

FROM THE GENERAL CURIA

Tempo Forte Meeting Summary

December 2013

Dear Confreres,

May the grace and peace of Our Lord Jesus Christ be forever in our hearts!

The following is a summary of proceedings from our December Tempo Forte meeting.

Update on Ongoing Activities

- Our ongoing formation session for Tempo Forte was held in conjunction with the annual gathering of our priest-confreres who study in Rome. The theme for our reflection was the second chapter of our Constitutions: "Apostolic Activity". Fr. Eli Chaves, Assistant General, presented and guided discussion with all present. A summary of the ideas shared with Curia and the Council will be published in *Vincetiana* as "Meditation Moment on the Constitution".
- We put the final touches on our "New Visitors Meeting" held in Rome in January, 2014. We are hoping for a great deal of sharing and interaction between Visitors and presenters.
- We began preparations for the 2016 General Assembly by reviewing names from Visitors for a Preparatory Commission. We discussed selection of a theme for the assembly, such as focusing on the 400th anniversary of our foundation (2017), and New Evangelization. We finalized the date and place from June 26 - July 17, at DePaul University, Chicago, IL, USA.
- We discussed ongoing plans for reconfiguration of provinces. Reports were given by the Assistants General charged with helping provinces undergoing discussion on reconfiguration.
- With regard to the on-line catalogue, it is now active and functioning. It has been visited by a number of confreres offering suggestions and information to keep it up to date.
- A letter and questionnaire sent to Visitors about establishing a center for confreres who need to do vocational discernment yielded a small response. There is still time to respond. At the next Tempo Forte, we will decide whether or not to establish such a center.

- We discussed the response to a letter we sent to Visitors requesting provinces take up a collection around St. Vincent's Feast to support the VSO (Vincentian Solidarity Office) in its efforts to strengthen the patrimonial fund for developing provinces. We received donations from the provinces of Indonesia, Colombia, Salamanca, Chile, Peru, and Poland. If other provinces have taken this collection, please notify the Econome General.

General Curia Personnel

- We are now selecting a confrere to be administrator for the General Curia. Fr. Giuseppe Carulli, C.M., will complete his three-year term in June, 2014. On behalf of the confreres at the General Curia, I express my gratitude for his generous service as administrator of the house these last three years. We have nominated his replacement and are awaiting a response.
- We have named a new brother to work at the General Curia, replacing Br. Ivan Sanchez who finishes his service in June, 2014. Br. Gerardo Fajardo is not new to the Curia, as he has previously served here. We are grateful to Br. Ivan for his years of generous service.

Department Reports

- Fr. John Maher, Director of Communications reported on Vincentiana, our web sites, and SIEV. We spent some time dealing with a revision of SIEV. There will be a meeting in 2014 to discuss future projects and to appoint a new board. We are grateful to the current SIEV Board members; namely Fr. Eugene Curran, Province of Ireland, Fr. Elie De Place, Province of Paris, and Fr. Alexander Jernej, Province of Austria, who have served SIEV diligently for over eight years. At the March Tempo Forte, we will appoint a new board.
- We also hope SIEV will create inter-provincial and inter-continental groups to encourage study of our Vincentian heritage and charism, especially among younger confreres
- We studied proposed statutes for the ONLUS Commission, that is, the Vincentian Solidarity Office based in Europe. Documentation was sent to the VSO-USA Director Fr. Miles Heinen for his input. We are in the process of forming an Executive Board for this ONLUS. The board's make-up will include the Superior General and Assistants General.

New Projects

- We had a discussion with Fr. Robert Maloney in his capacity as president of the Franz Foundation. Together, we discussed two new initiatives. The first is a program providing a distinctly Vincentian

emphasis to parishes where confreres serve that will strengthen our distinct Vincentian identity. Further information will be sent out once it is translated.

- The second initiative, with Franz Foundation help is to make emergency relief funds available. We will create a fund for emergency situations that will supplement our limited funds, often quickly depleted. With this new initiative, we can quickly respond when emergencies occur, particularly where confreres and Vincentian Family members live and serve.
- Another new initiative, a proposal to offer workshops to train confreres and members of the Vincentian Family on strategic planning, grant-writing, and asset management. This was proposed by Frs. Bob Maloney and Joe Agostino, and Sr. Marjorie Clifford, D.C. and discussed by the Council. Details are in the early stages of discussion and planning.

