

Tempo Forte Meeting Summary

March 2014

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 March Tempo Forte meeting. We began our Tempo Forte with a day of reflection on our Constitutions, specifically, the third chapter on community life. The reflection and discussion was guided Fr. Zeracristos, Assistant General. We ended the week with a workshop for practical information on using various computer programs.

UPDATES

We began with preparation for the General Assembly for 2016, meeting with the newly chosen members of the Preparatory Commission for their initial planning sessions at the Curia. We provided them with an orientation of the theme of the assembly and their responsibilities as a Preparatory Commission. We also asked the Commission to work together on preparing an article to help confreres and provinces to have a better understand the purpose and meaning of a General Assembly. Hopefully, this will foster greater dialogue on the General Assembly

The next matter of business was an evaluation of the New Visitors Meeting held in Rome last January. We also discussed the various stages in the processes of reconfiguration taking place in provinces across the Congregation. Each Assistant General will speak about it in visitations to various provinces, with the goal of increasing understanding of the need for reconfiguration as articulated in the 2010 General Assembly. As a Council, we will be developing strategies to help the provinces move forward on this most important issue.

We discussed the possibility of sponsoring a meeting of provincial secretaries for a workshop as a means of improving the quality of communication with the Curia and within provinces. However, after discussion, we decided not to convene a meeting. The Superior General will issue an ordinance requiring provinces to name a provincial secretary, be it a confrere or a lay person.

We then discussed the need to publish new copies of the Constitutions and Statutes together as the statutes were revised at the 2010 General Assembly. Prior to that, we will do a revision in English, French and Spanish from the original text in Latin.

In terms of matters specific to the General Curia, we decided to prepare a new set of rooms for the next house administrator of the Curia who will join us later this year. The renovations will consist of preparing two rooms and installing a full bathroom between them.

Departmental Reports

In regard to the Office of Communications, Fathers John Maher and Joe Agostino made a presentation to the General Council on the new strategic plan for the “Fam-Vin.org” web site. This serves as the official website for the Vincentian Family. In our June Tempo Forte meeting, we will name new members for the website team. The General Council decided Fathers Jorge Luis Rodriguez and John Maher of the Curia will be the co-coordinators of the “Fam-Vin.org” website. To assist Fr. Jorge in concentrating on the task of communications, the Vincentian Family Office at the Curia will evolve into a new form.

We discussed a proposal to reorganize SIEV. We reviewed and updated the SIEV statutes. We nominated new members to the SIEV team, with the hope that they will represent diverse cultural backgrounds and reflect the internationality of the Congregation.

We reviewed the various presentations planned for the CIF program in Paris. They are as follows: Inter-cultural Ministry, from April 25 - May 18, to be presented in English, Spanish, and French. CIF will also work in partnership with the Vincentian Family Collaborative Action Program (VFCAP), to be held from June 8-14 and presented in English, Spanish, French, and Portuguese. Those participating in this program have been selected. The 29th session of the CIF ongoing formation program will be held in Paris from September 5 to October 31, and will be held in English, Spanish, and possibly French. Finally, November 19-21, there will be a CIF program held in Krakow for confreres from Eastern Europe. The Province of Poland will be responsible for hosting and coordinating speakers for this event.

The Council has decided to suspend the creation of a VSO foundation for Europe. Acting on a recommendation from the Econome General, such an organization (referred to as an ONLUS), does not have the cost benefits necessary to make it viable for the Congregation at this time.

We had a report on the Franz Foundation from its President, Fr. Robert Maloney. The Foundation agreed to continue to assist the Commission for the Promotion of Systemic Change, particularly formation of regional leaders to present and implement this strategy in works of the Congregation and the Vincentian Family. We discussed the possibility of a new project; namely, to help prepare Provincial Economes in the Congregation (and for other congregations) with help from fac-

ulty at St. John's University campus in Rome. This project is currently under discussion.

The Commission for the Promotion of Systemic Change has recommended appointment of a full-time person to promote systemic change. This subject was discussed in conjunction with a similar proposals made by the Vincentian Family Collaborative Action Program.

We received a number of reports and appeals from the Union of Superior Generals on their project for South Sudan. All religious congregations involved in this collaborative project have renewed their commitments for an additional five years. We have sent Fr. Manny Ginete, former delegate of the Vincentian Family Office and member of the Province of the Philippines, as our representative to serve in South Sudan. His ministry is to train leaders for pastoral ministry in this project promoting solidarity with the Church in South Sudan.

We received a report from our Procurator General, who is participating in the Commission on for Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation, along with another commission to Alleviate World Hunger. Both are sponsored by the Union of Superior Generals.

With regard to the *Ratio Formationis*, it is our hope that the final text will be ready by early in 2015. It will be comprised of six chapters and published in two separate issues of *Vincentiana*. Each chapter, including the introduction, will be accompanied by an article written by confreres from various regions of the Congregation.

We received a report from Fr. John Rybolt, who is composing a compendium for the 400th anniversary of the Congregation in 2017. Hopefully, it will be published and ready for the General Assembly in 2016. In preparation, each province of the Congregation is asked to send the Secretary General a minimum of 2 to 3 significant pictures that represent the province to the Congregation. A formal letter of request on this matter to each Visitor will be forthcoming.

Economic Matters

We discussed how we as a Curia community might put to good use the small house located on the back of our property. One possibility discussed was to allow 'Caritas' to use it for special projects, renewable by mutual agreement. Meanwhile, we remain open to the possibility of other rentals or the sale of the house.

