a. Superiors and Synaxes possess power of governance for both the external as well as the internal forum, in conformity with Statutes and Practical Norms (CCEO 511 § 2).
- b. A General/Provincial synaxis is the one which holds the highest authority in the Congregation/Province according to the norm of the Statutes and Practical Norms, representing the entire Congregation/Province. It should be a true sign of unity and love of the members (CCEO 512).
167. All deliberations of the synaxes must be based on the Statutes approved by the Apostolic See. Nothing must be ever decided which is contrary to its spirit.
168. The General Synaxis can propose to the Apostolic See, and the Provincial synaxis to the General Synaxis alterations and additions to the Statutes provided they are in harmony with the spirit of the Statutes. Any addition, alteration or derogation in the Statutes are to be made by two third majority of votes of those present. Amendments to the Statutes are to be approved by the Apostolic See.
169. Synaxes are of two kinds: Ordinary and Extraordinary.
 - a. Ordinary synaxis is the one held every fourth year to conduct the election and to discuss the important affairs of the Congregation/Province.
 - b. Extraordinary synaxis is the one held for grave reasons outside the usual time. In the case of the extraordinary Provincial synaxis the approval of the Superior General is necessary.

170. At least three fourth of the capitulars shall be present to have the quorum of Synaxes.
171. It is the right and duty of all the members to submit their opinions and suggestions to the Synaxis.
172. Members who are diligent in the observance of our Statutes and Practical Norms, well-versed in the life and activities of the Congregation, zealous in preserving and promoting its spirit, and prudent in deliberations and actions are to be elected as delegates to the Synaxes.
173. Representation to the General Synaxis from each Province or Vice-Province, and Region or Mission directly under the Generalate shall be in proportion to the number of the perpetually professed members, but without prejudice to Statutes 184 b.
174. Once the delegates are elected they are obliged to attend the Synaxis. However, the concerned Major Superior may grant exemption owing to serious reasons after consulting the Councillors. When one is lawfully exempted the one who has secured the highest number of votes after the delegates shall substitute him. However, the number of substitutes shall not exceed one fourth of the number of the capitulars.
175. There shall be two tellers whose duty shall be to distribute and collect the ballots, check the numbers and examine them in the presence of the president and announce the number of votes. The two juniormost of the assembled shall be tellers. If any of them is elected or impeded, the next juniormost, shall be the teller (CCEO 955 § 1 & 2).
176. A secretary shall be elected by the Synaxis with absolute majority of votes for making the reports of the meetings. If needed assistants also shall be elected.
177. To help the president of the Synaxis in organizing the deliberations and in controlling the interventions and dis-

cussions a moderator also shall be elected with absolute majority.

178. A central commission shall be formed by the Synaxis including the president, the secretary, the moderator and two other capitulars elected with absolute majority of votes.
179. The duties of the central commission shall be the following:
 - a. To follow up the works of the preparatory commission
 - b. To co-ordinate the works of the whole Synaxis
 - c. To present to the Synaxis the day to day agenda.

i. GENERAL SYNAXIS

180. The General Synaxis, representing all the members of the Congregation is the highest authority and legislative body of our Congregation. The main purpose of the General Synaxis is to protect and promote the spirituality and apostolic activities of the Congregation.
181. The General Synaxis shall deal with such important matters as the practice of the evangelical counsels, religious discipline, apostolic activities, formation, administration, policy making and adaptation and renewal of life in the Congregation to modern needs and conditions.
182. The General Synaxis has the right:
 - a. To elect the Superior General, the Assistant General and the other Councillors and the General Finance Officer
 - b. To enact laws, Statutes and Practical Norms for the good of the community with due regard for the principles of collegiality and subsidiarity
 - c. To interpret authentically the Statutes and Practical Norms
 - d. To change the location of the General Curia if necessary.

183. The General Synaxis is composed of ex-officio members and the elected delegates. The ex-officio members are the outgoing and incoming Superiors General, the General Councillors and the Provincial Superiors.
- 184.a. The number of the elected delegates to the General Synaxis is fixed by the synaxis from time to time.
- b. There shall not be absolute majority for the delegates from any one Province alone in the General Synaxis.
185. The decisions of the General Synaxis are binding on all the members once the Superior General promulgates them.
- 186.a. The General Synaxis is convoked and presided over by the Superior General and is dissolved by him with the consent of the Synaxis.
- b. The Superior General with the consent of his Council can anticipate or postpone the ordinary General synaxis for grave reasons; but the period of anticipation or postponement shall not exceed six months.

ii. PROVINCIAL SYNAXIS

187. The Provincial Synaxis is the legal body representing all the members of a Province.
- 188.a. The decisions of the Provincial Synaxis are binding on all the members of the Province, once the Provincial Superior promulgates them.
- b. All acts of the Provincial Synaxis have to be forwarded to the Superior General.
- c. Decisions on matters relating to the general policy and discipline can be implemented only after getting the approval of the Superior General with the consent of his Council.
189. The Provincial Synaxis is composed of the ex-officio members and the elected delegates.

190. The ex-officio members are the outgoing and incoming Provincial Superiors and the Councillors.
191. Due to grave reasons the Provincial Superior with the consent of his Council can anticipate or postpone the Provincial Synaxis upto six months after getting the approval of the Superior General. Before giving the approval the Superior General shall consult his Council.
192. The number of the elected delegates is fixed from time to time by the Provincial Synaxis, in due proportion to the number of members in a Province.
193.
 - a. The Provincial Synaxis deals with matters that concern the life and activities, such as the practice of evangelical counsels, religious discipline, apostolic activities of the Congregation, formation, administration and adaptation and renewal of our life to modern needs and conditions.
 - b. The Provincial Synaxis can propose to the General Synaxis alterations and additions to the Statutes and Practical Norms of the Congregation. It can also send proposals regarding matters of importance.
 - c. The Provincial Synaxis discusses and makes decisions on matters pertaining to the well-being of the Province and formulates the policies for the Province in conformity with the general policy.
194.
 - a. The Provincial Synaxis is convoked and presided over by the Provincial Superior. He dissolves it with the consent of the Synaxis.
 - b. When a Region is declared a Province or Vice-Province, the Synaxis is convened by the Superior General and presided over by him or by his delegate but without the right of voting. He shall make all necessary arrangements for it.

III ADMINISTRATIVE BODIES OF THE CONGREGATION

195. As there are three levels of administration, there are three levels of administrative bodies, General, Provincial and Local.

196. The administrative body at each level consists of the respective Superior and his Councillors.
197. The General/Provincial administration shall be carried out through departments. A Councillor will administer the activities of the particular department entrusted to him under the supervision of the Superior General/Provincial Superior.
- 198.a. All the Councillors shall be convoked for each meeting of the Council.
 - b. When the consent of the Council is required, no decision will be valid unless at least three Councillors are present and the decision taken is unanimous. But when the four Councillors are present those decisions, which get the majority of votes, are valid.
 - c. When the consent of the Council is required, the Superior General/Provincial Superior has no right of voting in the Council (CCEO 934).
- 199.a. To be validly elected to the office of the Superior General, a member must have completed ten years in the Congregation after first profession and he shall not be below 35 years of age at the time of election.
 - b. Members not below 35 years of age and have completed 10 years after first profession are eligible to be elected as Provincial Superiors.
 - c. Only a priest can be a Major Superior or his Assistant (CCEO 513 § 1&2).
200. To be a Major Superior or Councillor one should have the following qualities:
 - a. Immunity from all inordinate affection
 - b. Practice of virtues, especially humility and charity and union with Our Lord in his prayer and action
 - c. Sound judgement, adequate knowledge and great prudence and discretion

- d. Vigilance and firmness of mind
 - e. Sufficient knowledge and experience in the affairs of our Congregation
 - f. Good reputation among all the confreres and outsiders
 - g. Exemplary in conduct and zealous in divine service
 - h. Lovers of good and earnest in preserving and promoting the spirit of our Congregation.
201. In order to do their duty they shall know well the documents pertaining to our Congregation, the circulars of the Superior General and Provincial Superior, the Statutes and Practical Norms of our Congregation, the life and works of St. Vincent de Paul, our Patron. They shall not neglect to understand the qualities of the members, so that they may be able to judge well about the suitability of appointing the members to various offices.
202. The Councillors shall give their opinion sincerely and faithfully without any partiality, about the matters proposed to them by the Major Superior, after considering all the aspects of the issue concerned before the Lord. They are bound to keep secrecy of them all as the nature of things demands.
203. The Major Superior shall promote the active participation of the members in the life and apostolate of the Congregation and shall place its members and resources at the service of the Church according to the spirit and aims of the Congregation. He should encourage the various ministries of our communities and be solicitous for the development and activity of the confreres, bringing about a valid union.
- 204.a. When the office of the Major Superior becomes vacant after he has completed two years in office, his Assistant takes charge as the Major Superior. In the case of the Provincial administration, the matter is then intimated to

the Superior General. The Superior General has to confirm the Assistant Provincial Superior as the Provincial Superior.

- b. If the vacancy occurs before the completion of two years, the Assistant assumes office. He has to convene an extra-ordinary Synaxis within six months to elect a new Administrative Body.
 - c. In both the cases the term of all the new office-bearers shall expire with the subsequent ordinary Provincial Synaxis.
205. In the absence of the Major Superior, his Assistant has the same authority, except in matters reserved by the law or the Major Superior himself.
- 206.a. When a Major Superior is impeded to do his duties, his Assistant shall assume his place with full right until the cessation of the impediment.
- b. In the case of the Superior General, the judgement on the impediment shall be passed by the four Councillors together.
 - c. In the case of the Provincial Superior, the Superior General with his Council shall pass the judgement on the impediment.
- 207.a. In the event of the office of the Assistant to the Major Superior falling vacant for any reason, the seniormost of the other Councillors exempting the finance Councillor shall become the Assistant.
- b. If the office of a Councillor falls vacant, the Major Superior with the consent of his Council shall appoint one from a panel of three, proposed by the members having active voice.
 - c. This is not to be done if the General/Provincial Synaxis is to be held within six months.

208. The resignation of the Provincial Superior, the Assistant Provincial, or Provincial Councillors is submitted to the Superior General. He acts with the consent of his Council.

i. GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE BODY

209. The General Administrative Body consists of the Superior General and the four Councillors. From these Councillors, exempting the Finance Officer, the Assistant General is elected by the General Synaxis, and the Secretary General is appointed by the Superior General. The administrative body shall be concerned with the perfection, unity and growth of the whole Congregation.

