

# Mission Appeal

Rome, 11 October 2011

*To all the Members of the Congregation of the Mission*

Dear Confreres,

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

My brothers, we once again are in the month of October, the time when traditionally the Superior General makes an appeal to missionaries throughout the world in order to respond to the needs of our own international missions or requests that have come from particular provinces or from Bishops.

I would like to begin this Mission Appeal Letter with an experience that I had in September. I was invited to participate in the 100<sup>th</sup> anni-



versary of the Province of Madagascar. I and Assistant General Father Zeracristos participated in many of the activities to celebrate this memorable time in the history of the province. As we all know, the mission of Madagascar was well loved by Saint Vincent himself, even in his old age having the desire to want to go there, but realizing its impossibility. It is a place where Vincent himself sent over 30 missionaries, both priests and brothers, all of whom did not survive the experience, giving their lives for the mission, an admirable gesture on the part of these confreres.

Madagascar has once again come to life after that first experience of missionaries as a province that is now made up of missionaries from various nations and cultures as well as native Malgasy. One of the fruits of their being a province for 100 years is a sufficient number of missionaries to send to other provinces in need.

On 25 September, in the cathedral of St. Vincent de Paul in Tolagnaro, we celebrated the mission Mass of four confreres. Roch Alexandre Ramiligaona is going to the international mission in Chad where the Province of Madagascar with other members of COVIAM, will work in collaboration with the Daughters of Charity and the Christians of that area. A missionary from Cameroon and another from Nigeria have already begun the mission there.

Sedy Rabarijaona has responded to the call in my last Mission Appeal Letter in which the Province of Puerto Rico asked for confreres for the urgent needs of Haitians, especially those in diaspora. Sedy will go to the Dominican Republic, working with Haitians together with confreres from the Province of Puerto Rico.

Father Calvin Tsimangovy and Brother Joseph Razafindrabe are going to initiate a mission in La Reunion, a joint mission of the Provinces of Paris and Madagascar. In the history of Madagascar, Vincentians were sent to La Reunion with the hope to one day reenter



Madagascar after they had left there. Currently there is no presence of the Congregation of the Mission in La Reunion. I am delighted to see that as is the tradition within the Congregation, a brother joins the missionary efforts.

Without a doubt Madagascar in itself is a missionary country. I am very grateful for the wonderful work that the missionaries from Poland, Spain, Italy, France, Slovenia, have from the beginning and continue to exercise together with our Malgasy confreres. Yet the missioning to other countries for me is a sign of the maturity of the Province of Madagascar where the confreres are conscious of the fact that although formed in Madagascar they are missionaries for the Congregation of the Mission and therefore available to go wherever they may be called and wherever there may be a need.

With that in mind, I thank the Province of Madagascar for its example to the rest of us in the Congregation of the Mission and I encourage all to reflect seriously upon the contents of this Mission Appeal Letter. It gives an update on the actual missions that we have, introduces new invitations that we have received and highlights some special missions. At the end of the letter is the procedure that you are asked to follow when you want to consider offering yourself as a missionary beyond the limits of your own province.

There is always the opportunity my brothers, to respond to the requests of the Superior General as well as different provinces in order to strengthen our collaboration in the worldwide Congregation. Our General Assembly document calls us to respond in greater creativity to the mission and charity. I would like to highlight three responses Our Lines of Action call us to:

- to foster personal availability and mobility;
- to participate in new and challenging missionary projects, to undertake new works of evangelization in the area of new emerging cultures, ecumenical and religious dialog;
- to go to the most distant missions *ad gentes*.

Our General Assembly, my brothers, has called us to these actions and I pray that we might be able to respond as I present to you a mission appeal for 2011.

## INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS

1. I begin with an update on our existing international missions where there is always an opportunity to volunteer if one feels called to do so. In **El Alto, Bolivia** this past year a new confrere, Emilio Torres, from the Province of Peru has joined the other three missionaries.

I recall for you the names of the other missionaries and ask you to pray that they might be successful in their mission: Cyril de Nanteuil of Paris, Diego Plá of Madrid and Aidan Rooney, superior of the mission from Eastern Province USA. As you recall, too, we began a new mission this past year in **Cochabamba** with confreres Joel Vásquez from Colombia and David Paniagua and Jorge Manríquez Castro from the Province of Chile. Both of these last confreres are from Bolivia. The language spoken in El Alto and Cochabamba is Spanish, and the native language of the people.

