

Newsletter of the Congregation of the Mission

Nuntia



FOUR HUNDRED YEARS OF FIDELITY TO ITS CHARISM AND THE NEW EVANGELIZATION



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Celebration of the 400th Anniversary of the origin of the Vincentian Charism 1617-2017

With the words: I was a stranger and you welcomed me (Matthew 25:35), the worldwide Vincentian Family inaugurates a Jubilee Year a time during which it celebrates the 400th anniversary of the origin of its charism of service on behalf of the poor.

The year 1617 was decisive with regards to Vincent de Paul's vocation. Two significant events occurred: on 25 January, the feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul, Vincent preached "the first sermon of the mission" in Folleville (France). That event took place several days after having heard the confession of a dying man, which made Vincent aware of the spiritual abandonment of the poor country people. Some months later, in August of the same year, as pastor in Châtillon, Vincent experienced the material poverty and misery of his parishioners an event that transformed him into the Saint of Charity.

Vincent understood that it was necessary to instruct the people, to make them aware of their dignity as children of God and to teach them the truths of God's plan for humankind.

The events that took place in Folleville and Châtillon during the year 1617 mark the origin of the Vincentian charism and for 400 years the followers of Vincent de Paul, the members of the Vincentian Family, have dedicated themselves to service on behalf of the less fortunate members of society.

At the present time, the Vincentian Family is composed of some 225 branches (various religious communities and lay associations) and is present in more than 80 countries. Among the more well-known branches of the family, we highlight here the International Association of Charities (AIC), the Congregation of the Mission, the Daughters of Charity (founded with Saint Louise de Marillac), the Saint Vincent de Paul Society (founded by Blessed Frédéric Ozanam), the Miraculous Medal Association (AMM), the Vincentian Marian Youth (VMY), Vincentian Lay Missionaries (MISEVI) and the Sisters of Charity of Saint Joan Antida Thouret.

The Vincentian Family is present on five continents and engaged in various ministries in which they "welcome the stranger" in their midst: healthcare ministry, works of education/formation, works of human promotion and development, works in which they care for homeless people, for refugees, for abandoned children and for single mothers.

The Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission and the Company of the Daughters of Charity, Father Tomaž Mavrič has encouraged the members of the

Symposium with Pope Francis
October 13, 14, 15 2017

Workshops in Paul VI Hall
Address by Pope Francis
Mass in St. Peter's Basilica

Through the Year
Pilgrimage of the Heart of Vincent
A Vincentian Film Festival
Project 2030: Ending Homelessness

MORE INFO COMING SOON

Vincentian Family to celebrate this year through participation in four common projects:

1. The pilgrimage of the relic of the heart of Saint Vincent, which will begin on 25 January in Folleville, France. This relic will be received in all those countries where the Vincentian Family is present.
2. Participation in a project to end homelessness throughout the world and this includes caring for refugees, migrants, street people, displaced persons, etc.
3. An International Symposium during which the participants will reflect upon their mission and charism. This event will take place in Rome (13-15 October) and will include a meeting of the Vincentian Family with Pope Francis.
4. An International Film Festival: an international competition that will focus on the life of Saint Vincent de Paul.

For more information contact: Fr. Joseph Agostino, CM, vfo@famvin.org

400 Years of the Vincentian Charism Pilgrimage of the Relic of Saint Vincent de Paul's Heart

Given its status as a relic, Saint Vincent de Paul's heart was removed immediately after his death. The Duchess d'Aiguillon offered a silver reliquary for it, which then was placed carefully in a cabinet. When Saint Vincent was beatified on 13 August 1729, his body and heart were placed on an altar at Saint Lazare for his feast on 27 September.

On 13 July 1789, during the time of the Commune, the Superior General, Father Cayla de la Garde, entrusted it to Father Siccardi, his Assistant, who managed to take it to Turin hidden in a hollowed-out book. At the request of Cardinal Fesch, the relic returned to Lyon on 1 January 1805.

On 15 February 1947, Sister Blanchot, Superioress General of the Daughters of Charity, met Cardinal Gerlier, Archbishop of Lyon, and expressed to him her desire: "You are not unaware that the heart of Saint Vincent appeared several times to (Sister) Catherine (Labouré). We would like it to be present during the glorification of our Saint."

When she did not receive a quick response, the Superioress General, a bit impatient, wanted to telephone, but that service was on strike, except for medical emergencies. "Emergency of the Heart," she responded and at once, by telephone, "Magnificat!" She was authorized to take the relic.

The relic is currently above the altar dedicated to Saint Vincent in the Chapel of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal in Paris, 140 rue du Bac.

On 25 January 2017, the relic of Saint Vincent's heart will go on pilgrimage, beginning with his beloved France and then to the "peripheries of this world."

Saint Vincent says to us today: Dare to be loving!