A. SUPERIOR GENERAL

210. The Superior General shall be elected by the General Synaxis with an absolute majority of votes of those who are present, or after two indecisive ballots, with a relative majority in the third ballot. If the votes are equal after the third ballot, the person who is senior by ordination is considered elected. He shall be elected for a term of four years from a panel of five members proposed by all the members having active voice. But the right of the capitulars to elect someone from outside the proposed panel remains intact. The four year term shall be computed to last till the newly elected Superior General accepts the office. He may be re-elected but not for a third term consecutively.
211. The Superior General shall govern the Congregation in collaboration with his Council, and Provincial Superiors and keep the Congregation loyal to its spirit and mission, and promote unity in common policies pertaining to the Congregation and its various Provinces and units.
212. The Superior General as the centre of unity and co-ordination of the Provinces, Houses and members should also be the principle of spiritual animation and apostolic action.

213. He has the ordinary power (*potestas ordinaria*) over the whole Congregation, i.e., over all the members and Houses, Regions and Provinces of the Congregation in accordance with our Statutes and Practical Norms.
214. The ordinary power of the Superior General is to be understood as direct power over the whole Congregation - the Provinces, Regions, Houses and members. In conformity with his power the Superior General governs all Provinces, Regions, Houses and members. For the common good of the Congregation the Superior General has the right to intervene in any area of administration in the Provincial and Regional level. He has the duty of an overall supervision.
215. It shall be the duty and right of the Superior General:
 - a. To make every effort that the spirit of our Father St. Vincent de Paul is fostered; that our Statutes and Practical Norms are diligently observed and that the apostolic activity of our Congregation and its renewal be constantly promoted
 - b. To issue ordinances for the good of the Congregation, which shall remain in force until they are changed by himself or by his successor or by the General Synaxis
 - c. To make the canonical visit of the Provincial Houses once in two years, Novitiates and study Houses as well as Houses and institutions under the Generalate once a year. He may make canonical visit of any House of the Congregation.
 - d. To promulgate the Decrees of the General Synaxis as early as possible
 - e. To make use of the prerogative of breaking the tie of votes after the third voting in all the meetings where he presides by right, except in case of election

- f. To grant to the exclaustered members, in case of their death, the same spiritual suffrages as to the deceased members
 - g. To forward the reports of the state of our Congregation to the Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Churches, at least once in four years
 - h. To grant our members dimissorial letters, if necessary, for the reception of Sacred Orders in keeping with the terms of the law
 - i. To appoint Confessors and spiritual directors in the Houses of formation under the Generalate
 - j. To give confirmation for the admission of the candidates to the perpetual incorporation into the Congregation and to the Sacred Orders and to dispense them from the vows in case of lawful departure or in the act of dismissal after informing the Councillors.
216. The Superior General has to get the consent of his Council for the following acts:
- a. To appoint Superiors of the Houses, Rectors of the formation Houses and the directors of the institutions under the Generalate
 - b. To erect or suppress houses, keeping all the formalities
 - c. To dismiss the members in temporary or perpetual vows on grave reasons (CCEO 552 & 553)
 - d. To make contracts of great importance after fulfilling the juridical conditions
 - e. To accept the mission territories offered by the Apostolic See and to propose the name of the hierarchy
 - f. To convoke an extra ordinary General or Provincial Synaxis
 - g. To appoint the Assistant General or any one of the Councillors, should one of their offices fall vacant during their term of office or to depose any one of them

- h. To appoint the Secretary General
 - i. To send any member abroad for the needs of the Generalate in consultation with the Provincial Superior
 - j. To appoint an assistant finance officer
 - k. To accept the resignation of the General Councillors, Provincial Superiors and Councillors
 - l. To grant approval to the Provinces to take up mission territories.
217. The Superior General is entitled to do the following after consulting the Councillors:
- a. To appoint a preparatory commission for the General Synaxis
 - b. To exempt the capitulars from the obligation of attending the General Synaxis for grave reasons.
218. The Superior General shall neither make any addition, alteration or derogation in the Statutes or Practical Norms; nor can he give any authentic interpretation of them but only the usual one, i.e. a declaratory and practical interpretation.
219. The Superior General with the consent of his Council can suspend a Provincial for a period up to three months, or dismiss him, for proportionately serious and grave reasons.
220. The Superior General ceases to hold office by:
- a. The acceptance of the election by his successor
 - b. The resignation accepted by the General Synaxis or Apostolic See
 - c. The deposition by Apostolic See
 - d. The acceptance of ecclesiastical dignity with jurisdiction.

B. ASSISTANT GENERAL

221. The Assistant General takes the place of the Superior General and discharges his duties when he is absent or impeded. He has to convoke the General Synaxis according to the norms of our Statutes and Practical Norms.
222. The Assistant General shall help the Superior General in the governance of the Congregation.
223. When the office of the Superior General falls vacant on account of any reason the Assistant General shall act as the Superior General till the new Superior General accepts the office. Until then he shall look after the daily administration of the whole Congregation without making any change in the policy of administration, unless urgency demands it, and that with the consent of the Council.
224. The Assistant General ceases to hold the office:
 - a. Through the acceptance of election by his successor
 - b. Through the resignation accepted by the Superior General or the General Synaxis
 - c. Through the deposition decreed by the Superior General with the consent of the other Councillors
 - d. By the acceptance of ecclesiastical dignity with jurisdiction.
225. If the Assistant General happens to be unworthy or incapable, it is the duty of the Superior General with other Councillors to pass judgement on the matter.

C. GENERAL COUNCILLORS

226. The four Councillors form the Council of the Superior General. They share his responsibility in the administration of the Congregation. The Councillors help the Superior General by their advice and service in the governance to promote unity and strength and to bring into effect the

Statutes and Practical Norms of the Congregation and the Decrees of General Synaxis.

227. If the Superior General becomes manifestly unworthy or incapable of doing his duty, it is the obligation of the Councillors to inform the Apostolic See of it, and abide by the mandate therefrom.
228. The Councillors cease to hold office in the same way as the Assistant General (see Statutes 224).

D. FINANCE OFFICERS

229. The Finance Officers, under the direction and vigilance of the Superiors concerned, administer the temporal goods of the Congregation in a spirit of poverty, charity and obedience, and supervise the temporal administration of the Houses.
230. The finance officer must be a man of sound virtue, of upright conscience, combining affability with discretion, and prudence with zeal.
231. He must have an understanding of, and experience in the financial matters in order to fulfil the responsibilities entrusted to him, and of which God will ask for an account (Lk. 16:10-11).
232. In the midst of material cares in which his duties involve him, he shall take pains not to neglect the spiritual life, so that his labours may be sanctified, and thus merit God's blessing. His religious life should be no less faithful than his administration.
233. For the administration of our goods competent persons are to be elected or appointed as finance officers in accordance with our Statutes and Practical Norms.
- 234.a. Let all finance officers remember that they are not the owners (Lk. 16:12), but only the stewards of the goods of the community and diligently see that our goods are not

spent for any purpose contrary to our state of life and that they do not go against the civil and Canon Laws.

- b. The finance officers shall see to the needs of the members in all those matters pertaining to their life, their special duties and apostolic work. Above all they shall follow the norms of equity in the very distribution of things, since they should foster fraternal communion among the confreres.
235. The main duties of the finance officers are:
- a. To manage the properties and supervise the undertakings, to attend to their upkeep and to see that taxes etc. are paid in due time
 - b. To adopt the safest and the most advantageous means of investment, to control all that concerns deposits at banks
 - c. To inform the Superior concerned the appropriate time about the dealings, and modifications he considers advantageous
 - d. To attend to whatever is necessary, in connection with the funds or securities of the Houses, of confreres and of dependents
 - e. To manage the assets of the pious foundations and keep a record of them, to inspect and investigate whether the obligations of the foundations are duly fulfilled
 - f. To collect and receive contributions to the general funds
 - g. To maintain and administer in accordance with the intentions of the donors, gifts and bequests.
236. The following documents shall be kept in the archives of the finance officer:
- a. Title deeds of the properties and vehicles
 - b. Mortgage deeds, letting and leasing agreements
 - c. Insurance policies, national bonds etc.

- d. The various contracts exchanged with civil authorities, case-files etc.
- e. Correspondence relating to the important dealings which he has transacted
- f. Postal and bank-deposits, pass books etc.
- g. All the vouchers relating to his accounts filed chronologically
- h. An inventory in which the list of all movable and immovable goods, assets and liabilities, are recorded
- i. The registers – cash books, ledger, monthly abstract of account and records – which are to be shown to the Superior.

E. GENERAL FINANCE OFFICER

- 237.a. In ordinary acts of administration the General Finance Officer is to be guided by the directions of the Superior General and his Council.
- b. For extra-ordinary acts of the administration he requires the explicit permission of the Superior General who, when necessary, has to obtain the consent of his Council.
- c. All the informations sent by the finance officers of the Provinces and Houses shall be kept in the archives of the General Finance Officer.

F. SECRETARY GENERAL

- 238. The Secretary General functions as the official correspondent and as the guardian of the archives of the Congregation under the direction of the Superior General.
- 239. The Secretary General is appointed by the Superior General in consultation with his Council from among the Councillors. He shall be zealous for the common good of the Congregation, well-versed in its matters, endowed with prudence, industry and diligence, and having a gift of knowledge and sociability.

ii. PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATIVE BODY

240. The Provincial Administrative Body consists of the Provincial Superior and the four Councillors.
241. The Provincial Superior shall be elected by the Provincial Synaxis from a panel of five proposed by all the members of the Province having active voice. However, the right of the delegates to elect someone from outside the proposed panel remains intact.
242. The Provincial Synaxis elects the Provincial Superior with an absolute majority and Councillors also with an absolute majority of votes of those present. The election of the Provincial Superior shall be confirmed by Superior General (CCEO 515 § 2). The term of office is four years.

