**Governance-in-a-Box Guide**

**Conference President/Vice President**

The primary concern of a Conference President and his/her Vice President is to learn and understand everything about governance in a Conference setting. However, the Conference President is also a voting member of a District Council (and possibly a Board of Directors) which means he/she must also be familiar with governance in a District Council setting. This holds true as well for the Vice President who may, at some point in time, stand in for the President.

**The Rule and Manual:** Every member is expected to have read both documents – not memorized, but familiar with the contents of both and able to search them for needed answers. The Rule, Parts 1 and 3, are most important. The Rule, Part 2 has to do with international operations.

**Bylaws:** It is most important for leadership and members to be intimately familiar with the specific Bylaws adopted for their Conference and Council. In this case the Conference President must understand the bylaws adopted by his /her Conference as well as those of the District and Diocesan Council to which He/she belongs. If no bylaws were adopted by the Conference, Document 1 is a good starting point to make this happen.

**SVdP-Specific Governance Materials:** These documents are related to specific roles and functions of the Society. Leadership should be familiar with where these documents are and refer to these documents as needed. The Conference President Handbook is the primary resource in this group. Another important resource here is “Governance: Council and Board.”

**Resolutions:** All leadership should be familiar with where these documents are and how to navigate through them.

**Group Tax-Exemption:** Leaders at all levels of the Society need to be aware of what their current tax-exempt status is: directly from IRS, provided as part their Council (using their Council’s EIN), or from joining the National Group. If they currently do not have tax-exempt status, it is imperative that they acquire it as soon as possible. Do not assume – find out specifically. Use of these documents depends on what the Conference current tax-exempt status is.

**Standards of Excellence:** Documents in this category help leaders at all levels of the Society to understand what is truly expected of their Council and/or Conference. These documents are based on Resolutions passed by the National Council and are explained using the The Rule, Manual, Bylaws and other pertinent materials. For a Conference President, the primary documents to become familiar with is “What is Expected of a Conference” and “What is Expected of a District Council.”

**Coaching, Mentoring, Training:** Contained in this category are documents and links to the Vincentian Pathway Toolbox. The documents and links to documents are intended to help leadership at various levels of the Society to better understand their roles within the Society, be prepared to meet the challenges they face and enhance their abilities. The Conference President should delve into the toolbox categories A1 through A7, B and G.

**Succession Planning:** The documents in this category are related to encouraging members to take on leadership roles. Explained also within the documents is the election process as currently defined for all levels of the Society. “Election Process-Conference” and “Why Go into Leadership in the Society” are the primary resources here.

**Additional Resources:** This category contains documents that help leaders at various levels of the Society better understand the structure of the Society, legal requirements, and the formal structures that define how things are to be done. The primary documents of concern here are “Fill in the Blanks,” “Robert’s Rules of Order,” and “Transparency for Governance Practices.”

**Governance Journals:** Contained in this category are all of the periodic Governance Journals that were published between 2009 and 2013. The topics published in these journals are primarily related to governance within the non-profit industry as a whole as well as specific articles related to governance and leadership in the Society. This is good additional reading for a Conference President.

**Relationship with the Church:** Currently there is one document in this category. It identifies the articles of Canon Law which relate specifically to the Society. Other documents will be added to this category as they become available. The Conference President should understand the basis on which the Society is viewed by the Church.

**National Group Insurance:** It is very important that all Councils and Conferences have liability insurance to protect the Society and its members. Sometimes Councils acquire insurance coverage that includes their Conferences but this is not always the case. The National Group Insurance program provides basic liability coverage for those Conferences and Councils that don’t have their own coverage or are not covered by a higher entity. Do not assume you have coverage – check into this and know. This section may or may not be important for a Conference President.