



CONGREGAZIONE DELLA MISSIONE CURIA GENERALIZIA

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SUPERIOR GENERAL

Circular Letter

Tempo Forte – 4-9 December 2017

Evangelization is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity (Evangelii Nuntiandi, #14).

Our *tempo forte* was preceded by the annual gathering with the members of the Congregation who are studying in Rome (Sunday, 3 December). The time together began with a fraternal dialogue that provided us with the opportunity to introduce ourselves to one another. At 11:00 am, we celebrated the Eucharist for the First Sunday of Advent (and were mindful of Saint Francis Xavier, the patron of the missions). Our celebration concluded with a special meal, after which the 16 students returned to their respective residences.

Initiatives of the General Council with regard to the Congregation

[1] Presentation of strategies (continued): For the second time the members of the General Council focused on strategies for developing and responding to the only *postulatum* that was approved by the 2016 General Assembly, a postulate regarding solidarity. Father Miles Heinen provided us with an update in this regard: in September, a questionnaire was sent to all the provinces but only thirteen (13) responded.

After a lengthy dialogue, it was concluded that the development of this *postulatum* should be focused on two realities that have been in place for the past 25 years: Patrimonial Funds for the neediest provinces and the Mission Fund. In view of that, Father Miles will develop a draft for our meeting in March 2018 that will enable us to concretize our vision with regard to solidarity. This plan will then be presented at the Visitors' Meeting that will take place in 2019.

[2] Missionaries in difficult situations (continued): The General Council has been charged with confronting and resolving as quickly as possible the various irregular situations that are found in almost every province. Guidelines have been offered to the Visitors who have been requested to send to the Secretary General specific information with regard to those confreres who are in those irregular situations. Some provinces have not yet responded to that request and we once again urge the Visitors to do so as soon as possible.

[3] Dialogue about the Symposium (13-15 October): It is hoped that this event will be evaluated since it is certainly the most significant initiative that took place during the Jubilee Year. Therefore, we hope that the Symposium will be evaluated by each one of the branches of the Vincentian Family (listening to those persons who participated in this event).

The General Curia did its own evaluation. For many members of the Vincentian Family this event was very enriching because where it took place, because of the number of people who participated, because of the festive atmosphere that surrounded the various activities. The General Council feels that some aspects could have been done better, for example, using this event to highlight our identity within the Church and to encourage the need for greater collaboration among the various branches of the Vincentian Family. The members of the General Curia could have been more actively involved in this event.

[4] A new approach for the consultation process for the appointment of a Visitor: As everyone knows, there are two methods for appointing a Visitor: election and consultation. In order to facilitate the second option (consultation), the Secretary General has proposed a new approach that outlines certain aspects on which the confreres are asked to comment when indicating their choice for Visitor. This process will help the Secretary General in developing a synthesis of the various opinions. In the consultation process it is important that the confreres not only express their preference but also state their reasons for their stated preference.

Offices Dependent on the Superior General and his Council

- Father Jorge Rodríguez (Director) presented the Council with a detailed description of the work that the Communications Office has done and is doing. Some proposals for the future were also presented (a distinct way for presenting the circular letters of the Superior General which will be published on cmglobal).

In light of the proposal to take on a part-time professional graphic designer, the Curia wants more time to reflect on the manner in which the Congregation should utilize the various means of communication. The Council has asked Father Jorge to provide them with some criteria in order to engage in such an evaluation and thus look at future needs.

- CIF held its first meeting for Archivists and Librarians. This meeting took place at the Motherhouse in Paris and was positively evaluated by the 25 participants (the majority of whom were Missionaries). Five Daughters of Charity and some lay persons also participated. A future edition of *Vincentiana* will present the content of this gathering and will include the Final Document that was developed by the participants.
- Despite the difficulties that SIEV has encountered in initiating their Masters in Vincentian Studies program (scheduled to begin in September 2018), they continue with their preparation for this initiative. At the present time, they are looking for individuals who will accompany the possible students during the time of their course work. Once

that process has been accomplished, an invitation will be sent to the Visitors who will be requested to approach individuals who might be interested in this program.

- With regard to the representation of the Congregation at the United Nations by Guillermo Campuzano, it must be said that about 20 Visitors have responded positively to the call for greater collaboration with Guillermo. Therefore, we urge those who have not responded to do so as soon as possible.
- The future of the Congregation of the Mission in Holland: As everyone knows and as is recorded in our *Catalogue* (pages 4-6), Holland is a mission that is dependent on the Superior General and his Council. On 6 December, Father Harrie Jaspers (superior) and Father Matthieu Van Knippenberg met with the members of the General Council.