A. PROVINCIAL SUPERIOR

243. The Provincial Superior is a Major Superior with ordinary power who is placed over a Province to govern it, according to the norms of common and particular law. For the validity of the election of the Provincial Superior, prescriptions of Statutes 199.b. are to be followed.
244. It is the function of the Provincial Superior:
 - a. To promote the observance of Statutes, Practical Norms and other Directives
 - b. To visit the Houses and the confreres frequently, and to make canonical visits at least once a year
 - c. To send annual reports to the Superior General about the affairs of the Province including the financial position and about the canonical visits of the Houses
 - d. To convene a meeting of the confreres once a year to conduct discussions on theological, pastoral and missionary issues, and to share experiences
 - e. To request confirmation of the Superior General concerning admission of members to perpetual vows and sacred orders as well as the departure of members

- f. To approve our confreres and grant them faculty for confession of our members and for preaching the Word of God, safeguarding the right of the Local Ordinary. He may delegate the same faculties to other priests (CCEO 723 § 2; 724)
 - g. To inform the Superior General of all important matters of the Province in writing.
245. The Provincial Superior has to get the consent of his Council:
- a. To enact ordinance for the good of the Province which shall remain in force until they are changed by himself or by his successor or by the Provincial Synaxis
 - b. To establish Houses, retreat centres and constitute local communities within the boundaries of his Province according to the norm of the law after having consulted the Superior General (CCEO 934 § 3 & 4)
 - c. To appoint local Superiors, master of novices, rectors of formation Houses. These appointments should be notified to the Superior General as early as possible
 - d. To admit candidates to the novitiate and to grant permission for vows in accordance with the Statutes and Practical Norms
 - e. Having consulted the rectors concerned to admit confreres to Sacred Orders, with confirmation from Superior General and to issue dismissorial letters for their ordination
 - f. To take up programmes and projects for the Province
 - g. Observing the required norms of the law to establish or suppress a major work in the Province for which the consent of the Superior General is required
 - h. To enter into necessary and useful contracts according to the norms of common law and our practical law

- i. To dispense confreres from Provincial norms for a just cause and in particular cases
 - j. To erect a Region and to appoint Regional Superior with the consent of the Superior General
 - k. To send members abroad for any purpose, other than short visits, the Provincial Superior should consult the Superior General.
246. The Provincial Superior has to consult his Councillors:
- a. To approve the projects and programmes of each House prepared by the Local Superior with the domestic meeting
 - b. To give assignments and transfers to our confreres. Proper dialogue with the confreres should normally precede the transfers and appointments. Very urgent situation may require exception.
 - c. To appoint the preparatory commission for the Provincial Synaxis.
- 247.a. In case the Provincial Councillors find that the Provincial Superior does not fulfil his office satisfactorily or he misuses it, and that he does not take good counsel, they should after mature deliberation, inform the Superior General about it, three of the four Councillors concurring in the matter. In such cases the Superior General with the consent of his Council shall take appropriate action.
- b. If a Councillor becomes incapable of doing his duty, the Provincial Superior with his Council will take a decision, in the absence of the said person, and will report to the Superior General who with the consent of his Council will take appropriate action.

B. ASSISTANT PROVINCIAL SUPERIOR

248. The Assistant Provincial Superior is to be elected from among the Councillors, exempting the finance officer

with an absolute majority of votes. Whatever is said in the Statutes 221-225 is applicable to the Assistant Provincial Superior with due modifications (*mutatis mutandis*).

C. PROVINCIAL COUNCILLORS

249. The Provincial Councillors shall not be appointed novice master or rector of a formation house. Whatever is said in Statutes 199-202; 226-228 and Practical Norms 185 and 196 is applicable to the Provincial Councillors with due modifications (*mutatis mutandis*).

D. PROVINCIAL FINANCE OFFICER

250. Every information sent by the finance officers of the Houses shall be kept in the archives of the Provincial Finance Officer. Whatever is said in Statutes 229-236 and Practical Norms 240 & 241 is applicable to the Provincial Finance Officer with due modifications (*mutatis mutandis*).

E. PROVINCIAL SECRETARY

251. Whatever is said in Statutes 238 & 239 and Practical Norms 201-203 is applicable to the Provincial Secretary with due modifications (*mutatis mutandis*).

iii. REGIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE BODIES

252. A mission area having at least one House and ten confreres may be formed into a Dependent Region.

253. A Dependent Region may be erected either by the Superior General with the consent of his Council or by the Provincial Superior with the consent of the Superior General.

A. REGIONAL SUPERIOR

254.a. The Superior General with the consent of his Council appoints the Regional Superior from a panel of three names from among the members of the whole Congregation proposed by the confreres working in that region.

- b. The Provincial Superior with the consent of his Council appoints the Regional Superior from a panel of three names from among the members of the whole Province proposed by the confreres working in that area.
255. The Regional Superior will be assisted in his administration by two Regional Councillors, one of whom shall serve as vicar, and the other as secretary.
256. The Regional Councillors are elected from the members of the Region, by the confreres working in the same Region.
257. The Regional Finance Officer is appointed by the Regional Superior with the consent of his Council.
258. In all aspects of religious life and discipline our missionaries and Houses shall be subject to the Regional Superior.
259. The Regional Superior shall take special care that the spirit of the Congregation is kept alive in all the missionaries. He shall, above all, endeavour by his example to stimulate the missionaries to labour with apostolic zeal in the vineyard of the Lord and at the same time, to achieve a harmonious blend of the life of prayer and active apostolate.
260. He shall minister to the needs of the missionaries and be solicitous about their temporal and spiritual well-being as well as their apostolic labours.
261. He represents the Major Superior before the Local Hierarchs. It is his duty to co-operate with the Hierarchs for the progress of the mission.
262. The Regional Superior shall take care that the agreements made between the Congregation and the Hierarchs are kept up. The Superior General /Provincial Superior shall be intimated of any deviations or difficulties that might appear in this regard. He shall inform the Superior Gener-

al and the Provincial Superior of all the important matters of the region in writing.

B. MISSION SUPERIOR

263. For the service of our confreres engaged in mission work in a particular area, a Mission Superior is appointed by the Superior General/Provincial Superior with the consent of his Council, after knowing the opinion of all the members working in that area.
264. He shall have a Council of two members elected from those who work in the area by all the missionaries and approved by the Superior General/Provincial Superior.
265. Whatever is said in the Statutes 252 - 262 and in Practical Norms 204 – 211 about the Regional Superior is applicable to the Mission Superior with the due modifications (*mutatis mutandis*).

iv. HOUSE ADMINISTRATION

- 266.a. A House is a primary and basic unit of our Congregation where the members form a community, sharing a life of prayer and apostolic ministry, under the leadership of a Superior.
- b. Every canonically erected House is a juridical person and there should be no less than three members (CCEO 423).
- c. Superior of a House having less than three members shall have delegated power only.

A. HOUSE SUPERIOR

267. The House Superiors shall exemplify and safeguard the spirit of brotherhood, collegiality and service and promote the spiritual and apostolic life of the community. They are to take an active interest in the all-round development of the members by creating an atmosphere in which each member can actively participate in the work

of the community, while pursuing the ideals of the religious life. They shall see that religious discipline is maintained and a friendly and generous relationship with our neighbours is fostered.

268. The House Superiors are appointed by the Major Superior with the consent of his Council. They are assisted in the administration of their respective Houses by all the confreres, according to the function of each one.
269. It is the right and duty of the House Superior:
- a. To see that the members of the House observe the Statutes and Practical Norms and partake in the exercise of community life
 - b. To take care of their spiritual and temporal needs
 - c. To admonish and correct the members with great humility and charity
 - d. To give reports of the state of affairs of the House to the Major Superior at least once a year
 - e. To convoke the domestic meeting, as often as it is necessary.

B. HOUSE FINANCE OFFICER

270. The House finance officer shall be appointed by the Superior General /Provincial Superior after consulting his Council.
271. The House finance officer shall conserve and procure the common good of the House and of the members under the direction of and in close co-operation with the House Superior, and in accordance with our Statutes and Practical Norms.
272. Stipend obtained for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy cannot be spent before fulfilling the obligations thereof.

C. DIRECTORS OF THE INSTITUTIONS ATTACHED TO THE HOUSE

- 273.a. Directors of the institutions attached to the Houses shall be appointed by the Major Superior. They shall govern the institutions under the guidance of the House Superior. They shall have sufficient freedom in the ordinary day-to-day working of the institutions.
- b. They shall be given assistants, if necessary.
274. Important matters regarding the institutions, such as general policy, development, etc., shall be discussed in the domestic meeting. This will enkindle interest of all the members in the institution.
275. The directors shall do also the work of the finance officer, if there is no other finance officer appointed and they shall observe all the relevant things about the House finance officer.
276. The directors shall realize that the institutions are ways of serving God and men and, therefore, in their dealings with the inmates, as well as outsiders, they shall be very cordial.
277. The directors, as member of the House, shall have the obligation to keep all the disciplinary rules, as well as the order of the day, as far as possible.

v. TEMPORAL ADMINISTRATION

278. The members of the “Vincentian Congregation” lead a communitarian life of evangelical poverty in such a way that all the goods of the Congregation are held in common and confreres may reasonably use them for the better pursuit and realization of the purpose of the Congregation.
- 279.a. The Congregation itself, Provinces and Houses have the right to acquire, possess and administer temporal goods by all lawful means (CCEO 1010).

- b. We shall consider these goods as the patrimony of the poor. Fully confiding in the providence of God we have to use them without any inordinate attachment.
280. Our material goods are meant for the proper arrangements for divine worship, for the procuring of honest living for all the members and for the exercise of works of the apostolate or of charity especially towards the needy.
281. Since all the goods are held in common all the confreres are co-responsible in acquiring, administering and utilizing the goods according to the norms of our Statutes and Practical Norms.
282. The administration of temporalities is of great importance to the well-being of our Congregation. Therefore, due care shall be taken with regard to it.
283. In order to activate the spirit of collaboration, the Superior General with the Provincial Superior will decide the way in which the Provincial Superiors and Houses should co-operate for the financial well-being of the Congregation.
- 284.a. Superiors, finance officers and other administrators cannot act in the name of the Congregation except within the limits of their offices and according to the norms of the law. Therefore, the Congregation/Province and the Houses are responsible only for those administrative acts performed according to the aforesaid norms; for the rest, those who perform illicit and invalid acts are held responsible.
- b. If any moral person of the Congregation shall contract debts or incur obligations even with permission, it alone will be held responsible for them at its own expense.
285. If it is a question of alienating goods which are valuable by reason of material, art, history or antiquity, or other goods the value of which exceeds the amount decided by

- the competent authority, or of contracting debts or obligations beyond the sum indicated, the contract lacks force unless permission in writing has previously been obtained from competent authority, according to the norms of the common and particular laws.
286. Superiors should proceed with very great caution in accepting pious foundations whose obligations are binding over a long term.
287. The will of the donors must be respected both in regard to ownership and use according to the norms of our Statutes and Practical Norms.
288. Consent of the domestic meeting and permission from the Major Superior shall be obtained before beginning new constructions and projects. The plan and estimate shall be approved by the Major Superior with his Council. No substantial change in the plan shall be made without the previous sanction of the Major Superior.¹
289. Labour laws, social securities and social justice must be observed in the case of the people who work for us.

