



Dear Confreres,

the last few months have been full of events. First of all, I would like to mention the General Assembly from which we received, among other recommendations, the request to have greater communication systems on matters of administrative nature. We, therefore, will do our utmost to send around this circular letter on a quarterly basis: it will be sent out every three months, possibly in the days following each Consulta of the General Council, when many of the decisions relevant to our economic life are taken.

1. General Assembly of Provincial Treasurers and Procurators. The Generalate hosted, between September 21 and October 1, the General Meeting of the Provincial Treasurers and Procurators. It was attended by forty five confreres with different responsibilities within the administration: among them almost all the provincial treasurers and procurators.

The Assembly is held every six years, usually in the year before the General Chapter takes place. It had among its main tasks the revision of the post-Chapter journey, focusing primarily on the application of the Total Common Fund, and preparing proposals for the next Chapter.

In the agenda there was also the updating of the General Directory for Finance, which has been revised and supplemented with the regulatory policies of recent years.

The Assembly was situated in the context of a time of economic difficulty for some circumscriptions, which brought out the need to increase the solidarity among the different provinces of the Institute.

The gathering also highlighted the importance of working with an ever greater transparency and the need, as expressed by the Chapter in 2009, to make use of external auditors.

At the Assembly we invited several experts who provided important reflections. Card. De Paolis, an authoritative canonist, and Sr. Oonah Mary O'Shea, General Superior of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Sion: both intervened on the relationship between the Superior and the Bursar at the different levels of goods management: local, provincial and general.

Dr. Luigino Bruni, economist and author of studies on the *Economy of Communion*, offered some elements for the reading of the current economic situation and the impact that gratuity can have.

Dr. Accardo and Dr. Baranes of Banca Etica illustrated the fundamental criteria of reference for the financial choices of *Banca Etica*. They also presented some concrete tools available in the network, through which one can attempt to make an assessment of the financial products offered by the market

and attain a greater awareness of their characteristics.

For a more detailed description of the work of the Assembly we invite you to read the article that will soon appear on the *Mccj Bulletin* n. 262, which will also contain the full text of the resolutions adopted by the Assembly. To facilitate the reading, the article is also enclosed with this issue of *EurNews*.

The Acts of the Assembly have been printed and will be sent to all the participants, Circumscription Superiors, Treasurers and Procurators.

Immediately after the Assembly, from 1 to 2 October, there was a short course of introduction to the accounting software *Banana*. The course was organized by Fr. Paolo Latorre, provincial treasurer of Kenya.

2. Council for Finance. The Council for Finance met with all its members on 1st and 2nd October, the days following the Assembly, for an evaluation of the event and to collect its suggestions.

Subsequently, from 26 to 27 November, the Council, with just the members residing in Europe, met again to review the budget of the General Administration.

The next meeting will be held from 26 to 29 May, 2015: it will have on the agenda the reviewing of the circumscriptions' economic reports.

3. Appointments of Provincial Treasurers. Earlier this year a new provincial treasurer was appointed: Fr. Avelino Gonçalves da Silva Maravilha – Portugal.

4. Interventions of extraordinary administration. In the two Consulta of October and December, 2014, the General Council approved several administrative acts of an extraordinary nature, as required by the respective provinces:

- 1) Italy: Renovation works in Limone and contribution from the Fund for Inalienable Assets
- 2) EGSD: construction for the extension of the *Comboni College of Science and Technology* (CCST) on the *Comboni Playground* in Khartoum
- 3) TGB: construction of a Centre for Mission Promotion in Pahou, Benin
- 4) Colombia: selling of the house in Cali to the Archdiocese.

5. Fund for Basic Formation in the Postulancies and Novitiates. Correcting the orientation emerged in the Assembly of Treasurers, the General Council has decided to confirm the Fund for Basic Formation in the Postulancies and Novitiates established a year earlier, although with a different name.

The provinces that require a subsidy, must submit an application to the GC in the manner that will be specified in the Directory.

For the financing of the Fund, the GC has decided to ask the provinces to contribute with an additional fee to the amount paid annually to the Scholasticates/CIF Fund, in proportion to the provincial assets.

