

CHAPTER VIII

ECONOMIC POLICY OF THE ORDER

Prologue

130.1. The last General Chapters, especially beginning with Walberberg (1980), have developed an increasingly deeper reflection on the economy and its role in the life of the Order. This reflection, in its central points, has shown itself most notably as:

- a greater awareness of the role of economy in human life;
- a greater sensitivity to the sharing of our goods with the poor and the most needy;
- a clearer understanding of the fact that our economy is completely at the service of our mission;
- a new vision of the office of the syndic (bursar) and of his role in the life of the community;
- a demand for a well-regulated rotation and mobility of brothers in the office of syndic;
- a greater ethical sensitivity with regard to the responsibility of investments;
- the incorporation of courses on economy, oriented toward sensitizing and preparing the brothers in formation;
- a greater emphasis on the immediate preparation of brethren for the office of syndic.

This interest has resulted in a series of choices and institutions which have allowed us to realize new forms of more equitable economic relations within the Order and new forms of more evenly shared solidarity, such as:

- the creation of a more objective system of funding the curia created by Fr Louis M. Trouiller, to whom we are grateful, which has provided 80% of the total costs of the Curia expenses realized with the contributions of the provinces and the houses under the jurisdiction of the Master of the Order;

- the creation of funds for particular purposes, such as the *Angelicum Fund*, to contribute to the activities of PUST, and the *Solidarity Fund* designed to contribute to the institutional formation of the provinces most in need;
- the grouping of regional Dominican entities (Inter-Africa, CIDAL, Asia-Pacific) that have similar problems, also financial, to facilitate a fraternal effort within the Order.

130.2. These chapters have insisted quite correctly on *solidarity* and *responsibility* in the economic field also.

Nonetheless we realize that in daily life solidarity can easily evaporate into a vague sentiment, and that a certain type of responsibility can enclose the person in “his” concerns, that is, those that concern only him, thus feeding into serious forms of dehumanizing individualism.

This must not worry us: the economic area, because it deals directly with material things, carries within itself something radical and fundamental which, if it is not continually renewed, dies.

“To be or to have?” The ambiguity of this choice, which is only apparently a vital alternative and which echoes in an impressive way the evangelical phrase “You cannot serve both God and Mammon” (Mt. 6:24), is used by St. Thomas Aquinas when he affirms that voluntary poverty is the first foundation in the acquisition of the perfection of charity (II, 186,3).

In fact we feel that we are “*alive*”, not because we have many things, but because we wish “*to be*” in God, we wish to exist in relationship to him, welcoming his invitation to communion, and because we wish to live in *co-responsibility* with our brothers and sisters.

A co-responsibility, seen first of all as a reply and a *common participation in common projects*, in projects of the Order, of the Provinces and of the communities, but also, and more profoundly, seen as an expression of *personal creativity* in full fraternal sharing, within local communities, of the Province, of the Order and all the Dominican Family.

If Charity is also *human* communion, it cannot do without economy and in economy it can and must show itself above all as co-responsibility in material goods.

130.3. In the economic field, co-responsibility actualizes itself without losing the human or faith dimension. The gifts between brothers and sisters, in the charism of Dominic, including gifts of money are not just money, but a fruit, certainly the most material fruit, of human activity, of faith activity, which continues to defuse itself, allowing other brothers and sisters to share in their turn fruits for the kingdom of heaven.

130.4. This “gift”, obviously, involves all the Dominican Family. Religious men and women, laymen and laywomen, and other fraternities, all who share with us the fruit of their different works, can participate, and in fact are already participating in other parts of the world, in the construction of the material conditions necessary for the preaching of the Gospel: the construction of priories, books, food...

130.5. But we well know that a gift is not possible without trust and, in the economic field, trust is built upon and spread when there is great transparency in the accounts. This remains true whether the accounts are personal, communitarian, provincial or of the whole Order. Clarity in the accounts, as well as clarity in requests presented with specific and motivated projects, and finally clarity in the verification of the results.

Consequently we must all remember the word which gives us a grave warning that every fraud before our brothers is a lie, not just to people, but to God (Acts 5,4).

103.6. The General Chapter has in a particular way shown new ways of improving the method of contribution to the Curia, and most of all has wished to provide an instrument of greater co-responsibility in the provinces, in order to facilitate and enlarge the existent system of inter-regional groupings.

In fact, these bodies, often in collaboration with the Curia, have shown themselves capable of responding better, whether it be to regional problems or to those of each entity, through a communal activity of pin-pointing the demands of the distribution of aid received, and the verification of works undertaken or of activities that have been developed.

130.7. We think that this is the best way to help each other, walking together in the way so cherished by the Order in which charity freely given today looks forward to the new social justice of tomorrow and our admiration of the charity of the brothers of yesterday is called to be an energy which radically commits us to a more just society today.

DECLARATIONS

131. We declare that according to LCO 569, the Syndic of the Order, Fr. Fernando Mañero, has presented a report of the accounts of the General Curia and of the other institutions under the immediate jurisdiction of the Master of the Order, and that report has been approved.

