

October 30, 1998

To Vincentians throughout the world

My very dear Brothers,

May the grace of Our Lord be always with you!

I write to you once again, as I have each year, about our new international missions and about other missionary needs as well. Much has happened over the past twelve months, so first I want to provide some news. Then I will appeal once more for your help. Over these six years the responses from confreres throughout the world, both old and young, have been most generous in this regard.

SOME NEWS

1. **GA 98.** As you know, in July we held the General Assembly of the Congregation. One of its commitments was to "establish a commission to develop a *ratio missionum*" (Final Document III, 4b). At a recent *tempo forte* session of the General Council, we named six confreres to this commission. They will be meeting in January to begin to draft this document, which I trust will be of great service not only to the new international missions but to the many other missions that so many provinces have so long sponsored.
2. **China.** The number of confreres who have volunteered for the mission in China continues to grow with the recent arrival of Frs. Henrico Susilo and Kevin Creagh. The volunteers come from Holland, the United States, Ireland, the Philippines, the Congo, Poland, India, and Indonesia. This last province has in recent years made a special commitment to China. Besides those staying permanently, other confreres and Daughters of Charity have taken on placements in Continental China as English or French teachers, remaining there for one, two, or three years.
3. **Rwanda.** During the year a team of three Colombian confreres did language study in Belgium, with the generous help of our confreres there, in preparation for entrance into Rwanda. But our desire to open the mission was continually thwarted by conditions in the country itself. Outbreaks of violence were especially severe in the Ruhengeri area to which our confreres were destined. Now, Fr. Juan Ávila is setting out for Kigali, where he will assist the Daughters of Charity who are already there and where he will investigate the possibilities for opening two missions: one in Rwanda and one quite nearby in Burundi.

4. **Siberia.** I hear from the missionaries there by fax on a regular basis. They seem quite happy. Fr. Krzysztof Waryan has now joined them after studying German and Fr. Alojz Letonja will soon arrive there after completing his studies in Russian. I hope to visit this mission next year with Fr. Józef Kapu_ciak, a new Assistant General.
5. **Albania.** The situation in the country is still very unstable, as you undoubtedly have seen in the news, but our confreres and the Daughters of Charity move ahead courageously in spite of many obstacles.
6. **Kharkiv, Ukraine.** The confreres are very busy in this active urban center. Construction continues. Their works touch not just native Ukrainians, but students who have immigrated from Africa as well.
7. **Mozambique.** The confreres from Mexico are doing very well at the seminary in Xai-Xai. The Vice-Province continues to suffer from lack of personnel, as will be described below.
8. **Cuba.** Two confreres recently received approval for their visa applications to enter the country, Frs. José María Mondéjar from Madrid and Francisco Javier Quintero from Colombia. Even after the papal visit, life conditions are difficult.
9. **Tanzania.** Fr. Manuel Prado has arrived and is now completing his language and cultural studies. The mission has its center in Mbinga, where the Sisters of Mercy of St. Vincent de Paul continue to grow. The confreres staff several rural parishes in very poor areas nearby.
10. **Bolivia.** Frs. Abdo Eid and Rafael Brukarczyk have just arrived and are beginning to work on both Spanish and Aymara. Fr. José Antonio Ubillús, a new Assistant General, is about to visit the five team members there.
11. **Solomon Islands.** I had the privilege of visiting the Solomons in February, with Fr. Victor Bieler. We met with the three local bishops who are delighted at the assistance that the confreres are providing in preparing a local clergy. I was very impressed by the seminary there and by the generosity and simplicity of life of the confreres. Fr. Tom Hynes is now returning to the United States after more than five years of service. I am deeply grateful to him for his contribution in the Solomons. Fr. Rafael Sucaldito from the Philippines will soon be arriving to replace Fr. Tom.
12. **Algeria.** Fr. Firmin Mola Mbalo is now living and working there and he is very happy, as are his companion Fr. François Hiss, the local bishop, and the Daughters of Charity. Fr. Dariusz Górski is studying culture and the Arabic language at the PISAI here in Rome preparing to go to Algeria.

13. **Haiti.** Fr. Bob Stone from the Province of Philadelphia will soon be going there to assist this mission in its needs.

All of us in the General Council, as we visit the confreres and other members of the Vincentian Family in numerous countries, have been struck by how energetically they serve the most needy.