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Visit to the Province of Ecuador

This was not a canonical visitation but was intended as an opportunity to know the confreres and to encourage them. As a result of the serious illness of Father Jhon Prager, CM (Visitor), the province has been deprived of his presence. The visitation (December 21-28), although brief, nevertheless it was sufficient time to understand and learn about the six works of the Province of Ecuador.



The young men manifested an interest in the International Missions, formation and the theme of reconfiguration. Later I was able to speak with the formators and with some other confreres who had been invited to participate in the opening of this visitation.

The same dynamics were utilized in the visit of all the houses: there was a dialogue with all the confreres gathered together and then I spoke individually with each one of them.

I was received by Father Guido Molina Robalino, CM (Assistant Visitor and Director of the Internal Seminary), who, together with the members of the Provincial Council, is exercising the ministry of Father Prager. Father was most generous in accompanying me during the time of my visit even though the time of Internal Seminary was drawing to a close (the seminarists concluded their stay at the Seminary on 3 January and this was marked by the celebration of the Eucharist and a farewell "fiesta"). The Internal Seminary for CLAPVI SUR is located in the town of Tabacundo, about an hour and a half outside of Quito. Tabacundo is a very ancient village that is near to Cayambre, a volcano that provides a very scenic background to the Internal Seminary. Father Roberto, the pastor at Tabacundo, invited us to his parish and provided us with a tour of the ethnological museum located at the Mama Nati Shrine (the site of devotion to Mary's birth of Jesus) it was there that we celebrated the feast of the Nativity.

From Monday, 26 December, until Friday, 30 December, the seminarists made their retreat at Casa Getsemani (a property of the Daughters of Charity). Father Pedro Guillén, CM (Visitor of Peru), and Father José Luis de Fina, CM (representative of the Visitor of Argentina), were present for the concluding celebrations at the Internal Seminary. On 5 January, the nine seminarists returned to their province of origin to begin the next phase of their formation.

We began the visit on 21 December with the celebration of the Eucharist that was presided by Father Valdimir Andrade, CM (recently ordained). After breakfast, we had the opportunity to dialogue with the seminarists at the Internal Seminary.

I was able to visit all the houses and, even though these were festive days, the confreres were most generous in receiving me. I had the opportunity to visit all the works of the province and was able to speak with all the confreres except two or three (who, for various reasons, were unable to make themselves available).

At the same time I had some brief meetings with the advisors and/or coordinators of the various branches of the Vincentian Family. We visited three local communities of the Daughters of Charity and had a brief telephone conversation with the Visitatrix, who was unable to participate in the planned meeting. I was unable to speak with the Bishop.

In general, the works of the province reflect a pastoral concern for the people. Though the number of confreres is small, the confreres seem to be well distributed among the various works and there are no staffing problems. There are some tensions to be overcome, but in general the situation seems to be moving forward. In the General Council we hope to be able to respond to this beloved province, to help increase its number and grow in its fidelity to the Vincentian charism.

I want to thank everyone for the kindness and hospitality that was shown to both Father Guido and me. Let us remain united in prayer and in the spirit of Saint Vincent, the origin of whose charism we celebrate during the year 2017.

By: Aarón Gutiérrez Nava, CM
Translated: Charles T. Plock, CM

Holding of the Vice-Provincial Assembly of Cameroon



Besides the presence of the confreres of the Vice-Province, one could also note the not-less-significant presence of the Assistant General responsible for Cameroon, Father Zeracristos Yosief. The latter was keen to respond favorably to the invitation of the Vice-Province by participating in this important moment in its history. The Assembly, the Assistant General highlighted, is "a moment of diagnosis for identifying the evils, evaluating the path traveled, and projecting toward a better future."

Generally speaking, the Assembly took place in a climate of fraternity beyond the differences of opinion among the confreres on one or other aspect of the Vice-Province's life.

From Sunday to Saturday, 8-14 January 2017, the first Vice-Provincial Assembly of Cameroon was held at the Charity House in Bonjongo in Southwest Cameroon. Given the unusual character of this event in the history of this young Vice-Province, by special provision, the Vice-Visitor invited all the confreres of his Vice-Province for the occasion. Chaired by Father Clément Ondo, Vice-Visitor, the theme of this Assembly was "Together for a real appropriation of the Vice-Provincial Norms." The objective was to allow the confreres to assimilate the norms in order to be better disposed to live them.

Father Emmanuel Typamn moderated the Assembly, seconded by Father Robert Ondobo. Father Chrétien Tadjikem served as secretary, assisted by Brother Georges Amassayouga.



The reports of the work of the small groups set up for this purpose made it possible to agree on a certain number of resolutions to be suggested to the Vice-Visitor and his Council for the development of the Vice-Provincial Project.

A commission made up of Fathers Jacob Nyeg, Jean-Marie Eho, Chrétien Tadjikem, and Brother Martial Tatchim drafted the final document of this Vice-Provincial Assembly.

