

Mission Plan Vocation Development Committee

The Mission Plan covers the space of a year, clearly identifies the geographic area of responsibility, the process that are in place, the challenges present and the action steps to be taken. This plan is the basis for the elaboration of a budget proposal for subsidy from the Congregation. The Congregation establishes the fiscal year from July 1 to June 31. In order to be able to study and evaluate the proposal, the General Council requires that the proposal be presented along with the mission plan during the month of April.

Dates for this Mission Plan: July 1, 2016 – June 31, 2017

Names of the Mission Program Director and persons that collaborated with the development of this plan: Francisco Gómez and since it is based on the Mission Plans of each stage of formation, the collaborators are the directors of each stage.

Brief description of what has worked well during the previous year, if possible, make reference to the previous year's mission plan:

Generally speaking, some of the things that “worked well” last year are as follows:

- I. It was important to present to the Generalate an initial mission plan for the VDC. Some of the elements that were presented in that initial plan and received appropriate attention were:
 - A. Promote the development of a culture among the STs and Cenacle Family that deliberately promotes and nurtures vocations.
 - B. Promote the ministries of Vocation Promotion and Formation as missions and not simply an administration task that is undertaken as something inferior to “real missionary” work.
 - C. Finish update on the handbook and the curriculums.
 - D. Create the settings for the appropriation of the update to the handbook and the curriculums at each level of the VDC.
 - E. Establish the calendar of activities of the VDC – including entry into prenovitiate, novitiate, professions and ordinations.

Hence:

- II. Finally bringing together a Handbook and Missionary Servant Curriculum. These documents, the fruit of much collaboration represent a shared vision of the Generalate as well as that of the directors of each stage of formation.
- III. As an outgrowth of the collaborative process that was followed in the creation of the Handbook and Curriculum, a structure of mutual support, of taking council and of supervision was created. Monthly meetings of each, by way of Skype, of the vocation promoters, the men engaged in ministry in Latin America and the men engaged in ministry in the United States. Once every three months, the entire VDC

meets as well. It may also be mentioned that communication with the Generalate has been positive and prompt, allowing for rapid implementation of decisions and processes.

- IV. Work was done and continues on the development of a web page in collaboration with MPO and the Office of Communications. Allen Rodríguez has become the liaison of the VDC to this effort.

Specifically:

- I. **Vocation Promotion.** Vocation promotion during the past year was engaged in ministry that spanned the United States, Mexico, Central America and Colombia.

Transition was an important experience in each vocation promotion site. In the **United States** it had to do with bringing in a new vocation director, Allen Rodríguez and initiating changes that would expand vocation promotion to the entire United States and Puerto Rico. Some, if not many of the structures that Allen has promoted were structures that the previous vocation director had initiated. In particular, the development of local vocation promotion teams has been important and the development of modern media communication and promotion.

In Mexico, transition has meant facing the challenge of shifting from a model of vocation promotion that has been reminiscent of the past: a lone vocation promoter, a lot of travel, mostly focused on advertisement with printed material, a lack of team development. With the advent of the Handbook and Curriculum and the Skype meetings, the shift is taking place to a new model.

In Central America, transition has been an ongoing experience as Diovany from Colombia and Gerardo from Mexico attempted to cover this area of ministry that did not have much during the short duration of Carlos Zacarías as the director for this area. A major move took place as the house of formation in Costa Rica accepted the challenge to become the vocation promotion center for Costa Rica and most recently as Edwin Guerra was obedienced to be the director for Central America. Edwin will benefit from the support and guidance offered by Costa Rica, that of Diovany and that of the Skype meetings.

Haiti has become a source of vocations. Diovany has been at the forefront in creating the structure and process for these men to enter into our program in Costa Rica. Edwin will now be taking charge of this area of vocation promotion. Because of political realities between Costa Rica and Haiti, due consideration will now be given to the possibility of creating a “propedeutic” in Colombia and from there transition the men to Costa Rica or the US.

In Colombia, Diovany continues with the ongoing evolution of the vocation promotion program. With the handing over the ministry area of Haiti to Edwin it will become more possible to focus on the vast area of Colombia. A special gift of Diovany is the

structuring of a clear process of recruitment and movement towards entry into Costa Rica. This includes the now evolving admissions team that had been lacking.

II. **The Prenovitiate** phase is divided between two houses, Riverside, California for English speakers and Costa Rica for Spanish speakers.

A. **Riverside** house of formation worked well in the often repeated consideration of an education system that has worked to our benefit, a house that is available for good apostolic exercise having two ST parishes nearby and access to multiple MCF sites in the US. Further, there has been a connection to the MCA and the California Region is very present to the men in formation. The program this year has benefited more from a greater interest in apostolic reflection as in greater dependence and collaboration with Coachella as well as more regular attention to the human development area of formation. With the opening of a new post novitiate program, the academic component has been revisited as well as the process of implementation of the Handbook and the Curriculum.

