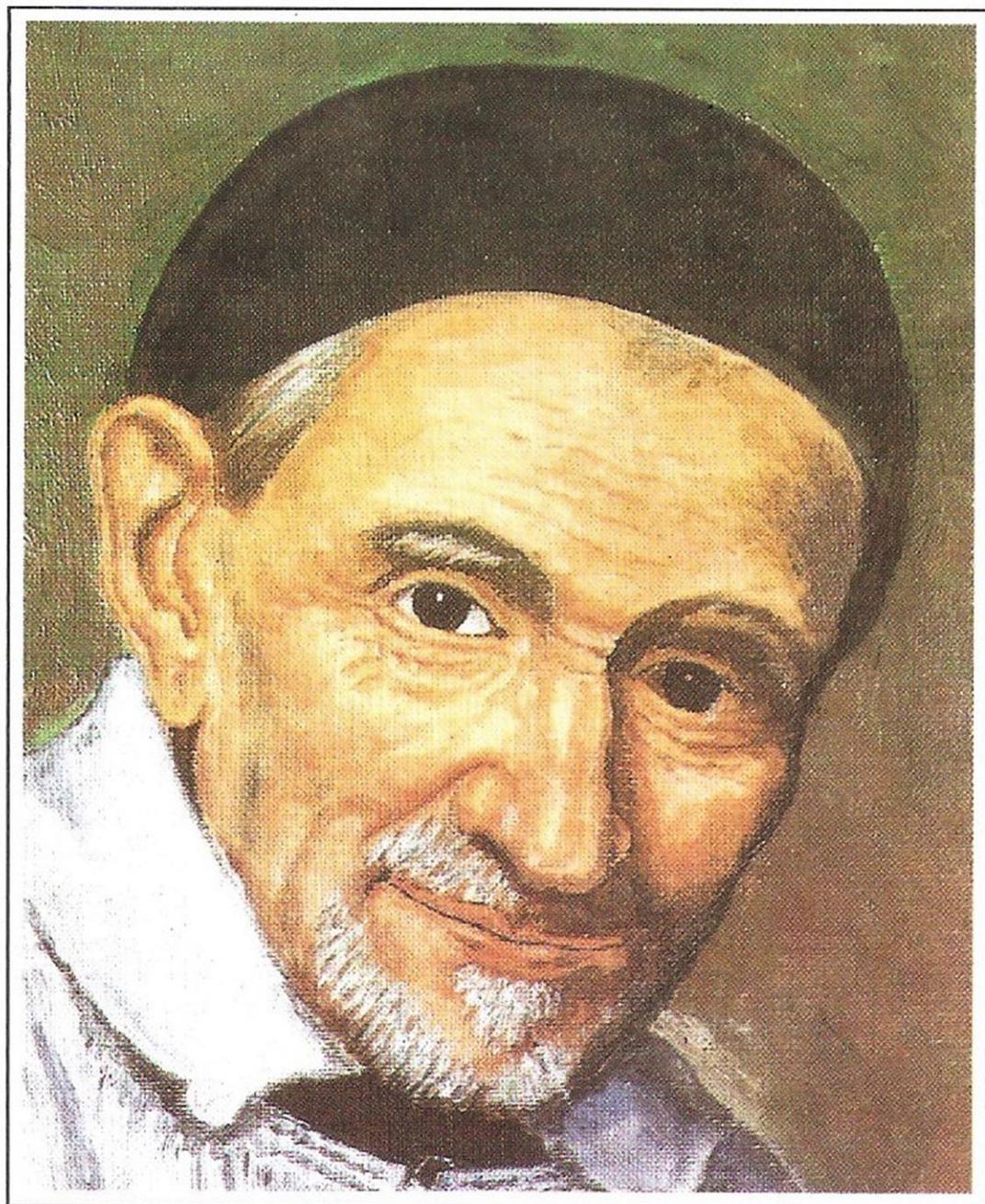


# VINCENTIANA

42nd YEAR, N° 6

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1998



FEATURE:

## *Vincentian Perspectives in Asia*

CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION  
GENERAL CURIA

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.

*To the members of the Congregation of the Mission throughout the world*

My very dear Brothers,

May the peace and joy of Our Lord be with you!

A friend reminded me recently that I had neglected the Magi as I swung the spotlight around the Advent stage. That is surely an unforgivable omission since down through the centuries popular piety has reveled at the presence of these late-arriving gentile visitors.

Matthew tells us that they came from the East, the mysterious land of human origins, of the garden, of the rising sun, of ancient wisdom. Few minor characters in the New Testament have so stimulated the religious imagination. Matthew's gospel provides us with sparse information about their identity, but popular piety has filled in the blanks so richly that we might almost forget that the New Testament tells us almost nothing about them, except that they were "magi," a caste of wise men associated with the interpretation of dreams (a common theme in Matthew). Starting from there, Christian storytellers have supplied countless details. Their number, after ascending as high as twelve, was gradually fixed at three, deduced from the three gifts mentioned in Matthew 2:11. They became kings under the influence of Psalm 72:10, Isaiah 49:7, and Isaiah 60:10. Eventually they received names: Caspar, Balthasar, and Melchior, at least in the Western Church. And of course, each got a camel! In a charming acknowledgement of racial diversity, Balthasar became a black and the others sometimes took on oriental features. Their following a star provoked a whole stream of literature on planetary conjunctions, meteors, comets, even supernovas, though today it seems more likely that Matthew was, here as elsewhere, simply reflecting on the Old Testament, especially Numbers 24:17; he was utterly convinced that all creation, including the stars, conspired to reveal God's purposes in the Messiah. Matthew relates that they offered gold, frankincense and myrrh. In one popular tradition gold came to signify the kingship of Christ, incense his divinity, myrrh his redemptive death. In another tradition, from the moral perspective, they symbolized virtue (tried like gold in the fire), prayer (ascending like incense), and suffering (soothed by myrrh's medicinal qualities).

Is there anyone \_ even the most sophisticated intellectual \_ who does not love the detailed imagery of Christmas stories like this one and who does not wait for the Magi to arrive at the crib at Epiphany time? Here in Rome the huge crib in St. Peter's

Square merits a second visit on January 6 when these gigantic visitors from the East appear.

One of the wonderful things about the popular devotion surrounding the Magi is that it never veered from Matthew's purpose; in fact, it understood the message of the early verses of his second chapter very well: the Magi came to worship the newborn King. Matthew repeats this message three times (2:2, 2:8, 2:11) precisely so that none of us will miss it.

This Advent, let me propose three challenges that are very evident in the story of the Magi.

1. They came to worship the newborn king. Are we capable of that ourselves? Are we willing to bow down before the Lord and pay him homage? Are we able to make Christ the *absolute center* of our lives, the revelation of God in the flesh? Or do we clutch alien gods as Herod did? These are manifold: power, popularity, security, comfort, only to name a few. Most such gods are reflections of our inner selves. They mirror forth our own desire to be the center of the universe. Unlike Herod, the Magi bowed down before the Lord and worshipped him. They joined Mary and Joseph, the angels, the shepherds, and the stars in proclaiming Christ as the center. I encourage you to bow down before the Lord this Christmas as all of us did when we vowed to give our whole lives to following him as the evangelizer of the poor. I urge you too to bow down before him in the person of the poor, who are \_ in a phrase we use so often that it can easily lose its meaning \_ "our Lords and Masters."
2. The Magi were searchers. They travelled by night, following a star, moving like pilgrims, struggling through deserts. That is so often the human way. Most of us grope in the darkness through much of our lives. Notice what Matthew tells us of these wise men's search. Even as they arrived at the culmination of their journey and found the king they longed to see, succeeding in spite of the politics and hostility of others, events revealed to them how closely light and darkness, birth and death, joy and sorrow, belief and unbelief are interlocked. Do not these 12 verses recount our own history? It is crucial for us to recognize ourselves as searchers, as did the Magi. Our life is a journey, in which we often travel by night. In fact, the Lord's star is visible for us only when we acknowledge the darkness. Life holds so many unanswered questions, so many unfulfilled desires. It fluctuates between heights and depths, between purity of heart and sin, between love and disillusionment. Being human means to experience our own radical incompleteness. Our hearts find ultimate fulfillment only in God, whom we search for during the entire course of our lives. That is the deepest meaning of the Advent mystery, one that the Magi proclaim to us very clearly.
3. The Magi were not just seeking something for themselves, they came bearing gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. It might be fruitful for each of us to ask

this question during Advent time: what gifts can I offer the Lord at this time in my life? Is there something that I have continually held back and that I can now place before the Lord as I bow down to worship him? Is there a material gift that I can give, like the Magi's gold? Is there prayer time that I can offer more faithfully, like their incense? Is there some ointment that I can apply to the human suffering that surrounds me, like myrrh? Can I stand at the side of refugees, who are more numerous now than at any other time in history, or be a listening ear to the unemployed, whose number never seems to diminish appreciably, or provide food and shelter to those who experience hunger and homelessness and who fall into the ever-widening gap between the rich and the poor on every continent? What gift can I lay before the Lord, or before our Masters the poor, this Christmas?

Reflecting on the Magi, a great modern theologian once wrote: "Let us also stride forward on the heart's adventurous journey toward God! Let us run! Let us forget what lies behind us. The whole future lies open to us. Every possibility of life is still open, because we can still find God, still find more. Human emptiness is overcome in those who run to meet God, the God whose smallest reality is greater than our boldest illusion, the God who is eternal youth...." (Karl Rahner, *The Great Church Year*, [Crossroad: New York, 1994] 105.).

Let us run together, my brothers. The star is always shining for those who know their incompleteness. The pilgrimage always beckons. The Lord is always drawing us on with his promise. This Advent let us set out anew, together, to worship him.

Your brother in St. Vincent,

Robert P. Maloney, C.M.  
Superior General

## **Postulates of the 39th General Assembly (1998) passed on by it to the Superior General**

After reflecting on the many postulates submitted by provinces and individual confreres, the General Assembly of 1998 decided to pass judgment on only a limited number. It then passed on 22 postulates to the Superior General and his council so that they could examine them with more leisure. The Assembly itself expressed no judgment about these postulates. It stated that the Superior General and his council should have complete liberty in either accepting or rejecting them.

At a *tempo forte* council meeting, October 12-20, 1998, the Superior General and his council considered each of these postulates and arrived at the judgments stated below.