Commission for Promotion of Systemic Change

- The Franz Foundation has generously agreed to continue financing the Commission for the Promotion of Systemic Change. The Commission is moving to a new phase: training leaders to teach systemic change. The Commission is also in transition to new leadership, and held their recent meeting at the General Curia. The Commission welcomed a new member, Sr. Teresa Mueda, D.C., former Visitatrix in the Philippines. With Fr. Maloney, I thank the founding Commission members who will complete their service in early 2014.
- In their October meeting, the Commission discussed a number of presentations to be given in different parts of the world. The Commission also recommended appointment of a full-time person to do follow-up on systemic change workshops.

Status of Ratio Formationis

- We took up the project of the revision of the Ratio Formationis, reworking its content to fifty pages total. Interspersed with text will be articles after each section, as confreres will offer various commentaries. The text will be published in a future issue of Vincentiana.

Union of Superior Generals

- Fr. Zeracristos, Assistant General, attended the “Solidarity with Southern Sudan” session. We renewed our participation as a congregational member of this project, which consists of assigning personnel to work an inter-religious community setting in Southern Sudan. We have Fr. Manuel Ginete of the Philippines Province training the laity in pastoral care.

- The topic of the meeting at the Union of Superior Generals was the exercise of leadership in religious communities in these days. The highlight of this meeting was a three-hour session of dialogue, questions, and give-and-take with Pope Francis at the Vatican. A summary of the Superior General's reflections on that meeting will be available at later.

Housing of Immigrants in Rome

- We studied a letter we received from Cardinal Agostino Vallini, the Vicar General of the Diocese of Rome, who represents Pope Francis, the Bishop of Rome. Inspired by the words and actions of the Holy Father, Cardinal Vallini made a request that religious congregations with access to underused buildings to consider housing poor and immigrant populations. Rome, like many cities, has a large immigrant population. We wrote to Cardinal Vallini, offering the use of a house on the grounds of the Curia for such temporary housing.

Implications for the Congregation

- I would recommend to all provinces with underused buildings to consider putting our goods at the service of the poor, whenever possible. Thus action is quite consistent with both our charism and Constitutions. The plight of the poor is real, raising a key question for Vincentians: in what concrete ways might we serve them? We do so not only because of Pope Francis or Cardinal Agostino Vallini, but as a response to Jesus in Matthew's Gospel (25:40): "*Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least of mine, you did for me*".

Vatican Synod for the Family

- We received the working paper issued by the Vatican for the Synod on the Family, to be held in October 2014. The Council will have an opportunity to reflect on its contents and to send our ideas in to the Synod via our membership in the Societies of Apostolic Life.

Archives and Historical Matters

- We received some recommendations from Fr. John Rybolt regarding the archives of the General Curia we will adopt with the assistance of the Archivist and Secretary General. We also considered a proposal from Fr. Rybolt regarding creation of a historical section for our on-line database. We approved it and authorized him to begin its implementation.

The Education Apostolate of the Congregation

- We reviewed minutes of a meeting between the five university and college presidents of institutions with Vincentian sponsorship: St. John's, DePaul, and Niagara universities; Adamson in the Philippines; and All Hallows College in Ireland. In general, we approved their statement on Vincentian sponsorship of universities with some recommendations. With the final document, the Superior General will write to Visitors in provinces where the universities are located, urging their support and encouragement in this apostolate.
- We also believe that, with the assistance of SIEV, we can establish and promote ongoing dialogue between the Congregation and the universities and colleges sponsored by the Congregation. We are considering having SIEV produce publications with practical ways to apply the Vincentian spirit in our educational apostolate where confreres serve.
- The Superior General shared with the Council the initiatives being taken for the benefit of secondary and elementary schools affiliated with the Congregation. A pilot project has been initiated at DePaul and St. John's universities (USA) to establish links with these schools to assist them find ways to promote the Vincentian charism.

Postulator General Report

- The Postulator General provided us with an update on the status of Vincentian Family members whose causes for beatification are moving forward. The results of this report will eventually be published on line in the "Fam-Vin" web site and in *Vincentiana*. The Council also intends to provide updates on these matters on a regular basis.

INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS

- A constant challenge we face is the difficulty of gaining entry visas for confreres going to various missions. This can lead to "double frustration", as the confrere seeking entry gets discouraged, while confreres at the mission must assume extra work in his absence. I appreciate the example of patience and perseverance of confreres seeking to go to the mission, and men in the mission waiting for a new confrere. The *Solomon Islands* is one such place, where the process for visa entry and residency can take a very long time.
- We discussed the International Missions of the Congregation. In *Papua New Guinea* plans are underway for the construction of a Vincentian residence in Bomana, as a place of work and rest for the confreres coming in from remote parts of the mission.