B. **Costa Rica** house of studies also offers much of what has constantly been mentioned as “working well”. This past year what stands out is an increased communication between the rest of the Formation Program. Not solely in terms of the structured Skyped meetings, also the first time experience of being part of the Admissions Board for Mexico, dealing with students that have left the program and communication between the vocation promotion team and the house of studies. What is of benefit for this coming year is the appendices listed in the Costa Rica mission plan – who is responsible for what – provides a template for support and evaluation. In addition, Costa Rica has become the vocation promotion center focused specifically on Costa Rica. It has been tragic that for so many years there has not been a single Costa Rican student.

III. **Novitiate.** The novitiate took place in Holy Trinity this past year. One deciding factor in favor of choosing Holy Trinity was the historical setting and resources that would be available. It proved to be a good decision, given the circumstances. Huitzila offers more of an appropriate setting and will return there for the following novitiate year.

IV. **The Post Novitiate** takes place in two sites: Chicago for the English speaking and Colombia for the Spanish speakers.

A. **The English** speaking post novitiate had been housed in Stirling, NJ and Seaton Hall was the theological school. What worked well was the discernment process that involved the membership of the VDC, the students and the Generalate. After much prayer and council, the decision was made to open the program in Chicago and use CTU and De Paul as the post novitiate academic centers. The housing is very appropriate in St. James parish. At this point in time, the program is just getting underway. With much gratitude for the expertise and gifts that Paul Michalenko brings to the program as director of the post novitiate, there is much that inspires hope. A formal mission plan is not expected at this time.

B. The Spanish speaking post novitiate experienced a transition in directors. After many years of service in this ministry Gilberto was transitioned and Rafael has taken over the directorship of the program. Some of the gifts that Rafael brings to the post novitiate are those of organization and ability to focus on priorities. This has become evident as structured plans have evolved that have to do with the individual needs of the students, the decision making process, the creation of a team approach to ministry and attention to details of administration. It is important to mention the capacity of the post novitiate program in Colombia by pointing to the undertaking of suffering the death of Andrethene.

Brief description of the challenges that appeared during the previous year:

- I. Most probably, first on the list, the challenge of hammering out the Handbook and Curriculum was the most significant challenge. Thereafter, the task of beginning to work with a new General Council as that body also took its first steps as a governing body.
- II. A second task was the work of discerning a new post novitiate house for the US. This took no little amount of consultation.
- III. To initiate in many cases, the shift from almost “individually initiated” apostolates to collaborative efforts within a single Formation Program. This included the promotion of Taking Counsel, the development of a structured plan for Skype meetings, the promotion of a local team approach and development of admission board committees.
- IV. The task of calling forth from the men a “new approach” to their ministry in the context of the Handbook and Curriculum. This includes the development of a mission plan and forthcoming a budgeting process that will also be served by an annual evaluation.
- V. The highlighting of the fact that we share one vocation to religious life as Missionary Servants that is expressed as a Missionary Brother or as a priest.
- VI. Making sure that we promote and develop avenues of formation for the Missionary Brother.
- VII. Communication and collaboration with the MPO and Communication Office.
- VIII. Time management in giving attention to the ministry of pre novitiate as well as VDC director and other ministerial tasks.

Identify the action steps that are proposed for the next fiscal year:

- I. Provide ongoing support in the implementation of the Handbook and Curriculum.
 - A. Attention needs to be given to any updating in these documents on an annual basis.
 - B. The Academic Curriculum has yet to be created.
- II. Continue to be supportive of the Skype meetings with the inclusion of translation service provided as meetings become bilingual. - The hope is that these meetings

become a way of structuring and giving sustenance to the individual identity of Vocation Promotion, Latin America VDC and US VDC and the structure of the entire VDC.

- III. Providing support for the ongoing development of a team approach at the local level, including MCF persons, the Taking of Council and work on the admission board committees.
- IV. Attention to the Vocation Promotion efforts.
- V. Discern and support a more permanent response to the situation with Haitian prospects.
- VI. Develop a strategy for an annual evaluation of each stage in the Formation Program at the beginning of each calendar year.
- VII. Attention to the collaborative efforts with the MPO and Communication Office.
- VIII. Develop a strategy that will respond to the above by improving time management and putting to work additional resources.

What other important information is necessary to transmit to the General Council in order to approve this plan and the resources that are being requested:

It is my hope that with the support of each, and God's grace, that the VDC will gain in its effectiveness so that its essential role in the Congregation may be structured so that it not become unduly dependent on personalities at the helm. Aware that the perfect cannot be an obstacle for the good, I also believe in attempting to provide a horizon; a direction that will keep us on track. Some of the questions that often haunt my thoughts: What must a Missionary Servant be like in order to be a witness of the absoluteness of God in the 21st century? How must the VDC be attentive; be listening to the Spirit in the newer members of the Congregation especially in the context of cultural nuances? What do, we, the men responsible for the Formation Program need for personal emotional and spiritual growth?

An evaluation report is anticipated of this mission plan approximately during the months of January-February.

In the Trinity,

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