They presented a plan that the confreres in Holland had developed with regard to the future of this mission. It is clear that they are not talking about a mission *ad gentes*, but a mission that is inserted into that secularized part of the world. Their plan flows from an essential question: how to transmit the rich Vincentian heritage in the midst of a secularized country such as Holland? Their plan is focused on three lines of action:

- *Cultural heritage* (chapel, organ, library) – these will be cared for by the confreres in Holland and this will be done with the assistance of the laity.
- *Missionary heritage* – this will be maintained through the beatification of Bishop Schraven (the bishop is and will remain a living witness to the missionary experience in China and in Holland).
- *Spiritual heritage* – it is thought that this heritage can be transmitted through the Saint Vincent de Paul Center which was established several years ago (confreres from Holland and Daughters of Charity, as well as lay members of the Vincentian Family, work together in this center). This is a spirituality center (inspired by the charitable activity of Vincent de Paul) where there is dialogue with the poor and where people are assisted in making an analysis of the present reality. It is hoped that as the center continues it will develop its plan of action, which will then be reviewed by the Superior General and his Council.

Financial Matters

The Treasurer General, Father Paul Parackal, presented a report on the costs of the Symposium that was held in Rome during the month of October. The Council approved its 2018 budget as well as the distribution of funds to the various international missions (that disbursement was based on a review of the budgets of each mission).

International Missions

- The missions in *Bolivia*: at the present time, there are three missions in that country, El Alto, Cochabamba, and Beni. There are not enough missionaries to maintain these three

centers and as a result we must close one of them. The General Council is involved in a process of discernment and there is a great possibility that the mission in Cochabamba will be closed.

- *Papua New Guinea*: seven confreres (from Poland, Oceania, Colombia, and the Philippines) are ministering there. These missionaries are involved in parish ministry, seminary ministry, and ministry at the Malaysian Institute (a center that specializes in providing a process of inculturation to those religious who desire to minister in Papua New Guinea). The mission is composed of two zones: the western zone (dependent on the Province of Indonesia) and the eastern zone (an international mission).
- *The Solomon Islands*: three missionaries are ministering there (two are involved in seminary ministry and one in parish ministry). In January 2018, two confreres from the Province of Oceania will become involved in parish ministry and two confreres of Indonesia will minister in the seminary. Thus there will be seven confreres in this mission (three in parish ministry and four in seminary ministry). The contract with the bishops expires on 31 December 2017, but a decision has been made to renew the contract for another five years (no other modifications will be made in the contract). The contract deals with the confreres ministering in the seminary. It is suggested that the Province of Oceania draw up a contract with the bishops that will deal with the confreres involved in parish ministry. In addition to those contracts with the diocese, a third internal contract will be signed by the Curia, the Province of Indonesia, and the Province of Oceania.
- *The Mission of Benin* (Africa): On 1 January 2018, this international mission will become a mission of the Province of Poland.
- *Punta Arenas* (Chile): three confreres are ministering there: Father Margarito Severino Martínez, Father Pablo Alexis Vargas and Father Rafał Bodgan Brukarczyk. Father Rafał has been requested to take on the role of animator of the community life of the missionaries. The contract with the bishop has been renewed for another three years (no other modifications were made to the contract).
- *Mission of Tefé* (Brazil): three confreres are ministering there: Father Alexandre Fonseca De Paula, Father Rogelio Toro and Father Paulo Venuto. While the juridical status of this mission is being clarified, Father Paulo has been requested to take on the role of animator of the community life of the missionaries. A superior will soon be appointed. Two contracts have to be drawn up: one with the Diocese and the other with the Congregation (this document will define the responsibilities of the General Curia and the responsibilities of CLAPVI).

Vincentian Family

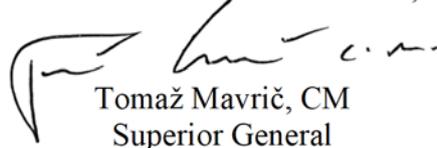
Here we highlight the report that was submitted by the Systemic Change Commission. This report is composed of an evaluation of the work that was done in 2017 and outlines the work that will be done during 2018.

- With regard to 2017 the Commission was pleased to have engaged in three workshops (Guatemala, India, and Rwanda), each of which was well attended. *The Manual for Systemic Change* has been finished.
- With regard to 2018: a workshop is planned for Panama and the members will participate in the gathering of the Vincentian Family, which will be held in Cochabamba (Bolivia). The Commission has been able to establish regional teams in America, Africa, and Asia (these teams promote a systemic change approach to ministry). Father Turati (coordinator of the commission) has programmed some regional events.

Conferences of Visitors

Our attention was focused on the meeting of CLAPVI, which took place in Belo Horizonte (23-27 October). Father Aarón Gutiérrez (Assistant General) participated in this meeting. Some of the themes that were dealt with included: systemic change, the new mission of Tefé, priorities of the General Curia for 2016-2022, review of the commitments that were made during the 2016 General Assembly, report on the School of Vincentian Spirituality in Curitiba (Brazil), the school of formators, the development of a three-year plan (2018-2020). During this gathering a new Executive Council was elected: Father Odair Gonçalves, *Visitor of the Province of Curitiba*, (President); Father Jesús Plasencia, *Visitor of the Province of Mexico*, (Vice-president); Father Gustavo González, *Visitor of the Province of Argentina*, (councilor); and Father Alejandro Paulino, *Visitor of the Province of Puerto Rico*, (councilor). Father José Carlos Fonsatti, Province of *Curitiba, Brazil*, was elected to the position of Executive Secretary.

Your brother in Saint Vincent,



Tomaž Mavrič, CM
Superior General