

# FROM THE SUPERIOR GENERAL

## Annual Mission Appeal

Rome, October 19 2014

*World Mission Sunday*

*“It is our vocation not to go just into a parish or a diocese, but the whole world. And to do what? To set people’s hearts ablaze and to do what the Son of Man did... to light a fire on the earth in order to set it aflame with his love” (St. Vincent, CCD: XII, 207).*

Dear Confreres,

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

In October, as the Church calls us to reflect on our missionary vocation, it is also time for our annual Mission Appeal, which supports our international and provincial missions. This appeal encourages confreres to support the missions by volunteering, praying for our missionaries, and offering financial support by strengthening these missions.

Let me begin by telling you a mission story. Fr. Manny Ginete, a confrere serving in South Sudan, shared his enthusiasm for his mission with me in a recent letter. He has served on the Solidarity with South Sudan (SSS) pastoral team since 2011. This is a mission project of the Union of Superiors General in Rome, who they send religious with expertise to help rebuild and renew the Church in war-torn South Sudan. Fr. Manny invited me to ‘come and see’ his life and work there. After describing his ministry with other religious, Fr. Manny observed that:

*“The bigger picture here is the task of building up the local Church—something our Spanish ‘Padres Paules’ had painstakingly done in the Philippines, by their formation of local and diocesan clergy and lay leaders. I see my role in South Sudan as no different from that of our beloved Spanish missionaries who established the Church and the Congregation there. It has convinced me the ministry I am providing*

*here in South Sudan is as Vincentian as any we do. If we truly want to serve the poorest of the poor, we have come to South Sudan."*

I am looking forward to my visit with Fr. Manny and the other dedicated religious next month!

For this years' Mission Appeal, I am excited to introduce a new website for our International Missions. Entitled, "***The Joy of the Gospel.***" their web address is [www.gospel-joy.org](http://www.gospel-joy.org). It provides an overview of our International Missions and the confreres who serve there. The web site also provides a way for you to contact individual confreres via the web site. Please take time to review this web site and see the many great mission efforts made by our confreres.

In this letter, I wish to share information with you on the international and provincial missions of the Congregation. All are in need of personnel and financial support, so please read and reflect on this 2014 Mission Appeal. Ask the Lord Jesus and St. Vincent for the grace to respond as best you are able. Following the listing of these missions, you will find the following:

- Criteria for the selection of volunteers for these missions;
- Information (next steps) for those volunteering; and
- How to contribute to the Vincentian Solidarity Fund.

### **CURRENT LIST OF INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS AND CONFRERES WHO SERVE**

#### **AFRICA**

**Angola:** Established in 2012, this Portuguese-speaking mission offers pastoral work and accompaniment of the Vincentian Family. Confreres currently serving there are *José Ramirez Martinez, and Jason Christian Soto Herrera. Two additional confreres will be arriving soon.*

**Benin:** Established in 2013, the confreres in this French-speaking mission engage in pastoral ministry, assist the Sisters of the Miraculous Medal, and accompany the Vincentian Family. The confreres now serving there are *Stanislav Deszcz, Jaloslaw Lawrenz, and Rafael Brukarczyk.*

**Chad:** Established in 2011 and staffed by COVIAM (Conference of Visitors of Africa and Madagascar), the confreres in this French-speaking mission do parish work. They are *Roch Alexander Ramili-jaona, Onyeachi Sunday Ugwu, and Esigbemi Ambrose Umetietie.*

**Tunisia:** Established in 2011, this French and English-speaking mission involves parish work and charitable assistance with CARITAS. The confreres serving there are *Firmin Mola Mbalo and Narcisse Djerambete Yotobumbeti.*

## AMERICA

### *Latin America*

**Bolivia, El Alto:** Established in 1994, this Spanish-speaking mission to indigenous people involves rural pastoral ministry and lay formation. The confreres serving there are *Aidan Rooney, Cyrille De Nan-teuil, Diego Pla, and Janez Cerar.*

**Bolivia, Cochabamba:** Established in 2009, this Spanish-speaking mission involves pastoral and parochial ministry. The confreres serving there are *David Paniagua, Jorge Manrigue Castro, and Luis Miguel Montano Flores.*