We approved the budgets for the International Missions and special requests of CLAPVI South, MISEVI, and Vincentian Marian Youth. In a report from the Vincentian Solidarity Office, we received detailed information in response to recommendations made by the General Council to the VSO after its recent report on the services and activities it provides to the Congregation. The Council accepted the submitted job descriptions for the VSO staff, and is still reviewing the report.

This report has given the General Council a greater appreciation of the work involved in seeking grants for projects, along with undertaking new development procedures to raise funds.

To date, we have continued to receive additional contributions to the Patrimonial Funds coordinated through the Vincentian Solidarity Office. In addition to funds received and noted in the last Tempo Forte report, we have also received donations from the Provinces of Ecuador, Argentina, Madrid, India South, the Philippines and China. We are very thankful to these and all provinces that have generously contributed to building up this endowment of Patrimonial Funds.

International Missions

We received a report from the international mission in El Alto, Bolivia, requesting assignment of a fourth missionary. Available confreres who may be interested in serving there are being contacted by the Superior General. Regarding international missions in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, the Superior General gave a report on his canonical visit to the Council. The visit to Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands took place in February 2014, followed by a meeting of the Asia Pacific Visitors Conference in Australia.

As in the past, there is a great need for confreres in both places, particularly for qualified personnel to do seminary work as formators or to teach philosophy. Formators are needed especially in Holy Spirit seminary, a work in Papua New Guinea that we have assumed. It would be wonderful to have more confreres there doing seminary work and other missionaries desiring to do pastoral work in the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea.

We discussed our international missions in Angola and Tunisia. One confrere in Tunisia will conclude his service this year, so we need a confrere, in particular someone with an interest in working in a highly Muslim area as a pastoral agent for the Catholic Church. It is a mission for two confreres who work together with the Daughters of Charity of the Province of North Africa.

We received a report from our international mission in Chad which is under the responsibility of the Conference of Visitors in Africa and Madagascar (COVIAM). The Chad mission renewed their contract with the local Bishop and a third confrere will arrive in March from the province of Nigeria. We studied a report on the mission in Benin submitted by Fr. Stanislav Zontac, Assistant General after his recent visit in January. As for our mission in Punta Arenas, Chile, presently there is only one confrere from the Province of Chile there. We have asked for help from two other confreres and await their responses. Lastly, we reviewed the petitions of confreres volunteering for the missions, with possible placements for nine confreres.

Vincentian Family

We discussed a report on the Vincentian Family submitted by Fr. Eli Chaves, Assistant General, particularly the January meeting of the Vincentian Family Executive Committee. After this meeting, an ongoing formation program was held for international leaders of branches in the Vincentian Family. There were over fifty participants from a number of congregations and lay associations. We studied the possibilities of establishing a Secretariat for the Vincentian Family. This matter will be discussed further in an ongoing formation session to help us understand more clearly our role as the Congregation of the Mission with the Vincentian Family. A decision on the whether to establish this Secretariat will be made by early 2015.

The Superior General gave a report on proceedings of the MISEVI General Assembly held in Costa Rica from February 28 to March 2. A new team of lay missionaries was elected from Mexico, Venezuela, Spain, Colombia, and the United States. This leadership team will hold monthly virtual meetings to prepare for the yearly gathering in January 2015. The focus of the next MISEVI meeting will be attracting lay missionaries to continue in places established by MISEVI Spain. We also received information that the 2016 Vincentian Youth gathering prior to World Youth Day will be held from the July 22-24 in Poland at a high school sponsored by the CM Province of Poland.

Conferences of Visitors

The Superior General shared with the General Council minutes of the Asia Pacific Visitors Conference (APVC) meeting that he attended in Sydney, Australia in February. They elected a new conference secretary to serve for three years. The next meeting will be in the Province of Northern India, coordinated by the Visitor of the province.

We received two reports from CLAPVI: first, a synthesis of the initial interprovincial meeting of students from CLAPVI North; and secondly, on a gathering of formators in Bogota, attracting over forty confreres from ten provinces, along with students from the Province of Colombia.

Calendars

Finally, at the end of our Tempo Forte, we reviewed our calendars from March through June, 2014. The schedule of the Superior General is as follows. For the month of April, he will travel to the United States to do a canonical visitation of the Eastern Province, and celebrate Holy Week and Easter liturgies in a Hispanic parish in Macon, Georgia, staffed by the Daughters of Charity. For the first week in May, he will preach a popular mission at John Carroll Catholic High School where he graduated, as the school celebrates its 50th anniversary.

On May 15, he will participate in an ongoing formation session for Daughters of Charity in Paris, From May 16-25, he will visit with the confreres of the Province of Germany; with the Indian confreres serving in Germany; and then to visit the Province of Austria. On May 26, he will travel to Holland to give a talk and preside at the Eucharist for the General Chapter of the Brothers of Our Lady of Mercy, who are part of the Vincentian Family.

The first part of June will be taken up with Tempo Forte. From June 10-15, the Superior General will go to Paris to participate in the Vincentian Family Collaborative Action Program. And from June 17-24, he will visit the international mission in Angola.

As I write this letter, we are at mid-point of Lent. May it be a time of deepened discipleship with the Lord Jesus and renewal of our Vincentian vocation. I pray that the grace of Christ and example of our Holy Founder will stir our hearts to greater love of God and service to the poor.

Your brother in St. Vincent,
G. Gregory Gay, C.M.
Superior General