### **7.1- (P. Congo):**

Concerning the inclusion of a **Statute** on collaboration *within all the groups of the Vincentian Family*.

*It does not seem appropriate to us that the Congregation of the Mission do this.*

### **12.- (P. Bras. Fluminensis):**

That the General Assembly ask the Superior General to review the Directory of the Directors of the Daughters of Charity, in such a way that it [the office] does not imply exclusive dedication.

*This does not seem appropriate to us because the Directory for Provincial Directors of the Daughters of Charity does not say that the Directors must be full-time.*

### **14.- (P. Bras. Curitibensis):**

Our suggestion is that a world organism of the Vincentian Family be formed.

*The General Assembly, in its Final Document, asked that structures for coordinating the collaborative actions of the Vincentian Family be established. In response to this, the Superior General and his council have named a Delegate of the Superior General for the Vincentian Family.*

### **16.- (P. Chilensis):**

We propose a Union of Superiors General of the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life of the Vincentian Family tree, in order to seek common lines of action for a better service of the Church and the poor.

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<sup>1</sup> The numbers correspond to those of the document grouping all the postulates sent to the 1998 General Assembly by the provinces and the individual confreres.

*We believe that the existing organisms are sufficient.*

**17.- (P. Chilensis):**

That the General Assembly of 2004 be held in some place in the Third World.

*In their evaluations, the members of the General Assembly chose Rome in first place. However, at the appropriate time, the Superior General will make a consultation on this subject.*

**24.- (P. Peruana):**

That the General Curia organize some of its courses on the missions, or other themes, on regional or continental levels and not only on the worldwide level in Europe.

*That which the 1998 General Assembly said about ongoing formation in its Final Document seems sufficient to us (III, 3, A, 5).*

**26.- (P. S.A.F. Occ. Centralis):**

That the General Assembly discuss the possibility of establishing a Vincentian Historical Archives.

Rationale:

As it is now, our archival holdings are divided artificially and illogically between material that dates from before the French Revolution and after it. The early material is in Paris and the later material is in Rome. The division has been poorly made since some material in each place contains items that cover both periods. An historical institute or some sort of structure could be developed to take responsibility for a thorough study of the matter. Some initial study has already taken place but the attempt was superficial.

The advantages of such an historical archives include access to study our history and charism. This institute would surely benefit increased cooperation among the various members of the Vincentian Family.

*There are difficulties with this which seem insurmountable at this time.*

**31.- (P. Indiae):**

In connection with Superior General's relief fund, most groups felt that, our province can be relieved of the intricacies involved in going through Bishops to get our project sanctioned, if our Generalate thinks of opening a secretariat for the mission and appoint a father to deal with the socio-economic projects sent from the provinces.

*This does not seem appropriate to us.*

**34.- (P. Indonesiae):**

Establishing a Vincentian Study Center in Asia is really needed.

*This is a question which belongs to the Visitors of Asia or to the Conference of Asian-Pacific Visitors (ASPAC).*

**35.- (P. Orientis):**

Get an international structure of former students of Vincentians started.

*It seems more useful to establish such structures on a national level, according to the possibilities and the needs.*

**36.- (P. Orientis):**

Assure an appropriate formation for new superiors, treasurers, and archivists before they take up their new responsibilities.

*It is up to the provinces to organize adequate formation.*

**40.- (P. Orientis):**

We wish that collaboration among the provinces of the Congregation of the Mission (sending and exchange of confreres) extend also to the material level, through an organism which the Superior General and his council will supervise. The sharing will take place through an official contract and reasonable rates for the purpose of helping provinces get out of certain deadlocks or difficulties resulting from wars or other catastrophes.

*This does not seem appropriate to us.*

**41.- (P. Philippinarum):**

That the Superior General encourage the Vincentian Family to assist the migrant workers.

*This pastoral need has already been taken into account, in a certain measure, in the Congregation; the Superior General has also already had the occasion to encourage this ministry.*

**42.- (P. Philippinarum):**

That the Superior General initiate a Regional Coordinating Body to do advocacy work for Social transformation (Justice and Peace, Human Rights and Integrity of Creation).

*The 1998 General Assembly already treated this theme (cf. Final Document III 2 c).*

**43.- (P. Sinica):**

The CM has an excellent theoretical Ratio Studiorum. To foster more professionalism in the attitudes, the behavior, and the reactions of the new candidates, we feel that one pastoral year is not appropriate. The practical training has got to be done during the whole formation period.

That the Assembly ask that the Ratio Studiorum demand periods of exercising the different pastoral techniques during the whole time of formation under supervision of qualified people.

*The Ratio Formationis Vincentianae for the Major Seminary of the Congregation of the Mission already demands this (cf. I, B, 3 "Apostolic Formation"). See also Statute 40. It is up to the Visitors to implement these orientations.*

**44.- (P. Sinica):**

Confreres who are formed in institutes that do not belong to the CM or are not staffed by CM people get a very good theoretical formation. Oftentimes they are pushed to take university degrees. But that makes them apt for scientific research. We are concerned about their professional attitude, behavior, and reactions in the basic pastoral work they are called for.

That the Assembly ask those who are responsible for the formation to take steps that these confreres exercise regularly every year the different techniques of pastoral behavior with supervision by qualified people.

*This issue belongs to the Visitors.*

**45.- (P. Sinica):**

Major seminaries form candidates for basic pastoral functions. Formation is highly specialized and needs a special formation. CM is often invited to contribute formators.

That the Assembly want the CM to create a Vincentian Institute of Formation for the formation of CM and non-CM formators.

*The 1998 General Assembly has already given a response to this in its Final Document (III, 3, B, 3).*

**46.- (P. Austriae):**

The General Assembly of the Congregation of the Mission might establish:

That the Superior General and his council be charged to focus reflection favoring the work of the Congregation in the Islamic world, especially in the Near East.

*A session on Islam, open to all interested provinces, has been scheduled for August 1999.*

**51.- (P. Gal. Tolosana):**

The Provincial Assembly asks the Superior General to have a study done by confreres involved in different ministries and by dependable canonists, Vincentians or other, on the practical means which would permit married deacons to be united by some official juridical tie to the Congregation.

*This theme is presently being studied at the General Curia. A document will be published later.*

**57.- (P. Ital. Romana):**

The C.M. Provincial Assembly of Rome asks that clarification be given with regard to the nature and methods of the Visitations of the Provinces foreseen in Article 51, 2\_ of the Statutes.

*Specifics on this subject can be found in the Practical Guide for the Visitor, numbers 318 to 324, as well as in two articles by Fr. Italo Zedde (cf. Vincentiana 1996/4-5, p. 420 and 1998/4-5 p. 276).*

**59.- (P. Poloniae):**

The problem of the appointment and the maintenance of the new houses in the East; the question: how has the resolution of the last General Assembly about the commitment of the entire Congregation of the Mission in the East been realized?

*The Letter to the Confreres of the 1992 General Assembly says that "our Congregation commits itself in Eastern Europe to at least one missionary project...." (New Evangelization , 6). The General Curia has opened three in the course of the past six years, without counting those which were opened by the provinces of that region.*

**60.- (P. Poloniae):**

To make more dynamic or re-found the Center of Studies in Vincentian Spirituality in Rome (there is the possibility that Vincentians presently studying in Rome could do these studies).

*Such a center never existed in Rome. The Assembly reflected on this theme and made a commitment on the subject (III 3 B 3 a). We are in the process of examining various possibilities for the future.*

**Information Sheet**  
**on the work and decisions of SIEV**  
**n\_ 3 - October 1998**

Welcomed by the confreres of the Roman Province, SIEV (International Secretariat of Vincentian Studies) held its annual meeting at the Collegio Alberoni in Piacenza on 14 and 15 September 1998.

Present were: Frs. Emeric Amyot d'Inville, delegate from the Curia, Hernando Escobar, John Prager, Kazimierz Stelmach, Norbert Tix and Roberto Lovera, Executive Secretary.

The work of the members of SIEV led to a series of decisions, which were submitted for evaluation and approval to the Superior General and his council. We are bringing to your attention the most important and most significant ones.

1. A provisional edition of the CD ROM of Vincentian texts was presented during the General Assembly. A computer technician, with the collaboration of a confrere competent in the Vincentian studies field, will work at producing the CD ROM containing all the Vincentian texts presently available in the various languages. The search program "Adobe Acrobat Reader" will be included on the CD.

At the same time we will try to put the Vincentian texts on the proposed Vincentian Family Internet Site.

At a later date, we will produce a new edition of the CD ROM, adding other Vincentian texts that will be ready.

2. This CD ROM will contain, in addition to the Vincentian texts, the Spanish bibliography prepared by Fr. José María Román and the English one prepared by Fr. John Rybolt. We will ask the collaboration of confreres from other linguistic groups in preparing the Vincentian bibliography in other languages in order to put this valuable tool at the service of all.
3. Another project which should begin shortly is the progressive development of an archive of Vincentian images, subdivided into three major sectors: a) iconography and history; b) present day events; c) the life of the provinces and missions. The images, digitalized by scanner to obtain the best quality possible, will be inserted little by little on the Vincentian Family Internet site, to which all will have access, including for publication. We anticipate incorporating some of the most significant images from the last General Assembly.

4. The Curia archivist, Fr. Rolando Delagoza, who has already researched the documents of the Holy See with regard to the Congregation during the last 40 years, will extend his work to the period going back to 1876, the date of the last publication of this type. When the research is finished, depending on the quality and volume of the material collected, we will decide how to put this work at everyone's service.
5. The inquiry on the Vincentian study organisms existing in our provinces or groups of provinces is drawing to a close. The purpose of the inquiry was to gather the most complete information possible about these organisms. As soon as it is completed, the results will be made available to everyone through publication in *Vincentiana*.
6. A succinct bibliography of basic books useful for the formation of our young will soon be published in *Vincentiana*.
7. The work of preparing the study session on Islam, scheduled for 1999, continues. In the coming days, the Visitors will receive a letter from the preparatory commission inviting them to register the confreres. The registrants will then be directly involved in the preparation of the session.

Likewise, the preparatory work on the Vincentian Month for the Directors of the Daughters of Charity, scheduled for 2001, has begun.

8. Finally, SIEV invites the Visitors to encourage a confrere involved in higher studies of history to take as a subject of a thesis the figure and work of St. John Gabriel Perboyre. Critical research in this field would be not only an enrichment for the entire Congregation on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of the saint's birth, but also would be an invaluable help to future publications directed toward the general public.

The place and date of the next meeting of SIEV will be specified as soon as the Superior General has established the new composition of this Secretariat. Some current members are completing their mandate.

In the name of all the members of SIEV, I wish to thank anyone wishing to send us suggestions or advice in order to help us improve our work at the service of all.

Roberto Lovera, C.M.  
Executive Secretary of SIEV

## Appointments and Confirmations by the Superior General

DATE	NAME	OFFICE	PROVINCE
10/06/98	Alfonso Berrade Urralburu	Visitor 1/6	Peru
13/06/98	Georg Witzel	Director D.C. (2nd mandate)	Germany
26/06/98	Roberto D'Amico	Sup local (2/3)	General Curia
01/07/98	Edward Batko	Director D.C. (2nd mandate)	Warsaw
01/08/98	Naoum Atallah	Director D.C. (2nd mandate)	Near East
24/08/98	José Fernández Riol	Director D.C.	Pamplona
03/10/98	Manuel Nóbrega	Visitor (2/3)	Portugal
05/10/98	Augustín Martínez	Director D.C.	Toulouse
03/11/98	Claude Lautissier	Director D.C. (2nd mandate)	Paris
03/11/98	Claude Lautissier	Director D.C. (2nd mandate)	Rennes
30/11/98	Benjamín Romo Martín	Vincentian Family	General Curia
30/11/98	Arturo Galvis	Director D.C.	Chile
03/12/98	George Weber	Visitor (2nd mandate)	USA Southern

# The China Mission

*Hugh O'Donnell, C.M.  
Visitor of China*

The China Mission is one of the oldest missions and one of the newest. It reaches back to the century in which St. Vincent died. It was in 1699 that our first two confreres, Frs. Appiani and Mullener arrived in China. Since then the China Mission has had a special place in the heart of the Little Company and has captured the imagination of generations of our confreres. The China Mission evokes images of missionaries who were pioneers, martyrs, bishops, confessors, scholars, visionaries, seminary professors and pastors \_ but, above all, priests and brothers who fell in love with the peasants of the countryside and the ordinary folk of the towns and cities and broke the Bread of Life in their midst in season and out. Even when events forced the confreres to leave China, many left their hearts behind them.

The China Mission, at the same time, is also one of the newest missions. The last words of the "Letter to the Confreres" written by the General Assembly of 1992 were a challenge "... to go to the ends of the earth, even all the way to China." These words turned out to be prophetic, when Fr. Maloney visited China in 1993 and 1994. The sufferings, perseverance, joy and radiant faith of the priests, sisters and Catholics of China touched his heart and, through his letters, the hearts of very many. The joy of the sisters and priests at being visited by Vincent's successor, after decades of feeling themselves to have been orphaned, brought tears to many eyes.<sup>1</sup> Stories of new confessors and martyrs, women and men of immense and unassuming faith, met with joy, tears, admiration and renewed missionary zeal. China was open again, or at least, opening, and the Superior General called for volunteers.

The China Mission, as a new international mission, has the distinctive characteristic of already being part of a province, the Province of China. In fact, the mission had never died, but rather continued in two streams, the one in China, the other on Taiwan. The mission was carried on in China by the Chinese confreres who remained, after the missionaries were expelled. How many there were and what their history was is in many instances not known. To the best of our knowledge the majority of the 192 Vincentian Chinese priests and brothers in 1942 (the last available statistics) remained in China after the establishment of the Peoples' Republic of China on October 1, 1949. Their stories of daily love for the people, pastoral devotion in the face of adversity, and fidelity to the Lord and his Church during times of hostility and persecution are for the most part not documented, but the fragmentary stories that have been handed down give the sense of loyalty to the faith and unassuming heroism. Archbishop Joseph Chow of Nanchang may be the most notable of these heroes. He

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<sup>1</sup> It was only in the early 80's that Sister Emma Lee, D.C. re-established contact with them. Eventually, contact was re-established with ninety sisters and fourteen confreres.

spent twenty-two years in prison and under house arrest before his death in 1972, after he refused the Communist Party's offer to make him the Chinese "pope."

The other stream flowed into the church on Taiwan. After being expelled from China in 1949-1952, Chinese, Dutch and American confreres continued the China Mission on Taiwan. In the early years the confreres believed it was only a matter of time before they would be back in the Mainland. As this hope disappeared, the energies of the confreres went into the pastoral care of the young communities they had founded when they arrived.<sup>2</sup>

It is in this historical context that the China Province welcomed nine new confreres to the China Mission in the past five years. These confreres are all ordained. They have come from nine provinces: Indonesia, the Philippines, Ireland, the Eastern Province USA, the Western Province USA, Poland, the Netherlands, the Congo, and India. Three more confreres are joining the mission this year (1998-1999) from the Eastern Province USA and Indonesia. The Province of Indonesia in its Provincial Assembly two years ago made a formal commitment to partnership in the China Mission, and four of the confreres mentioned are from Indonesia. The new confreres have been warmly welcomed by the Dutch, Chinese, Hungarian and American confreres of the province, who are indeed grateful for the new life we share together and for the hope we share for the future. The New International Missions have given new life to the Province of China and our mission on Taiwan and in China.

This new phase of the China Mission is taking place in circumstances vastly different from our previous history. Today the Chinese government under the control of the Communist Party proclaims freedom of religion, but understands this as freedom under government control and supervision. Its outright hostility to religion decades ago has been changed into tolerance. In its eyes the Church has gone from being an enemy of the people to a servant of socialism, so it expects and intends. It rejects Vatican claims to authority over the Church in China, particularly in the appointment of bishops. In recent years Catholics have been permitted to pray publicly for the Pope and even to acknowledge him as spiritual head of the Church without, however, any jurisdiction in China. Membership in international religious communities is not allowed. Foreigners are also not allowed to be missionaries in China, except for a few specially invited and approved professors in seminaries. In spite of these restrictions and the sufferings of the Church and the people, the Catholic population has grown from 3,500,000 in 1949 to perhaps 10,000,000 today, and has a vigor all its own.

From a Church point of view the most dramatic changes concern who is in charge. In 1949 the Church in China was for the most part in the hands of missionary

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<sup>2</sup> Arriving in 1952, the confreres participated in the joint effort to provide basic necessities for the many refugees from the Communist victory on the mainland. From 1952 to 1965 there were 250,000 people baptized on the island, and the confreres spent their days and evenings catechizing and baptizing new converts, when they were not distributing food and medicines. With only 10,000 Catholics on the island in 1945 and more than a quarter of a million in 1965, this, it can be said, was the most significant period in the establishment of today's Catholic Church throughout the island. The confreres built at least thirty churches and opened as many parishes and parochial communities.

congregations. Today, however, the Church is entirely in the hands of Chinese bishops, priests, sisters and lay people.

Gradually seminaries have been opened, beginning in 1982, and Church properties are being restored to the churches. To give just a few examples, we have been able to visit five or six of the more than 12 seminaries now open in China, where there are more than 1200 seminarians and already 1000 ordinations. In Tangshan the bishop has rebuilt his cathedral and thirty-four other churches, since the devastating earthquake there in 1976. Also, the bishop of Tianjin has built a new seminary for twenty-five seminarians next to the historic Wang Hai Lou Church and he has founded a diocesan community of sisters in the spirit of St. Vincent. There are 34 young women there and their happiness at being sisters has left a lasting impression on all who have visited them.

This new situation presents a profound challenge to all who wish to proclaim the Gospel among the Chinese people. It is turning out to be a great, though unexpected, grace for us. We are called to see the situation with new eyes and a new heart.

Many ask when will China be open? It is clearly not open to previous forms of missionary work. But China is open and opening up more all the time. We have no problem going to China frequently, but we usually go as tourists, or retired professors, or we go for specific purposes, like teaching English or French or studying Chinese. We are discovering a new role for ourselves in China. We are focusing on RELATIONSHIPS, A MINISTRY OF PRESENCE, HUMILITY and personal CONVERSION.

Like the first Jesuit missionaries to China, who focused much of their energies on making friends, we are also discovering the primacy of *relationships* in Chinese life. Developing friendships, of course, is one of the five Confucian pillars of Chinese culture. We are trying to know the people and be known by them at a personal level. Little by little mutual trust and knowledge of what is important to one another is developing.

*Presence* to young people through daily contact in the English or French classroom has turned out to be an unexpected and wonderful experience. We cannot preach the Gospel in words, only through our lives, but those who have taught in China testify that it happens. The students wonder about the meaning of the teachers' care for them and interest in them and want to know the source of their dedication in a situation with few material rewards.

We are also called to be *humble and patient*. There are so many things we would like to do and think ourselves capable of doing in and for the Church and we are not allowed. This humility and patience opens us up to new dimensions of the Chinese world. Without patience nothing is possible in China, which is no easy lesson to learn. It leads to a *conversion* in our outlook and our way of being among the people. It also changes our way of experiencing our priesthood.

In this situation, what are our short- and long-term goals and objectives? Our short- term goals and objectives are to learn Chinese well, to become incorporated into the Province of China, to begin to feel at home in the Chinese world, to understand the culture and to develop a missionary and pastoral vision for the China Mission.

When new confreres come they live in community at the Perboyre Mission Center in Taipei. Knowing one another and forming a community of faith and friendship is a primary goal. It has been the Lord's blessing that the confreres in the house, each from a different country, have become a close-knit community. This community meets with the other confreres in the area at least once a week and on different occasions with all the confreres in the province. The relationship between the older and younger confreres has been open and warm. The newcomers study Chinese full time for two years. In the third year they either go to Beijing or Wuhan or some other city in China to continue studying Chinese or begin pastoral work on Taiwan. In the past two years a new mission among the aboriginal peoples of the East coast has begun in collaboration with the Bethlehem Fathers and Brothers and close to the Daughters of Charity. Two confreres have established our presence there and have been warmly received, while another young confrere has become pastor in Kaohsiung. In both cases they are close to the people and progressing in their Mandarin. The confreres have been making every effort to speak and understand Chinese in ordinary situations and to celebrate the Eucharist and preach in Chinese. Learning Chinese is a lifelong process, so the program aims at giving each confrere a strong foundation upon which to build.

Besides fluency in Chinese, each confrere needs to be experienced or trained in a particular area of competence, so that we will be able to respond effectively when the opportunities come. Since formation is of special importance, two young Chinese confreres have undertaken studies in liturgy at the Anselmo in Rome and Biblical Theology at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. Other confreres are now identifying areas in which they can become knowledgeable and skilled. Areas of special need and interest are formation, prayer, the spiritual journey, pastoral theology, organizational development and Asian Studies. It is also part of the vision that these studies can be done in an inculturated context. In this area we are just now finding our way.

There is a Mainland Committee which is concerned with information, understanding, planning and initiatives on the Mainland. In this committee serious efforts are made to gradually develop a missionary strategy based on the realities of China as we come to know them. The committee coordinates the efforts of all the confreres in the province in relationship to the mainland. The committee also publishes "China Sparks" which is a newsletter written to inform the English speaking provinces of the Vincentians and Daughters of Charity about developments in China, both on the level of international news and on the level of personal experience.

The province also sponsors "Vincentian Outreach" in conjunction with the Daughters of Charity. Through "Vincentian Outreach" confreres, Daughters and lay

people that we know are made aware of the opportunity to teach English or French at the university level in China for a year. Last year there were four teachers in China and this year there are twelve from the Vincentian Family. Those who have gone as teachers have had a wonderful experience, not always easy humanly speaking, but profoundly rewarding and for some people transforming. Teaching English is not a pretext for doing something else. Teaching English is actually about teaching the students. Through classroom contacts relationships develop and the values of two worlds begin to be shared and mutually exchanged. The teachers learn a great deal about themselves as they are learning about the Chinese students. Incidentally, for any who might be interested, it is not necessary for teachers to speak Chinese.

What are our long-term goals? We know that our future in China depends on preparation now. The axiom that the future belongs to those who are prepared is especially true for China. We do not know what ultimately will be our opportunities, but we are preparing for the following: our own inculturation, formation and rural missions.

Our own inculturation means we have to receive the gift of China before we can give our own gifts. This is particularly true of the Church. We must first receive the gifts of faith and love, patience and perseverance which blossomed in the midst of deep suffering and decades of persecution. We need also to receive the gift of forgiveness and lack of resentment which seems to be a remarkable fruit of those years in the lives of the people who suffered most.

Almost everyone who has contact with China says the greatest need is formation. In China there are young priests and old priests, between whom there is a thirty-five year age gap. This is an immense challenge for priestly formation and for leadership training in the immediate future.

A particular area of acute need is the development of structures to support and strengthen young priests who are often given large responsibilities immediately after ordination and find themselves living alone, without experience or proper guidance. One young priest we know is responsible for half a county in which there are twenty-five small Catholic centers or villages and two larger ones with 600 and 1000 respectively. His situation is not untypical. Though we may not be able to help immediately, we need to acquire the formational strategy and the necessary training to help when the time comes.

There are also some opportunities to develop scholarship programs abroad for the formation and education of seminarians and young priests and sisters. On the whole, the challenge remains great for the foreseeable future.

It has been said that China was never more open to the Gospel than it is today. Many agree that there is a widespread search for meaning going on in the personal lives of many in China. There is disenchantment with the ancient and modern world views available to the people. There is a hunger for the Gospel or for gospel values,

which has been demonstrated by the appeal the Gospel has to many university students. In the last ten years there is also a scholarly interest in Christian theology. These scholars, who are sometimes referred to as "cultural Christians," because their interest is more cultural than religious (more about values and meaning than about a relationship with God), are, nevertheless, very real and serious. In many ways it is the lay people who are best situated to respond to this hunger. This calls for a formation all its own. Can we prepare ourselves for these challenges?

Finally, we are asking ourselves do popular missions have any relationship to the 850,000,000 farmers and villagers in China, many of whom have been left behind by the economic progress of the coastal provinces? Our initial efforts in this area, starting in Taiwan, have found that the task is beyond us and our personnel resources at present. The most dramatic challenge is to find a way to do popular missions in a missionary way as first evangelization, among people where Catholics are less than one percent of the population. It calls for a radical recasting of popular missions, though many of the necessary elements seem to be present in the worldwide Congregation's renewal of these missions.

It is only two years since St. John Gabriel Perboyre was canonized. It is under his patronage that this new phase of the China Mission is taking place. It is our prayer that his love for the Chinese people and his love for the Gospel will be our guide and inspiration in our journey of faith with the Chinese people.

# Vincentian Apostolate at Adamson University (Manila)

*Rolando Delagoza, C.M.  
Procurator General*

**Historical Background.** Adamson Ozanam Educational Institutions, Inc., was founded by George Lucas Adamson and Alexandar Athos Adamson in 1932 as a school of Industrial Chemistry. After World War II, in 1948, the University rented the buildings owned by the Vincentian Fathers at San Marcelino Street, Manila and stayed there until 1964 when the priests took over the administration of the University. At that time there were only 4,000 students; after 34 years of Vincentian administration the school population reached 22,000 students.

**Vincentian Apostolate.** Although Adamson University was founded as a secular school, when the Vincentian Fathers took over, they introduced several important religious programs to place it in line with the general ideals of Catholic Education. A theology department was opened, campus ministry was strengthened, Masses were held daily, religious icons and celebrations were introduced on the University campus. These diverse apostolic activities were based not only on the various guidelines from the Holy See which looks at education as a most important apostolate but also from the experiences of Vincentian Universities around the world (e.g. St. John's in New York and De Paul University in Chicago) and the apostolate of the Seminary-colleges before World War II.

**Teaching of Religion.** After the Vincentians took over the University, twelve units of theology courses were required for graduation. This means that a student had to stay in class for around 150 hours before he is given his graduation diploma from Adamson University. During a particular semester as many as 8,000 students are taking one of the four subjects in theology: Introductory Course in Theology, The Bible, Dogma and the Sacraments, Morals and Ethics. Some of the Vincentian administrators willingly spend hours in the classroom but the vast majority of the professors are laymen and women, some of them Ladies of Charity and members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, who have degrees in Catholic Theology.

The importance of the religious teaching can be glimpsed from the fact that the majority of the poor students who study at the University at the tuition fee of \$200 a semester, have practically no catechetical instruction in their primary and secondary schools which are run by the government. The introductory course in religion (Theology I) is so basic that even the Buddhists, the Muslims and the Protestants can attend the course without qualms of conscience. As the Philippines is a third world country, the parishes and dioceses around the country can barely afford to sponsor the catechetical instructions in the public schools.

The Vincentian Fathers had a very firm guidance and direction of the Theology Department which was for many years under the chairmanship of a priest, this writer having been the first chairman of said department. The priest-chairman sees to it that

the textbooks being used are good, the professors well-qualified, and the teaching-learning experiences beneficial to the students. For the past few years, as many as 25 professors teach in the department of theology, all of them trained in the best theology schools in the Philippines and abroad. Special ongoing formation was given to the theology faculty members in the form of seminars, lectures and special courses in the various theological centers in the country. Some of the theology professors have written textbooks for the use of their students.

Many priests, including this writer, have taught basic theology at Adamson University. As in all courses, the problem was to keep the students interested, communicate enough of the basic Catholic doctrine and to insist that theology is an important part of their lives. The interest of students was enhanced by multi-media presentations, contests and prizes, poster making and painting. One special occasion was the feast of St. Vincent, when all theology students were asked to paint or draw a picture of St. Vincent, write an essay or declaim a poem in honor of St. Vincent de Paul. The classrooms were sources of information and knowledge for the interested priest-professor to get a feel of what the young were thinking about God and their relationship to Him, the various cults in the area, their problems about religion, their parents and their future. There were so many occasions to take care of the young who were not only poor materially but also spiritually and mentally handicapped.

All year round, the Theology department undertakes special programs for the students: retreats by groups, special Masses on various occasions, confessions on first Friday, apostolate with the prisoners and the sick, teaching of catechesis in addition to the daily Masses held on campus. Practically all the freshmen and the graduating classes had to undergo a one or two-day retreat in preparation for entering the school year and for graduation year. Generally, the priest-chairman, the campus minister and the five or six priests assigned to the University give the retreat. But due to the large number of retreatants, around 4,000 students a year, other priests from the neighboring areas are asked to help out. For many students, these retreats are the first retreats of their life and they are inspired to take their spiritual life seriously. This is the time when some are encouraged to become priests or nuns. There are dozens of Sisters who were students of Adamson University; many students became Vincentian seminarians and two have been ordained priests.

**Campus Ministry.** Campus Ministry is one of the Vincentian arms of the University because of its direct contact with the students who belong to poor families. In addition to their activities they undertake programs which keep them in contact with the less fortunate members of society: "The Campus Ministry also participated in programs for special occasions. Its staff shared in the closing of the International Marian Year Congress on *Humanae Vitae*; the National Laity Week; the CBCP \_ episcopal Commission on the Youth; the Forum on CBCP Pastoral Letter and Challenge to Fundamentalism; the National Bible Year Congress; the Youth Encounter and the Operation Kamay to help earthquake victims. The Campus Ministry's extension services included the PGH Sunday choir, the Annual Day with the Poor at Golden Acres, PPL Depressed area, settlement, etc" (cf. DelaGoza & Churchill, *Adamson University: A History*, p. 218).

The Campus Ministry Office was also in charge of the Vincentian organizations, e.g. the Children of Mary and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Around 60 Children of Mary and 200 members of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul are active every school year. Several dozen Ladies of Charity are also on campus but most of them are members of the faculty and so are not under the Campus Ministry. The students who are members of the Children of Mary and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul take turns helping in the animation and preparation of the daily Masses at the University. The altar decorations they prepare every week are beautiful, inspiring and imaginative coming as they do from young talents who would later on become architects and engineers because the majority of Adamson students are in the Engineering and technological courses.

This group of students undergoes special training with the campus minister and the directress of campus ministry. They take part in special activities related to their spiritual life and apostolic activities. They spend a certain number of hours visiting dozens of hospitals, asylums, psychiatric centers, etc.

**Integrated Community Extension Service (ICES).** The Integrated Community Extension Services (ICES) is another Vincentian service arm of the University specifically instituted to reach out to the underprivileged members of society. A yearly report noted the following activities of ICES: "Although it is relatively new, it has attracted the attention of many groups, especially the accreditation councils, for its untiring efforts in reaching out to the underprivileged members of society. Its occupational skills program graduated 316 students, its food processing seminars had 49 participants, the dressmaking class had 56" (cf. DelaGoza & Churchill, *op. cit.*, p. 217).

The Vincentian Fathers, through the Adamson University ICES office, saw another instrument of their apostolic ministry. With hundreds of people who benefitted by the occupational skills, food processing and dressmaking programs, they opened other projects. There were training for computer skills, automotive, and electrical skills. Many of the trainers were volunteers from among faculty members and students of the University. One of the most popular and effective training programs was computer literacy for youth. At one time practically all the 150 or so secretaries of the Archdiocese of Manila underwent several days of a training program which helped revolutionize the record keeping and accessing programs in the whole archdiocese of Manila. Before the training sessions, the participants are invited to pray, read the bible or listen to some short inspirational talks by the director or a priest.

**Conclusion.** There is little doubt that Adamson University is a rich field for the apostolic ministry of the Vincentians who have administered the school for the past 34 years. The number of students (22,000 every year), a majority of them from the middle and lower income groups, the facilities of the University and its Vincentian orientation as a Catholic University augur well for the future of the University. The various institutional departments, notably the Theology Department which takes care of around 4,000 students, the Campus Ministry with the support of the Children of

Mary (COM) and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul (SSVP), the Integrated Community Extension Services (ICES) all help in setting up a Christian atmosphere.

Students who pass through the portals of Adamson University are one in proclaiming their Vincentian brand of training in the various fields and corporations which hire these graduates can distinguish their service orientation. Students who finish their course are assured of a real change in their social and personal lives. They are able to climb from poverty to decent living, from spiritual ignorance to Christian living. As the former president of the University emphasized in his inaugural address: "If the students study law, they can become Vincentian lawyers, with the predilection towards the poor and the deprived. Future managers should remember that they need to help solve the social problems of the country.... Future educators, writers, and artists should be made aware that they are in a position to shape and influence public opinion towards the common good" (cf., DelaGoza & Churchill, *op. cit.*, p. 395).

## **Presence of The Vincentians In West Kalimantan, Indonesia**

*Stefanus Prio Oetomo, C.M.*

As *Vincentiana* has asked me to contribute a piece with regard to our presence in Kalimantan, I decided to narrate our own concrete experiences rather than to put forward an article based on historical research. Hoping that this may give a real glimpse of our humble presence, this decision is made simply by reason of my personal limitations to do such a scientific research.

KALIMANTAN or, in western expression, BORNEO is the biggest among more than 17,000 islands in the archipelago of Indonesia. Kalimantan is giant, green and, in a certain sense, virgin as well. It is green because most of its regions are covered with wild forest. It is also virgin since the majority of its regions have not yet been touched and polluted by so-called modernism. There are still very few people who occupy it. The condition of human life is still traditional, not yet modernized. Recently, Kalimantan became famous all over the world for several reasons. One of them was the disastrous fire burning its green and large forest. That fire produced haze suffocating the people in the surrounding regions.

We are ten Vincentian missionaries working in West Kalimantan, in the diocese of Sintang. We work with and in the midst of the native people, the tribe of DAYAK. The people of Dayak had already settled in this giant island hundreds of years ago. The majority of the Dayak people live in the interior regions of the island, which are mostly forest. Some of them use motorcycles for transportation. For transport on the rivers they use a small ship or speed boat (a boat powered by a small diesel motor).

The Dayak people have different sub-tribes with various languages. They believe in the spirits of ancestors, magic powers, dreams, and magicians or, in their traditional expression, *dukun-dukun*. Their lives are in the shadow of the magical powers of a powerful being who, in their own traditional belief, governs and judges everybody according to his or her deeds.

Their traditional feasts are always accompanied by drinking and eating much to their heart's content. A common characteristic of the Dayak's feast is typically associated with the usage of the blood of the animal slaughtered to purify themselves and their hunting instruments. They believe that by doing so they can protect their life from the black spirits which disturb them. In fact, the Dayak people are afraid of some kinds of black spirits.

Now, in Kalimantan the people of Dayak are identified with the Christians. They are commonly recognized as either Catholics or Protestants, distinguished from other people who are mostly Moslems. It should be noted that 80% among more than two hundred million people of Indonesia are Moslems. Only six percent of Indonesians are Christians.

Regions where the Vincentian missionaries are working are located on the far side of a big river, Melawi. That is in the very interior of the giant island. We serve some parishes, such as Nanga Pinoh, Nanga Ella, Menukung, Nanga Serawai and Nanga Ambalau. Catholic missions in these regions began only about 50 years ago. Because of the recent evangelization, the Catholic faith embraced by the people of Dayak is not yet well-rooted.

This new Christian faith confronts the traditional beliefs which have already existed for hundreds of years and have been held strongly by the people. This is the concrete challenge for the Christian faith. The challenge is all the more serious for us when we consider the real conditions of parishes in which we work. There are many big parishes which are handled only by a priest and a catechist. Besides, the people have problems of living associated with poverty, poor quality education, poor health care. There are also side-effects of industrialization and modernism which are now starting to invade and pollute the innocence of their traditional way of life. Industrialization in Kalimantan is related to plywood produced by the forests, whereas modernism alludes to the arrival of parabolic antennas for television.

The Congregation of the Mission began its first mission in 1976 when the Vincentian missionaries from France, Switzerland and the United States were expelled from Vietnam by the communists. After having been driven out of Vietnam, they moved to Indonesia and entered the jungle of Kalimantan. They considered that the culture and natural conditions of Kalimantan were more or less similar to those of Vietnam. The coming of these Vincentian missionaries was and is considered as an immense grace for both the local Church, the diocese of Sintang, and the Congregation of the Mission of the province of Indonesia.

"I have come so that they may have life, and have it to the full" (Jn 10:10b). In our experience of the mission in West Kalimantan, we believe that we are called to partake in the spirit of Jesus Christ as the good shepherd. Jesus wants to satisfy everyone who comes to Him. He gives not mere words but also bread to those who hunger and thirst, freedom to the oppressed, consolation to the distressed, sight to the blind. Following this example of Christ, the Vincentian missionaries in West Kalimantan do not merely deliver homilies in the pulpit, give conferences or teach catechism in class, say the Mass or celebrate other sacraments in the church. Rather, we also touch and work in all aspects of human life. We take care of the sick, help the poor, teach the ignorant, defend them against injustice and so forth. In sum, we strive to apply a new integral evangelization, in accordance with the local situation, the interior regions of Kalimantan.

Some years ago, when a public health center (a governmental organization that is in charge of the health of the people) did not yet exist, our missionaries could not help but play the role of "medical doctor" as well, bringing medicine and curing the sick. When the sick people need further serious treatment, we take them to the cities, such as Nanga Pinoh or Pontianak or even Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia. At Nanga Pinoh, a town where we set up the center of our mission, we have constructed the "Wisma Husada," a kind of small hospital, used for curing and treating the sick of tuberculosis and skin illness. For sustaining the activities of "Wisma Husada" and curing the sick we have many expenses.

St. Vincent told his priests that the duty of a priest is to evangelize the poor in villages. But, if we abandon charity, evangelization is not complete. Similarly, delivering a conference to the Daughters of Charity, he said that though their main task is to give service to the poor, evangelization should not be abandoned. If they neglect evangelization, their service of charity is not complete. We, the Vincentian missionaries in West Kalimantan, strive to concretize the integration of evangelization and charity in our mission to the Dayak people.

We work in poor parishes. Each one of them has about 40 villages that are regions of that parish. Mostly, villages are visited by a speed boat or on foot. Since distances from one village to another are tens of kilometers, our missionaries need days to walk by foot in visiting the parishioners. In every village we teach catechism to adults, youth, and children. We celebrate the sacraments of reconciliation and the holy Eucharist. Because the region is large and difficult, we can visit a village usually only two times a year. That means that a village has the celebration of the holy Eucharist only two times a year!

With regard to activities of Christian faith, the people in the villages are not merely dependent on the missionaries, but also on the volunteers who are available to be leaders in every village. Most of them have graduated only from elementary or secondary school. Nevertheless, they have good will and availability to serve the people in their village. For their formation, we organize courses in leadership, liturgical celebrations, and simple lessons for giving a homily or spiritual reflections. The task of a missionary here is difficult enough, since he himself and a catechist must deliver the material for courses. Besides, the difficulties arise from the fact that human resources in the interior regions of Kalimantan are not yet well explored. By giving these courses, however, we hope that the leaders may be more capable to handle the celebration of the word of God, to help people in preparation for a wedding celebration, and so forth in their own villages.

Compared with other regions in Indonesia, the quality of education in the interior regions of West Kalimantan in general and in the zone of the Vincentian missionaries on the far side of the river Melawi in particular, is still quite poor. There are so many children who do not finish their elementary school, so many young people do not have the skills of reading, writing and counting. This miserable situation is understandable, since many elementary schools have only two teachers for

six classes! Moreover, the effective times for studying are supposed to be four hours in school, but in reality they are reduced to only two hours. This has been going on for years in the interior regions of Kalimantan. What will become of our children in the future?

We strive to encourage the children to go to the school, but we often fail, because they do not want to go for many reasons: they do not want to be separated from their own parents in villages; they do not have enough money; they just want to help their parents work, and so on. Thus, when we are successful in sending a young man to school, we take care of his expenses. This does not mean that we do this because he is intelligent or good at studying. Rather, we do it simply because he is available to go to school. We have spent much money for this charity, but still not always successful.

Aside from sending a young man to the school, another project we have developed to advance elementary education is to create small schools, a group of informal studies in villages. In this project, we look for some teachers to run them and teach the young people. This project is connected with the fact that some villages do not have any school. For instance, in Nanga Pinoh parish there are 10 out of 40 villages in which there is no elementary school. This situation indicates that there are many school age children who do not go to school. To resolve this immense problem, we look for volunteers to teach these children.

The majority of the Dayak people live from the so-called "moving fields." They cultivate fields without possessing them, as they move from one place to another. They open forest, cut big plants, burn them. When the rainy season comes, they plant rice. Such is their way of life. Every year they move from one place or forest to another. However, as the times change, such a way of life changes gradually as well. Now, large forests that "belong to" them are in the hands of other rich people who come to explore natural sources and build industries of plywood. Their fields are divided and bought by these rich people for a cheap price. Consequently, they are not free to farm anymore. Their forests, their homes are invaded and dominated by other people. The Dayak people are in great difficulty. They are oppressed, abandoned, cast aside.

We strive to educate the Dayak people to leave behind their old way of life and live in a new way. We urge them to settle in one place, cultivating their own fields and persevering in planting rice. Instruments for cultivating, tractors, animals, houses, and other necessities are also provided for them. They can use them gratuitously. We deliver some courses on how to hoe and plow the fields, to plant rice, and so forth. Such a program has lasted for ten years already, but it has not yet fully succeeded. We, however, need the grace of patience. As missionaries, we must be patient when facing a new mentality and culture different from our own. It is very true that to be good missionaries we need more and more the grace of God.

A part from working in the midst of the Dayak people, we serve the diocese of Sintang also by handling the priestly formation. The diocese has both a major and a minor seminary. The minor seminary, founded four years ago by one of our missionaries, has now 51 students. The qualities of faith, intellect, education and vocation of the seminarians are still not ranked high. We must understand and consider their quality in an integral background of the whole condition of life in the very interior regions of West Kalimantan, which are nothing other than jungle. Vocation is a response of faith. So, when faith is still young and not profound, we must strive to hoe, plow and make it fertile so that it grows, blooms, and gives fruits of vocation.

As the times change, the condition of human life for the Dayak people is changing as well. The interior regions of West Kalimantan, in spite of being isolated in terms of modernism, are now being invaded and polluted by the so-called globalization and sophisticated communication. Now, televisions with parabolic antenna are coming into the jungle. This means that the Dayak people are facing new challenges. Their strong and genuine culture, which they have lived for more than a hundred years, is now at stake.

The Vincentian missionaries, anticipating the side-effects of modernism for the Dayak people, are constructing a VTC (Vincentian Training Centre) at Nanga Pinoh. At the end of 1997 we began to create houses for this project. The VTC will be a place for courses or a center of formation for the leaders of the Catholic people. We propose that in the VTC we can hold spiritual retreats, a school of evangelisation, or some courses on practical skills for the youth, such as repairing motorcycles, carpentry, and so on.

We are grateful to the benefactors who sustain financially this proposal of building the VTC in particular and our common projects of the mission in general. We hope that this VTC will be useful for helping some of the Dayak people to be more capable of decision-making with regard to their life, facing the modern challenges of the time. Besides, we hope that they may be bright and smart enough to look for occasions of business amid the difficult situations that they face. With regard to their faith, we expect that they may know Christ more profoundly and that their faith may be rooted deeply in their culture and mentality. In realizing this project, humbly we join with the spirit of the good shepherd of Christ, that "they may have life, and have it to the full."

Living with the poor, collaborating with them, working with them, serving or, better yet, loving them are something not easy. We need a solid and firm basis of personal experience of union with Christ. Serving the poor is not easy, especially when we are hindered, for some unexpected reason, from finding Christ who is present in them. However, in our own experience, we strive to hold firmly that "insofar as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me and.... ... insofar as you neglected to do this to one of the least of them, you neglected to do it to me...." (Mt 25:39, 45). In arriving at the experience of such contemplation,

that is, finding Christ in the poor whom we serve, we learn what it mean by *kenosis* (Phil 2:6-11). As Vincentian missionaries, we should be courageous in emptying and humbling ourselves so as to have space for the poor in our heart.

The very ideal of our humble presence as the Vincentian missionaries in West Kalimantan is nothing other than Christ himself, the good shepherd and the genuine evangelizer of the poor. Our presence, thus, is simply a bid for participation in realizing Christ's redemptive will; i.e., that they, the Dayak people, may have life and have it in abundance.

(Translated by: F. X. E. Armada Riyanto, CM)

# **Among the Savaras**

## **The evangelization of the tribal populations in India**

*By Joseph Moolan, C.M.  
Province of Northern India*

In the vast mountain areas of southern Orissa and northern Andhra Pradesh live one of the most primitive and backward tribals of India. They are called Savaras, Soras, Soboros, or Souras. Numbering around 2.2 million souls, they are believed to have migrated from southeast Asia, together with other Munda and Ho groups of tribals. They are the first settlers of the land, hence they are called Adivasis, or Aborigines. Since they belong to a particular group of primitive peoples, claiming a common ancestry, sharing a common culture, and originally living under a chief or headman, they are called tribals. Most of them were nomadic, wandering in search of food for themselves and for their cattle. At present they are definitely settled in four districts of Orissa and Andhra Pradesh.

Although the Christian missionaries, especially Baptists and Lutherans, started evangelization works among the Savaras from the very beginning of the British Raj, Catholic evangelization among the Savaras began only recently. Though traces of Catholic Faith could be found in this part of India from the 17th century onwards, evangelization work as such was started by the M.S.F.S. Fathers from Visakhapatnam in 1845, when it became a diocese.

At the request of the Holy See, the Spanish Vincentians of the Madrid Province took up the evangelization of this area, from the hands of the M.S.F.S. Fathers. At that time, it was called the Cuttack Mission. In 1922 four pioneer missionaries arrived and started evangelization work in the area. They penetrated into the interior areas and evangelized the people with much enthusiasm and zeal in the face of great difficulties and privations. In the beginning they directed their attention at the Harijan and Khond communities. They evangelized a large number, especially among the Harijan community. The Church was firmly established; institutions for education, health care, and social and developmental works were also established for these communities. The missionaries made sporadic attempts of evangelizing the Savara community and a few villages of Bodopoda and Gunupur range. But due to differences of language, culture, life situations, and approachability and lack of personnel, the evangelization works among them could not proceed until recently. A different and singular approach had to be done for their proper evangelization and establishment of the Church among them.

The training and ordination of native Indian priests helped in the progress of evangelization among the tribals. As an example, after I was ordained in Salamanca, Spain, I returned with enough knowledge and enthusiasm to work in the mission field

of Orissa. At my arrival, the Vincentian Philosophy department at Gopalpur was just starting and I was requested to teach there for three years. Upon my request, I was sent to Bodopoda range as my first mission field of pastoral and missionary activities. It was mainly a "Baptist-converted-Catholic" community and had its own specific problems. As a new missionary, I placed myself under the guidance of an old catechist of the range, Bhokthinato. Because of the latter's prudent, wise and experienced guidance, I was able to solve the pastoral problems and gradually introduce myself into the Christian as well as non-Christian communities.

There were already a few catholic Savara villages in Bodopoda range. I found them as a very special kind of people whom I had not met before. I acquired a good knowledge of the Savaras as a people from this small but energetic and lively Savara Catholic community. I accepted the Savara community as it was, with all its good qualities and defects. I accepted their language, culture, good customs, food, lodging, and accommodated myself to their poor, helpless life situations. With the help of a catechist, I learned their language, translated liturgical prayers and Holy Mass and composed hymns and popular songs in Savara tune and rhythm. The Savaras have their own traditional music and dance and it is an important part of their tribal life. I translated the small catechism book, together with some additional questions and answers needed for their community. All these literary works were printed in Savara (roman) letters. Most of the children and adults learn easily these letters and know how to read and write in them so the missionaries were able to conduct all the liturgical prayers fully in Savara with the full participation of the faithful. It was a glorious and memorable day for me and for the Savara tribal community, when they offered the Holy Mass for the first time in Savara, with all solemnity and pomp, with the full participation of the whole community. "Naba, kudduben jumba..." those were the words of Christ, now in the Savara language, among the Savaras, in a far interior village! In the course of time, it was to be repeated in hundreds of villages!

With the help of a catechist, I started visiting more and more new Savara villages, communicating to them the message of Christ, in a way understandable and accommodated to them. We found them like sheep without a shepherd under great poverty and misery, fear and exploitation, driven here and there in confusion and despair. We used to take to them nothing but the Message of Christ, greet them and talk with them, with great love and appreciation. Through dialogue, music or symbols, we used to make them understand the "Good News" and essential principles of the Catholic Faith. We have communicated the "message, Good News," in its integrity and purity, according to our capacity. Now, it is up to the Holy Spirit and them to react. And the reactions were very varied. Some refused it outright and chased us away, some looked with suspicion and fear, still, some asked us to wait and come again and a few accepted it wholeheartedly. To those who accepted the message we had to go several times again and strengthen their convictions and lead them to the Faith. For them, the initiation to Catholic community was not the regeneration by baptism, but the abandonment or rejection of the evil spirits and all things connected with them. Hence it was done with great solemnity and in the presence of some witnesses. Baptism would be given only after two or three years,

after proper preparation and understanding. Liberated from sins and superstitions of all kinds, they find peace, joy and rest in Jesus Christ! This helps them to rise up in the economic, social and educational status and to form a healthy, dignified, and active tribal society.

Up to the year 1975, I was mainly working among the Savaras from existing parishes of Bodopoda and Gunupur. Soon the need of moving to fully Savara areas and establishing small centers, and afterwards, developing them to full pledged parishes was felt. For that, necessary permissions were sought and obtained from the local Ordinaries (Orissa and A.P.). I remembered with enormous love and gratitude, Rev. Fr. James W. Richardson \_ may his soul rest in peace \_ the then Superior General, who sent the necessary permissions, very encouraging letters, and financial help to start the first Savara Mission Center of Christnagar, at present a huge parish, and mother of many parishes and centres. My love and appreciation, gratitude and prayer for Rev. Fr. Richard McCullen, the previous Superior General, and for Rev. Fr. Robert Maloney, the present Superior General, for their continuous support, prayers and financial help for this beautiful evangelization work. It is worth mentioning, with special gratitude, the financial help which Rev. Fr. Robert Maloney has sent recently for the Mission station of Katiki-Sulludi-Ramanaguda. After completing the preliminary evangelization works and establishing a good Catholic community in that area and entrusting it to one of our Fathers, I moved to a new area \_ Parlakhimundi-Narayanapur \_ for evangelization and establishment of the Church there.

The beginnings of Christnagar Mission Centre was very simple and humble, so also with seven other mission centres which are now beautiful parishes with flourishing Catholic tribal communities, with the needed educational, health and developmental institutions. At the time of the visit of Rev. Fr. F. Kapu\_ciak, some of them were only poor huts but for our Savaras Catholics as well as Hindus, they were "Their Mission Centres," where they could freely come and pray and sing in their language without fear and shame, conduct meetings and conventions, reunions and feasts, display their tribal talents and abilities. They feel proud of these institutions and are ready to do everything in their power for their upkeep and improvement. So too are our dear benefactors. These tribal communities remember with love and gratitude all their beloved benefactors and pray for them even everyday in these centres. May the Good Lord of the Harvest bless all of them abundantly and reward them a hundredfold.

We have a very ambitious plan, in preparation for the great JUBILEE 2000 "KRISTO JOYONTI 2000," to start a Spiritual Retreat Centre, mainly for the Savara tribals and to spread the Word of God to every tribal of the vast area and country.

Almost all the Savaras accepted the Faith recently but have not studied it very deeply. They know and practice just the essentials of the Catholic faith, rituals and customs. Hence, they need to be taught the specific details to strengthen their faith and Catholic life. The Savaras appreciate very much the religious meetings, conventions and get togethers. Every year we have a few meetings of this type at one

place or another. To strengthen all these and to deepen the religiosity of the tribals, we need a small permanent centre, where they can spend a few days of prayer, meditation and renewal.

The command of Christ "Go into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature," is relevant even today, particularly for the tribal communities. There are millions of tribals who have not heard the gospel message even today. This is true of the thousands of Savaras and Khonds who are ignorant of Christ and his message. Right in our midst are thousands who, when asked, say that they have never heard or known anything about the Saviour or about the Church. Hence, this plan of forming a small group of evangelizers who would visit the villages, particularly the tribal ones, and preach the Word of God.

# The Congregation of the Mission in Vietnam

By Gérard Tran Cong Du, C.M.  
and Alexis Hau, C.M.

## 1. History

*a. Origins.* At the start, seventy years ago, the presence of Vincentians in Vietnam was brought about by the arrival of the first three French Daughters of Charity in 1928. They came to work as nurses in Saigon Hospital, at the request of the Vicar Apostolic of Saigon. From 1928 to 1952, though, there was only one confrere permanently resident in Vietnam, as Director of the Daughters of Charity. In 1952 some confreres who had been expelled from China took up residence in Dalat, 300 km. north of Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh Ville). They numbered six, five priests and a lay brother. Their ministry was the direction of the Daughters of Charity and chaplaincy to their works, the chaplaincy at the French secondary school in Dalat, and a student centre (from which Vincentian vocations came later).

*b. Expansion.* In 1955 the house in Dalat was canonically erected. The community there ministered to the Catholics in the neighbourhood of the house and to the Chinese Catholics. Later on a Chinese parish was set up by a Chinese confrere who came from Italy.

In 1959 a French confrere arrived, and his arrival, together with the ordination of Vietnamese confreres in the following years, allowed further expansion. Two missionary sectors were established among the Montagnards 50 and 60 km. from Dalat. These are one of the fifty-three ethnic minorities in Vietnam. They are rather poor and are of a completely different origin to the Vietnamese. Around the same time an apostolic school was opened in Dalat to foster indigenous vocations.

1966 was significant for the opening of an internal seminary in Dalat. The apostolic school was moved from Dalat to Tam-Hiêp, 32 km. north of Saigon. The school could cater for about a hundred boys in the minor seminary and about a thousand others.

In 1969 there were fifteen confreres, thirteen priests and two brothers, working in the two regions of Vietnam:

- *The DALAT Region:* This was the main house of the confreres, with five priests and one brother. It included the internal seminary, the residence of the students who attended lectures in the Jesuit Pontifical College (where the cream of the Vietnamese clergy was formed). There was also a group of aspirants in the house. A Vietnamese confrere was in charge of a small Vietnamese parish, and a Chinese confrere was in charge of a Chinese parish and also looked after a Chinese primary school and a dispensary 23 km. from Dalat. Finally there were two missionary sectors in Montagnard territory, 50 and 65 km. from Dalat, where four confreres worked.

- *The SAIGON Region*: There was the Apostolic School in Tam-Hiêp, 32 km. from Saigon, with about a hundred boys in the minor seminary, and a secondary school. There was also the chaplaincy to the “Centre Caritas” run by the Daughters of Charity in Saigon. As well as this there was a confrere of the Eastern Province of the United States who looked after the spiritual welfare of the Americans in Saigon.

**c. *Vietnamisation***. From 1969 to 1975 the Vietnamisation of the Congregation of the Mission in Vietnam got under way. In future, foreign confreres would be working full-time in the mission “ad gentes” among the Montagnards, and one of them would be the Director of the Daughters of Charity.

The Vietnamese confreres would become the superiors of the houses throughout the Congregation’s network in Vietnam. They would take full control of the formation of seminarists and students, and the Vincentian seed-bed in the Apostolic School.

In 1973-74 the seeds produced the first harvest. Four Vincentian students were ordained priests in their homeland, bringing to fifteen the number of confreres available for ministry. The community was able to start a third house. There was the house of the confreres working among the Montagnard and the house comprising the internal seminary and scholasticate in Dalat, with forty philosophy and theology students. The third house was that of the confreres in charge of the Apostolic School in the Saigon Region.

**d. 1975: *The Great Turnabout***. The day of the “liberation,” 30 April 1975, marked the final victory of North Vietnam and the withdrawal of the Americans. The two Vietnams, separate since the Geneva Accords of 1954, were re-united and governed by the Community Party. The uncertainty and fears, foreseen by the veterans from China, became reality.

It goes without saying that under the Communist regime foreign priests and men and women members of religious communities had to leave the country. The Apostolic School was suppressed and the three priests and the brother were removed to a re-education camp, where the superior remained for almost twelve years.

**e. 1975-79**. The political line of the re-united Vietnam, whose official title is The Socialist Republic of Vietnam, adopted inevitably an attitude of isolating itself from the universal Church and of interference in the local Church.

For the Church as a whole in Vietnam, and for the hierarchy and religious congregations in particular, this was a period of waiting and of apparent or real stagnation. It was impossible to continue with the mission in the way our foreign confreres operated. All contact with ethnic minorities was suspected of being a subversive tactic. A large number of our seminarists, discouraged by the situation, left the Congregation; this happened with others as well. Those who stayed on until the end of their studies wait, *sine die*, for ordination to the priesthood.

**f. 1989**. Perestroika in the USSR, which was the prelude to a change of regime there and, as a consequence, to the bursting asunder of the communist bloc in the countries of Eastern Europe, had inevitable repercussions in Vietnam, which was a satellite country of the

USSR. As a result, a certain easing was experienced in the relationship between the regime and the Church.

*g. 1990: A modest re-awakening of missionary work and recruitment.* The region where foreign confreres had their mission before 1975 had become a new economic zone, and the local authorities gave permission to two confreres, one priest and a deacon, to establish a missionary parish. In 1991 the parish of Kadeune was set up, the parishioners being 50% Vietnamese and 50% Montagnards. In 1995 a second missionary parish was established 4 km. from the first one. This was under the care of the deacon mentioned above, who meanwhile had been ordained a priest. Most of the parishioners of this second parish are Montagnards. This is the parish of Próh, and its church was solemnly dedicated by the bishop of Dalat in 1997 with eighty concelebrants in the presence of a congregation of more than five thousand Catholics from everywhere.

At the same time young aspirants from different places are asking to be admitted to the Congregation. They are recommended by either their parish priest or the Daughters of Charity. After a probationary period they are admitted as postulants and learn something about the Congregation. At the end of a one year postulancy they begin the first cycle of studies (philosophy) which lasts three years. They then start the important stage of the internal seminary. Needless to say all this formation programme takes place in secret, even though everyone knows what is going on! For the present the authorities seem to close their eyes and let it go on.

## **2. The Present Situation.**

Between 1992 and 1997 we have had four ordinations to the priesthood, bringing the total number of confreres who are priests up to ten. As well as this there are two deacons waiting, and one incorporated confrere.

The confreres are divided between three houses:

*Dalat:* This is the central house, with eight confreres, one of whom is a deacon. This is where the twenty-one students of the first cycle are studying, helped by professors who come in from outside. The confreres are in charge of three small parishes in the city.

*Kadeune-Próh:* This is a missionary sector with two rural parishes 50 km. from Dalat, with two priests and a deacon.

*Tuc Trung:* This is 90 km. north of Saigon in a region where the majority are Catholic, former refugees from the North. There are many vocations to the priesthood and religious life. The postulancy and internal seminary are here, with one priest, one incorporated confrere, and one brother.

*Saigon:* A hostel for twenty theology students of the second cycle was recently opened. They attend lectures in an inter-congregational institute which caters for about two hundred students from different congregations. Among our students we should mention a doctor aged forty-two, a dermatologist, recently converted from Buddhism.

## **3. Looking Ahead for the Vincentians in Vietnam.**

It is obvious that for us looking ahead means aspirations. Whether these ever become realities depends mainly on a softening of the present political situation in the country. It is officially defined as socialist but is strongly tainted with communism, at least with regard to religious matters. As long as the regime sticks to the principle of the right to oversee and regulate everything concerning politics, culture and religion, a long-term specific programme is impossible.

### *Two complementary perspectives*

**a. Formation:** We can prepare our young confreres for the evangelization of the poor even if the question of ordination to the priesthood is uncertain. Our young members have always to remember and accept the fact that their receiving holy orders does not depend on decisions of the Congregations, but mainly on those of the government if they are to carry on priestly ministry in public. Secret ordination carries too many risks and reduces pastoral activity to a minimum. A ray of light is emerging, though. The committees for religious matters in many provinces have recently recognised some of our students as Vincentian religious.

After the opening up of Vietnam which took place in 1989 religious and priestly vocations are flourishing, but we are afraid that there will be a falling off in the near future because of the effects of capitalism and the market economy on Christian living. This is what happened in Eastern Europe.

It must also be noted that the lack of trained formators is a worrying problem. Most of our confreres were ordained under the present regime and did not receive a complete formation which would enable them, in their turn, to “accompany” others and take on the important task of forming our young members in spiritual and Vincentian matters. The Paris Province is trying to fill this need by bringing confreres to Paris to take part in CIF sessions of Vincentian formation. But the difference of language is no small handicap, and getting an exit visa is still very difficult.

**b. Mission:** Following the spirit of the Vincentian vocation we want to carry out the aim of the Congregation of the Mission, namely to follow Christ the evangeliser of the poor, which is the fundamental statement of our Congregation. We accept for ourselves what is stated in art. 1, § 2 of our Constitutions and Statutes: “[the members] Work at evangelizing the poor, especially the most abandoned.” There is no doubt that now, as in the past, the poorest and most abandoned people in Vietnam are the ethnic minorities, and this is true at all levels. Our priority therefore is the evangelization of the Montagnards, fulfilling art. 16 of our Constitutions. This is continuing the work of those who went before us but who had to leave the mission field fallow when they left in 1975.

In giving priority to this choice we are strongly supported and encouraged by our excellent bishop. He has great missionary zeal, directed towards the Montagnards and he urges young priests to study their language and culture, and to evangelise them. He himself speaks one of the Montagnard dialects.

We appreciate, though, that what we want to do is limited by “the circumstances of time and place,” even if we are “attentive to the signs of the times and the more urgent calls” of the Church in Vietnam (C.S. 2)

We await in faith and hope the moment when Providence will allow us to put our choice into practise in accordance with our Vincentian charism, namely to be, in so far as it is possible, “nearest to the furthest off.” Who knows whether in the new millennium the sons of St. Vincent in Vietnam will be numerous enough to swarm, and move into other parts of the high plateaus where there are other ethnic minorities even more needy and abandoned, in order to bring them the charity of the Good News of Jesus Christ, sole saviour of the human race.

We are united to our confreres by the same Vincentian spirit and the same faith in Christ, and we commend our plans to their prayers, and also to our dear readers spread all over the world.

*(Thomas Davitt, C.M., Translator)*

# Vincentian Bibliography for the formation of our own

*SIEV is happy to offer an impetus to the formation of our own in proposing a bibliography which focuses on the Vincentian books which might be called "basic" and which should be part of every library in the formation houses of the Congregation of the Mission. We hope this will help the formators in the choice of books to acquire for the library in their formation house or to give to their students to read. It is evident that for areas of specialization, many other books are necessary.*

*We are offering three different bibliographies, according to the languages: one in French prepared by Fr. Jean-Pierre Renouard; a second in English, prepared by Fr. John Prager; and a third in Spanish, prepared by Frs. Miguel Pérez Flores and John Prager. If you wish to procure the bibliographies in the other languages, you will find them in the same issue of Vincentiana according to the proper language.*

## **1. Writings of St. Vincent and St. Louise**

- *Vincent de Paul: Correspondence, Conferences, Documents*, trans. Marie Poole et al., (NY: New City Press) vols. 1-8.
- *Conferences of St. Vincent de Paul to the Daughters of Charity*, trans. Joseph Leonard, (London: Collins, 1979). (Corresponds to Coste vols 9 & 10).
- *Conferences of St. Vincent de Paul*, trans. Joseph Leonard, (Philadelphia: Eastern Province, 1963) (Corresponds to Coste vols 11 & 12).
- *Spiritual Writings of Louise de Marillac*, trans. Louise Sullivan, (NY: New City Press, 1991).
- *Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac: Rules, Conferences and Writings*, ed. J. Rybolt & F. Ryan, (NY: Paulist, 1995)

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**ROBERT P. MALONEY, C.M.**  
*Spiritualidad para diversos tiempos*

Published by CEME, Salamanca, Spain, 1998 (229 pages)

This is the Spanish translation, by Fr. Rafael Sáinz, C.M., of Fr. Maloney's third book which appeared under the title, *Seasons in Spirituality. Reflection on Vincentian Spirituality in Today's World* (published by New City Press, New York, 1997). You will find a description of the book in *Vincentiana* 1997/6, p. 503.

**GIUSEPPE TOSCANI, C.M.**  
*La mystique des pauvres*  
**Le charisme de la Charité**

Published by Saint-Paul, Versailles, France, 1998 (168 pages)

"Fortunately, works on the spirituality of St. Vincent have multiplied in recent years. This has helped us to take great strides in understanding his spirit. A new field of understanding opens before us and we find new reasons to admire him. We are no longer just treating of a giant of charity, a creator, an innovator full of intelligence and power, but the heart of a saint!

It is difficult, however, to perceive the heart of a saint! One must have a refined spirit as well as controlled scholarship!

The book which you are going to read is a wonderful attempt to introduce us to this. The author knows his subject very well. Behind each of his affirmations, he could slip pages of notes and texts of St. Vincent. But he has gone much farther. He has sought to seize that which, in the very depths, made him live. One need only allow oneself to be led by him. Beyond the seriousness of the study, one enters into a true contemplation. There, one touches what St. Vincent loved most, his very heart, and that is really contemplation." (Extract of the Preface of Bernard Peyrous)

**ALEXANDRETTE BUGNELLI**  
*Vincent de Paul*  
*Une pastorale du pardon et de la Réconciliation*  
*La confession générale*

Co-Published by Editions Universitaires, Fribourg, Switzerland  
and Cerf Editions, Paris, France, 1998 (441 pages)

This book reproduces the author's doctoral thesis in moral theology in which a precise aspect of the activity of St. Vincent is studied: his concern to help the poor make up for the greatest of all poverties, that which serious sins provoke, the loss of divine grace. He proposes that they completely hand over themselves and their entire past to God by a general confession. He is only original in this because he wants to procure this grace not for the city dwellers and the devout rich, but for those who suffer.

General confession is situated in St. Vincent's missionary thought and action, as well as in the larger historical, theological, and ecclesial context which has been well documented and studied. The author, for his research, consulted abundantly, notably the archives of the Motherhouse in Paris.

**BERNARD PUJO**  
*Vincent de Paul*  
*le précurseur*

Published by Albin Michel, Paris, France, 1998 (380 pages)

This is a new biography of St. Vincent de Paul! It is a work for the general public, but it is a rigorous one with numerous notes giving all the references and applications. There is an eight-page section of illustrations in the middle. The author has already written the lives of Vauban and the Great Condé with the same publisher. He was attracted to Vincent de Paul when he saw his name appear several times while he was looking for information on others. He worked on this book for several years with the archivist of the Motherhouse in Paris and is up-to-date on the most recent discoveries in various archives. He tried to sift through the legends recounted about his subject in order to find the man as he lived in the turbulence of his era.

**FRANK M. VARGAS, C.M.**  
*Sent to do the Work of the Father*

Published by Claretian Publications, Quezon City, Philippines, 1998 (132 pages)

This book is a collection of conferences that the author gave in various situations between 1990 and 1997, especially to various groups of the Vincentian Family (Daughters of Charity, AIC, Vincentian Marian Youth, Society of St. Vincent de Paul, etc.). Rooted in the Scriptures and the present-day teaching of the Church, especially on social matters, the book presents the charism of St. Vincent in the context of society today. It aims to bring a reply to the challenges of contemporary society and to help the reader commit himself/herself more fully in the evangelization of the poor.

**COLLECTION**  
***DePaul University***  
***Centennial Essays and Images***

Published by DePaul University, Chicago, USA, 1998 (373 pages)

This book was published on the occasion of the centenary of this university in Chicago, which is directed by the Congregation of the Mission. DePaul, which has its origins in the modest St. Vincent College situated in a parish north of Chicago, is presently, with its 18,000 students, one of the largest Catholic universities in the world. The history, growth, and development of DePaul University is the theme of this volume as well as the presentation of the particular vision of higher education and values which have sustained this institution. It contains many archival photos.

**LUIGI MEZZADRI, C.M.**  
***Giovanna Antida Thouret***  
***Il coraggio della carità***

Published by San Paolo, Milan, Italy, 1998 (319 pages)

This is the biography of the foundress of the Congregation of Sisters of Charity of Besançon. Jeanne Antide Thouret had entered the Daughters of Charity in Paris, but in 1793, before she pronounced her vows, the revolutionary laws led to the dissolution of the Community. After trips abroad and many adventures, she returned to France in 1799 and opened a school for girls, beginning a new Congregation, inspired by the model of St. Vincent. It quickly crossed the border and was established in Naples.

**THEODULE REY-MERMET**  
***Nous avons entendu la voix des pauvres***  
***Sainte Jeanne-Antide Thouret***

Published by Nouvelle Cité, Montrouge, France, 1998 (636 pages)

This is also a biography of Jeanne Antide Thouret. The author is well known to the French public for his lively style, yet serious analysis based on much research. In the middle of the book there are 16 pages of beautiful illustrations in color.

**COLLECTION**  
***Soeurs de la Charité de Strasbourg***  
***Centennial Essays and Images***

Published by Signe, Strasbourg, France, 1998 (60 pages)

This beautiful, large size, well-illustrated book, like those published by Signe to which we are accustomed, features this Congregation which is close to the Company of the Daughters of Charity and is part of the Vincentian Family.

**SR. ALFONSA RICHARTZ, D.C.**  
*Auf dem Weg met Vinzenz von Paul, Louise von Marillac*  
*Vorträge, Ansprachen 1986-1998*

Published in Kommern, Germany, 1998 (180 pages)

This is a collection of lectures given in several different places and on several occasions, many of them for MEGVIS (Central European Vincentian Studies) meetings and for members of the German Vincentian Federation. The author is a Daughter of Charity of the Province of Cologne, Germany, very well known in the German-speaking Vincentian world. As an expert with a very inspiring style, she always has something refreshing to say. She speaks: about Vincentian identity; about the realism of Vincent de Paul, his great confidence in God, and his idea of martyrdom; about the vows; about the holiness of Louise de Marillac and her pedagogy as seen from her correspondence with the Daughters of Charity; about inculturation of the charism in an ever changing world. These are just a few of the subjects she treats. This collection of lectures is certainly worth reading.

**GIUSEPPE MENICHELLI, C.M.**  
*Non più stranieri né ospiti ma concitadini (Ef. 2,19)*  
*Collection "Orientamenti di Azione Vincenziana," n\_ 46*

Published by the St. Vincent de Paul Society, Rome, Italy, 1998 (64 pages)

This small booklet offers thoughts on the problem of immigration in the context of Italian society today. Also included are nine reflection themes with a presentation of text from the magisterium and questions.

**ANTON SRHOLEC**  
*Light from the Depths*  
*of Jachymov Concentration Camps*

Published by Michal Vasko, Presov, Slovakia, 1996 (198 pages)

This book is a testimony on the persecution of the Church in Slovakia and Bohemia under the Communist regime. It also recounts the life of Ján Havlik, a student of the Congregation of the Mission who spent 11 years in prison and died a year after his release, at the age of 37, from an illness he contracted there. This book is dedicated to the memory of this confessor of the faith.

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