Note:

1. The House superior / Econome / Director of the institution has to get the consent of the domestic meeting for all those projects which he has to get permission from the Major Superior. Besides, all those issues which come beyond the day to day running of the House are to be consulted in the domestic meeting and let the Council of the Major Superior proceed only after getting a favourable reply from the domestic meeting.

PRACTICAL NORMS

CHAPTER ONE

VINCENTIAN WAY OF LIFE

i. LIFE OF PRAYER

1. a. The Eucharistic mystery is the source and culmination of our spiritual life . Hence, we shall celebrate the Divine Liturgy with devotion and attention and actively participate in it. Also we shall diligently assist at other liturgical celebrations.
 - b. Priests shall have great esteem for concelebration in which they bear witness to the unity of one priesthood of Christ and their fraternal communion. However, due consideration shall be given to the pastoral needs of the faithful.
 - c. Liturgical norms and rubrics approved by the competent ecclesiastical authorities shall be observed (CCEO 415 § 1)
 - d. The salvific mysteries of Christ are to be celebrated along with the Church interiorising the spirit of each particular liturgical season, such as the seasons of Annunciation (*Soovara*), Epiphany (*Denaha*), Lent (*Anpathu Nombu*), Resurrection (*Udhanam*), Apostles (*Sleeha*), Summer (*Kaitha*), Cross (*Sleeva*), and Dedication of the Church (*Pallikoodasa*). We shall also observe the days of feast of the Oriental Fathers.
2. The priests are earnestly exhorted to celebrate the Divine Liturgy every day.

3. Brothers and seminarians will actively participate in sacred Liturgy every day and shall endeavour to receive Holy Communion frequently, even daily. Moreover, they shall be diligent in assisting at liturgical functions and in exercising the functions proper to the orders they have received.
4. Communal celebration involving the presence and participation of the faithful is to be fostered in all our Churches.
5. Celebration of the Divine Liturgy should be done with decorum, dignity and devotion. Our recollection and gestures should be the outward expression of the spirit and devotion we have towards the Eucharistic Mystery. Care should be taken to say the prayers devoutly, slowly and distinctly.
6. The worship of Eucharistic Jesus should be close to our hearts. We shall keep the pious custom of making visits to the Blessed Sacrament.
7. Visits to the Blessed Sacrament may be done when we go out from and come into the House. When we go out we ask grace and protection in our journeys and pray for the success of our undertakings. On return we offer thanks for our success and ask pardon for our shortcomings.
8. We shall observe the devotion of the Holy Hour at least once a month in all our Houses, preferably on the day of the monthly recollection.
9. We should celebrate the Divine Office with attention, devotion and reverence, and as far as possible in common(CCEO 377).
10. a. Morning prayers and night prayers shall be recited according to the formulary of prayers approved from time to time by the General synaxis.
 - b. Other efficacious methods of prayer are to be encouraged.

11. Being convinced of the importance of mental prayer in our spiritual life and its effectiveness in our apostolic activities, we shall devote at least half an hour daily for it, in common, after morning prayers (CCEO 369).
12. It is very much advisable that each confrere spend daily at least half an hour in personal prayer, besides the spiritual exercises prescribed by our Statutes and Practical Norms.
13.
 - a. All shall devote at least a quarter of an hour daily for spiritual reading at an appropriate time.
 - b. The writings of the Oriental Fathers and Ascetics on spiritual life, prayer, penance and asceticism are recommended for spiritual reading, as they are of immense help for laying the foundation for a life of holiness and growth in the spirit of prayer.
14. We shall make the examination of conscience twice a day; one at noon before lunch and the other at night before retiring.
15. Psalm No.51 or 130 and the Angelus shall follow the examination of conscience at noon.
16.
 - a. Blessed Virgin Mary, the mother of God and our mother, is to be honoured by praying the rosary daily and in common as far as possible. On the first Saturday we shall renew the Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.
 - b. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Bible Service, Office of the Immaculate Conception, etc. can be occasionally conducted instead of daily rosary in common.
17. We shall frequently (say, once in a fortnight) receive the Sacrament of Penance by which we are purified and strengthened in our spiritual life.
18. Each one shall choose a confessor and spiritual director and shall go to them regularly and when necessary for confession and guidance.

19. We ought to spend at least five full days for annual retreat arranged for our community (CCEO 369 § 2).
20. The place and time of the annual retreat, which is to be in common, shall be fixed and communicated to the members sufficiently early, together with the list of those who have to partake in each session.
21. We shall devote a day for spiritual recollection every month with special spiritual exercises; on that day we shall hold common discussions on matters pertaining to our religious, liturgical, pastoral and apostolic life (CCEO 369).
22. On the day of monthly recollection we shall have the following spiritual exercises:
 1. One hour of meditation in common
 2. The Way of the Cross in common and a more detailed examination of conscience.
23.
 - a. The Common Rules given by St. Vincent de Paul and the Statutes and Practical Norms of our Congregation should be read in common during the days of recollection and retreat.
 - b. Besides reading them in common, all of us shall take care to read them often privately.
24. Consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus must be renewed on every first Friday of the month.
25.
 - a. Penance shall be duly practised as decided by the domestic meeting, such as:
 1. Abstinence on all days of advent and lent
 2. Way of the Cross on all days of lent and on all Fridays of the year
 3. Fasting on all Fridays of lent
 4. *Moosnu Nombu* (three days of fasting and prayer, between Christmas and Lent), *Ettu Nombu* (eight days

of fasting and prayer before the feast of the Nativity of Our Lady) and *Pathinanchu Nombu* (fifteen days of fasting and abstinence before the feast of Assumption of Our Lady).

- b. All the difficulties and trials in doing our duties well, should be borne in a spirit of penance.
26. a. The following feasts shall be celebrated with due solemnity in our Congregation:
1. St. Vincent de Paul
 2. St. Thomas the Apostle
 3. Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception
 4. St. Joseph
 5. St. Ephrem
 6. Patron of the House or the institution
- b. The death anniversary of our founder, Very Rev. Fr. Varkey Kattarath V.C., shall be commemorated on October, 24th.
- c. The Foundation Day of our Congregation shall be celebrated on November 20th.*
- d. The Revival of our Congregation shall be commemorated on July 19th. On that day, we remember in a special way V. Rev. Frs. George Mannara, Antony Pauvathil and George Vattamkandathil who revived the Congregation.*
27. On the feast of our Father St. Vincent de Paul we shall renew our vows in common using the prescribed formula (see appendix).
28. A patron must be designated with the approval of the Major Superior, when a House or institution is started.
29. Our Church buildings and furnishings must excel in simplicity, decorum and cleanliness befitting the honour and worship of God.

ii. FRATERNAL COMMUNION

30. a. The domestic meeting in our Houses shall make a timetable. It should contain all the spiritual exercises prescribed in our Statutes and Practical Norms.
 - b. All shall take care to regulate their occupations so that they may be present for all the community exercises.
31. Permission of the Superior is required to leave the House for a considerable length of time. But the absence from the House for more than a fortnight and expensive or long journey require the sanction of the concerned Major Superior.
32. Those who are away from our Houses for the sake of study and ministry shall occasionally come and spend some days in our Houses with our confreres to grow in fellowship and communion.
33. a. Each of the confreres shall have sufficient time for study, work and relaxation and get opportunity to develop his personality.
 - b. We shall esteem and observe in all our Houses silence and recollection as indispensable for an atmosphere of prayer and dedicated work.

We should not disturb any of our confreres nor distract them from prayer, study or other serious work by our unconcerned behaviour.
34. Priests, religious and seminarians may be admitted to our refectory to have meals with us. On special occasions others also may be invited to table.
35. Let us take care that externs do not go into our quarters without sufficient reason.
36. Recreations after lunch and supper are the main ones. After breakfast and tiffin also there shall be some time for relaxation.

37. a. At lunch, recreation at table begins after reading a passage from the Holy Scripture. At supper it begins after reading a portion from the lives of saints or any spiritual book. There should be reading during breakfast in the Houses of formation.
 - b. In order to remember and pray for our beloved departed confreres their life history shall be read during supper from the book "*Munpepoyavar*" on the eve of the anniversary of their death.
38. Let us keep silence outside the times of recreation to render our community life more fruitful. Special care shall be taken to observe silence from the time of night prayers till the breakfast of the following day.
39. The Superior and finance officer shall be particularly concerned with the needs of confreres especially of the sick and the aged. One should be appointed for the care and service of these confreres.
40. We shall gladly extend our fellowship to all those who are associated with us in life and works.
41. All individualistic undertakings that weaken the common activities and destroy the community spirit shall be discouraged.
42. Special occasions of relaxation like picnics may be arranged for our brethren in each House every year on a day that is convenient to all.
43. Our confreres may be permitted a vacation of two weeks, which may be utilized for rest in some of our Houses or places approved by the Major Superiors or for visiting our mission territories.
44. The Golden Jubilee and Silver Jubilee of the priestly ordination of our priests and that of the profession of our Brothers shall be celebrated befittingly and moderately at the General and Provincial levels.

