

Mission Appeal Letter

Rome, October 2012

To all members of the Congregation of the Mission:

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

Once again my dear confreres, as we enter the month of October, the Church asks us to reflect on our missionary nature as the Body of Christ. The annual October World Mission Sunday Appeal of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith reminds us that, no matter where we find ourselves, we are called to be missionaries. In inaugurating the “Year of Faith” Pope Benedict XVI described the goal of the annual Sunday World Mission Appeal as a *“call to radiate the word of truth that the Lord Jesus has left us”*.

The ‘word of truth that the Lord Jesus has left us’ reaches fruition in the deeds of missionaries who bravely proclaim the Gospel the world over. Forged by faith, they ventured forth in uncertainty and hardship to bring Christ to all continents, countries, and cultures. Our Congregation has a storied history of missionary activity, beginning in St. Vincent’s lifetime and continuing to the present day. Indeed, most of today’s provinces began as missions. St. Vincent captured this missionary spirit best when he told his confreres:

“So our vocation is to go, not just to one parish, not just to one diocese, but all over the world; and to do what? To set people’s hearts on fire, to do what the Son of God did. He came to set the world on fire in order to inflame it with His love” (Vol. 12, Letter No. 207, 30 May, 1659).

Last July, I had the exhilarating experience in witnessing the fullness of this missionary fire when I visited the Philippines for the 150th anniversary celebration of the arrival of the confreres and Daughters of Charity. For decades, the Spanish provinces generously shared their “time, talent, and treasure” with the people of the Philippines. Today, we see the results of their efforts: as the psalmist prayed, God has given *“success to the work of our hands”* (Ps. 90:17).

The “success” of the Province of the Philippines must not only be viewed by the numbers of houses, works, confreres, and native Filipi-

nos in formation. It is seen most fully in the fact that now this province has established missions in Thailand and Japan. The Province of the Philippines has also sent men to serve in Asia, Africa, and South America. They who were once mission territory have become missionaries to new lands and people.

With this in mind, let us now review the challenge put forth to us by the 2010 General Assembly. The Assembly called us to respond individually and communally to:

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

Thus, I present to you the specifics of our mission appeal for 2012, with particulars of the places and needs of each mission.

INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS

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.

1. BOLIVIA: El Alto & Cochabamba

The mission in Bolivia is comprised of two sites: El Alto and Cochabamba. Both can be challenging places to live and work, so reinforcements of confrere personnel are a priority to keep this mission moving forward. **In El Alto**, the superior of the mission is Aidan Rooney from the Eastern Province, USA. He is joined by Cyril de Nanteuil of the province of Paris, and Diego Pla of the province of Madrid. Emilio Torres has returned from El Alto to Peru after a year's service. *For further information on this mission, read Fr. Aidan Rooney's blog: <http://vocesvicentinas.org/>*

As you recall, we began a new mission last year in **Cochabamba**. Our confreres are Joel Vásquez from Colombia, David Paniagua, and Jorge Manríquez Castro from the Province of Chile. Joel will be returning to his province at the end of the year. Both David and Jorge are natives of Bolivia. The work in both El Alto and Cochabamba involves parish ministry, pastoral work, and assistance to the Vincentian Family. The language is Spanish, and local native languages.

2. THE SOLOMON ISLANDS

This mission includes a major seminary for the three dioceses of the Solomon Islands, pastoral ministry, accompaniment of our CM candidates, and work with various branches of the Vincentian family. The confreres working in the Solomon Islands include Victor Bieler, former Assistant General, who, at 83 years of age is still on mission! Other missionaries are Raul Castro from Argentina, Tewolde Negussie Teclemicael of the Province of St. Justin de Jacobis, Augustinus Marsup and Yohanes Agus Setyeno of Indonesia, Joachin Nwaorgu Udochukwu from Nigeria, and Jose Manjaly of the Province of India-North. This mission is coordinated by the General Curia with assistance from the Asia Pacific Visitors Conference.

The mission is coordinated by Greg Walsh who serves as superior and is from the province of Australia. He will be returning there in late 2013. This mission has also benefited from the help of confreres who have come for a shorter term, including Drago Ocvirk from Slovenia, Greg Cooney from Australia, and two confreres from the province of Southern India, Simon Kaipura and Thomas Kallely. *You can read more about this mission at their weblog: <http://vincentsolomon.wordpress.com/>*

3. PAPUA NEW GUINEA

In Papua New Guinea, the work of the confreres occurs on three sites: Port Moresby, where there is a seminary, Woitope, where there is a parish, and the Diocese of Alotau, where our confrere, Bishop Rolly Santos serves as the Ordinary.