Earlier this year Fr. Victor Bieler, the Assistant for the missions, and I went to Indonesia and the Solomon Islands together. In Kalimantan (Borneo) we witnessed the aftermath of tribal wars. The riots that preceded the change of government in Indonesia were just beginning to break out at the time of our visit as the country began to experience severe economic crisis.

In Madagascar, where I went with the Vicar General, Fr. José Ignacio Fernández de Mendoza, I was deeply impressed by the wonderful contribution that the confreres from that province and from the mission of Androy, as well as the Daughters of Charity, and other members of our Family have made in the southern part of that country. In fact, if they were not present, there would be almost no evangelization, no schools, no hospitals, no services for the handicapped and for lepers. I felt proud to be there among them.

In a brief visit to the Philippines, I was delighted to visit "Smoky Mountain" in Payatas where our confreres, the Daughters of Charity, and many other volunteers live among the people in the poorest of circumstances. The inhabitants survive as scavengers, searching for pieces of food, glass, and paper among garbage heaps that are continually undergoing spontaneous combustion and emitting an awful odor. I also had two remarkable evenings with members of the Vincentian Marian Youth groups. On each of these occasions more than 2000 young people were present.

The situation in the Congo is still very difficult because of the outbreak of armed conflict. The confreres and Daughters of Charity continue their ministry in spite of the violence.

In Ethiopia and Eritrea too the situation is tense and difficult because of war.

At the beginning of the year, the new Vice-Province of Nigeria was established. The province has a good number of vocations and is finishing the construction of a building for its students. In Cameroon and Kenya too formation houses are being built.

In Vietnam there will be an ordination this year. We have many vocations there, but one must often wait for many years, after the completion of studies, to receive permission from the government to be ordained.

FIRST APPEAL

Our top priority here in the General Council is to strengthen the missions we have already begun. In that context, to the extent possible, we will attempt to respond to other appeals. These are frequent, especially the call for help in formation of the clergy.

The requests we receive are too numerous to recount exhaustively here, so I will mention only some of the principal ones:

1. All of the new international missions mentioned above would be happy to have further volunteers. You already know some of the background for these missions from my earlier letters.
2. In the General Council we have often discussed the possibility of opening a small missionary parish near the seminary in the Solomons, with the prospect of interchange that would enrich both the seminary and the parish communities. This would entail sending two or more new confreres to the Solomons.
3. The bishop of the Diocese of Malanje in Angola asks our help in staffing a major seminary which has students from five dioceses. The seminarians are on the philosophy level. Moreover, in Angola, there are now Daughters of Charity from Madrid, who would be happy to have confreres accompanying them in the mission there. The language is Portuguese.
4. Mozambique is, as you know, one of the poorest countries in the world. The Visitor has written expressing his need for a priest and brother to work in the internal seminary, two priests to staff the center for the formation of lay leaders in Machel, and two lay volunteers who could provide instruction in basic professional skills (carpentry, welding, plumbing, electricity, etc.). He also expresses the need for help in the philosophy house and at the central house of the vice-province.
5. The Visitor of the Province of Toulouse expresses an urgent need for a confrere who might go to Iran, where Fr. Lazare de Gérin now remains alone, under difficult working conditions. The language is French and, eventually, Persian.
6. Our confrere Fr. Theo van Ruijven, the newly appointed Apostolic Prefect in Jimma-Bonga, asks help in the administrative side of his new service to the Church there. Fr. Theo humbly admits that "his strength is not in letter writing" and that he needs a confrere who has "more knowledge of English than I have!"
7. We still have not been able to respond to the frequent appeals from the Bishop of Tete in Mozambique, whom I mentioned last year. He requests our help in

staffing a minor seminary. As you know, the Province of Mexico has already taken on a minor seminary in the Diocese of Xai-Xai, Mozambique. The language is Portuguese.

8. Fr. Gregorio Alegría has frequently asked for help in staffing the formation programs in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, where vocations are numerous.
9. The Province of the Congo has asked help in the formation of our own candidates. The language is French.

Those are some of the principal needs. Even if you have written before as a volunteer, I encourage you to write again. Your own circumstances, as well as those of the various missions, change from year to year. I would be very happy to hear from you. I am enclosing a sheet that provides some information as to the contents of a volunteer letter.

SECOND APPEAL

Last year, for the first time, I appealed to you for financial assistance for our many missions. At that time I mentioned that we already receive considerable monies from three main sources: 1) the generosity of provinces that send us surplus funds for the poor and for the formation of the clergy; 2) large and small gifts that I receive, which total up to a very significant sum; 3) revenues from some funds that have existed here at the General Curia for a number of years.

