

REGULATIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE CONDUCT OF CANONICAL VISITATIONS

Approved by the General Council

In Session 131, December 16, 2015

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

1. The Prior General in person, or through a representative, conducts, at least once in a six-year term, a canonical visitation of all of the Provinces, General Commissariats, and other entities of the Order (Cost. 279 b; cfr. can. 628 § 1).
2. The visitations are normally conducted by the Prior General accompanied by the General Councillor of the respective geographical area; otherwise the visitors may be Councillors appointed by the Prior General.
3. Visitors may be members of the Province that is being visited.
4. The canonical visitation shall be announced ahead of time via a letter of indiction to the Province or General Commissariat. This notice shall contain the names of the visitors, the time that the visitation will take, and instructions as to how it will be conducted. It is important to note that the visitation is addressed to the friars, and activities more suited to a fraternal visit should be avoided. In the case of a visit to a Provincial Commissariat, the Prior Provincial shall convey the letter of indiction to the Commissary.
5. At a convenient time, ahead of the visitation, the visitors shall make contact with the Prior Provincial/Commissary General to agree upon the agenda for the visitation. In order to avoid too many long journeys, it would be good to invite the friars to attend at the community that is closest to them.
6. The Prior Provincial/Commissary General shall send to the visitors a list of the communities to be visited with the names and responsibilities of each of the friars.
7. The visitation shall be conducted in the form of individual conversations of about 30 min. between the visitors and each friar. Community meetings are not necessary. The local prior shall give the visitors a short report on the present material and spiritual state of the community.
8. If in the Province or General Commissariat there is a monastery of our nuns, or convents of affiliated sisters the visitors shall put aside some time for them.
9. At the end of the visitation there shall be a meeting between the visitors and the Prior Provincial/Commissary General, and his council or, in the case of a Provincial Commissariat, with the Commissary Provincial and his Council. At this meeting the visitors shall offer a first feedback on the visitation.

THE CONDUCT OF THE VISITATION

10. Among the topics that may be treated in confidence, during the individual conversations, the following are to be considered:

- the personal and spiritual situation of the friar (health, well-being, spiritual direction, sense of belonging to the Order etc.)
- relations of fraternity in community
- how the friar views his community, his Province, the Order
- how the friar views his ministry
- how the friar views the future of his Province, what are his concerns, what is his vision
- proposals for improvement
- vocations, formation, ongoing formation (his own, and in his province)
- transparency in the administration of temporal goods
- relationship with the government of the Province
- encouragement

11. Particular attention is to be paid to formation in the Province/General Commissariat. The visitators shall note whether the indications in the RIVC are being followed.

12. In the meeting with the formation director's attention shall be given to the profile of the formation director and to the stability of formation (entries/exits).

13. One of the visitators shall keep notes of the conversation in order not to lose points that may be of use in writing the report of the visitation.

14. The visitators shall decide which topics from the personal conversations will be communicated (in confidence) to the Prior Provincial/Commissary General.

THE REPORT OF THE CANONICAL VISITATION

15. The report of the canonical visitation must be written within two months of the conclusion of the visitation.

16. The report, with the appropriate protocol, in accordance with the customs of the Secretary General, and signed by the visitators, shall be addressed to the Prior Provincial/Commissary General and his Council.

17. The report shall be made known to the members of the Province/General Commissariat.

18. The topics to be covered in the report are, particularly:

- the general situation of the Province/General Commissariat in the context of the Rule, the Constitutions and the RIVC etc.
- community life in the Province/General Commissariat (community meetings, liturgy, etc.)
- formation, above all, its alignment with the RIVC
- ministries
- concerns that emerge with some frequency from the conversations with the friars
- transparency in the administration of temporal goods and the financial condition of the entities visited
- the visitators' observations
- the visitor's suggestions for improvements, concrete proposals

19. The report on the visitation will be presented and approved by the General Council.

THE APPLICATION OF THE VISITATION AND THE EVALUATION OF ITS FINDINGS

("what to do after the visitation")

20. Within one year of the canonical visitation the Provincial Council/Commissariat General Council shall send a letter requesting in what way the results of the visitation of the Province /General Commissariat are being applied.