



EUR News

Information leaflet from
Treasurer General's Office

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Dear Confreres,

It is with pleasure that, after missing the issue expected for January, we come to you for this brief update on the financial development of our missionary Institute.

1) Annual General Meeting of Provincial Treasurers and Procurators. As it is well known, from 21 September to 1 October 2014 we shall hold in Rome the General Assembly of the Provincial Treasurers and Procurators.

It is an important event in view of the XVIII General Chapter, whose the preparation was officially started on June 27 with the Letter of Convocation.

The registration form and the outline for a short report were sent to the participants.

There will be many issues to deal with. I remember, for instance: revision of the journey made from Chapter 2009 to Chapter 2015, the TCF, legal aspects (provinces and works), revision of the General Directory, bookkeeping and chart of accounts, relationship between provincial superior and treasurer.

For those who wish, on days 2 and 3 of October, there will be a short tutorial introduction to the program for accounting *Banana*. The course will be led by Fr. Paul Latorre, provincial treasurer of Kenya.

2) Council for Finances. The Council for Finance met from 26 to 28 November 2013 to discuss the budget of the General Direction for the year 2014 and, subsequently, from 5 to 8 May 2014, to examine the provincial financial reports.

The next meeting will be held on October 1 to 2, immediately after the General Assembly.

3) Appointments of Provincial Treasurers. In the last twelve months, there have been six rotations among the provincial/delegation Treasurers.

- 1) Fr. Mariano Pérez González, RSA, 1/9/13
- 2) Bro. Giuseppe Redaelli – SS – 1/1/14
- 3) Bro. Binaghi Marco – CO – 1/1/14
- 4) Fr. Nambasi John Bosco – U – 1/4/14
- 5) Fr. Chmiel Sebastian – TC – 1/7/14
- 6) Fr. Gabriele Perobelli – CA – 1/7/14

The average age of the circumscriptions treasurers is 57.89 years.

With the merging earlier this year, their number has decreased from 29 to 27.

Eighteen of them (2/3) have been in office since 2011. There is a lot of mobility: on average, a new treasurer every two months.

4) Software *Banana*. We closed the year of experimentation of the new accounting software with

great satisfaction. There have been no difficulties in the running of the program as well as the opening of the new accounting year. The program is characterized by its simplicity and adaptability to different situations. So far, *Banana* was adopted by the General Direction and seven provinces.

Immediately after the General Assembly a brief training session for the use of the program is offered (see n. 1).

5) Interventions of extraordinary administration. In the four Consultas, from October 2013 to June 2014, the General Council approved several administrative acts of extraordinary nature, as requested by the respective province:

- 1) Italy: building of Centre for the Sick in Castel d'Azzano
- 2) Italy: the sale of the House in Arco
- 3) Congo: the sale of the house in Lemba
- 4) Kenya: building the centre for mission promotion in Embakasi
- 5) Kenya: building of the inter-provincial postulancy in Ongata Rongai-Fatima
- 6) DSP: sale of part of the property in Bresanone
- 7) Peru-Chile: sale of land adjoining the house in Santiago, Chile
- 8) South-Sudan: Construction of pre-postulancy in Juba.

6) Extraordinary Ordinary Contributions. In March, with a letter to the Superiors of Circumscriptions, the Superior General has presented the Institute's needs for 2014. As there have been no objections from the circumscriptions superiors during the meeting held last February, the GC has approved the increase of the shares of the provinces for the Ongoing Formation Fund (OFF) from \$ 3,500/7,000 to \$ 5.000/10.000 respectively. In December, the contribution requested for the Scholasticates/CIF Fund was reduced.

It was also proposed to the circumscriptions to contribute to two major initiatives:

- a) The construction of the Centre for the Sick in Castel d'Azzano;
- b) The Basic Formation Fund in Africa.

7) Basic Formation Fund in Africa. This Fund was established by the General Council in December last year and its aim is to financially support the provinces in greater difficulties in the formation of young candidates in the stages of the postulancy and the novitiate.