2. The mission in the **Solomon Islands**, is expanding to include not only a seminary for the three dioceses of Solomon Islands which is both a philosophy and theology seminary under our responsibility, but also a parish. In addition, they have expanded to another parish in one of the neighboring dioceses where the Bishop has invited us to participate. The confreres working in the Solomon Islands include Victor Bieler, our former Assistant General, who is an example to all of us because he continues to have that missionary spirit at 82 years of age. Newly arrived to the mission are Raul Castro from Argentina, Tewolde Negussie Teclemicael from the Province of St. Justin de Jacobis, Augustinus Marsup who has returned from Indonesia, Yohanes Agus Setyeno from Indonesia, and Joachin Nwaorgu Udochukwu from Nigeria. Ivica Gregurec from Slovenia continues in the mission. As we know the mission of Solomon Islands is under the responsibility of the General Curia with the special assistance of the APVC. The mission is coordinated by the services of its superior Greg Walsh from Australia. I want to thank at the same time Flaviano Caintic from the Philippines for his most generous service these last three years in the Solomon Islands.
3. In **Papua New Guinea** we have the mission going strong at this moment with four confreres; newly arrived is Emmanuel LaPaz from the Philippines, joining Justin Eke from Nigeria, Wlodzimierz Molota from Poland. They are coordinated under the general services of Homero Marin from Colombia. Hopefully before the end of the year or the beginning of the new year Georges Maylaa from the Province of the Orient will join the mission in PNG as well as Jude Lemeh from the Province of Nigeria. The languages of Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea are English and Pidgin English.

## NEW MISSIONS

4. We have recently received a letter from the new Bishop of the **Diocese of Alotau Sideia in Papua New Guinea**, our confrere Bishop Rolly Santos, former longtime missionary in Papua New Guinea and one year as Visitor of the Province of the Philippines. Rolly writes to ask if we could include his diocese in the coming Mission Appeal letter. He says that it is probably one of the largest dioceses in the world in terms of geographic size and most of the parishes are separated by vast stretches of ocean. Some are so remote that it would take up to two days to reach by motorized boat. At present the diocese is in great need of priests. There are 21 priests to serve 17 parishes, but five of the priests are 75 years old and above. Some of the parishes have 20 or more substations or communities. He would particularly like two Vincentian priests and one brother if possible to go to Kiriwina in the Trobrand islands. There are two large parishes there with an active population of 2,500 people. Each of the parishes has six substations and three Catholic agencies, elementary and primary schools. He writes that it would be preferable if the confreres to be assigned are healthy and able to travel by sea if needed. Finally, he writes, the confrere to be assigned should know how to live simply and adjust to conditions of the place since there is no electricity and therefore no TV and no malls. This is one of our new requests to support an area of the world where we already have significant presence and at the same time emerging vocations. The language is English and the native language of the people.
5. Another project of the Curia for international missions is in **Chad** together with the collaboration of the Visitors Conference of Africa and Madagascar (COVIAM). At the present time there are three in the mission: Albert Atching Kitikil from the Province of Paris and the country of Cameroon, Onyeachi Sunday Ugwu from the Province of Nigeria and Roch Alexandre Ramiligaona from Madagascar. I visited the confreres in this mission who have joined a group of Daughters of Charity from the Province of San Sebastian. The Daughters have been working in this remote area for more than ten years. It is a simple mission, a difficult mission. It is not necessarily restricted to confreres from COVIAM, so anyone is welcome to consider this mission. The official language is French, but they also speak the language of the people.
6. I am happy to announce that on the first of September two confreres assigned to **Tunisia** have arrived: Father Fermin Mola Mbalo from the Province of Toulouse, originally from Congo, and Brother Henry Escurel from the Philippines.

7. Another new mission that we have initiated, at least in its beginning stages trying to find where it would be suitable that we serve, is in **Angola**. That mission investigation is being undertaken at the present moment by Father José María Nieto, former Assistant General, and Father José Martínez Ramírez, from the Province of Mexico. I have received word from the Daughters of Charity working in Angola as well as branches of the Vincentian Family how delighted they are that we are finally able to arrive and establish our presence among the Vincentian Family and peoples of this poor Portuguese-speaking country. Hopefully they will be joined by a third confrere once the mission station location is determined by the General Council. Father Nieto and Father Pepe will be investigating three requests that we have received from Angola, from the Diocese of **Malanje** the Diocese of **Sumbe** and the Diocese of **Mbanza Congo**.
8. We have several new requests made, one coming from the Diocese of **Mbaiki, Republic of Central Africa**. The bishop wrote with the following request which comes in the name of the entire Episcopal Conference of the Republic of Central Africa. The bishop mentions that this is a moment when the Central African church has suffered a great deal because of the crisis that we are all aware of in the last couple of years. The bishop's diocese, which was established in 1995, has only 10 parishes in the Region of Lobaye. What they most lack at this time are model priests. Because of the lack of spiritual formation in past years, a situation of weakness has emerged among the present-day priestly ministers in this country. The bishop knows of our charism, a congregation that has dedicated its life to the service of the clergy as was done in the time of Saint Vincent when the clergy also was considered in a period of weakness. I certainly would hope that we might be able to respond to this request. The language is French. We do have a presence in the country. Three confreres from the Province of Paris in the mission in Cameroon have established a mission in Bangui.
9. By way of the Sisters of the Miraculous Medal, a congregation with roots in Slovenia and a mission in our Vice-Province of Sts. Cyril and Methodius, I have received a request, not only from the Mother General but also from the Bishop of **N'Dali, Benin** that confreres of the Congregation of the Mission might make a presence there. The diocese has 800,000 people, 4 native priests of which only one is serving in the diocese, 16 seminarians, a small number of priests from Spain, Italy and Africa. Support for evangelization in this region is needed as Islam is prospering in spite of the hard work of the missionaries.

