

Introduction

Editor's Note

We bring 2016 to a close with the publication of #4 of our 60th year. This past year our publication focused on *Mercy in Our Vincentian Being, Vincentian Collaboration, and the XLII General Assembly of the Congregation of the Mission*. In this present edition, we reflect on the beginning of a *Year of Welcoming the Stranger*. All of this leads us to reflect on our Vincentian identity in the midst of the present-day world.

I want to highlight the Decree of Establishment of the New Region of Venezuela which is found in the section entitled, **From the General Curia**. Since 1951 this area had been recognized canonically as the Province of Venezuela but now, 65 years later, has become a Region attached to the Province of Colombia. Also included in this section is a letter from the Secretary General who invites the confreres to use the on-line catalogue which is now up-to-date with regard to information about the members and the houses. Finally, in this section one will also find a letter **from the Superior General** concerning communication with the General Curia in which he offers some practical guidelines for doing this.

In the section, **From the Superior General**, you will find Father Tomáš's letter (19 September) in which he expresses his gratitude and admiration for each one of the confreres ministering throughout the world. He also expresses his gratitude to those confreres who have guided the Congregation during these past years. In this section, following our custom, one will also find a report on the October and December *Tempo Forte* meetings of the General Council. Here also one will find the promulgation of the decisions that were made by the General Assembly. Finally, included in this section is the 2016 Mission Appeal Letter and here I highlight the new mission in the area of Tefé (Brazil). This section also contains a document entitled, *Letter of the Superior General, Assignments and Distribution of Provinces to the Members of the General Council*.

In the third section, **Special Interview**, we include an interview that Father Tomaž gave to one of the confreres from Chile. Thus, one can attain a deeper understanding of the background and the thinking of the Superior General.

In the following section, **Of Current Interest**, the Vicar-General comments on the Final Document of our recent General Assembly, a grace-filled event. We are invited to reach out to the future as we continue to reflect on the three parts of the Final Document, namely, challenges, the Vincentian charism for the new evangelization, and lines of action and commitments.

This number concludes with **Some Reflections Centered on the 2016 General Assembly**. Four confreres from distinct provinces share with us their reflections on the 2016 General Assembly, or perhaps we could refer to these reflections as moments that touched and moved the hearts of the participants. This section includes a reflection on Vincent de Paul as the mystic of charity. Another reflection is entitled *between memory and prophecy* and develops the theme of Christ as the center of all missionary endeavors. The final reflection is entitled *Apart in Chicago* and refers to the transcultural dimension of the charism, the primacy of mercy, discernment, and the signs of communion. Let us, then, allow the confreres themselves to travel along these paths together.

Alvaro Mauricio Fernández, CM
Director of *Vincentiana*