



Information Newsletter  
General Treasury  
N° 16 - Roma, 15<sup>th</sup> July 2011

Dear All,

we have come to the end of a year full of events and meetings.

With this letter, I would like to give you an update on the main events in the small Comboni financial arena.

1. Continental Assemblies. The past few months saw the celebration of the assemblies for the provincial treasurers of the continental groups of America-Asia, French-speaking Africa and English-speaking Africa. All the invited treasurers were present, with the only exception of Kenya and DCA, that were represented by a member of the Secretariat. The atmosphere was always characterised by great support and attention.

Much appreciated was the report on the questionnaire on the juridical personality. In addition to collecting valuable information, it has helped to raise awareness about the importance of the topic.

In all the assemblies, the issue of the clustering of circumscriptions was also discussed. The general opinion was that the financial question does not represent an obstacle to prosecution of the process.

From the *Assembly of Bogotá* (August), there came a strong demand for the revision of the Chart of Accounts in order to adapt to both the Total Common Fund (TCF) and to international standards. There was also a discussion on how to assist the provincial superiors in accompanying the work of local treasurers.

In the *Assembly of Lomé* (September), the debate on the TCF brought to light very different ways to implement it. The participants agreed on the need to move towards a common model. There was also a widespread concern on how to provide recourses for the activities of the provinces, while keeping an eye on self-supporting projects.

The *Assembly of Cairo* (November) presented the request of a new software for accounts. The participants also pointed out the need to

define more clearly the procedures for the preparation and the approval of a project, also in view of the implementation of the TCF. In this assembly too the report on the juridical personality made a great impact, with the growing awareness of the urgency to define the juridical framework of our provinces and institutions.

The last assembly is for the European provinces and is scheduled to take place in Rome from 23 to 27 April. The assembly will complete the round of consultations on the Guide-Lines for the TCF. It will also try to implement a common policy (criteria, timing, application and reporting formats, etc.) for the funding of project, as it was wished in the previous Assembly (Sunningdale 2010).

2. Council for Finance. The Council for Finance met from November 30<sup>th</sup> to December 2<sup>nd</sup>. The Council examined the financial situation of the General Direction as on October 31<sup>st</sup> and presented some suggestions for the closing of the year. It also gave its opinion on the 2012 budgets of the General Direction and the Scholasticates and IBC. The Council reviewed the suggestions presented by the Continental Assemblies and the development of the post-chapter processes. The next meeting of the Council is scheduled for 2-5 May. Fr. Vitor Manuel Beco Ancaes, provincial bursar of BNE, will take part representing the America-Asia Group, replacing Fr. Jorge Martinez.
3. Decisions of the General Council. After consultation with the General Treasury, during the Consulta of October and December, the General Council approved several requests for deeds of extraordinary administration presented by the provinces:
  - 1) Brasil South: selling of Sao José do Rio Preto Seminary to the Dioceses.
  - 2) Kenya: purchase of a plot of land for the Postulancy in Ongata Rongai

- 3) Tchad: enlargement of the Provincial House at N'djamena
- 4) TGB: additional works for the arrangement of the compound of the new Scholasticate.

4. Financial Reports for the Year 2011. This year, no changes were applied to the reporting formats, in consideration of the many introduced lately.

During the coming year, following the request from the Continental Assemblies, we hope to elaborate a new general chart of accounts, which can be applied both to the Circumscriptions and the General Administration. The introduction of the new Plan of Accounts should go together with the publication of the *Norms* for the Total Common Fund.

During the year 2012, we shall also try to identify a new software for the accounts, available in different languages.

5. Questionnaire on Comboni Enterprises ("Opere"). This year too, the financial report is accompanied by a Questionnaire seeking some information on the enterprises of the province/delegation. This topic is the logical continuation of the previous questionnaire (juridical personality) and aims at gathering precious information, besides asking questions that need to be answered for the good functioning of the enterprise. Filling in the questionnaire will demand some extra work for the provincial bursars, but - as it became clear this year - over the time it will prove to be very beneficial.
6. A new Plan of Accounts. There is a growing awareness of the need to adopt a new Plan of Accounts. The present formats for the yearly

reports are based on a system whereby the report concern only the actual running of the province in its general activities, leaving the financial reality of the community, project and institutions to a separate format. In the logic of the TFC, everything should be visible in the general budget of a province.

Through the new Plan of Accounts, we aim also at obtaining data - concerning the different realities of the Institute - that could be aggregated and compared.

The necessity to comply with international reporting standard could be addressed too.

Finally, the new Plan of Account gives the opportunity to clarify the role of the Funds (depreciation, reserve, etc.), their management and limits. We hope to develop an instrument which will allow us to describe with numbers the standard of our life-style and make it comparable.

7. Handing over. Soon the General Council will publish a letter on the procedures to be followed in the handing over between outgoing and incoming provincial/delegation bursars. The handing over is a very important moment and demands a certain degree of formality. The Letter intend to cover the lack of directives on the subject in the present General Directory for Finance and any other official document.

8. Training course for Provincial Bursars. During the year 2011 alone, nine provincial bursars have been replaced (31%). Some of them are at their first assignment in the field of administration. It is realistic to expect that at least ten bursars need to be trained every two years.

The course organized by the General Secretariat for Finance and due to take place next October tries to meet this need.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to all the bursars for theirs precious service, which "obliges" them to imitate St. Joseph with their dedication, fidelity and silence.

Best wishes of a very Merry Christmas!

Fr. Claudio Lurati  
General Treasurer