45. Exchange of news that will enable us to increase mutual understanding and to share the joys and sorrows of our confreres and their families and of our communities, shall be fostered.
46. We shall avoid all that would endanger fraternal communion such as groupism, obstinacy in talk, contention, rivalries, murmuring, detractions etc.
47. Since hospitality is a trait and sign of Christian charity, we shall receive our guests with cordiality and make them feel at home.
48. We should not forget to show our concern and respect towards our parents and close relations. Let us sincerely partake of the joys and sorrows of the family of each confrere.
49. Personal care, love and justice should be shown towards our dependents with regard to their spiritual and material welfare.
50. There shall be a general gathering of the priests and brothers of our Congregation/ Province every year to foster solidarity, fraternity and mutual understanding at the General and Provincial level. In this gathering the Major Superior may give a report about the works and progress of the Congregation/Province during the year. He will also give a tentative programme and schemes for the coming year. The General/Provincial finance officer also shall render a report of the temporal administration and the present financial state of the Congregation/Province.
51. There shall be firm unity and love between our Houses. Those Houses, which can afford to give financial assistance should readily help other Houses that are not financially self-sufficient or if they are new ones. Keeping in mind that everything is common, such help shall be rendered in accordance with the directions of the Major Superior.

52. Always there shall be a renewal team in our Congregation.

iii. EVANGELICAL COUNSELS

A. OBEDIENCE

53. Permission of the Major Superior is required for the publication of books, audio-video cassettes and compact disks by our confreres. In case of articles to be published, the House superior's permission is sufficient (CCEO 662 § 2).
54. Superior General is to be informed of the publication of books and audio-video cassettes.
55. A confrere who takes up programmes or goes for retreats, courses, or for long journey, even if it is with the permission of the Major Superior, have to inform the House Superior and get his consent too.
56. The rules and timetable of the House shall be followed by all the members of the House, and by other confreres who happen to be there for any reason whatsoever.
57. Our letters shall pass through the Superior who will not, as a rule, read them.

B. CHASTITY

58. Since self-guidance and presumption are very detrimental to chastity, timely advice of an experienced and mature spiritual director is necessary. We shall, therefore, sincerely open our conscience to him and get his advice and counsel.
59. In order to safeguard this virtue we shall practise mortification and penance with discretion and in accordance with the guidance of the spiritual director.
60. We shall not attend those movies and public shows which are unbecoming to the state of our life. We must abstain from intoxicants.

61. a. In our dealings with others, especially with women, we must be prudent and dignified, avoiding undue familiarity and unbecoming behavior.
- b. Spiritual direction of women shall be given, as far as possible, in the confessional.
- c. Women shall not be allowed to enter our living rooms. Visits of women, even if it is for direction or counselling, shall be avoided after nightfall.

C. POVERTY

62. a. Members who have immovable goods or their equivalents, shall make their last will in a legal form valid before the court, and keep a copy of it with the Major Superior.
 - b. If they die without making a last will, all their immovable goods or their equivalents shall go to their heirs in the family. If they have no heirs, they belong to the Congregation just as their movable goods or money.
 - c. They may renounce them in favour of their needy parents or relatives, or for some pious work, or for the apostolate of the Congregation, but only after their perpetual incorporation and after mature thought and due consideration for their own maintenance in case they leave the Congregation.
 - d. Lest they get too much involved in temporal affairs, they shall make arrangements to administer their property.
 - e. They can also alienate or sell them.
63. Things needed for our daily life will be supplied by the finance officer of the House. For extra-ordinary things permission from the Superior is required.
 64. No one is permitted to own any vehicle personally.
 65. When we are transferred to another place we shall take only those things which are given for our personal use. The Superior may allow the confrere to take with him for

a definite period of time an article which he needs immediately.

iv. APOSTOLIC ACTIVITIES

66. We should be of service to the clergy by fraternally helping them in their life and ministry. We should always be ready to help parish priests through our ministry, especially that of preaching, and of hearing confessions. Superiors shall see that such services are rendered generously.
67. We shall encourage pious associations; we shall be ever ready to render service to the associations especially those emanating from the spirit of our Holy Patron.
68. The spirit of competition or rivalry or prestige shall not prompt us to start any institution (CR 12, 10)
69. The Major Superior with the Council, in consultation with the members of the House concerned, takes the final decision regarding the form of the apostolate to be undertaken.
70. When any Bishop or head of any institution asks us to take charge of any apostolic work, the Major Superior makes necessary consultation and takes the decision. This kind of services shall be rendered especially in the Missions.
71. In true apostolic spirit we shall be prepared to render our service to spread the Kingdom of God. Every one shall be willing to work in the mission at least for a limited time; the Major Superior shall give consideration to the wish of those who volunteer.
72. During the time of their regency and pastoral course, our confreres should be given opportunities and means to deepen their understanding of the future work in which they are to be involved.
73. The projects and activities of a House which are duly undertaken, shall be preserved and continued even if there

is change of personnel. If for some special reasons some projects need to be discontinued or changed into another project, due permission is to be sought from the Major Superior.

74. Those who are working in parishes or other institutions shall be enrolled as members of the nearest House. These members are expected to partake in all the important functions of the House such as monthly recollection, domestic meetings, feasts etc; the Superior shall duly inform them about these.
75. The normal duration of our pastoral services outside our Houses shall be three years.
76. One percent of the gross income of our Houses shall be sent to our missions through the Major Superior for any specific project.

A. POPULAR MISSION

77. Although the preaching of Popular Mission is the duty of all, the Provincial Superior has to make sure that there are a few groups of priests to do it efficiently. Provincials shall appoint only competent persons to the team. Directors shall be appointed to guide them.
78. Special care should be taken in catechesis; modern techniques and psychological approaches are to be employed to make the teaching of religion more efficient.
79. We shall also be prepared to preach parish retreats, retreats for the religious, and other groups of people.
80. As far as possible we shall provide facilities to outsiders for making closed retreats.
81. Each confrere should, at least once a year, render his help in the Popular Mission field.
82. Information, including annual report concerning Popular Missions shall be sent to the Superior General through the Provincial.

83. We shall preach Popular Mission without receiving any remuneration.

B. CHARITABLE AND SOCIAL WORKS

84. Works of mercy, such as dispensaries, and homes for children, the aged and the handicapped, hospices for the sick, SSSMILE (Sacred Scriptures Social Message into Living Experience) Fellowship etc. bear witness to the charity of our holy patron.
85. We shall give the children in our care vocational training, which will enable them to find a means for their livelihood.
86. We should endeavour to improve the spiritual, social and economic conditions of our domestic servants.
87. We shall pay attention to the socio-cultural well being of the people around us by opening reading rooms, starting study circles and adult education schemes, giving guidance for co-operative societies, cottage industries, technical institutes etc. wherever it is necessary.
88. The persons engaged in social work in our Houses should study and teach others the social teachings of the Church and put them into practice diligently. They should also equip themselves with the techniques of the work of social welfare and the problems of the field.
89. In every Province there may be a social service director appointed by the Provincial Superior, who will occasionally visit the fields of social and charitable activities of various Houses and opportunely discuss with the Superior of the House and the local director about the ways and means of making our work more efficient.
90. A general fund for the social service is to be raised by contributing 3% of the gross income of the House, institutions, Provincial House and the Generalate (exempting the money given to Houses from the Generalate/Pro-

vincial House). From the 3% of the gross income, each House retains 1.5% for local social service and the other 1.5% is sent to the Generalate/Provincial House every three month together with the quarterly accounts. The Major Superior at his discretion administers the general fund.

91. There shall be a registered apex body at the Generalate level to co-ordinate, direct and support the social work programmes of our Congregation at the Generalate/Provincial level.
92. In every House a member is elected by the domestic meeting and approved by the Major Superior as social director. He should not be given jobs that would hinder his works. Persons interested in the field shall be given suitable training.
93. Whenever a new scheme or project is to be implemented, the social director of the House should consult with the social director of the Congregation/Province and should get the approval of the Major Superior.
94. Every six months a detailed report of his work should be sent to the Major Superior, a copy of which is sent to the social director of the Congregation/Province.
95. A programme for social work should be included in the Programme of Formation of the Seminarians.
96. Seminars and conferences on social themes should be convened occasionally in which members are expected to partake.

C. EDUCATIONAL AND LITERARY ACTIVITIES

97. Competent persons must impart religious and moral instructions to all the students regularly and systematically. Retreats and other religious practices are to be conducted for catholic students.

98. In our educational institutions a priest must be appointed as spiritual director. Programmes like guidance and counselling are to be introduced.
99. In order to give better guidance to the students, it is recommended that those in charge of our schools be in touch with their guardians.
100. We shall start and conduct educational institutions mainly in such places where there are no other agencies to do it. Priority is to be given to schools in the missions. To establish a scheme for giving financial help for deserving students is highly desirable.
101. For the administration of our educational institutions, certain norms are to be formulated. The Major Superior with the Council, or a board of members constituted by them, shall go into the details of administration and give final decisions.
102. In our English medium schools, we should give admission to deserving poor students of the locality with fee concession.
103. Superior General's permission is required to begin or suppress regular and professional colleges.
104. Superior General is to be consulted before establishing schools. I.T.C.s and parallel colleges.
105. Annual statistics of the educational institutions are to be sent through the Provincial to the Superior General at the beginning of the scholastic year.
106. Since the apostolate of the press is a felt need of the day, we should endeavour to propagate the catholic literature by publishing books and periodicals, by using audiovisual aids and by opening libraries, book stalls, bureaus etc.
107. In every House there shall be a reading room and a good library. A sum fixed by the domestic meeting should be spent for buying books every year.

108. Superior General's permission is to be obtained to begin or suppress periodicals, dailies, and audio-video studios.
109. Three copies of all the publications are to be sent to the Generalate: for the library, archives and the showcase.