**Puntas Arenas:** Established in 2013, this Spanish-speaking mission involves pastoral ministry to Punta Arenas in southernmost Chile, next to Tierra del Fuego. These confreres serve here: *Angel Ignacio Garrido Santiago, Pablo Alexis Vargas Ruiz, and Margarito Martinez Gonzalez.*

### *North America*

**Alaska, USA:** Soon to be established, these confreres serve the growing Hispanic community living in the Archdiocese of Anchorage. The languages are Spanish and English. Confreres soon to serve are *Arnoldo Hernandez Rodriguez, and two confreres from Colombia awaiting VISAS.*

## ASIA

**Solomon Islands:** Established in 1993 as one of the first international missions, the apostolates here involve seminary formation and pastoral and parish ministry. The languages spoken are Pidgin and English. The confreres who serve there are: *Jose Manjaly, Jeff Harvey, Raúl Castro, Tewolde Negussie Teclmicael, Greg Cooney, Thomas Christiawan, Varghese Ayyampilly, and Antony Punnoth, who will arrive soon.*

**Papua New Guinea:** Begun in 2003, this mission encompasses several dioceses. Besides seminary formation work in Port Moresby, the confreres are engaged in rural parishes and missions. The language spoken is Pidgin and English. The confreres who serve there include *Vladimir Malota, Georges Maylaa, Homero Marin, Marceliano Oabel, Justin Eke, Emmanuel Lapaz, Jacek Tendej, and Neil Lams.*

## CURRENT NEEDS OF PROVINCIAL MISSIONS

In addition to the needs of the International Missions, provinces and vice-provinces also have needs as well for confreres to assist in their work of missions. Below are several listings.

### **Province of China**

The Province of China continues to serve the pastoral needs of the people of Taiwan and mainland China. Confreres serve in a variety of ministries, and the language is Mandarin.

### **Province of Cuba**

Although considering reconfiguration with other provinces, the Province of Cuba has a serious shortage of personnel. The language is Spanish.

### **Province of Hungary**

This province, while small in number, has one of the youngest groups of confreres in the Congregation. They engage in various types of pastoral work. The language is Hungarian.

### **Vice Province of Mozambique**

This Vice-Province has works for the poor, seminary formation, and a mission in South Africa. However, they still depend on confreres from other provinces to continue their works. They welcome new members and the language is Portuguese.

### **Vice Province of Sts. Cyril & Methodius**

This Vice-Province has evolved and grown with native confreres from the Ukraine, and has found creative ways to meet the pastoral and material needs of the poor. With ministry in the Ukraine, Russia, and Belarus, this vice-province welcomes confreres for short-term ministry as well as new members. The language is Russian.

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My brothers, as Pope Francis notes in *Evangelii Gaudium*, all members of the Body of Christ are called to be missionaries and evangelizers. This calling is deeply imbued in each of us by virtue of our Vincentian vocation. As our Holy Father wrote in his apostolic exhortation:

*“I dream of a ‘missionary option’, that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today’s world rather than for her self-preservation” (Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium, No. 27).*

This “missionary impulse” is inherent to our Vincentian charism. I ask you to reflect on the words of Pope Francis and review details in this letter and on the International Missions website: [www.gospel-joy.org](http://www.gospel-joy.org). Pray the Lord to awaken in you a desire to live the ‘missionary impulse’ in whatever way you are able. Consider if the Lord is calling

you to serve in one of these missions. Support our confreres who serve so generously in the missions by your prayer, financial support, and even by corresponding with them through the web site, which provides a page to do so.

In this “month of the missions” that the Church provides, let us resolve to do what St. Vincent called us to: *“To set people’s hearts ablaze and to do what the Son of Man did, who came to light a fire on the earth in order to set it aflame with his love.”*

Your brother in St. Vincent,

G. Gregory Gay, C.M.  
Superior General

### **CRITERION FOR SELECTION OF VOLUNTEERS FOR INTERNATIONAL MISSION ‘AD GENTES’**

As the realities of life in the international missions are challenging and totally different from that of a confrere’s home province, some criteria is required for selecting missionaries to serve in these places. Using the criteria below, the volunteer will be interviewed by someone from the General Council or by their representative.