But our needs in the missions are continually increasing. These are especially pressing in the area of formation since precisely those provinces that have the fewest economic resources also have the largest number of vocations. It was in that light that I made a new appeal a year ago for contributions to the "International Mission Fund: 2000." The response was wonderfully generous. Beyond the monies arriving from the three sources described above, last year's special appeal raised over \$853,000. These gifts came from a large number of individual confreres and from provinces (even some of our neediest ones!). We also received several letters from confreres and former confreres who expressed the intention to make the IMF: 2000 one of the principal beneficiaries in their will. They requested information that would facilitate their doing this.

As you might imagine, I am immensely grateful to all those, both individuals and provinces, that made such generous contributions. If you are able, I encourage you to continue. Several of our needy provinces have recently written to me telling me that fund-raising agencies which have assisted them in the past, have recently told them that their funds are diminishing and that they will no longer be able to help. That makes it all the more imperative that we be able to provide for the increasing demands placed on our own resources within the Congregation.

As I mentioned last year, I am always somewhat embarrassed to ask for money, but its importance and the goodness of the cause encourages me. So I ask you, with as much simplicity as I can summon up, to reflect on whether you can make a contribution to the IMF: 2000. I am enclosing a sheet that will provide you with instructions as to how this can be done.

That is the news and those are my appeals for this year. I am deeply grateful to you for your generosity in responding to these letters over the past six years. In reflecting on the new missions to which the Company was being called, St. Vincent stated in 1648: "Behold the beautiful field which God is opening up to us in Madagascar, the Hebrides, and elsewhere! Let us beg him to kindle in our hearts a desire to serve him. Let us give ourselves to him to do with us whatever he pleases" (SV XI, 74-75). I rejoice that so many confreres are so generous in doing precisely that.

Your brother in St. Vincent,

Robert P. Maloney, C.M.
Superior General

IMF: 2000

METHODS FOR MAKING A CONTRIBUTION

Provincial Contributions

1. Checks made payable to: "Congregazione della Missione" and with "Deposit Only" written on the back. These should be sent to:

Patrick J. Griffin, C.M.
Econome General
Via dei Capasso, 30
00164 Roma
Italy

2. Direct bank transfers in US dollars to Northern Trust in Chicago:

The Northern Trust Company-Chicago
ABA No: 071000152
Credit Account No. 5186061000
Further credit trust account No. 26-79629
NAME OF ACCOUNT: Congregation of the

Mission

3. For Italy and France, the CCP account can be used following exactly the information in the Catalogue, page 1.
4. Other possibilities for transfers can be discussed with the Econome General.

Individual Contributions

1. Checks made payable to: "Congregazione della Missione" and with "Deposit Only" written on the back, sent to the address above.
2. Bank transfers (as above) are possible.
3. Other arrangements can be made via the Provincial Econome, who will be acquainted with various methods of transfer.

In every case:

1. All gifts received will be acknowledged.

2. If your contribution is not acknowledged in a reasonable time, please contact us for clarification.
3. Please inform us if you are making any transfer of money, as described above.

SOME INFORMATION AND CRITERIA FOR THOSE WHO WRITE

1. If you should wish to volunteer, please send your letter in time to arrive in Rome by December 30, 1998.

2. So that I might read the letters all at once and so that they might be carefully organized, would you please address the envelopes as follows:

Robert P. Maloney, C.M.
MISSIONS
Congregazione della Missione
Via dei Capasso, 30
00164 ROMA
ITALY

3. It is, of course, helpful to know the language beforehand, but it is not absolutely necessary. A period of cultural and language training will be provided for the missionaries. Details will vary according to the particular place to which a confrere is sent.

4. While we have decided that no automatic age cut-off would be established, it is surely necessary that the missionary have reasonably good health and the flexibility needed for inculturation.

5. Confreres who volunteer, by sending a letter to the Superior General, should inform the Visitor that they have done so. I will always dialogue with the Visitor about the matter.

6. Your letter should give some background about your person, your ministerial experience, your languages, and your training. It should also express any particular interests that you have, such as what mission you would like to take part in.

7. Even if you have already written in the past, please contact me again. Experience has demonstrated that confreres who are available at one moment might not be available at another, and vice-versa.