Note:

- Cfr. The Decisions of General Synaxis, 2005

CHAPTER II

MEMBERSHIP IN THE CONGREGATION

i. RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS

110. a. The priests of our Congregation have the right of celebrating the Divine Liturgy twice a month for their own personal intentions.
 - b. Priests who are unable to celebrate Mass and brothers who are perpetually incorporated can ask the Superior for the application of Eucharistic celebration twice a month.
111. a. Every year one day (November 3) shall be dedicated for the remembrance of the deceased members of our Congregation. On that day every priest shall offer the Sacred Liturgy for them. Brothers and seminarians shall participate in the Divine Liturgy for the same intention. Besides, the Office for the Dead shall be recited in common.
 - b. In every House, the Divine Liturgy is celebrated once a month for all the members and benefactors living and dead, with the special intention of preserving the spirit of our Congregation. The Office for the Dead also is recited. The community shall participate in these functions.
 - c. As we are greatly indebted to our benefactors and well-wishers, living and deceased, we shall set apart a day (July 18) to pray for them. On that day every priest shall offer the Sacred Liturgy for them. Brothers and seminarians shall participate in the Divine Liturgy for the same intention. We shall also recite in common the Office for the Dead for the deceased benefactors.*

112. The following spiritual suffrages are given to every deceased member including novices:
- a. Celebration of the Divine Liturgy once by every priest; Brothers and seminarians shall participate in the Divine Liturgy.
 - b. Recitation of the Office for the Dead in all our Houses.
 - c. A moderate funeral service.
 - d. Celebration of the Divine Liturgy a few times (not less than thirty) in the House to which the deceased member was last ascribed.
 - e. A solemn celebration of the Divine Liturgy and office for the dead, on the first anniversary of death; all the members of the House shall participate in them.
113. The priests can apply the celebration of the Divine Liturgy a few times (not exceeding thirty) for their deceased parents. In the case of Brothers and priests who are unable to celebrate, the House Superior shall provide for the same suffrages.
114. Those who stay outside our Houses for studies or other services, shall send in regular reports about their life, work, studies, semestral mark list, quarterly account etc. to the Major Superior. They shall maintain close relations with our members staying in the same locality or region.
115. As we have no special religious habit, our dress shall be in accordance with the prescriptions given by the Eparchial Bishop.

ii. FORMATION

116. Proper spiritual guidance and counselling shall be given to the members with the help of competent persons.
117. a. All those who are engaged in the training of the members, such as directors and teachers, should be of balanced character and specially trained for their task.

- b. Those who are assigned to the House of formation must be zealous in the observance of the rules and exemplary in behavior.
118. Mutual respect, co-responsibility and spirit of dialogue shall be fostered among the staff and students. In order that the family spirit may prevail in our community, special care must be taken to foster it in all our Houses of formation.
 119. The Major Superior shall ensure that the candidate chosen for higher studies or for ministries in parishes or mission, have the necessary aptitude which is to be objectively evaluated in view of their past performances, both academic and pastoral or apostolic.
 120. Members sent abroad for higher studies or ministries should be given in writing definite instructions regarding their work or study, subject, duration, place, residence etc. Extension of stay or vacation requires prior approval of the Major Superior.
 121. Members who return after their study or ministry abroad, or who have been living outside our Houses, shall submit to the Major Superior their accounts.
 122. Eligible candidates should be given chance to attend regular colleges for arts and science subjects.
 - 123.a. The Major Superior is to visit the Seminary frequently for consultation concerning the formation of his students especially if there is a question concerning those to be promoted to Sacred Orders (CCEO 356 § 2).
 - b. In making judgements about persons it is not permitted to ask for the opinion of confessors or spiritual fathers (CCEO 339 § 3).
 124. All may be given chance to study upto graduate level.
 125. Members endowed with literary and artistic talents should be encouraged and given opportunities to develop and express their talents.

126. After ordination the new priests shall spend one year for pastoral training which includes catechetics, preaching, celebration of sacraments, spiritual direction and parish administration.
127. Priests endowed with good qualities and talents may be sent for higher studies to meet the various needs of our apostolate.

A. RECTORS

128. The Major Superior concerned with the consent of his Council shall appoint the rectors of various centres of formation, including the novice master.
129. The term of the office of the rectors and novice masters shall be normally three years, which can be extended for another period of three years, but not for a third term consecutively.
130. In order that there may be thorough co-ordination between the several stages of formation, the rectors shall meet together at least twice a year, to discuss the programmes and problems regarding formation. They shall present their observations, suggestions and recommendations to the Major Superiors. If they pertain to the general policy of formation the Superior General may enforce them with the consent of his Council. Any innovation in the formation programme requires the approbation from the Superior General.
131. The rector, after consulting the members of the House having active voice shall present the report of each candidate, twice a year to the Major Superior concerned. He shall have his own archives (CCEO 356).
132. Rectors to be competent must have proper education, experience and awareness of the contemporary life-situations. They must be able to exert moral influence on the students, and to establish personal relationship with them.

133. Opinions of the seminarians too are to be considered, since they are the ones to be formed.
134. Special orientation courses should be conducted for Superiors and directors of the formation Houses.

B. PROMOTING VOCATIONS

135. The Major Superior concerned shall appoint a vocation director whose task will be to foster vocations and seek suitable candidates. However, all the members, especially those engaged in pastoral and educational works, have a special responsibility to foster and seek out vocations.
136. Candidates shall be properly examined and carefully selected, keeping sound standards, even when there is a shortage of vocations.

C. MINOR SEMINARY

137. The students of the Minor Seminary shall be given education till Plus Two level. Moreover, they are to be taught the religious doctrines, languages and other subjects necessary for ecclesiastical studies and future ministry, especially the Vincentian spirituality.

D. NOVITIATE AND PROFESSION

138. Two months prior to the admission of candidates to the Novitiate, the rector of the aspirants shall send a report to the Major Superior concerned about their fitness.
139. The candidate has to submit a written petition to the Major Superior concerned expressing his intention of dedicating himself for the mission of Christ as a member of the Congregation. The Major Superior concerned however, with the consent of his Council, after considering the reports from the rector, gives him admission to the Novitiate in writing.
140. The aspirants shall undergo a medical examination before admittance to the Novitiate. The dates of birth, of

baptism and of the sacrament of chrism and other relevant details of the aspirants shall be recorded in a register.

141. Before the beginning of the Novitiate and before the first profession the aspirants have to make spiritual recollection at least for five full days. They are advised to make a general confession.

142. The novices shall make the following declaration before the first profession:

I, (name with surname) ...son of (name of the parents) ... belonging to the parish of ...in the Diocese of ...hereby declare that by my own accord I had applied for admission into the Novitiate of the “Vincentian Congregation”, and consequently I was admitted on (date) ...I promise to the Provincial Superior, that in case of my departure from the Congregation either by dismissal or by my free will, I will not demand anything by way of remuneration for the works done in the Congregation. (Signature).

143. The novice master shall discern the genuineness of the vocation of the novices and shall consult the members of the House about it at times. He shall submit to the Provincial Superior the reports of the observations twice a year.

144. The following is the formula for taking the vows:

I, (name and surname) vow to God that I will faithfully dedicate myself for one year (my whole life) in the “Vincentian Congregation” to the evangelization of the people, especially the poor. For a closer imitation of Christ the Savior, I vow obedience, chastity and poverty according to the Statutes and Practical Norms of the Congregation and may the grace of God help me.

E. MAJOR SEMINARY

145.a. The seminarians shall make the best use of the library for their personal study and specialization in the ecclesiasti-

- cal subjects and for a critical and evaluative study of other topics under the guidance of their teachers and directors.
- b. Our students and teachers alike shall be careful about the novelties prejudicial to sound doctrines of faith and morals.
146. Seminarians shall be given proper orientation in Indian culture, and they shall be taught languages and be made aware of pastoral problems of the place where they would have to engage in apostolic activities.
147. Before the final incorporation, the scholastics shall undergo a period of regency for a year or more for practical training under competent directors.
148. Before perpetual profession all shall undergo a course for one month as an immediate preparation for the same.
149. The sacred ordination to the priesthood need not be given immediately after the theology course in the Seminary. A convenient date and place (Vidya Bhavan/Provincial House/Generalate/one of the Vincentian Houses/parishes) for the ordination shall be fixed.

F. FORMATION OF BROTHERS

150. The vocation director shall recruit worthy candidates for brotherhood. As a rule candidates who have studied upto standard ten may be given admission to the Congregation by the Major Superior. If need be they are allowed to continue their studies.
151. The aspirants shall be taught:
- a. Coherent and systematic catechism to a higher level
 - b. Introduction to the Sacred Scripture
 - c. Introduction to Vincentian studies
 - d. Explanation of the Divine Liturgy and other sacred functions

- e. Languages necessary for their works
 - f. Manual works and introduction to technical training
 - g. Management of temporalities
 - h. Good manners and other relevant Subjects.
152. Their Novitiate shall be together with the clerical candidates. What has been said regarding the formation of clerical candidates shall be applied to the formation of Brothers too, with necessary modifications.
- 153.a. Brothers are not to be assigned any full-time work immediately after Novitiate. They are to continue their spiritual, apostolic and doctrinal formation under the direction of a competent person at least for one more year. They should have special programmes of studies adapted to their needs and talents.
- b. The special formation, cultural and technical, of Brothers can be accomplished through the regular curriculum of the training centres where they can fittingly qualify for a degree or diploma.
154. Brothers shall be given cassock at the time of the perpetual profession.

Note:

- * General Synaxis, 2005

CHAPTER III

ADMINISTRATION

i. GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

155. The ordinary Provincial Synaxis shall be held after the election of the general administrative body.

156. There shall be division of work for Superior General/Provincial Superior and his Councillors, and it may be made more or less in the following way:

Superior General/Provincial Superior:

General administration, community life, recruitment, formation, higher studies, auditing, etc.

Councillors:

1. Popular Mission, retreats and pastoral ministry
2. Mission, charitable and social activities
3. Education and mass media
4. Finance and construction

157.a. The Superior General/the Provincial Superior shall assume direct charge of the department of religious life, formation and discipline.

b. The General/Provincial Councillors shall be in charge of the department entrusted to them.

c. Reallotment of these areas may be made only with the consent of the General/Provincial Council.

158. The Superior General/Provincial Superior and the Councillor for mission should visit the mission fields and maintain close contact with the missionaries.

ii. PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION

159.a. A Province should have at least five houses and 50 perpetually professed members ascribed to it.

b. A Vice-Province should have at least 3 Houses and 30 perpetually professed members ascribed to it.

160. A Vice-Province by its nature is transitory and is raised to a Province by the competent authority when the required conditions are realized.

161. To administer the areas allotted to each member of the Provincial Council, there shall be a departmental cell consisting of:

a. The member of the Provincial Council (convener and president)

b. A consultant appointed by the Provincial Council (secretary) and

c. A co-opted member.