132. We declare that the Syndic of the Order, Fr. Fernando Mañero, has presented a report on the management of the *Angelicum Fund*, and that report has been approved.

133. We declare that the Syndic of the Order, Fr. Fernando Mañero, has presented a report on the management of the *Solidarity Fund* and that report has been approved.

134. We declare that the Master of the Order, in accordance with LCO 572, has presented a report of his personal expenditure to the General Chapter, and that the General Chapter has approved it.

135. We declare that the Economic Commission of the General Chapter met the diffinitors of four provinces to find out why their respective provinces have not sent their annual reports nor paid their ordinary contributions.

ORDINATIONS

136. We ordain, according to LCO 573, I, that the 1996 total for the ordinary budget of the Order will be: US \$1,410,000.00 of which US \$1,100,000.00 will come from the provinces.

137. To avoid that the fluctuation of national exchange rates in relation to the dollar should unbalance the ordinary contributions of the provinces, we ordain that there should be an annual adjustment of the contributions, according to the percentage system used by the Order.

138. With the aim of defining the *net income* of each province for determining the ordinary contributions to the Order, and believing it to be more convenient, we ordain that there no longer be a deduction from the total income for the expenses of institutional formation, but rather that a fixed per capita amount be deducted for each brother in formation, beginning with novitiate to the end of institutional formation. This per capita amount will be fixed annually by the Syndic of the Order along with the Economic Council and be approved by the Master of the Order and his Council.

139. We further ordain that in defining the *net income* of each province for the determining of the ordinary contributions to the Order, that donations for formation may be deducted, just like with other types of aid given to other entities of the Order.

140. We ordain that the houses under the immediate jurisdiction of the Master of the Order deposit as their ordinary contribution 6% of their overall income.

141. We ordain that the ordinary contributions of the provinces, vice-provinces and vicariates, including those recently established, not be less than US \$1,000.

142. We ordain that the *ordinary budget* of the Order should include aid of US \$100,000 for Africa. This aid will be applied to the

costs of formation and will be distributed by Inter-Africa, in proportion to the number of religious from each region in initial formation.

143. We ordain that the *ordinary budget* of the Order should include aid of US \$15,000 for Latin America, distributed by CIDAL.

144. We ordain that *ordinary budget* of the Order include aid of US \$50,000 for the provinces and vicariates of Central and Eastern Europe. This aid will be distributed by the new organization which will be constituted in accordance with no. 49 of the Commission for New Areas.

145. Considering the development of the extraordinary restoration works already done at the General Curia, and at those locales adjacent to it and remembering the good economic state of the financial capital of the Order, partly as a result of the favorable rates of exchange over the last few years, which seems to allow continuance of the extraordinary works of restructuring these places, we ordain a suspension of the extraordinary contributions of the provinces (Walberberg, 163), that had been demanded in this respect (cf. Mexico, 224).

146. We ordain that whenever particular urgencies arise in the Order that the Master of the Order, with his council, can reinstate extraordinary contributions up to 10% of the *ordinary budget* of the Order (cf. Walberberg, 163).

147.1. Several General Chapters have focused our attention on the office of the syndic. This General Chapter considers it opportune to insist on the necessity of having an adequate change of syndics, especially at the provincial level, and therefore we ordain that the syndics of the province, or any acting syndics of the province, cannot be named to this office for more than two terms.

147.2. In case of the need for a third and necessarily final term, the provincial chapter or the provincial council must ask for a dispensation from the Master of the Order, and the religious involved must write a letter to the Master of the Order, indicating his agreement.

148. We ordain that the provinces in their statutes decide the terms of office of those officials responsible for the administration of schools, universities, of scientific centers and all other administrative roles undertaken in the name of or with the consent of superiors.

149. We ordain that in each province, that the ethical norms of investment and deposition of money be agreed upon. The Prior provincial with his council must take this charge, having heard the economic council and the promoter or the provincial commission for Peace and Justice. With regards to these norms, the provincial and the houses determine in what banks (LCO 560, III) it is opportune to deposit their monies and in what societies they participate.

COMMENDATIONS

150. We recommend that the yearly economic reports of the provinces, vice-provinces and the general vicariates fully completed according to LCO 566 (cf. LCO 567 §I) shall be sent to the Master of the Order within the five months following the end of the fiscal year.

151. We also recommend that the responses to the economic questionnaire, prepared and sent by the syndic of the Order, shall be sent to the Master of the Order within five months following the end of the fiscal year.

152. We recommend that all the members of the Dominican Family, according to their possibilities, support the project of the library of the *Ecole Biblique*, an extremely important work for the future of the *Ecole* and the mission of the Order.

EXHORTATIONS

153. We repeat the exhortation addressed by the Chapter of México to the provinces, convents and all the Dominican Family in general, for an increase of the *Solidarity Fund*, to benefit formation, apostolic frontier areas, and the intellectual life (cf. México, 233), according

to the explicit desire of the Master of the Order: “if the Fund could be tripled, we would be able to begin to face this challenge in a more adequate manner” (cf. *Relatio de statu Ordinis*, p. 109).