The Fund needs to be structured and, therefore, at the end of March the outline for a report on

the economic aspects of basic formation was sent to the treasurers of all the African provinces.

The results of the research will be presented during the General Assembly in September.

8 Revision of the General Directory for Finance.

The process for the revision of the General Directory for Finance states that the proposed changes are to be discussed in the first place by the Financial Council and subsequently by the General Assembly of the Provincial Treasurers and Procurators. Final approval rests with the General Council.

We are preparing a working paper for the Assembly. This draft should include the new normative aspects developed in recent years: Financial Investments, Total Common Fund, Handing over of Office, the Audit and Verification of Assets.

9 Financial Report of the GC. The financial report of the General Direction for 2013 was approved by the General Council in June.

All confreres have the right to consult the report: they can do so by contacting the circumscription's treasurer.

10 Financial Reports of the Circumscriptions. All the circumscriptions (30 including the Curia District) have sent their Financial Reports in 2013.

All the reports received were drafted in accordance to the new chart of accounts, although with varying degrees of understanding of the same.

Several reports been signed (7 out of 30) and, in many cases, there was an unexplained delay in their examination by the Provincial Councils.

The presence of explanatory notes (17/30) does help a great deal in the understanding of the financial statements. Unfortunately, when these notes are missing, their lack is felt terribly.

Too often the opening balances do not correspond to the balances of the previous year closure: working capital, funds balance, communities balance, the balance of projects, etc., often show significant differences in relation to the previous balance. In some cases, the practice to clear the result of the year through the refinancing of the funds continues. It is not a good administrative practice because it gives a false picture of the situation of the circumscription's financial life and transfers ordinary activities to extraordinary administration.

With satisfaction we notice that an increasing number of reports (10/30) include activities such as magazines, CAM, procures, schools... It is a good habit that needs consolidating.

Each circumscription will receive the remarks from the Council of Finance.

11 Consolidated Balance of the Institute in 2013. A booklet that collects the financial report of the General Direction, together with that of the provinces, is being prepared and will be sent to all circumscriptions superiors and treasurers.

The Consolidated Financial Statements will be presented during the General Assembly. Its processing is made possible by the fact that in their reports all follow a common chart of accounts.

12 Course in Administration for Scholastics and CIF.

In January, together with Br Giusti, the General Treasurer has directed the seminar of formation in administration in the scholasticate of Pietermaritzburg. In May, the same course was held in Nairobi for Scholastics and Brothers together.

The Scholastics and Brothers have actively participated in the discussions and showed appreciation for the opportunity to deepen the issues raised.

During the year 2015, we hope to repeat the course in the scholasticates of St. Paul, Cape Coast and Kinshasa.

13 Formation on the TCF for the communities of the Curia.

On September 30, 2013, we held a training session on the Total Common Fund for the Curia communities. The preparation work has allowed us to define the times and procedures for the elaboration and discussion of the budgets. Despite its peculiar setup, even the District of the Curia is on the way towards implementing the Total Common Fund.

Allow me to conclude by recalling a quote from a movie that recently won the Academy Award:

"It always ends like this. With death. Previously, however, there was life, hidden under the blah blah blah blah. It's hidden under the sediments of the chatter and the noise. The silence and the feeling. Emotion and fear. The sporadic and inconstant flashes of beauty. And then the wretched squalor and misery of the human being. All buried under the blanket of the embarrassment of being in the world. Blah. Blah. Blah. Blah"

(Jep in *La Grande Bellezza*)

Let us not take ourselves too seriously! Swept away by the "blah, blah" of our accounts to be balanced, by the daily battle with bureaucracy, by having to face needs beyond our strength, we must not let slip by "the sporadic and inconstant flashes of beauty" that life offers. In particular, let's never give up searching for the Beauty.

Good work!

Fr. Claudio Lurati
Treasurer General