162.a. The departmental cell shall meet at least once in three months.

b. When the department cell for religious life discusses matters regarding formation, the rectors, directors concerned and the novice master shall be invited.

c. At the meeting of the Provincial Council there shall be regular briefing regarding important recommendations made by each department cell.

d. For the carrying out of the special work of each department, expert advice may be sought even from outside the Congregation.

iii. SYNAXIS

163. The agenda for sessions of a day is to be posted at least in the preceding evening. The proposals or matters are taken in the order of the reports distributed to the capitulars, unless changed by the central commission or by the Synaxis itself.
164. The convocation of the Synaxis is made at least three months before the date fixed for its opening. In a letter to the members, the concerned Major Superior shall indicate the date, place and purpose of the Synaxis and prescribe prayers for its success.
165. The delegates are to be elected in the following manner. The Major Superior shall send to all the electors ballot papers in which the names of all eligible members are given. Within the time limit each elector sends back his ballot paper after marking the prescribed number of names of those whom he wishes to elect as delegates.
166. On a fixed day the Council of the concerned Major Superior shall meet to count the votes. Those who get the highest number of votes shall be declared elected. In case of equal votes the senior by ordination, profession and age shall be preferred.
167. The Major Superior after consulting the Councillors shall appoint a preparatory commission consisting of at least three members from among the delegates to prepare the agenda and to arrange in order the proposals of the members. At least one month before the sitting of the Synaxis the commission shall send the agenda of the Synaxis and all the proposals to every capitular. Once the Synaxis has begun, the duty of the preparatory commission shall cease.
168. In preparation all the capitulars spend the day before the Synaxis in prayer and recollection.

169. At the first meeting of the Synaxis the president shall give the inaugural address which shall include a report of the present state of the whole Congregation/Province. The General/Provincial finance officer also shall render an account of the temporal administration and the financial state of the Congregation/Province since the previous Synaxis.
- 170.a. Both the secretaries and the tellers shall make a special oath of fulfilling their duty faithfully and keeping the secrecy as regards the matters pertaining to their office even after the Synaxis, using the following formula (Placing the right hand on the Holy Bible):
- “I promise to fulfil faithfully the duty entrusted to me and to keep secrecy regarding the relevant matters. So help me God”.
- b. The secretary is to record accurately all the acts of the election and after they have been read to the electors they are to be signed by at least the secretary, the presiding officer and the tellers and be carefully preserved in the archives of the Congregation/Province (CCEO 955 § 5).
- 171.a. Proposals are to be made in written form and each one separately. Any addition, alteration or derogation in the Statutes are to be made by a two third majority of votes of those present not counting the invalid ones. Other proposals and amendments on Practical Norms shall have legal force if they get the absolute majority of votes. In case the votes are equally divided a second ballot shall be conducted. If at this ballot also the votes are equal, the matter may be discussed again, after which the third ballot shall be conducted. If at this ballot also equal votes are obtained, the president breaks the tie by his casting vote.
- b. Any proposal once rejected by the Synaxis can be accepted for discussion, only if one third of the capitulars present give a written request to that effect.

172. Those who wish to speak on a particular matter should hand in their names to the secretaries before the particular session.
173. A time limit for all speakers is to be established by the president and the moderator.
174. No one should be allowed to speak more than once on the same matter on the same day.
175. It will be helpful in one's preparation to write out what one intends to say. The written preparation is highly conducive to accuracy and very helpful to brevity. It also tends to cool down the speeches that would otherwise be only tense and highly emotional.
176. A speaker should neither repeat arguments, adequately given by previous speakers nor attempt to refute them, but give facts and reasons, without unnecessary repetition, as one who holds for the true and better in everything.
177. The speakers should be called in the order of priority.
178. When those who had previously requested to speak have finished, the president or the moderator is to ask whether any others wish to speak. These are to raise the hand and their names are to be taken down. They are to be called in the same order; and can be given three minutes each to speak on the matter discussed.
179. At least a day should intervene between the discussion and the vote. Unless the matter is of lesser importance it should not be voted on the same day as that on which the discussion is concluded.
- 180.a. On the day of election, after the usual prayer the president himself makes a short speech. The relevant Statutes and Practical Norms are read out. Then all shall spend a quarter of an hour in silent prayer.
 - b. All standing together take the following oath:

“I swear that I will elect those whom I consider worthy to be elected. So help me God.”(cfr. CCEO 445)

181. Ballot papers are distributed to all by the tellers before each election. Each one shall write the name and surname of the person whom he wishes to elect in the Lord. Then the tellers collect the ballots, check their numbers and examine them in the presence of the president and announce the number of the votes. If any elector is ill in the House where the Synaxis is assembled, the two tellers shall go and collect his ballot (CCEO 949 § 2).
- 182.a. If the number of ballots does not equal the number of electors the vote is invalid (CCEO 955 § 3).
 - b. One who gets the requisite majority of votes excluding the invalid one shall be considered elected. If at the first ballot nobody gets the required majority, then a second ballot shall be taken in the same way as the first. If no one receives the required majority in the second ballot also, a third ballot shall be held (CCEO 956).
 - c. In the third ballot a relative majority of valid votes cast is required and sufficient in the election of the Major Superiors and Councillors (CCEO 956).
 - d. If however, the votes are equal, the senior by reason of ordination, first profession and age is declared elected (CCEO 956).
- 183.a. The Major Superior (Superior General & Provincial) is elected first. After the legitimate election (and confirmation by the Superior General in case of election of the Provincial Superior) and acceptance by the elected, the president, after making the decree of election shall announce the one who is elected; but if the president himself is elected the moderator shall make the announcement. Then the meeting is adjourned for a while.

- b. If the newly elected Major Superior (Superior General/Provincial Superior) is not present, he shall be called for and the synaxis shall discontinue its work until his arrival.
184. In the meeting after the interval, the four General/Provincial Councillors are elected one by one by separate balloting. The Councillors are elected in the view of the departments of work to be entrusted with and the Councillor for the department of finance will be the finance officer.
 185. The General Councillors are elected by the General Synaxis with an absolute majority of votes.
 186. The Assistant General/Provincial is to be elected by the General/Provincial Synaxis from among the Councillors exempting the finance officer (Councillor for the department of finance).
 187. Once the elections are over, the ballot papers are burned and then thanksgiving to God shall be offered.

iv. ADMINISTRATIVE BODIES

- 188.a. The General / Provincial Synaxis will decide from time to time the method of voting to the panel.
 - b. The counting of the votes for panel shall be done by the General/Provincial Synaxis.
- 189.a. Men of wisdom and prudence having qualities for leadership and zeal for the common good shall be elected.
 - b. The names proposed by a member for the formation of the panel for the election of the Superior General/Provincial Superior shall neither be more nor less than three.
190. Those who have completed two terms either in the General/Provincial administrative body or in both bodies together consecutively are not eligible for the General/Provincial administrative body in the subsequent election. At least a period of one term should intervene (CCEO 514 § 1&3).

191. The General/Provincial Council is to be convoked at least once in two months and whenever the common good of the Congregation/Province demands or the Superior General/Provincial Superior deems it good. The Superior General/Provincial Superior is bound to convoke the Council if three Councillors ask for it in writing.
192. Generally one week before the Council meeting the Councillors shall be informed of the agenda of the Council. The consent of the Council is ascertained by secret ballot.

A. SUPERIOR GENERAL

193. The Superior General shall be the Superior of the Generalate. But in order that he may be able to devote himself fully for the government of the whole Congregation, he shall appoint an assistant superior who will manage the day to day affairs of the House.
194. The Superior General calls together all the Provincials and Regional Superiors and discusses the affairs of the Congregation occasionally, at least once a year.
195. The Provincials and Regional Superiors should keep the Superior General informed of all important matters of the Provinces/Regions in writing.

B. GENERAL COUNCILLORS

196. The Councillors have to reside in the Generalate, or in a House whence they can conveniently go to the Generalate.
197. The General Councillors shall not be appointed as a Superior of a House, novice master or a rector of a formation House.

C. AUDITOR

198. There shall be a General/Provincial auditor appointed by the respective Major Superior.

- 199.a. He shall audit the accounts of the Generalate/Provincial House and the departments once in three months and of the Houses and institutions under Generalate/Provincial House once a year.
- b. After auditing the accounts the auditor shall submit his report to the Major Superior concerned together with suggestions for further action, and send a copy to the Superior of the House or director of the institution.

D. GENERAL FINANCE OFFICER

200. The General Finance Officer shall be the finance officer of the Generalate. An assistant finance officer may be appointed by the Superior General in consultation with his Council to manage the day to day affairs of the Generalate.

E. SECRETARY GENERAL

201. The duties of the Secretary General are the following:
- a. To write the minutes of the Council and keep its secrecy
 - b. To handle official correspondence under orders and in the name of the Superior General
 - c. To remind the Superior General about the official matters to be written especially about the replies to be given either to our confreres or to externs
 - d. To take care of the archives in which all the useful and necessary records are accurately kept in order
 - e. To make known to all the members with the help of a suitable periodical the pastoral problems which confront us and affairs regarding our ministry in different regions and other important and useful matters of common interest
 - f. To write the chronicle of the Congregation
202. The Secretary General shall publish the Acts of the Apostolic See concerning our Congregation, the Decrees of

the General Synaxis, the circular letters of the Superior General and all matters that pertain to the history of the Congregation.

203. The Secretary General shall keep the following files:
- a. The faculties and the privileges granted to the Congregation by the Apostolic See
 - b. Acts of the General/Provincial Synaxes
 - c. Ordinances of the Superior General and the Provincial Superiors
 - d. Letters of the local Hierarchs
 - e. The replies to the doubts concerning the Statutes, Practical Norms, Decrees and other queries
 - f. Doubts or questions that are proposed to the General and Provincial Synaxes
 - g. Copies of the letters of importance sent either to our confreres or to externs
 - h. A compendium of all the letters with their respective dates and numbers
 - i. A file of all those matters which pertain to the history of the Congregation and Provinces from their very beginning
 - j. Files regarding the Provinces, Houses and members of the Congregation
 - k. The catalogues of all the members in the alphabetic order, with details of all the deceased members and of those who have left the Congregation up to date

F. REGIONAL SUPERIOR

204. Besides those mentioned in our Statutes and Practical Norms the Regional Superior will have rights and powers delegated by the Major Superior.