- 1. *Missionaries must have emotional stability.*** Missionary work is hard! Those ministering cross-culturally, if they are to be effective, must learn to speak other languages, learn new cultures, and speak God’s eternal message in changing earthly contexts. Interpersonal relationships with co-workers, confreres who are also going through cultural stress and work anxiety, can often amplify this tension. Only the emotionally stable should make the commitment for long-term, cross-cultural missions.
- 2. *Missionaries must have spiritual maturity.*** They cannot effectively preach the Gospel by their own initiative and power. They are mere “jars of clay”, who demonstrate that the “all-surpassing power” employed in Christian ministry is “from God and not from us” (2 Cor. 4:7). Missions are thus a “supernatural work” ultimately accomplished by the power of God. Therefore, missionaries must be people who “fall on their knees before the Father” (Eph. 4:2) in prayer. They must also be committed to studying the Bible not only to prepare homilies and lessons, but also to reflect upon God’s will in their own lives.
- 3. *Missionaries must have an intimate relationship with God,*** one that will influence who they are and how they relate to others. They allow themselves to be increasingly transformed into God’s

likeness as they look upon Him (2 Cor. 3:18). Their spiritual maturity should lead them to **be effective teachers of the Word of God**. Teaching a Christian worldview as revealed by God in Sacred Scripture is integral to the missionary task. Therefore, missionaries sent to foreign mission fields should be those who have taught the Gospel in their own country and culture and have empathetically nurtured the faithful to Christian maturity.

4. ***Missionaries must have the aptitude and training*** to effectively build-up churches, nurture new Christians to maturity, and equip national church leaders for Christian service. These are essential tasks of missions. This must be done taking into account the local realities. They should not transport their own cultural church to the mission, but rather allow Gospel values to be implanted in the culture of the place where they serve. Missionaries must be trained to enter new cultures and lay the foundations of the Gospel.
5. ***Missionaries must have effective interpersonal communication skills***. These interpersonal abilities are largely formed through parental, familial and other relational influences in one's early life, and are difficult to learn as adults. Personalities are also influenced by culture, and vary by country and continent. Despite one's personality type, all missionaries must have the ability to empathetically enter into the culture where they will minister. This will also include the capacity to work and collaborate as a team.
6. ***Missionaries should have a pure motive***. A missionary should develop a clear and direct motivation for evangelization, a vision for the mission, and service to the poor; always keeping in mind that all this is ultimately for the glory of God alone. The dubious motives of personal gain and vain glory will always defeat the purpose and do harm to the mission and the missionary.

### **NEXT STEPS: INFORMATION FOR THOSE VOLUNTEERING**

1. After a period of serious discernment, if you feel moved to volunteer, please send your letter or e-mail to Rome by **November 23, 2014** or again by **February 23, 2015**, so we can review requests in our *Tempo Forte* meetings of December 2014 and March 2015.
2. It is helpful to know the language beforehand, but it is not absolutely necessary. A period of cultural and language training will be provided for all missionaries.
3. While we have no automatic age cutoff established, it is necessary that the missionary have reasonably good health and the flexibility needed for inculturation.

4. Confreres who volunteer should inform the Visitor in their province that they have done so. The Superior General will then dialogue with the Visitor about the matter.
5. 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 the mission in which you would like to take part.
6. Even if you have already written in the past, please make contact again. Experience has shown that confreres not available at one moment might be available at another time.
7. If you are unable or unavailable for the missions, we welcome your monetary contribution to represent your zeal for our missionary endeavors. Every year, many eligible provinces needing help seek a micro-project grant of \$5,000 or less from the Vincentian Solidarity Fund. These grants are awarded by the VSO quickly and with minimal paperwork. The VSO reports on the wonderful results of these grants in its quarterly bulletin (see: [www.famvian.org/vso](http://www.famvian.org/vso)). Donations to the Vincentian Solidarity Fund are the only source of funding for the micro-project grants.

## **MAKING A CONTRIBUTION TO THE VINCENTIAN SOLIDARITY FUND**

### ***Provincial, House and Individual Contributions:***

1. Checks must be made only payable to: "Congregazione della Missione". The bank will not accept any other name. They should be sent to: **Econome General / Congregazione della Missione / Via dei Capasso, 30 / 00164 Roma (Italy)**.
2. Other possibilities for bank transfers can be discussed with the Treasurer General.
3. Clearly indicate that the funds are for the Vincentian Solidarity Fund (VSF).

### ***In every case:***

All gifts received will be acknowledged. If your contribution is not acknowledged within a reasonable time, please contact us for clarification. Also, please inform us if you are making any transfer of money.