In 2014, several provinces have contributed to the Fund, and others have benefited.

6. Yearly Fee for the On-going Formation Fund. After the transfer to Rome of the activities of the Centre for Ongoing Formation (Comboni Year, Renewal Course, Course for Senior confreres) a further increase in yearly fee to the Ongoing Formation Fund, which funds the activities of the Centre, became necessary. The increase will be \$ 2,000 with respect to the amount of the previous year.
7. Provincial Procurators. In the Consulta of October, the GC has chosen to gradually abandon the practice of having autonomous procure run by the treasurers' office. In those circumscriptions in which the procure service has a certain independent consistency of cash flows, employment of personnel and supply of services, they are requested that they simplify the structures in financial management, assembling them under the Treasurer of the Circumscription and establishing appropriate and clear organizational structures.
The new Treasurer General will take up this approach and describe the various areas of competence in detail.
8. Financial Reports of the Circumscriptions for the Year 2014. Forms for the provincial reports were sent since time back. The deadline for submission of the reports, duly completed and signed, is by the end of April.
9. Revision of the General Directory for Finance. The updated text of the General Directory for Finance has been widely discussed and voted on at the General Assembly. Subsequently, the Council for Finance has further clarified some uncompleted issues.
The final approval of the new text by the General Council is scheduled for March 2015, in the course of the Consulta.
10. Management of the Renovation Funds of Inalienable Assets. The financial resources relating to the Renovation Funds of Inalienable Assets belonging to the provinces and originally deposited with the Treasurer General were transferred to the Procure of Cincinnati (USD) and the Provincial Treasurer of the DSP (Euro).
The new arrangement of the funds implies the need to move them as little as possible and to simplify the payment of annual dues. Therefore, as of 2015, the distribution of annual interests and the payment of the annual fees are both made automatically in January by the Treasurer General's Office.
11. External Revision of the Accounts of the General Administration. The Council of General Finances and,

later, the General Council welcomed the orientation emerged in the course of the General Assembly to avail ourselves of external consultants to audit the accounts. This process has been started, aware that obtaining this goal will require at least two years.

The importance of an audit by external consultants was reiterated more than once and a growing number of circumscriptions have done so. This exercise is not just about bank accounts, but it involves a thorough examination of the ownership documents of the institution, the relationship with the communities, the situation of the employees, proxies bank accounts, decision-making processes, the activity of the tax consultant, and so on.

12. Course for the Provincial Treasurers. The General Assembly has called for organizing formation courses for the provincial treasurers. The General Council has decided that the next course will be held in the year 2016. The dates will be fixed and promptly communicated in June.
13. Administration Course for Scholastics and CIF. In January, along with Bro. Giusti, the Treasurer General visited the scholasticate of Cape Coast to hold the Seminar on Administration, as it was previously done in Casavatore, Piermaritzburg and Nairobi. The week proved to be a valuable opportunity of sharing with the scholastics and of on-going formation. In July, the seminar will be held in São Paulo Scholasticate.
14. The Plan. On the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the drafting of the "Plan for the Regeneration of Africa", the Treasurer General has promoted some informal moments of confrontation on the importance that the *Plan* provides for the administrative practice of the Institute today.
The contents of this reflection were collected in an article that will soon appear in our *Mccj Bulletin* n. 262. The text of the article is also sent as an attachment to this circular letter.

Among the major objectives of a good administration there is the ability to predict as accurately as possible future events, to manage without drama the extraordinary situations or emergencies, to carefully follow the laws and regulations so that we may not unknowingly find ourselves debtors to somebody.

While not giving up on these goals, let us try to leave enough room for surprises, which we hope will be the result of the Awaited One, rather than of negligence.

Let a great poet tell us about it:

*"And what will now happen
to my journey?
Too carefully did I have study it,
without knowing anything. An unexpected event
is the only hope. But, they tell me,
that it is foolish to say so." (Eugenio Montale)*

Good work!

Fr. Claudio Lurati
Treasurer General