205. The term of the Regional Superior shall be three years. He may be appointed for a second term but not for a third term consecutively.
206. The Regional Superior can recruit candidates exclusively for the Region, in consultation with the Major Superior. They shall be given training for the apostolate of the Region. Local vocations are to be fostered.
207. He must arrange an annual retreat of at least five full days for the members working in the Region.
208. At least once a year a meeting of the members of the Region shall be convened by the Regional Superior to conduct theological discussions, to exchange views on missionary problems, and to share experiences. They shall also discuss important matters and give recommendations to the Major Superior about the administration and development of the Region.
- 209.a. Once in three months all the members shall render their accounts to the Regional Superior.
 - b. The Houses in the region too shall send the quarterly accounts to the Regional Superior.
 - c. The regional finance officer shall send the accounts of the Region to the Superior General/Provincial Superior once in three months.
210. The Regional Superior shall send annually a report to the Superior General/Provincial Superior regarding the missionaries, their activities and the progress of the Region.
211. The Regional Superior shall be consulted by the Superior General/Provincial Superior before sending our confreres to the Region and before calling them back.

G. DOMESTIC MEETING

212. A domestic meeting in which all the members partake shall be conducted at least once in two months. Liturgical,

moral and spiritual subjects, as well as matters pertaining to the general administration, discipline, apostolate, etc., of the House shall be discussed in a spirit of dialogue.

H. HOUSE SUPERIOR

213. The House Superior is appointed for a term of three years. No one shall be appointed a House Superior for a third term consecutively.
214. The House Superior can appoint the confreres to those offices to which the appointment is not reserved to the Major Superior.
215. The House Superior shall not grant to any member of the House any permission that is indefinite with regard to time and manner in any matter.
216. To introduce a new programme, to change an existing one and to start a new construction the Superior shall obtain the permission of the Major Superior.¹
217. He shall also take care that the decrees of the Apostolic See and of the General/Provincial Synaxes, the ordinances of the Major Superiors and the Decrees of the local Hierach are well observed.
218. The Superior shall not be absent from the House habitually. If on account of some necessity, or for some ministry of the Congregation he has to be absent, he shall give his assistant the necessary instructions and take care that his absence shall cause no inconvenience to the community. If the absence lasts for more than a fortnight he has to obtain sanction from the Major Superior.
219. When the Superior leaves the office he shall transmit to the successor:
 - a. Appropriate instructions about the customs and functions both spiritual and material
 - b. Archives with all the books and documents which pertain to the administration of the House, with necessary details.

220. The House Superior shall have his archives in which are kept:
- a. The Apostolic Letters, Rescripts, Instructions, and Decrees of the Holy See, the pastoral letters and the ordinances of the Local Hierarchy
 - b. Circular letters and the Ordinances of the Major Superior and the replies given for the doubts about the Statutes and Practical Norms, Decrees, and other materials which concern our Congregation and our state of life
 - c. The official periodicals of the Congregation
 - d. The Statutes, Practical Norms and the Decrees of the General/Provincial Synaxes
 - e. The Directories
 - f. The minutes of the domestic meeting
 - g. Report of the canonical visits
 - h. The register of the members of the House with details
 - i. The register of the deceased members of the House with details
 - j. An inventory of all things
 - k. The register of the Mass intentions, pious foundations and Church records
 - l. The chronicle
 - m. Copies of official letters to the Ecclesiastical or civil authorities
 - n. The book of benefactors
221. The Superior shall see that the suffrages for the deceased are fulfilled in accordance with our Statutes and Practical Norms.
222. The Superior shall be vigilant to see that the obligations to celebrate the Divine Liturgy are fulfilled in due time.

223. The Superior shall see that liturgical functions, especially those in which the faithful partake, are conducted punctually and properly, and in an orderly manner. All facilities are to be given to the faithful for the reception of sacraments.
224. The Superior shall bear in mind that the success of his service lies much in the co-operation and benevolence of the other members of the House. He shall be kind and considerate and try to obtain their voluntary and effective co-operation by prudent division of labour and by entrusting them with responsible tasks.

I. HOUSE FINANCE OFFICER

225. If necessity demands, especially in our Houses where there are only a few activities, the House Superior himself may act as the finance officer.
226. He shall have a diary in which any article lent out should be noted with due remarks and the date. When it is returned it shall be noted in the same way.
227. The finance officer of the House shall submit the account monthly to the Superior of the House for his verification and counter signature. The finance officer shall prepare also the monthly abstract of the accounts, which may be presented in the domestic meeting once in three months. A copy of this shall be sent to the Provincial, signed by the Superior and the finance officer.
228. The finance officer of a House shall have a separate ledger and bank account of the private money of the members. If there is a considerable amount, the same shall be deposited in the name of the person concerned and of the Superior or finance officer and the amount shall not be spent by the Superior or the finance officer.
229. The finance officer shall take the special care of the domestic servants not only in their material well being, but also in their spiritual affairs.

230. The finance officer shall pay special attention to the following:
- a. The maintenance of the buildings, furniture, utensils, etc., cultivation of land and care of domestic animals
 - b. To see that nothing is wasted or spent badly
 - c. That the House is kept neat and well arranged
231. The directors of the institutions attached to the Houses shall send the quarterly accounts of the institution to the Major Superior, countersigned by the House Superior.

J. TEMPORAL ADMINISTRATION

232. The method of keeping accounts is to be uniform in all the establishments of our Congregation.
233. Generally speaking the finance officer shall maintain all accounts. However, the Superior shall maintain the Mass register. The respective directors can hold the accounts of different institutions attached to a House.
234. The following accounts are to be submitted for auditing:
- a. Records regarding all the financial commitments
 - b. Documents of all projects undertaken
 - c. Records of permissions received from higher Superiors
 - d. Documents concerning the encashment of the money received
 - e. The books of accounts: cash book, ledger, monthly statements of accounts, Mass register, inventory, vouchers and bills, passbooks, etc.
- 235.a. There shall be a ceiling with regard to donations and loans. It is to be determined by the General Synaxis.
- b. In case of loans and gifts between our Houses, the ceiling shall be ten- fold of the ordinary ceiling.
 - c. With regard to debts to be incurred, the consent of the domestic meeting is required. The maximum amount of

the total debts shall never exceed the amount fixed by the General Synaxis. For incurring further debts special permission from the Superior General/Provincial Superior, in writing, shall be obtained.

236. The following shall be the ceiling with regard to donations and loans:

House Superior	-	Rs. 3.000/-	Per year
Regional Superior	-	Rs. 5.000/-	”
Provincial Superior	-	Rs.15.000/-	”
Superior General	-	Rs.25.000/-	”

Beyond this amount the consent of the respective Council is necessary.

237. Public collection of donations cannot be made without the written permission of the Major Superior.
238. In each House a register containing details about all the donations received shall be kept.
239. All the money and cheques received shall always be handed over to the finance officer.
240. The deposit of the common money shall be in the name of both the Superior concerned and the finance officer; SB A/c under the title “either or survivor” and Fixed Deposit jointly.
241. The finance officers shall submit the report of his administration to the Superiors concerned at least once in three months, and as often as the Superiors demand it.

Before the beginning of the financial year the finance officer in consultation with the Superior prepares a detailed budget for the year and this shall be discussed in the domestic meeting. At the end of the year a report of the financial condition of the House is submitted to the domestic meeting.

242. A Major Superior shall not allow debts to be contracted or loans to be taken unless it is certain that they can be

- paid off from the revenues of the House within the time foreseen.
243. The consent of the domestic meeting and the permission of the Major Superior are required to file a lawsuit. In case of urgency, the consent of the domestic meeting is sufficient. But the matter shall be referred to the Major Superior as early as possible.
245. The heads of the institutions shall have proper archives, books of benefactors etc., for their institutions.
246. Consent of the Superior General is required for every purchase or construction for amount exceeding Rs.50,00,000/- and for alienation of immovable properties if its value exceeds Rs.25,00,000/-.*
- 247.a. At the end of each financial year each of the various departments shall prepare the statement of accounts along with the balance sheet and also a detailed report including all relevant particulars.
- b. Relevant parts from this report may be circulated among our members with a view of creating in them a greater sense of participation.
- c. The annual budgets as well as annual reports and statements of accounts shall be submitted to the General/Provincial Council.
- 248.a. Any application requiring the approval of the General or Provincial administration is to be submitted to the Superior General or Provincial Superior with a copy to the respective Councillor. The Councillor will study the application and submit his observation to the General or Provincial Council.
- b. The decisions shall be communicated to the petitioner through the department concerned.
- c. If any subsidy is to be given for a project the General/Provincial finance officer does it.

- d. The department cell concerned will do the supervision and follow up of the project.
 - e. In order that the general Councillor may fulfil his ministry of animation more effectively the concerned Provincial Councillor shall inform him from time to time of the important activities and programmes of the respective departments.
 - f. The General Councillor of each department shall convene at least twice a year a joint meeting of the Provincial Councillors of the respective departments to discuss issues related to their department. The Superior General and the Provincial Superiors should be informed of such meetings. A report of this meeting is to be given to the Superior General and to the Provincial Superiors.
249. It shall be within the competence of the General/Provincial departments to send out to our Houses circulars containing instructions and details of projects, to organize seminars, conferences and such other programmes, to try out new methods of work, to recommend suitable persons for special training, and so on.
250. It is the function of the Provincial Superior to approve the order of the day presented by the local Superior with the consent of the domestic meeting.

Notes:

1. The Superior has to get permission from the Provincial Council for any work/project to be undertaken, after consulting with and getting the permission of the domestic meeting. This would be the case even for the projects to be undertaken by institutions attached to the Houses. If the Superior/domestic meeting does not agree with the proposals and when the matter is urgent, the concerned head of the institution can approach the Major Superior explaining the situation. The Major Superior shall take the decision after evaluating the issue and its circumstances.

* General Synaxis, 2005.

CONCLUSION

These are the rules of our Congregation emanating from the teachings and example of the Divine Master and from the life and works of our Father St. Vincent de Paul, wherein our manner of living, praying and working are envisaged under the influence of the Holy Spirit and guidance of the Church. We shall highly esteem, diligently study and earnestly observe the Statutes and the Practical Norms, and the rules derived therefrom, fully convinced that they are God given means for us to grow in charity which is the fulfilment of the law. “If you love me you will keep my commandments” (Jn. 14:15).

APPENDIX

Formula for Renewing the Vows on the Feast Day of St. Vincent de Paul

Today on the Feast Day of our heavenly patron St. Vincent de Paul, I (name surname) renew my promise to God that I will faithfully dedicate myself in the “Vincentian Congregation” to the evangelisation of the people, especially the poor. For a closer imitation of Christ, the Saviour I renew my vows of obedience, chastity and poverty according to the Statutes and Practical Norms of the “Vincentian Congregation” and may the grace of God help me.