10. From the Bishop of the newly formed Diocese of **Bunda Tanzania**: There are 16 priests working in 14 parishes and other diocesan institutions and the Catholic population is growing. Part of the Diocese consists of some islands in Lake Victoria which the Diocese is not able to evangelize because of the scarcity of priests. He invites the Congregation of the Mission to serve in this diocese.
11. In last year's Mission Appeal Letter I had received a request also from the Bishop of **Kaolack in Senegal**, who says that "with confidence I solicit the presence of your Congregation for the works of evangelization in the Diocese of Kaolack." Unfortunately there was no response to that petition although he has a grave desire to reinforce the missionary presence in the diocese. The language is French.
12. The Bishop of **Punta Arenas** asks for priests for his diocese in southern **Chile** with a large area with almost no priests. He has supplemented with some deacons and there is a pastor who is 82 years old. There are two communities of Daughters of Charity assisted by local priests and once a year for a couple of days by the Visitor of Chile. The presence of the Congregation of the Mission would be a blessing for the Daughters and the Vincentian Family in this mission land. The climate has discouraged many with very cold winters and strong winds. There are also great distances but one can appreciate the solitude of the immensity of Patagonia.

## PROVINCIAL MISSIONS

13. I am most happy to announce that the **Vice-Province of Sts. Cyril and Methodius** has been reinforced with two confreres: Anthony Ekpunobi from the Province of Nigeria, and Thomas Enchackal, a confrere from South India. They are serving the needs of peoples from their own countries as well as integrating into this Vice-Province of Sts. Cyril and Methodius. The needs of this province are great. I was able to make a visit there to Ukraine, Belarus and Western Siberia in Niznij Tagil. The confreres are doing fantastic work, but they are always in need of new missionaries to support them. The Russian language is difficult but we are called to be missionaries and so we learn difficult languages.
14. Once again I make an appeal for the **Province of China**. The language is Chinese. Many of the confreres coming to that Province come from around the world and there is always our continued hope of reinforcing especially the mission in mainland China. I am

happy to announce that there has been great collaboration on the part of lay Vincentians in the area of mainland China and hopefully we can reinforce that with the beginning of a community of MISEVI. It is a promising hope for the future in China.

15. The **Vice-Province of Mozambique** is a mission that continues to depend primarily on confreres from outside of the area. The long-standing missionaries are from Portugal as well as now from Brazil, Mexico, Nigeria, Eritrea, Argentina, Spain and Congo. The language is Portuguese. The Vice-Province has recently assumed the responsibility of the mission of the Province of Salamanca in Nacala.
16. I also make an appeal to all the confreres to continue to help us support our **Province of Cuba**. The mission there has been reinforced over the last couple of years from confreres like Angel Garrido from the Province of Madrid coming from Madagascar; and Nicolas Salazar from the Province of Colombia. We continue to pray that the Lord might bless us with vocations in this mission.
17. I request missionaries for our **Province of Hungary**. The numbers continue to be small and yet the mission is alive with young confreres willing to serve in the spirit of Saint Vincent de Paul. The language is Hungarian.
18. There is always a need for missionaries to reinforce the **Vice-Province of Costa Rica**, particularly its mission in **Santiago Apóstol, Amubri, Talamanca**, a very mountainous area where the confreres of this small Vice-Province of the Congregation have been making this request of the Superior General for the last number of years and which we have yet to fulfill, although they have been reinforced with the presence of personnel from the Province of Colombia in the area of formation. The language is Spanish and the native language.
19. I continue to include in the list a call for missionaries from around the world for our mission in **Honduras**, particularly the part that is under the responsibility of the Province of Barcelona. I am happy to announce that the Province of Slovakia has a new mission now underway in the Diocese of our confrere Bishop Luis Solé. Presently there are two confreres working in this mission. The language is Spanish and Moskitia. For those who might be interested in continuing to support the Province of Barcelona this is wonderful missionary endeavor.

20. As usual I would like to make an appeal to some of the provincial missions that we have as I have done in the past. Once again the Visitor of Puerto Rico asks if we might be able to supply missionaries for the **Region of Haiti** in order that confreres there might have the opportunity to go on for further studies and deepen their maturity in the Vincentian spirit. The languages are French and Creole.

