



RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR THE VINCENTIAN FAMILY IN NIGERIA

Introduction

Since 1998, the Superiors General of the Congregation of the Mission and of the Daughters of Charity, have promoted during these years the development of the Vincentian Family in order that it grows in communion and in the coordination of its efforts.

Accepting the invitation made in the General Assembly of Congregation of the Mission in 1998 for the different branches of the Vincentian Family so that it can truly become “a more effective force for evangelization and for the Works of charity and justice in today's world,” the different lay and religious representatives of the Vincentian Family in Nigeria came together in March 2000 in order to move along this path.

Having formed ourselves therefore, we, the members of the Vincentian Family in Nigeria, impelled by the love of Christ and inspired by the spirit of St. Vincent de Paul, commit ourselves to live and serve in a spirit of fraternity and mutual collaboration to work for the evangelization of the poor and the needy according to the signs of the time.

PART I: NATURE AND PURPOSE.

Article I. Name:

It shall be called Vincentian Family, because there are some elements that unite us together as a Family: having St. Vincent as founder or inspiration; a loud and clear desire to serve the poor; Vincentian spirituality; the virtues of charity, service, simplicity and humility, among others. Responding to the cry of the poor, those who in a direct or indirect way, prolong in time the Vincentian Charism, are called together to seek effective and concrete ways to uplift the poor. At the moment, there are six recognized branches of the Vincentian Family in Nigeria, namely: Association of International Charities (AIC), Congregation of the Mission (CM), Society of St. Vincent de Paul (SSVP). Daughters of Charity (DC), Association of Miraculous Medal (AMM) and Vincentian Marian Youths (VMY). We remain open to any other Catholic religious association that has the Vincentian Charism, which wishes to join this Family.

Article II. Vision:

To empower the poor to realize the Kingdom of God in their lives.

Article III. Mission

We are:

1. Called to share the Vincentian Spirit.
2. Chosen to respond to God's call to evangelize the poor.
3. Sent to the whole world to uplift the poor.



We believe:

1. In the presence of Christ in the persons who are poor.
2. In manifestation of the love of God by being at the service of the poor with affective, effective and contagious love.
3. In the derivation of our strength and unity from the Eucharist, the sacraments, the Word of God and the mediation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
4. In the strength of collaboration to build up the Kingdom of God here on earth.

We intend:

1. To be prophetic witnesses in our world more by our lives.
2. To be involved actively in transforming the lives of the poor.
3. To risk our lives and use our resources for the cause of the poor.

Article IV. Objectives:

1. To intensify fraternity and understanding among the members of the different branches.
2. To recognize and become more deeply aware of the challenging reality of the poor. Also to create a database about the reality, needs, hopes and fears of the poor.
3. To deepen the Vincentian Charism in the light of today's challenges.
4. To elaborate common apostolic projects among the members of the Vincentian Family.
5. To undertake common projects at the service of the poor, according to their new and real clamors.
6. To stimulate the search for ways in common formation for the purpose of inculturating the Vincentian Charism.
7. To develop forms of collaboration in the formation of the members of the various branches.
8. To serve as the link with the Delegate of the Superior General for the Vincentian Family, in order to become more aware of the new forms of poverty and in order to respond jointly with the other Vincentians in the world to the challenges of our times.

Articles V. Principles:

1. Openness of each branch within an ecclesial context of the service of the poor.



2. Wide respect for the autonomy and specificity of each branch.
3. Spirit of fraternity, of mutual help and equality among the different branches.
4. Recognition of the experience of each branch and its concrete place in Vincentian heritage.

Article VI. Priorities:

1. Formation of the members in the Vincentian tradition and spirituality.
2. Reaching out together in times of natural disasters and calamities.
3. Undertaking of common projects for the service of the poor.

Article VII. Formation Programmes:

1. Common Programme: There shall be periodic common formation programmed for all the members of the Vincentian Family. The National Leadership Team shall decide the frequency and duration of such programs and arrange the resource persons, venue and other logistics. The financial expenses shall be shared amongst the branches and/or participants.
2. Particular Program: In order to empower especially the lay associations of the Vincentian Family, each branch of the Family shall ensure that there shall be formation programs for new members as well as on-going formation programs for already admitted members.

PART II: ORGANIZATION.

Article VIII. National Leadership Team:

1. It shall consist of the President, Secretary and all the heads of the branches of the Family.
2. The National Leadership Team shall meet at least once a year at either of the houses of the CM or DC or any member who can foot the bill of such meeting.
3. It shall be the function of the Leadership Team to:
 - a. Animate and coordinate the activities common to the Vincentian Family. It informs the members of the General Body of the activities through an Annual Report, Circulars, Bulletin and other selected means.
 - b. Prepare the agenda for the Annual General Meeting.
 - c. Implement the resolutions of the Annual General Meeting.
 - d. Arrange special formation programs for the members.



- e. Monitor the common projects and prepare the Completion Report with necessary documentation.
 - f. Establish committees (if needed) and appoint members for the implementation of such projects.
4. The members of the Leadership Team, except the National Secretary, will pay their fares to Executive Meetings. Others shall be responsible for their fares.
- a. The Family will reimburse the road transport fares of the National Secretary to Executive Meetings.

