

# FROM THE SUPERIOR GENERAL

## Letter on Christian-Islam Commission

Rome, 2 July 2012

*To the leaders of the Vincentian Family  
To all members of the Vincentian Family*

My dear friends in Jesus and St. Vincent,

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

At the International Vincentian Symposium on dialogue with Islam, held in Pacet, Indonesia from 7-17 August, 2011 the reality that many priests and brothers of the Congregation of the Mission and sisters from the Daughters of Charity have been working in Islamic countries was discussed at length. In addition, it was unanimously acknowledged as a providential call for the Vincentian Family to begin a “new apostolate” of interreligious dialogue in a better and more appropriate way for the benefit of its mission.

As a result, the participants in this 2011 symposium expressed the desire that the Vincentian Family establish a permanent international commission on dialogue with Islam. In January, 2012, the preparatory commission of the symposium in Indonesia presented a detailed proposal of a future commission to the Executive Committee of the Vincentian Family Leaders at a meeting in Rome.

After having thoroughly discussed the matter with other leaders in the Vincentian Family, and having received their support for this proposal, I am happy to announce the establishment of the Vincentian Commission on Dialogue with Islam.

The members of this commission for the time being are as follows: Fr. Claudio Santangelo, C.M. (coordinator), Fr. Armada Riyanto, C.M.,

Sr. Abeba Hadgu, D.C., Christa Foelting, A.I.C., Albert Zoghbi, SSVF. They will serve an initial term of three years which is renewable. They will be assisted by other Vincentian Family members experienced in this field who will collaborate as consultants.

Faithful to its nature and objectives, the Commission will be:

- An inspiring group that proposes and organizes forums and symposiums of the Vincentian Family to engage in and develop theological and spiritual reflection on dialogue with Islam;
- A help in developing ongoing formation programs at different levels (e.g. at continental levels) for members of the Vincentian Family, with regard to dialogue and working together with people from other faith, namely Muslims;
- A source of support and accompaniment for Vincentians and Daughters of Charity who are working in predominantly Muslim countries, so they do not feel alone in their mission.

The structure and functioning of the commission will be as follows:

- There will not be a fixed place for the seat of the commission;
- Members will meet at least once a year to study the requests and the proposals coming from the Vincentian Family and to plan activities and initiatives;
- Members are encouraged to make use of modern means of communicating and to have virtual meetings via teleconferencing to save time and expenses;
- A member of the Commission will assume responsibility for the maintenance and updating of their existing website: [www.vindialogue.org](http://www.vindialogue.org)
- The Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission and of the Company of the Daughters of Charity will be the immediate liaison between the Commission and other leaders of the Vincentian Family;
- With regard to financial matters of this commission, each participating branch of the Vincentian Family will assume responsibility for expenses of their own representative. Expenses from maintaining the website will be shared equally.

I am most grateful to the leaders of the Vincentian Family for their generous response and to all commission members for their kind availability to undertake this important work. In my recent circular letter on the occasion of the celebrations of our Holy Founder, I wrote:

*“I invite you to broaden our Vincentian collaboration. To this end, I propose as a theme: Collaboration and Evangelization”* (Letter to the members of the Vincentian Family, 3 June, 2012).

I am confident that the Vincentian Commission on Dialogue with Islam will be a meaningful sign of our collaboration as one family, as well as an effective tool for our evangelization in the footsteps of St. Vincent de Paul.

Your brother in St. Vincent,

G. Gregory Gay, C.M.  
Superior General