In Port Moresby, Emmanuel LaPaz from the Philippines and Justin Eke from the province of Nigeria both work at the seminary. However, Justin will soon take a sabbatical to better prepare for seminary formation. Also in Port Moresby, Jude Lehme from the province of Nigeria will do parish ministry with the superior of the mission, Wlodzimierz Molota from Poland. They work with George Maylaa from the Orient province (Lebanon) to do pastoral outreach to the Woitope mission.

In the diocese of Alotau, a new mission has begun at the request of Bishop Rolly Santos. Our confrere Marceliano Oabel is soon to arrive from the Philippines. He will assist Homero Marin from Colombia in doing parish ministry and pastoral outreach on the islands of Kiriwina and Woodlark. The diocese of Alotau is at the eastern-most end of Papua New Guinea, just north of Australia. It has a territorial area of 250,000 sq. kms. and comprises 160 islands. Like Papua New Guinea, English is an official language of the country, but Pidgin English

and multiple native languages are also spoken on the various islands. To learn more about the Church in Papua New Guinea, please visit: <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/country/pg.html>

4. CHAD

The mission in Chad is well underway. Established with the help of COVIAM, two confreres work with Daughters of Charity from the Province of San Sebastian. Albert Atching Kitikil of the Paris Province, (region of Cameroun), has returned to Cameroun after a year's service in Chad. The superior is Roch Alexandre Ramilijaona from the province of Madagascar. He is assisted by Onyeachi Sunday Ugwu of the province of Nigeria. This mission is located in one of the world's poorest countries, so it is quite a challenge. Yet, we are confident it will succeed as confreres volunteer. The language is French as well as native languages of the people.

5. ANGOLA

Fr. José María Nieto, former Assistant General, and José Martínez Ramírez from the Province of Mexico have begun work in this new mission in the Diocese of Malanje. They hope to be joined by another confrere, Henry Miguel Kristen from the Province of Venezuela. The confreres have been welcomed to Angola by the Daughters of Charity. Their work involves parish and pastoral ministry and assisting the Vincentian Family branches. Portuguese is the language spoken with native languages. It is a place of great poverty and spiritual need.

6. TUNISIA

Br. Henry Escurel from the Philippines has returned home to his province after a year's service. Fr. Fermin Mola Mbalo from the Province of Toulouse will be joined by James Kunninpurayidom, a confrere from the province of Southern India. The languages are French and Arabic, but English is also spoken by many Christians there.

NEW MISSIONS

Below are details on two new missions on the African and Latin American continents. As is true of our international missions, there is great need.

1. BENIN

Stanislaw Deszcz and Rafael Brukarczyk, two confreres from the Province of Poland, have begun a mission in Benin at the request of a local bishop. They will also provide formation and pastoral work for the Sisters of Mary of the Miraculous Medal of Slovenia, whose sisters are Croatian. The language is French and native languages.

2. PUNTA ARENAS, CHILE

This is a new mission that holds great promise. With assistance from the General Curia and Provinces of Argentina and Chile, this new mission will undertake pastoral ministry and accompaniment of the Vincentian Family. Our confrere, Bruno Enzo Torelli, from the province of Argentina, has volunteered. We are hoping that other confreres will join Bruno. Punta Arenas is located at the southernmost point of Chile, near the strait of Magellan. The language spoken is Spanish.

SHORT-TERM REQUEST FOR MISSIONARIES

Pacific Regional Seminary, Fiji-visiting lecturers

Fr. Michael Walsh, Visitor of Australia, wrote to encourage confreres to consider shorter-term service as visiting lecturers and teachers at the Pacific Regional Seminary of St. Peter Chanel, located at the town of Suva on Fiji Island. Rector Fr. Michael O'Connor, SSC seeks to enhance the education and formation of seminarians by welcoming visiting faculty. The language spoken is English. The seminary has over 100 students from 9 dioceses and 5 religious communities enrolled. Their website is: <http://www.prsfiji.com/>

PROVINCIAL MISSIONS

The following missions, comprised of provinces and vice-provinces are places that while having made progress, are still in need of support from the world-wide Congregation.

1. STS. CYRIL & METHODIUS

In this vice-province, both the work the confreres do and the needs of the people they serve are tremendous. Two confreres, Anthony Ekpunobi Ifeanyichukwu from Nigeria, and Thomas Enchackalia from

India-South have a year of experience there and are doing quite well. With 21 confreres who make up the 7 houses of this vice-province, they do great work in responding to the needs of the poor. This vice-province is always in need of new missionaries to support them. Russian is the language of the people.

2. MOZAMBIQUE

The Vice-Province of Mozambique is a mission depending mainly on confreres from outside the country, due to a lack of native vocations. The provinces that have made missionary commitments to Mozambique include Portugal, Brazil, Mexico, Nigeria, Eritrea, Spain and Congo. As the Mozambique mission has a number of non-natives, the turnover of personnel is high (4 confreres finish their assignment in 2013 to return to their home provinces) so new missionaries are needed. The vice-province has 21 confreres and 7 houses. The language is Portuguese and local languages.

3. CUBA

This year, the Province of Cuba will celebrate the 150th anniversary of foundation. The confreres in Cuba, while small in number, are fervent in their zeal for the mission. Recent events have made it a little easier for the Church to do its work, but both the poverty of the people and their pastoral needs are great. The language is Spanish.

4. CHINA

In the Province of China, confreres collaborate both in Taiwan and mainland China. Most of the confreres in that province are from other provinces throughout the world. I make an appeal for missionaries to go to China, not only to strengthen the mission there, but knowing it is one of the oldest missions in the Congregation. I also happily note the growth of collaboration in this province between confreres and other branches of the Vincentian Family. The language is Chinese.

5. PUERTO RICO

The Visitor of the Province of Puerto Rico has requested assistance due to greater demand for pastoral service and less confreres available. This province has taken care of Haiti, a place of great devastation and poverty. However, our request for the mission in Haiti has been

answered by two confreres from the province of the Congo: Jean-Pierre Mangulu Mobonda and Jean Baptiste Nsambi E Mbula. Besides assisting Haiti, the Province of Puerto Rico also serves the Dominican Republic. The language in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic is Spanish.

6. COSTA RICA

The Vice-Province of Costa Rica is in need of confreres to assist in pastoral work, particularly in a rural mountainous area of Santiago Apóstol, Amubri, Talamanca. Despite appeals made for help here for several years, we have been unable to staff this mission continuously, except for interim assistance generously given by Province of Colombia. The language is Spanish and the local native language.

THE NEW EVANGELIZATION

Confreres, as you receive this Mission Appeal letter, I am in Rome participating in the Synod of the Bishops on New Evangelization, where I will speak as an elected delegate representing the Union of Superior Generals. The idea of a “new evangelization” was introduced by Blessed John Paul II during his papacy, to revive the Catholic faith and to encourage all baptized believers to live and witness as “ambassadors of Christ” (2 Cor. 5:20).

Instrumentum Laboris, the “working document” for the Synod of Bishops on the New Evangelization offers us a central truth:

“Announcing and proclaiming is not the task of any one person or a select few, but rather a gift given to every person who answers the call to faith. It is the responsibility of every Christian and the whole Church, who continually rediscovers her identity as a People gathered together by the Spirit to live Christ’s presence among us” (IL, #92).

It is important during this “Year of Faith” and “New Evangelization” that we reflect on our missionary vocation. As our Vincentian heritage and history attests, we have much to offer. We evangelize by entering into the world of the poor, depending on the Lord Jesus, one another, and our Vincentian virtues of humility, simplicity, meekness, mortification and zeal for souls. The preferential option for the poor is fundamental to the new evangelization. In living our Vincentian virtues, especially simplicity and humility, we come close to God and the poor. We can enact the new evangelization through pastoral and corporal service, especially to God’s poor.

That is why I bring this Mission Appeal before you. Please review and reflect on its content and consider volunteering. For those who simply cannot go, I ask for your prayers. As St. Vincent reminded his confreres, *“Let us no longer say: it is I who have done this good work; for every good thing ought to be done in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ...”* (CED, VII, 98-99).

Your brother in St. Vincent,

G. Gregory Gay, C.M.
Superior General

MISSION APPEAL LETTER 2012: NEXT STEPS

INFORMATION AND CRITERIA FOR THOSE WHO WRITE

1. After a period of serious discernment, if you feel moved to volunteer, please send your letter or e-mail to Rome by **30 November 2012** or again by **February 28, 2013** so we can review requests in our *Tempo Forte* meetings in December and March.
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 the 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. I 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.
7. **If you cannot go to the missions, we welcome your monetary contribution to represent your zeal for the mission. 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 (through the Curia) quickly and with minimal paperwork. The VSO reports on the wonderful results of these grants in its quarterly bulletin (seen at www.famvian.org/vso). The financial 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.**

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

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:

**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:

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.