154. We exhort the provinces to keep in mind some particular needs which exist in the Order, especially those of formation. Such needs can be financed by extraordinary aid given to them directly or through the General Curia. In the latter way, right usage and verification can be made more easily.

GRATITUDE

155. We thank the Dominican Family for their extremely generous response made to the request by the Master of the Order to help the new vicariates in the regions of the ex-USSR for the recent establishment of a new presence of the Order in those territories.

156. The General Chapter thanks all the entities of the Order which have generously contributed to the development of the *Solidarity Fund*.

157. It is the responsibility of the syndic of the Order to personally thank the brothers and sisters who have helped in the development and organization of the finances of the Order.

PONTIFICIA UNIVERSITAS S. THOMAE IN URBE (PUST)

158. The General Chapter is fully conscious of the committed service given by PUST within the Order and the Church and of the difficulties, especially the economic ones, met during recent times. That is why we value the fact that the administration of PUST, with outstanding efforts of various institutions, has achieved a very satisfactory level of clarity and has initiated a process of a more unified planning.

However, in spite of this new planning, the economy of PUST continues to be lacking for various reasons. Among these reasons, the chapter points out in a particular way:

- The reduction of registrations. This reduction seems to be irreversible and must be due especially to the establishment of new centers of study in Rome and in other parts of the world which also offer incentives to the students (for example, scholarships); the desire of several provinces of the Order and of some dioceses of the world to have local institutional formation, which means a marked loss of interest for the institutional studies given in Rome; and, finally, the reduction of religious and ecclesial vocations.
- The expenses incurred by the employment of three new employees for updating library information, which is necessary for connecting with other Roman university libraries.
- The employment of an accountant, ordained by the General Chapter of México (235).
- The economic situation created since the initiation of the new economic statute for those brothers who serve in the houses under the direct jurisdiction of the Master of the Order.

We are all aware that the centers of teaching and research, such as PUST, face many difficulties in order to be economically self-sufficient on a continual basis or to never be so. For this very reason, the Order has shown itself committed to giving not only a direct and continual subsidy, but it has sought in many ways to encourage the participation of the whole Dominican Family. Despite this help, PUST is not able to cover all its expenses, and for this reason, the General Chapter asks that the expenses be reduced.

This undoubtedly painful reduction will be brought about, at least from the economic point of view, primarily by preparing of a budget in a truly comprehensive manner, that is, in a joint meeting of the

rector, the administrator, all the deans, the heads of institutes and the librarian, in such a way that each responsible person can take into account the needs of the others, so that all remain committed to the terms of the budget. The unification of the different existing administrations (University and priory) will also help in the future.

It would certainly be a great help to the reduction of costs if each Dominican professor lecture full-time which would mean eight (8) hours a week.

This year, the Order has already had to give a loan to the PUST to help them reach the end of the academic year. The General Chapter would be very willing to write off this loan, on the condition that during the coming years the accounts of PUST, be presented in a complete manner, be correctly balanced, taking into account the ordinary subsidies it receives, which include, those received from the Order and the *Angelicum Fund*.

The difficulties which everyone recognizes, but also have to be faced and solved by all, give us further motive to sincerely thank all the religious who in one way or another work at and serve PUST. They are the ones who must put up with an uncomfortable situation that has far-reaching roots. May our understanding also be a comfort to them.

Finally, we take this occasion to once again remind the Order and all the Dominican Family of the *Angelicum Fund*, which aims to sustain our University, and which for these past years has not had any new increases.

ORDINATIONS

159. We ordain that the budget of PUST for each academic year be undertaken in a truly collegial manner, that is, by the rector, the administrator, all the deans of the faculties, the heads of institutes and the librarian in a joint meeting.

160. We ordain that the administration of PUST and of the convent of SS. Domenico e Sisto, while keeping separate accounts, shall have the same administrator.

161. We ordain that the syndic of the Order, with the economic council of the Order, revise the economic statute of PUST, with regards to the payments to the professors for the next three years, and then to present it to the General Council for its approval.

PALAZZO LARGO ANGELICUM N. 1/A

162. In agreement with the petition made the General Chapters of Rome (147) and Oakland (201), the house at Largo Angelicum no. 1/A was vacated of residents so that it would be available to the service of the University. According to the indications of the PUST, a plan for there structuring of the whole building was developed. Such restructuring would incur a projected expense of US \$1,550,000. This budget does not include the expenses of furnishings nor those related to occupancy permits.

PUST considers it urgent to restructure these buildings in order to make it a place suited for different offices, lecture rooms, rooms for seminars, offices for professors in such a way as to be able to work out the necessary extension of the Library (cf. Rector's Report PUST).

COMMISSION

163. We propose that the future of the “palazzo” Angelicum 1/A be examined and decided on by the new commission asked for and approved by this General Chapter according to the terms expressed in no. III of the Commission for Study and Formation.