



# Nuntia

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## A dream called Akamasoa, the visit to Rome of Father Pedro Pablo Opeka, CM



Elena Grazini, Press Service Office

The visit to Rome of Father Pedro Pablo Opeka, CM, had a double purpose: to make known the work done in the Mission of Madagascar among the most forgotten poor and to collect funds to continue that work in Akamasoa. At the press conference held in Rome, Father Pedro said, “When people see that their financial contributions, donated generously, are being well invested for the good of the poor, they continue giving.”

The press conference was attended by, among others, the Superior General, Father Tomaž Mavrič, CM, and the Ambassadors to the Holy See from Argentina, Monaco, and Slovenia, who will continue supporting Father Opeka’s work. They offered their backing to new works that, like this one, can be carried out in other parts of the world for the benefit of the poorest. Those who have been able to share closely with Father Pedro Opeka discover in him a Vincentian man, who expresses with simplicity, in the words of Saint Vincent, what the poor mean to him, they “are my burden and my sorrow.”

Amakaso’s poor people are always present in his thoughts and in his life, as he conveyed in these words, “I often get angry at the media, because despite the fact that many governments could help end poverty, they are kept as spectators, and this makes me angry.”

He also recalled what it means for him to be a Vincentian missionary in Madagascar, “living in Akamasoa is, first of all, action, not words. Those of us, who never hide the truth, seek to be clear when we face problems. We do not ignore them. We face them. That is sincerity.” For 40 years, Father Opeka has worked in Madagascar, among the poor of the earth. The name that this work has taken, Akamasoa, means “good friend” in the local language. That is the name of this incredible adventure, which he started 29 years ago, not as a dream, but as a concrete reality.

It all began in 1989, in the dump of Antananarivo, the capital of Madagascar. The poor, after having been expelled from cities and fields, saw this gar-

bage dump as their last refuge. They dug among the debris in order to seek their livelihood. The children slept covered in flies. There, young and old died, without anyone bothering to bury them. Prostitution spread. This image, of men, women, and children living in inhuman conditions, broke Father Opeka's heart. Thus, he began searching for a way to help the poor. Thanks to some aid, first received from local religious communities, Father Pedro was able to develop his idea of how to help people help themselves. There was a granite quarry near the dump. Whoever was willing to work there could produce bricks, slabs, and gravel, which, when sold, would have been sufficient only to buy rice and nourish the family. In this way, under the guidance of Father Pedro, the inhabitants of the garbage dump united, began to sell and, with their work, a bit of hope came into view.

This magnificent work speaks for itself:

25,000 people benefited from the social project and living in the villages of Akamasoa. Each of these towns has schools, a dispensary, and workplaces for adults: quarries, masonry, carpentry, agriculture, and crafts.

30,000 poor come to Akamasoa each year seeking specific help: food, medicine, and clothing.

13,000 children benefit from a scholastic education, thanks to the schools built.

3,000 houses have been built.



Fr. Pedro Opeka, CM

Pope Francis

Fr. Tomaž Mavrič, CM

In 2014, Akamasoa was recognized by the State as a public interest project, confirming the need for its presence and action in the island's general social functioning. At the base of Father Pedro's social project is the idea of helping the person to help him/herself.

Recently, Father Pedro recounted the experience of what it meant for him to meet with Pope Francis. The meeting, together with Father Tomaž Mavrič, CM, took place on 28 May at the Vatican. "It was a meeting with a very serene man, in which one feels the peace he lives and, above all, very close and friendly." "I suggested to him," said Father Opeka, "that, as the Bishops of Madagascar had invited him to visit the wonderful island, then I too invited him to Akamasoa. There he would discover the joyful welcome of thousands of children and young people who today have been able to overcome poverty and live a new life, to which, Pope Francis showed, with a gesture, his assent, availability, and joy."



## The Province of Colombia Prepares for the Celebration of its 150th Anniversary



*This year the Province of Colombia begins its preparation for the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the first Lazarist missionaries. Each year the members of the province will deepen their understanding of their Vincentian spirituality, allowing themselves to be enlightened and animated by the three verbs that Pope Francis used during his encounter with the members of the Vincentian Family at the time of the Vincentian Symposium (October 2017: Rome). Those three verbs were: to adore, to welcome and to go.*

Fr. Carlos Albeiro Velásquez Bravo, CM  
Seminarist Andrés Felipe Rojas Saavedra

### Explanation of the Logo:

The map of Colombia outlined with a green ribbon indicates the missionary movement of the sons of St. Vincent throughout this vast national territory and even beyond its borders ... a movement that has been constant from the time of their arrival until the present day.

The profound gaze of Vincent de Paul expresses the depth perception of his piercing eyes and the eyes of each member of the Province ... a reality that began with those pioneers, Gustavo Foing, CM and Augusto Rieux, CM.

The waves with the colors of the French flag (on the left side of the logo) and the Colombian flag (on the right side of the logo) express the missionary zeal that led those individuals to travel across the ocean and ultimately, to arrive at the port of Buenaventura. Therefore, the French colors are planted in Colombia and the Colombian colors are projected outward toward other lands.

The waves of the flags form the image of wings, wings of the Holy Spirit who anointed Jesus of Nazareth to evangelize the poor (cf. Luke 4:16-20), without which his mission would have been fruitless.

The geographical extremes of Colombia (Gugjira and the Amazonas, Nariño and Arauca) and the flags form a cross and affirm the missionary command of Christ to go to the ends of the earth, to the peripheries of the world and there proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ.

Three elements give the logo an integral unity: water (the waves of the sea), land (the outline of the map) and air (the breath of the Spirit and missionary vitality).

The logo itself invites us TO ADORE (to cultivate the interior life), TO WELCOME (to give oneself to others) and TO GO (to move out beyond oneself).



## Official Prayer for the 150th Anniversary

*Lord God almighty, you sent forth your Son and anointed him with the Holy Spirit to proclaim Good News to the poor. You also gifted Vincent de Paul with the charism of service on behalf of the world's most abandoned and forgotten men and women. We give you thanks for the presence of the Vincentian missionaries during these past 150 years. We give you thanks for their commitment of service on behalf of the poor and in service of the formation of good priests.*

*We pray today that you give us the grace to be faithful to the legacy that you have entrusted to us. Help us to inculturate and to incarnate the charism of Vincent de Paul in today's world. Help us to do this with a charity that is inventive, with hearts that are simple, humble and gentle, and with zeal that is on fire and that impels us to go forth to satisfy the material and the spiritual needs of those who are suffering. We make this prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen.*

## Chaplain of the Camp of Burundian Refugees at Mahama in Rwanda (Africa)



Fr. Henri Matsinga, CM, Capellán

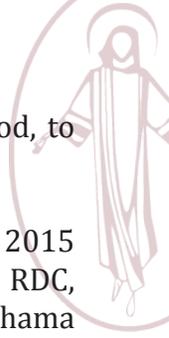
At the Symposium of the Vincentian Family, which took place from 13-15 October 2017 in Rome, the Superior General, Tomaž Mavrič, asked me to inform him of my mission in the Burundian refugee camp of Mahama in Rwanda. Following up on that request, I would like to write to you, Father Tomaž, these few lines about my mission.

First, I will introduce myself before presenting my weekly activities; next, a word about the visit of the Bishops of Rwanda and Burundi; finally, two interviews with refugee people who participated in the Christmas and New Year 2018 games organized at the camp by the chaplaincy.

### 1. Presentation of the chaplain

I, Father Henri Muvugha Matsinga, am a Vincentian Missionary of the Congregation of the Mission,

Rwanda-Burundi Region, Province of Colombia. I was born on 5 March 1983 in the Democratic Republic of Congo (RDC). I was ordained a Catholic priest on 15 January 2017. My first missionary experience took place in Burundi, where I spent about six months. Beginning in April 2017, I accepted the call to serve refugees of the Mahama camp. This camp is located in the eastern part of Rwanda, near the border with Tanzania in the diocese of Kibungo. As a spiritual father, I have a duty to take care of the most vulnerable people. I like this sentence from Saint Vincent de Paul: "I cannot love God if my neighbor does not love him." That is why, beginning in April 2017, as part of the 400th Jubilee of the Vincentian charism, in order to be closer to the poor, the Rwanda-Burundi Region of Vincentian Fathers wanted to send a missionary to serve the refugees. I wholeheartedly received this new mission to serve the poor, my brothers and sisters,



victims of the Burundian conflict.

The Mahama Refugee Camp is in Rwanda, Africa. It is located on the Kibungo – Rusumo road. From Kibungo to the camp there are about 67 kilometers. The camp is near the border with Tanzania. Thanks to this location, there is a lot of movement between the two countries.

Young people are looking for a good future, but they are being influenced negatively by the international mindset. For this, the people of Mahama camp are very exposed to various dangers; among others, contamination, especially HIV. That

is why we feel the duty, with the grace of God, to help them face these dangers.

The Mahama refugee camp arose out of the 2015 Burundian conflict. Some Burundians fled to RDC, others to Tanzania and Uganda. In the Mahama camp, they are about 56,000, mostly young people and children. Catholic Christians are about 18,000, grouped in 20 Basic Christian Communities (BCC). All these people need help until they return to their home country. However, it should be noted that the situation is even worse in Burundi itself, because there is no peace in the country.

**2. Weekly activities**

Monday	Personal recollection	—
Tuesday	Visits to the sick + Anointing of patients and Viaticum	9 am - noon
Wednesday	Visit to the Basic Christian Communities	9 am - noon
Thursday	Adoration + Sacrament of Reconciliation	9 am - noon
Friday	Listening to Christians and counseling them.	9 am - noon
Saturday	Youth Supervision + Children’s Youth Club + Catechesis + Singing Classes + Adoration	7 am - 5 pm
Sunday	1st Mass	7:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. 10:30 a.m. – middle day

**3. The Visit of the Bishops of Rwanda and Burundi on 7 November 2017**

On that day, 14 Bishops from Burundi and Rwanda, accompanied by some priests, visited the Burundian refugees at Mahama Camp. They celebrated the Eucharist with about 18,000 Christians. In addition, other people of all categories came to meet with the Bishops, about 40,000 in all.

The Bishops sent a message of peace, forgiveness, reassurance, and patience. They asked the refugees to pray so that peace might return to their country of origin. In addition, they promised to do their best to approach the Burundian authorities so that the refugees could return to their countries. However, they asked the refugees to pray and wait patiently for the return. *el regreso.*



#### 4. Youth Supervision.

Among the activities of youth supervision, the great Christmas and New Year 2018 games tournament was organized from 1-18 January 2018. This tournament brought together the youth teams from the refugee camp. There were 31 football/soccer teams, seven volleyball teams, six basketball teams, and three seatball teams, and the participation of some 50 traditional Burundian dance clubs.

#### 5. Overview of Christmas and New Year games 2018

Generally, the matches went well. However, the negative was not lacking, as you can read in the interviews presented here below. Nevertheless, for us the goal had been achieved: to build up unity and integration; to spread the message of fighting against diseases, disorder, and drugs; and to invite young people and children to like school and to enjoy vacation time to prepare for a promising future.

Here are the interviews of two young people.

##### 5.1. I am Egide Manirakiza:

Age: 32 years

Sex: m.

Civil status: married

Discipline: Abahizi Cultural association

Religion: Catholic

##### \*Positive aspects:

- These games helped me to overcome sexual roaming. They helped me to avoid disorder.
- The games helped us to reacquaint, to know each other, and to unite in the cultural sense.
- We came together to display our talents.
- Traditional dance helped us to find ourselves in our traditions without discrimination.
- There was a balance in the prizes, because all the clubs succeeded at something in certain disciplines.

##### \*Negative aspects;

- In terms of discipline, some teams brought players from outside the camp.
- I hope that in due course we will receive prizes in kind and not in money, because money can become a bad master.
- I wish they would buy us more balls, sport shoes,



and uniforms for the next tournament.

- I hope that the prizes will be announced soon.

Message: I thank those who helped us and I ask that they continue to assist us, so that there are more activities that occupy us especially during the holidays.

##### 5.2. I answer to the name of Majuwa Nduwimana

Age: 22

Sex: m

Social status: single

Disciple: dream dance

Religion: xxxxx

##### \*Positive aspects:

- The games went well and we shared our goods and news.
- I thank the chaplain for getting us together to play these games.
- The games helped us to have fun and rest during the holidays and to avoid any kind of bad behavior.
- In general, everything went well.

##### \*Negative aspects:

- I prefer that on future occasions there be more information about the preparations.
- That the objective be well clarified: to seek to discover and live the values and not to focus on the prizes.

Message: I thank the benefactors and may God continue to bless them. The games reached the goal of drawing close to and mentoring young people.

A final word: I would like to conclude by pointing out that I was sent to the camp to respond to the call of the Vincentian Charism's 400th Jubilee, "I was a stranger and you welcomed me" (Matthew 25:35). I am ministering at the camp as a member of the local community of Vincentians of Kabgayi, Rwanda-Burundi Region. The service to the refugees is given with the support of the Bishop of Kibungo, the priestly team of the parish of Rusumo, and the Daughters of Charity who have served in the camp since well before my arrival. These refugee brothers and sisters are the strangers we are trying to welcome according to the invitation that launched us on the 400th Jubilee celebration. In my priestly missionary ministry, I experience joys and sorrows in the

service to the Lord's vineyard and all this for the glory of God.

I thank very much those who support us materially and morally, especially the Rwanda-Burundi Region and the Diocese of Kibungo in which the camp is located.

Long live Charity!

Long live the Congregation of the Mission!

Long live the Rwanda-Burundi Region!

Long live our Lords and Masters of the Camp: the Burundian Refugees in Mahama!

## Paris: "With a missionary heart in the heart of the city," the Mother House celebrates 200 years



Fr. Bernard Massarini, C.M – Fr. Jean-Pierre Renouard, C.M

Our conference, entitled "the Mother House at 200 Years: a Missionary Heart in the Heart of the City," opened with the celebration of the Eucharist. We chose the Liturgy in honor of Mary, Mother of the Church since Pope Francis had just established the feast. Concluding the Mass with a brief pilgrimage to the altars of the holy Fathers Clet, Perboyre, and to the reliquary of St. Vincent de Paul, we then crossed over to the Salle Baude, a community hall, where we

could view some photos, original letters and various texts that the Saint Vincent de Paul Society and the Daughters of Charity had shown previously at the UN exhibition in Geneva. At the Salle Baude we welcomed some 100 guests, including various lay people, Daughters of Charity, CM missionaries and regular visitors to our Chapel.

Sister Marvaux, D.C. from the Daughters' house at

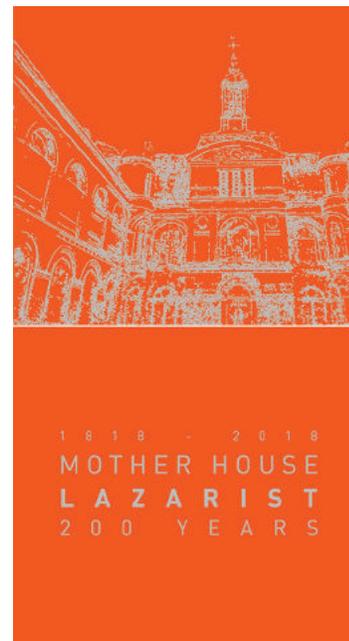
Lyon was our moderator. She started off the day, offering some details to enhance our participation. Then she invited Father Mauvais, Provincial of France, to convene the conference. He began by recalling that it was in November 1817 that confreres first settled in this neighborhood. He also reminded us that, while we certainly do want to remember the past and recall the missionary dynamism of those confreres who first lived there, we also wish to project ourselves towards tomorrow. Even today, this home at 95 rue de Sèvres continues to face challenges in development: our location now includes a campus for Saint John University, housing for students seeking doctorates, and even the reception study area for the Augustinian Studies Library. These buildings also support initiatives for solidarity such as the reception of the APA that bring together people in high-risk situations with those who can help, the planning process for a welcoming day center for women at risk, and the opening of a kindergarten within the neighborhood. By means of attending to today's events in our history, he invited us to rediscover the missionary zest of our elders so that the missionaries of Saint Lazarus today continue to have hearts that beat for Jesus and thus, give life to our world.

Sister Marvaux noted that the persons discussed during this symposium range from 1787 to 1956, that is to say, they trace the history of the Congregation since the Revolution, during periods of the revolts of 1830 and that of the two great world wars.

Before discovering ourselves at this new Saint Lazare, our second Mother House, our predecessors had to go through great conflict in the struggle against Jansenism. Father Mezzadri (unfortunately prevented from being here personally), presented this to us in an introductory and transitional way, as the first crisis experienced by the Congregation. While confreres in the seminaries were numerous, it's important to note that this bubble was part of serious tensions in the Church of France; bishops were taking part by supporting or refusing to advance to the priesthood any candidates who could not assure doctrinal correctness with their teachers. This led to the closure of seminaries and instilled fear among the Polish and Italian confreres, believing that the Congregation was tied up with a conflict

that was essentially French. But as neither law nor custom required that the general house be transferred to Rome, and the fact that the foundation, the remains of the founder and the largest number of communities were all in France, all this pointed to maintaining the Congregation in Paris. Indeed, the General Assembly of 1724, decided in favor of keeping the Congregation of the Mission in France.

We then proceeded to the history of the Mother House at 95, Rue de Sèvres, starting with its beginnings with 10 confreres: 2 superiors general, 7 priests and one brother. As for the superiors general, we limited our attention to Fathers Etienne and Boré.



First of all, Monsieur Etienne, who would be Superior General for 31 years, in addition to his period of public procurator which had provided him with an important mission. A temperamental man and political to his core, and despite the last biography that expressed reservations about his direction, we do need to point out that Father Etienne organized 14 new Lazarist provinces and witnessed the Daughters of Charity grow in number from 6,000 to 20,000 by the end of his term. He inaugurated the complex at Berceau with the assistance of 30,000 people. During his time as superior, he did declare his recognition of pontifical infallibility, for his silences would have been received like a form of Gallicanism. Faced with the growth of the Company, he would use the Mother House as a model to be replicated throughout the world, which caused much resentment.



Monsieur Boré who succeeded him was a renowned orientalist. His vocation was born out of meeting with a Lazarist father while traveling in the East, his fervent passion. He was soon ordained before being posted to Turkey and worked with the Armenian community. During the Crimean War, he appealed to the Daughters of Charity to treat the sick and wounded. The Sultan, thankful for their excellent work, ordered the construction of the Peace Hospital, currently the Daughters of Charity's home in this country. Boré would govern the congregation for only four years. A contemporary historian judged him a highly capable administrator. We too can appreciate his political skill and good sense as we note his choice of Monsieur Fiat as an Assistant, the one that a General Assembly would later choose as his successor.

We familiarized ourselves with Fathers John, David, Perboyre, Pouget, Portal and Brother Carbonnier. All men were passionate about their sciences and filled with the Holy Spirit.

Speaking of Monsieur Jean, he was another famous orientalist, and although he may not be known on the Internet, his research contributed much to the studies of the ancient languages Akkadian and Sumerian. He would discover many tablets of the second and third millennia before our era. Convinced that our Western culture was born out of these pre-cultures, he never stopped revisiting the Bible with all the finds he made. He demonstrated links between biblical texts and the knowledge of the surrounding cultures, accompanying the birth of the idea of "Biblical milieu" to explain the culture of which Revelation was a carrier.

Father David, a hale and hearty Basque and a genuine ham, was also a naturalist. He struggled to get a

start in China, developing his scientific talents in Italy. So passionate was he about the missions, he finally could go to China. On his first return from China to Paris he met with scientists with whom he shared his passion for Chinese nature. Once his abilities had been recognized he received funding to organize a scientific expedition to China. He departed in order to found schools that would accept him taking scientific expeditions; he had the opportunity to discover nearly 200 plant and animal species discovering and saving the giant panda and Chinese deer. His discovery of the panda became the animal-emblematic of Chinese diplomacy. The city where he discovered the panda today bears the name of "New David". Once back in France, he never ceased sharing his discoveries. Finally, while he acknowledged that China did not need Europe, he would always speak of his joy at seeing so many Chinese become Christians.

Then came Father Pouget, who specialized in exegesis. His study of the Pentateuch allowed him to identify his principles for historical study of the Bible. He avoided rationalism while blending the historical-critical study. His courses articulated revelation and humanity within the historical perspective where faith takes on meaning. He believed that we must reflect theologically about history, focusing on the concrete, rather than on our magisterium. Soon becoming blind he would then take the opportunity to deepen his exhausting research, continuing to work on this new understanding of Scripture that would later inspire the texts of Vatican II and would be included during St. John XXIII's opening of the Council.

Monsieur Portal meanwhile, had joined the Congregation to go to China. But it was as a Bible instructor that he began ministry in Nice. For reasons of

health he would join the Mission in Spain. There he met Lord Halifax with whom he desired to convey his passion for Catholicism. He founded a journal for dialogue that would produce 50 issues, and he supported recognition of the validity of Anglican ordinations. However, Pope Leo XIII, reputed still open to this, decided otherwise. Following this he was asked not to meet Lord Halifax anymore and he was sent back to France to return to the task of training seminarians. Only twenty years later, Cardinal Mercier would resume the dialogue although in secret.

Once he was back in Paris he participated in the revival of seminary studies while paying attention to the faith in the world of students. He founded the group "TALA", Young Christian Academics. With Mme. Galicia, a mystic foundress of a lay association living alongside the poor in disadvantaged neighborhoods, he integrated young people into the activities that his patronage would establish.

He would influence Marcel Legault, Teilhard de Chardin, and Vincent Lebbe. He moved to the rue de Lourmel where he died. He always wanted to advance elsewhere to discover new frontiers. All that he founded has since disappeared, the new magazine "the seminary", the Catholic magazine "the rue de Grenelle", and even the community of Mrs. Galicia. He left his mark as a watchman, a sower, a discoverer of new lands, inviting us to remember that must always keep the mindset that we are only travelers.

We then recalled the face of Saint John Gabriel Perboyre, China's first recognized saint. This gem of a person who came from a family who would give five to their children to religion, would live out his gift of himself in the mission, first in seminary formation in France and then in China. There he was soon arrested and lived through a passion that would bind him to his master Jesus whom he wanted to imitate; his daily prayer, which he recited before Mass, reminds us of this. His condemnation in China for having propagated an "abominable sect" points to the absence of any real motive. Fr. John Gabriel never failed in his identification with Christ, whom he had made his rule of life.

We ended the day concerned with the beauty that adorns St Lazare, speaking of Brother François Casimir Carbonnier. This native of Beauvais from a poor

family, was spotted early on for his skills at painting and received a scholarship before joining the school of Delacroix, the painting artist for the emperor. Not having mastered that particular setting and uncomfortable with the debauched atmosphere of the members of the school, he would join that group of a painter recently arrived in Paris: Ingres. Now well established, he traveled to Rome then joined Naples where he created paintings for the Queen. Once Napoleon abdicated, he had to go into exile in England like all the painters of his reign.

There he met a poor girl whom he took under his protection and later married. Neither was intended for marriage. He was offered India but preferred to return to France. While participating in a conference, Monsieur Nozo noticed him and invited him to return with him to the Lazarists. When he declined this commitment, Monsieur Nozo proposed to host him so that he could participate in making the house what it is today. It was Carbonnier who would adorn the walls with his art: the chapel, the refectory, corridors, and the sacristy contain so many creations that he has left us. Later he would agree to become a brother, aware that painting was religious service for him. All his creations had demanded prayer and silence from him, clearly shown in what he painted.

Around 4 pm, Father Gomez closed this beautiful day, recalling that the first Saint Lazarus had as a coat of arms on the door, the risen Lazarus, testifying to the work of Jesus who transformed death and made the tomb a fountain or symbol of life. By recalling all these faces we have met brothers who were both very human and filled with passion for Christ. Whether historians, a novelist, or orientalist, all come to speak to us about him, shining their rays produced by their lives.

He suggested to us that this house, which can sometimes seem cumbersome, at least in its physical structure, lives on as a gathering place for various currents in our society, knowing how to combine theology, spirituality and the apostolate, three elements constituting the heritage left to us by Saint Vincent. We will continue this mission by reimagining how to live internationality and to respond today to the challenges in the world and the Church.

Translation from French to English by Dan Paul Borlik, C.M. Western Province, USA.

## Third CIF Encounter for the Vincentian Family



Fr. Andrés Motto, CM. Director of the CIF.

The International Formation Center (CIF) held its third encounter for the members of the Vincentian Family (April 10-May 11). This group was composed of men and women from various congregations and associations as well as from many different countries, speaking distinct languages. The largest group of participants were members of the Congregation of the Mission: Alfredo León Navarro (Peru), Arturo Ernesto Hernández Gutiérrez (Mexico), Francisco Ivo Nascimento Sousa (Brazil), Silvio Alfredo Batista Mitozo, (Brazil), Franciscus Hardjodirono (Indonesia) and Stephanus Rudy Sulistijo, (Indonesia). There were also members of the Brothers of Our Lady, Mother of Mercy: Blasius Perang (Indonesia), Rofinus Banunaek (Indonesia); The Sisters of Mary of the Miraculous Medal: Ivančica Fulir (Croatia), Marie-Reine Avade (Benin) and Rolande Alafia (Benin); Daughters of Charity: Luz de María Tumialán Francia (Peru). Sisters of the Holy Faith: Verónica Maguire (Ireland); Servants of the Precious Blood: Cunegonde Arlette Gómez (Benin); Sisters of Saint Vincent de Paul (Gijzegem): Nsafu Florentine Nzebo (Congo).

We were happy to see an increase in the number of lay participants: Andrés Lizondro (Panama), Carlos Centeno (Panama), Mónica Cobos (Ecuador), Orlanda Rodrigues Alves (Brazil), Claudio Gastón Minuche Córdova (Ecuador), Wirawan Margo (Indonesia). As you can see, a very varied group. Indonesia, Brazil and Benin had the largest number of participants and the majority of lay persons were from Latin America.

This group of men and women of various ages and vocations revealed the intercultural and international elements of the Vincentian Family. Because of the absence of the Sub-Director, the participants helped in various tasks and I was very pleased with this group because it was obvious that they wanted to learn. Even with the reality of language difficulties it became clear that, in the words of Pope Francis, we spoke the universal language of charity.

During the time together, there were various presentations: Evangelize through use of the means of communication, Vincentian presence in means of communication, saints of the Vincentian Family (Elizabeth Ann Seton and Frederic Ozanam) [presented by Joseph Agostino CM and Javier Chento], St. Vincent: resources and bibliography, Vincentian studies, Vincentian spirituality and ethics [presented by André Motto], the Miraculous Medal: historical context and the apparitions (presented by Jean Daniel Planchot), theology of the poor: Vincentian option for the poor and service on behalf of the poor within the context of the Vincentian Family [presented by José Antonio Ubillus, CM]. During the time of this encounter we added a new element to the prayer component, namely, continuous readings from the Bible [the first two chapters of the book of Genesis] ... will we at some point come to read the book of "Revelation."

The three pilgrimages that we undertook enriched us in our understanding of the Vincentian charism and also reminded us of the fact that life itself is a pilgrimage

and during that pilgrimage we must be attentive to our spiritual development. Our first pilgrimage included Richelieu, Perigueux, Sarlat-La-Canéda, Le Berceau, Buglose, Pouy, Dix, Lourdes, Angers. Our second pilgrimage included Gannes, Follleville and Amiens and our third pilgrimage included Taizé, Châtiillon, Anney. We also took two tours of the significant Vincentian places in Paris and added visits to those places where poor persons are being served. During the time of our encounter Father Tomaž (Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission) and Sister Kathleen Appler (Superior General of the Daughters of Charity) visited us, enlightened us with their insights and helped us to deepen our love for the Vincentian Family.

Proposal for next year: 30 participants and so please take note of the dates: May 3rd – May 27th, 2019. ... for more information write [andremotto@gmail.com](mailto:andremotto@gmail.com)



## **“Here I Am” Strengthening VMY and Founding New Associations around the World**



Fr. Tomaž Mavrič, C.M. Director General JMV

With hearts full of gratitude for last year’s 400th Anniversary of the Vincentian Charism and as we begin its

fifth century, we are very much encouraged that each member of the Vincentian Family, as well as the Fami-

ly as a whole, becomes more and more engaged in the life of the Church and the world. One very clear sign of commitment and vitality is the different initiatives in which we are involved and in which we encourage others to take part.

The Vincentian Marian Youth Association (VMY), one of the branches of the Vincentian Family, is beginning 2018 with, among other things, the initiative, “Here I am,” to strengthen in every possible way the existing VMY groups around the world, as well as to become more active members within the Church and in the world.

This active involvement and engagement in the countries where the Vincentian Marian Youth is already present surely will encourage others –parishes, schools, youth in different areas of society– to form new VMY groups in the given country, as well as to found Vincentian Marian Youth groups in countries where the VMY is not yet present.

Dear members of the different women and men’s Congregations of the Vincentian Family around the world, I would like to invite and encourage you:

1. to found new groups of Vincentian Marian Youth in the countries where the VMY already exists; and
2. to found groups of Vincentian Marian Youth in countries where the VMY still is not present.

To Jesus through Mary: During the apparitions to Saint Catharine Labouré, Our Lady expressed this very clear wish, “I would like an Association of Youth founded!” This wonderful and extraordinary invitation and wish came from Jesus and Mary themselves.

For us, this invitation and wish become nothing less than a clear sign that we must do everything possible to make Jesus and Mary’s invitation and wish a reality in the places and countries where the VMY already exists by founding new groups and by introducing VMY into countries where it is not yet present and founding it there.

The International Secretariat of the Vincentian Marian Youth, which has its headquarters in Madrid, Spain, has prepared a project to help found new groups of Vincentian Marian Youth in as many countries as pos-

sible. The international team of the VMY Secretariat is available to any Congregation, school, parish, or young person in other parts of society who would like to know more about the VMY Association, receive materials, guidance, and help in founding and accompanying a new group. You can write its members there in many different languages.



The Director of the VMY International Secretariat, Father Irving Amaro, CM, will send you a letter shortly with the details of the project.

I would like to ask the Superiors General and through them the Visitatrices and Visitors of the different Congregations within the Vincentian Family, who decide to found a new group or groups of VMY in a given country, to name a sister, priest, or brother as coordinator. They then should inform the Director of the VMY International Secretariat in Madrid, Spain, so that he can help the newly appointed leaders to organize the new groups.

I encourage and invite all of us, as members of the Vincentian Family, to do everything possible so that this initiative will bear much fruit and bring, God willing, many new vocations to the consecrated life.



## General Information

### NOMINATIONES / CONFIRMATIONES

CHITTOOPARAMBAN Varghese (Biju)	02/05/2018	Director DC - South India
GARAJ Jozef	16/05/2018	Director DC- Slovakia (Confirmed)
ZEDDE Italo	16/05/2018	Director DC - Sardinia (Confirmed)

### ORDINATIONES

COSTE BENÍTEZ Yan Carlos	Sac	POR	28/04/2018
VALDÉZ MENDOZA Alfredo Ramón	Sac	ARG	12/05/2018
CEPIELIK Maciej	Sac	POL	19/05/2018
DUCHNIK Grzegorz	Sac	POL	19/05/2018
FILHO DA SILVA Arthur Ricardo	Sac	FOR	22/05/2018

### NECROLOGIUM

Nomen	Cond.	Dies Ob.	Prov	Aet.	Voc.
DE BARRAU Raymond André	Sac	04/05/2018	FRA	83	65
SLEVIN Peter J.	Sac	05/05/2018	HIB	81	63
MOLINA RÍOS Emilio	Sac	20/05/2018	CAE	86	69
TELUS Jan	Sac	21/05/2018	POL	72	55
TOSCANI Giuseppe	Sac	23/05/2018	ITA	89	66
DEVEUX Prosper Amand	Sac	24/05/2018	CNG	91	67
BOMBA Władysław	Sac	27/05/2018	POL	80	61
KLEMBA Leopold	Sac	28/05/2018	CUR	83	64
JANSEN Frans Pierre	Sac	29/05/2018	CNG	89	69

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