Article IX. The President and Vice President:

1. The President is the head of the Family in Nigeria.
2. A candidate for the post of the President shall always be the visitor of the CM.
3. He shall be the animator of the Family in Nigeria and represents the Family in all matters concerning the Family within and outside Nigeria.
4. It is the duty of the President to:
 - a. Convoke and preside at all the meetings, organize the order of the day and officially close the meetings
 - b. Look into the realization of the objectives, mission and principles of the Family
 - c. Provide information on themes discussed, orientations agreed upon, and/or projects commonly adopted
 - d. Ensure that formation programs are carried out at the Family level.
5. The Vice-President shall always be the Visitatrix of the Daughters of Charity.
6. In the absence of the President, the Vice President fulfils these functions.

Article X. National Secretary and Assistant:

1. In order to coordinate and promote the unity and collaboration among the various branches of the Vincentian Family, there shall be a National Secretary, who keeps all the records of the Family.
2. The National Secretary shall be elected at the plenary meeting by a simple majority of the valid votes cast.
3. There shall be three nominees from the members of the plenary in a random and spontaneous way before election is conducted.
4. The election proper shall take the form of open-secret ballot.



5. The candidate with the highest number of votes shall stand elected and the runner-up shall be confirmed as the Assistant National Secretary.
6. Candidates for the offices of the National Secretary and Assistant shall be active members of any of the branches of the Family for a minimum of three years.
7. He/she shall be literate and eligible and have a good command of English Language.
8. The tenure of the National Secretary and Assistant shall be for three years and can be renewed for another three years.
9. It shall be the duty of the Secretary to:
 - a. Write the minutes of the meeting and send them to the members,
 - b. Take care of the communications between the President and the members,
 - c. Send to the members the order of the day and the convocation of the meeting, and
 - d. Organize and keep the archives.
10. In the absence of the Secretary, the Assistant Secretary shall fulfill these functions.

Article XI. Financial Secretary and Treasurer:

1. There shall be a Financial Secretary and a Treasurer.
2. The Financial Secretary and Treasurer are elected at the plenary meeting by a simple majority of the valid votes cast.
3. There shall be three nominees for each office from the members of the plenary in a random and spontaneous way before elections are separately conducted.
4. The elections proper will take the form of open-secret ballot.
5. The candidate with the highest number of votes stands elected. There shall be separate elections for the Financial Secretary and Treasurer.
6. Candidates for the offices of the Financial Secretary and Treasurer shall be active members of any of the branches of the Family for a minimum of three years.
7. They shall be literate and eligible and have a good command of English Language and some working or at least common sense knowledge of basic accounting.



8. The tenures of the Financial Secretary and Treasurer shall be for three years and can be renewed for another three years.
9. As a general principle, the six National Executive Officers of the Family shall come from the six arms of the Family. No arm shall produce more than one officer.

Article XII. General Body:

1. It represents the various branches which belong to the Vincentian Family in Nigeria. It shall be composed of all the active members of any of the following branches: AIC, CM, SSVP, DC, AMM and VMY.
2. A Plenary meeting of this body shall be held once in a year preferably at the first weekend in March beginning on Friday afternoon and ending on Sunday morning. It shall be known as the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Vincentian Family in Nigeria.
3. The venue of the meeting, duration, theme, cost, number of participants, etc, shall be determined by the National Leadership Team.
4. Each participant shall be responsible for the cost of their room and board and other logistics of the meeting. The cost of the meeting shall be made clear to the members at least two months before the meeting.

Article XIII. Functions of the AGM:

1. It shall deal with those matters pertaining to the Vincentian Charism without affecting the autonomy of each branch of the Vincentian Family.
2. All the common actions from the previous year shall be reviewed and evaluated at the AGM.
3. New plans and projects which are time bound shall be elaborated and discussed at the AGM.
4. It shall decide on whether to take up joint initiatives for a greater and better service of the poor.
5. It shall find funds for the common project as well as the running expenses of the secretariat.
6. Approves the budget for each year.
7. It elects the Secretary/Assistant, Financial Secretary, Treasurer and determines their tenures and powers.



8. Approves the various common formation programs for the members of the Vincentian Family which is arranged by the National Leadership Team.
9. It draws up and amends the Rules of the Vincentian Family in Nigeria.
10. Settles all conflicts within the Family, if such arise, in a fraternal manner.

Article XIV. Finance:

1. In order to meet the administrative expenses of the Secretariat each Branch shall pay annual contribution agreed upon by all.
2. These dues shall be paid directly to the Treasurer during the Annual General Meeting.
3. Efforts are to be made to find alternative means of generating income to the Family.

Article XV. Amendment:

These Rules and Regulations shall be valid after it has been endorsed by at least two-third majority of the Annual General Meeting and shall remain in force for three years unless another Annual General Meeting repeal or amends it.

These Rules and Regulations have been approved by the General Body of the Vincentian Family in Nigeria, at its Annual General Meeting held in Issele-Uku on 3rd March, 2012.

Signed: