

Foundation Day

Rome, 25 January 2014

To all the Members of the Congregation of the Mission

My dear Confreres:

May the grace and peace of Our Lord Jesus Christ fill your hearts now and forever!

As the universal Church observes the feast of the conversion of St. Paul, we celebrate the anniversary of our foundation, given us through the conversion of another disciple of Jesus:

“But there was such a great crowd that I could not handle it with just the one other priest who was helping me... Father Portail, another priest, and I took residence at the College des Bon Enfants... From there all three of us would go around preaching and giving missions”, Conf. 180, 2, Correspondence, Entretiens, Documents, Paris 1920-1925.

On this day, we recall with gratitude the charism and community entrusted to us by St. Vincent. The challenge before us today is this: how can we better follow Christ, Evangelizer of the poor?

The theme of the 2010 General Assembly, “Creative Fidelity to the Mission” was adapted to guide our Congregation forward. The Curia devised a strategic communications plan to infuse the objectives of the “Lines of Action” yearly and thematically into our provinces and works. Foundation Day is a good time to review and renew our commitment to this strategic plan.

“Creative Fidelity to our Mission and Ministries in following Christ, Evangelizer of the Poor”, guides the five years of this plan with yearly objectives and specific strategies for Visitors, provinces, and confreres. The full plan is on our web site, www.cmglobal.org. Today, I direct you to the objectives and strategies for 2014: “Dialogue with the Poor” and “Initial and Ongoing Formation”. A brief explanation of each with their main points is below.

2012-2016: DIALOGUE WITH THE POOR

To enable confreres to listen to the voices of the poor and make practical, ongoing efforts to participate in their lives. Specific strategies include:

- To favor works that promote systemic change in society;
- To provide legal assistance to defend the poor and promote justice;

- To create programs to counter human trafficking, promote access to universal health care, advocate for the environment, the dignity of women and children, and rights of migrants.

2014: INITIAL & ONGOING FORMATION

To encourage regional and provincial appraisal of available resources, so as to enhance the quality of initial and ongoing formation in the Vincentian charism of the Congregation. Specifically, as stated in the “Lines of Action”:

- To study, disseminate, and implement the revised *Ratio Formationis*;
- To create formation programs that strengthen Vincentian vocational fidelity and our response to the needs of the 21st century;
- To assume ongoing formation as our daily commitment, embracing prayer, reflection, on our experiences in living out our ministry;
- To foster openness to opportunity offered by new languages and techniques of the digital world in view of the Mission;
- To foster exchange of formation experiences with Conferences of Visitors and confreres;
- To reflect on and encourage the vocation of the Vincentian Brother in local communities, provinces and the Conferences of Visitors.

On this Foundation Day 2014, I ask Visitors, provincial councils, local communities, and confreres to focus on dual objectives of *Dialogue with the Poor* and *Formation – initial and ongoing*. Reflect earnestly on ways you can apply them to your local community, apostolate, province, and region. This plan is for the benefit of our Congregation, and it is easily adaptable.

Our two Vincentian-based web sites, “Fam-Vin” and “CM-Global” both offer resources for ongoing formation, be it personal reflection, inquiry, and activities for groups of confreres. In the ‘Vin-Formation’ section of Fam-Vin (www.famvin.org), and the ‘Virtual Library’ of CM-Global (www.cmglobal.org), you will find many opportunities to enrich your understanding of our charism and spirituality. You will also find resources to assist you in preaching and teaching.

As we celebrate our Vincentian vocation today, we give thanks to God for the life and example of our Holy Founder. Seeking the intercession of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, let us be creative in fidelity to our Mission and ministries, following Christ, Evangelizer of the poor.

Your brother in St. Vincent,

G. Gregory Gay, C.M.
Superior General