### *I conclude with some special missions*

- I take this opportunity to mention that we do have a missionary who came from Congo working in a special mission in **Haiti**. Father Jean-Pierre Mangulu is under the responsibility of the Curia working to help animate the Vincentian Family particularly with regard to creating projects for the **International Vincentian Family project of Zafen**. This past year, not only has this responsibility been confided to Jean-Pierre, but he has also been asked to be the Director of the Daughters of Charity in Haiti. This is a most needy and significant project of the Congregation.
- I would also like to make mention of the missionary spirit that has been expressed by Father Dan Borlik who has been named Assistant Director of our **CIF program**, helping to inspire the confreres in the charism of Vincent de Paul. Dan begins his period of transition this month. He will be replacing Father José Carlos Fonsatti who has done a tremendous job in moving forward the projects of the CIF program these last five years together with Father Marcello Manimtim.
- Another special mission I would like to mention is that of Father Joseph Agostino who has been named by the **Vincentian Family Leadership Commission** to coordinate that Commission with another team to create a program for Vincentian Family Leaders. Father Joe Agostino is from the Eastern Province USA and has been involved in a number of different activities dealing with planning both for his own province and others as well. I thank Joe for that missionary spirit, willing to share his talents beyond the limits of his own particular province.
- And finally I mention a special mission of our former delegate of the Vincentian Family, Manuel Ginete. Father Ginete, in dialog with me and with the approval of his Visitor, is assuming a mission in **South-ern Sudan**, a mission that was initiated by the Union of Superiors General of men and women. It is an intercongregational mission where twenty missionaries, fifteen women and five men, from different congregation have gone in order to reinforce ministries with regard to health, education and pastoral activities. It is a mission

where they are not there to carry out these responsibilities themselves, but to prepare other in order to be the new ministers emerging in this new country of Southern Sudan. I congratulate Father Ginete for moving forward, and ask for the blessings and health he needs to respond faithfully to the call he has received.

The prayer that we recite daily asks that the Lord send laborers into his harvest. This is my prayer that there will be a generous response to the cries of those who are poor.

Exspectatio Israel, Salvator eius in tempore tribulationis, propitius de caelo respice, vide et visita vineam istam, rivus eius inebria, multiplica genimina eius et perfructe quam plantavit dextera tua. Messis quidem multa, operarii autem pauci. Rogamus ergo te, Dominum messis, ut mittas operarios in messem tuam. Multiplica gentem et magnifica laetitiam, ut aedificentur muri Jerusalem. Domus tua haec, Domine Deus; domus tua haec: non sit in ea, quaesumus, lapis quem manus tua sanctissima non posuerit. Quos autem vocasti, conserva eos in nomine tuo et sanctifica eos in veritate. Amen.

Your brother in Saint Vincent,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "G. Gregory Gay, C.M." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "G" and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

G. Gregory Gay, C.M.  
Superior General

## **INFORMATION AND CRITERIA FOR THOSE WHO WRITE**

1. After a period of serious discernment, if you should feel moved to volunteer, please send your letter or e-mail to Rome no later than 27 November 2011 or again by February 27, 2012 so that we might review the requests in our *tempo forte* meetings of December and March.
2. It is, of course, helpful to know the language beforehand, but it is not absolutely necessary. A period of cultural and language training will be provided for the missionaries.
3. While we have decided that no automatic age cutoff would be established, it is surely necessary that the missionary have reasonably good health and the flexibility needed for inculturation.
4. Confreres who volunteer should inform the Visitor that they have done so. I will also 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 contact me again. Experience has demonstrated that confreres who are not available at one moment might be available at another.
7. **If you cannot go to the missions, perhaps your monetary contribution can represent your zeal for the mission. Every year about 15 eligible provinces needing help to realize their mission, seek a micro-project grant of \$5,000 or less from the Vincentian Solidarity fund. These grants can be awarded by the VSO (through the Curia) quickly and with minimal paperwork. The VSO reports on the wonderful fruits of these grants in its quarterly bulletin (available at [www.famvian.org/vso](http://www.famvian.org/vso)). The well for the micro-project grants is going dry. Donations to the Vincentian Solidarity Fund are the only source of funding for these micro-project grants.**

**VINCENTIAN SOLIDARITY FUND:  
TO MAKE A CONTRIIBUTION**

*Provincial, House and Individual Contributions*

1. Checks made payable to: "Congregazione della Missione" and with "Deposit Only" written on the back. These should be sent to:

Treasurer General  
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*

1. All gifts received will be acknowledged. (If your contribution is not acknowledged in a reasonable time, please contact us for clarification)
2. Please inform us if you are making any transfer of money, as described above.