**2. ORIENTATIONS AND DIRECTIVES**

**2.1. Situations to be regularised**

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I wish to bring to your attention two questions concerning religious discipline with regard to the life of the confrères and to community life, and which have repercussions on the life of the Province. Sometimes these situations are not taken into serious account, whereas, on the contrary, they require to be faced without delay: waiting too long does not solve the problems, but aggravates them.

**1. Absence from the religious community**

First of all we must face the situations of absence from the religious community that may take place in each Province or Vice-Province. There are three types of absence from the community: legitimate absence, absence in the process of definition, illegitimate absence.

1.1. *Legitimate absence:* this is the case of those confrères who have a position regulated by a rescript. It can be a year of absence from the religious community authorized by the Provincial and the Provincial Council, an absence for reasons of apostolate, exclaustration, a trial passage to another religious Institute, an indult to leave the Congregation in view of incardination, “with prior experience” in a diocese.

The confrères who are in such situations reside in their community until the rescript is given with which they are authorized to be absent from the religious community, or the executive decree of the Bishop who accepts “ad experimentum”, or the letter of the Superior general of the religious institute which the confrère wishes to join.

After the acts required by canonical norms for each situation are formally completed, the confrères remain members of the Congregation and are listed in the Provincial house with the note “provisionally absent”.

1.2. *Absence in the process of definition*: this is the case of those confrères who have already submitted a request of dispensation from celibacy and from the obligations deriving from the ordination or who have requested the indult to leave the Congregation. These confrères are recorded in the final list of the Yearbook 2016 of the Congregation, with the abbreviation “F”. The process to deal with such situations and to collect the necessary documentation must start promptly and must be done within a reasonable lapse of time, so as to reach a quick solution.

1.3. *Illegitimate Absence*: this is the case of those confrères who have left the community without permission of the Superior or who contracted civil marriage. They are recorded in the final list of the Yearbook 2016 with the abbreviation “F”. Confrères thus listed are not included in any community: they are precisely absent. We would like that before reaching the compilation of Yearbook 2017, and in any case before the next General Chapter, to regulate all these situations.

We must be aware that their situation is irregular and must be dealt with and clarified quickly, also in order to avoid situations of open counter-witness regarding the obligations freely undertaken with religious profession and with the priestly or diaconal ordination.

The Secretary general will point out the situations and the way to deal with them consulting, if needed, the Juridical Office and the Vicar of the Rector Major. It is good to remember that “a member who is absent from a religious house illegitimately with the intention of withdrawing from the power of the superiors is to be sought out solicitously by them and is to be helped to return to and persevere in his or her vocation” (can. 665 §2 CIC).

If the situation is irreversible, it will be necessary, case by case, to invite to submit a request of indult to leave the Congregation and, in particular cases, with grave and proved motivations, to submit a request of dispensation from the obligations of priestly ordination. If such an invitation remains without any effect, it must be assessed whether there are the conditions to start a process of dismissal (cf. “Juridical Elements” nn. 104-114).

**2. Consistency of Communities**

In many Provinces and Vice-Provinces of the Congregation, during this period of the year, changes in the communities and of tasks of the confrères are taking place. This is then the time to regularize the situations of the communities. It is a matter of putting into practice what has been given as a guideline in AGC 422 concerning the consistency of communities.

2.1. *Communities canonically erected*: we must strengthen these communities, ensuring in them the presence of at least 4 perpetually professed confrères. You can find in the Yearbook 2016 the situation of your communities that are canonically erected: in some Provinces they are often comprised of 2 or 3 confrères and among them there are temporary professed; such situations must be overcome through a strengthening of the communities.

2.2. *Communities not canonically erected*: we must render autonomous those communities so called “linked to other communities”, so as to arrive in due time to their canonical erection. These communities are legitimately constituted, even though they are not yet canonically erected; they must be comprised of at least 3 perpetually professed confrères, one of whom one will be in charge of the Community, and there should not be any temporary professed confrère. This is also another step to make.

Such actions are demanding and require a careful distribution of the confrères of the Province or Vice-Province and above all the implementation of the “reshaping of presences”, even by entrusting the works to lay administration or by closing communities and works. The intervention made on the consistency of the communities will visibly appear in the Yearbook 2017.