- We received a copy of the community project from our international mission in **Chad** (sponsored by COVIAM). It is well prepared by the two confreres at the mission. They are hoping for a third confrere to arrive in January 2014. Fr. Sixtus, Province of Nigeria, will visit and encourage the confreres, and negotiate a contract with the bishop in **Chad**.
- With regard to our mission in **Benin**, Fr. Zontak, the Assistant General responsible for this mission will visit the confreres there shortly. This relatively new mission is staffed by three very enthusiastic confreres from the Province of Poland.
- We received a report of our **Punta Arenas** mission from the Visitor of Chile, where two confreres from that province serve. Unfortunately, the Visitor announced that one of the two confreres is not able to continue for health reasons. So, I am putting out an appeal for a confrere who may be discerning applying to the missions to consider **Punta Arenas**. On a related note, in the recent meeting with the Holy Father sponsored by the Union of Superior Generals, Pope Francis appealed to religious communities to go to the ends of the earth for mission. He mentioned that the Salesians had done so in **Punta Arenas**. But, what the Holy Father did not know is that the Salesians left, and we've taken their place! Hopefully, we can keep our commitment to **Punta Arenas**, our 'end of the earth' mission.

Mission Appeal 2013

- We received five responses to the October mission appeal from confreres volunteering for the international missions. We made two definite assignments: Fr. Alexander Fonseca, Province of Fortaleza, will go to Mozambique; Fr. Slawomir Szucki, Province of Poland, will go to Papua New Guinea. I thank the confreres who volunteered, and urge all to consider volunteering. Don't hesitate to discern more deeply. Recall that we are a missionary congregation who serve the most abandoned wherever the Lord calls us!

The Vincentian Family

- We received notice of the cancellation of a workshop on "Dialogue with Islam" that had been in preparation for over a year by the Commission for Inter-religious Dialogue with Islam. Hopefully, it will be held at DePaul University in Chicago in 2015.
- We received a proposal from Fr. Claudio Santangelo, who serves as moderator of the AIC (Ladies of Charity) in Rome. The ladies of Charity are willing to offer a scholarship to a confrere in the

Congregation for the study of the social doctrine of the Church. For further information, please contact the Secretary General (secgen@cmglobal.org).

Conferences of Visitors

- We received reports from the different Conferences of Visitors. The Asia-Pacific Visitors Conference (APVC) will have its meeting in Sydney, Australia in February. It is being organized by Fr. Greg Brett, the Acting Visitor of the province. At its recent provincial assembly was renamed the Province of Oceania, at the request of the confreres.
- The European Conference of Visitors (CEVIM) will have its next meeting in Jerusalem. The Latin American Conference of Vincentian Provinces (CLAPVI) is holding a program for seminarians in theology in the Province of Venezuela. The Superior General will meet with the National Conference of Visitors (NCV) in the USA next spring to discuss how the three provinces can support each other and spread the Vincentian charism.

Superior General's Calendar

- The calendar for the Superior General for the next three months is as follows. In January, he attends the New Visitor's meeting in Rome from January 5-15. Then, he goes to Paris January 16-19 for the annual Executive Committee of the Vincentian Family and ongoing formation for Vincentian Family Leaders. Then he will participate in the International Council of the Vincentian Marian Youth in Madrid, from January 22-26.
- On February 2, he will have his traditional meeting on the Feast of the Presentation with Sr. Evelyn Franc, D.C. to discuss the state of the Company of the Daughters of Charity as they prepare for the annual renewal of vows. From February 3-25, he will visit the missions in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, and attend the Asia Pacific Visitors Conference (APVC) meeting in Sydney, Australia. February 27 - March 2, he will attend the General Assembly of MISEVI in Costa Rica. He will then go to Rio de Janeiro. Assisted by Fr. Eli Chaves, he will participate in dialogue on the reconfiguration of several provinces of the Daughters of Charity in Brazil. He will then return to Rome to prepare for the quarterly March Tempo Forte meeting.
- As I conclude this report, 2013 is nearly over, and Advent has ushered in a new liturgical year. I look back with great thanksgiving and gratitude to God for the warm welcomes I received in my visits with

confreres in this past year. I am also thankful for the many kind and thoughtful greetings I receive from confreres by letter, e-mail, and phone. I pray God will bless you and grant you “abundant life” (Jn. 10:10) in the year ahead. Together, may we continue to live the Mission entrusted to us by Jesus and Vincent.

Your brother in St. Vincent,

G. Gregory Gay, C.M.

Superior General