The Assembly ended with a Mass of Thanksgiving presided over by the Vice-Visitor, surrounded by all the confreres. During this celebration, the Vice-Visitor thanked each of the confreres for his active participation, and, more specifically, the Assistant General, who came from Rome for this event.



By: Martial Tatchim Fotso, CM

Official and Solemn Establishment of the New Province: Saint Vincent de Paul (Spain)

Gratitude, hope and communion. Those three words form the background of the event that was celebrated in our house in Santa Marta de Tormes (Salamanca) on Wednesday, 25 January, 2017, the feast of the conversion of Saint Paul. The process of reconfiguration, that was begun some four years ago among the Provinces of Barcelona, Madrid and Salamanca, has now given birth to a new province, namely, the Province of Saint Vincent de Paul (Spain). Such is the good news that was proclaimed on this historical day. The establishment of this new province of the Congregation of the Mission in Spain took place in accord with a program that had been agreed upon previously, a well-prepared program in which solemnity was combined with simplicity, reflection with fiesta, and gratitude for the past was combined with trust and hope for the future.

About 100 confreres from almost every local community of the three provinces gathered together in the house at Santa Marta de Tormes (Salamanca). Also present was the Visitor and two other confreres from the Province of Zaragoza, the Visitor of Slovakia, the Visitor of Portugal, a representative from the Province of France and from the Province of Orient, the seven Visitatrixes from the seven provinces of the Daughters of Charity and representatives from the various lay branches of the Vincentian Family. The presider at this event was Father Tomaž Mavrič, CM, Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission and the Daughters of Charity, who was accompanied by Father Javier Álvarez, (Vicar-General) and Father Aarón Gutiérrez, (Assistant General). The celebration began with Vespers on Tuesday, 24 January and what followed could be described as a work of five acts. The first act was a prayer service based on the biblical text of Matthew 26:6-16 (the anointing at Bethany).



The prophetic gesture that is referenced in the gospel is to become our prophetic gesture. The new province is preparing for this time of new life. The second act was the prayerful recitation of Morning Prayer on 25 January. As one would expect, the psalms sounded a joyful note and were prayed in a powerful manner. The Te Deum, with which we began this prayer, seemed to provide us with the element that bound the whole celebration together.



The third act took place in the community room and was somewhat informal. Animated by Father José Manuel Villar, various persons spoke. First, the Superior General outlined the history of the Congregation in Spain, highlighting its various ministries and expressing his gratitude for the labor and the holiness of so many missionaries. He focused his attention on a promising future.

Then the three Visitors, whose term of office had concluded, expressed their gratitude to those who had gathered together for this event. Father Alagarda underlined the fact that today we are leaving a land that had been our own. Now, with the help and through the intercession of Saint Vincent de Paul, we begin a new mission and a new phase in our life together. Father Joaquín González stated that we are writing a new page in our history; we carry in our backpacks the gospel and charity and, like Saint Vincent, we know what the Congregation has been up to the present time but only God knows the future. Father Juan de la Rosa referred to three basic attitudes that all should cultivate: a profound Vincentian identity, apostolic zeal and availability. From today forward, the new Province will be our home.

The central aspect of this third act occurred at the time when Father Javier Álvarez read the decree that established the new Province of Saint Vincent de Paul (Spain).

The public reading of this decree was accompanied by two very symbolic acts: handing over to the Superior General the three seals of the former Provinces and placing in the hands of the Superior General bowls that contained soil from the various places where the confreres are currently ministering.

Finally, the Superior General read the letter in which Father Jesús María González Antón, CM was appointed Visitor of the new Province. Father Jesús María made a profession of faith and took the oath of fidelity to our Constitutions. The Superior General then gave Father Jesús María the seal of the Province.



In turn, Father Jesús María briefly spoke about the various gifts that the Missionaries can contribute to the New Evangelization. Then, with a spirit of humility and trust in providence, he stated: I am aware of my limitations, but I trust that God will provide me with those graces necessary to fulfill this mission. Father then announced the appointment of Father José María Nieto as provisional secretary.

This institutional act concluded with a very symbolic act: Father Jesús María planted a tree in the soil that had been given to the Superior General from all the places where the missionaries were ministering.

The fourth act was comprised of the Eucharistic celebration which was presided by the Superior General. In his homily, Father highlighted the conversion of Saint Paul and the fact that Paul's conversion demands that we also enter into a process of conversion and renewal. He concluded with the words: let us continue to dream together so that our dreams become a reality.

The fifth act began shortly thereafter a shared meal. That meal became an opportunity for communal encounter and sharing. This time we pray that the three



words mentioned at the beginning of this news bulletin (gratitude, hope and communion) might become a guide for the members of this new Province.

Celestino Fernández, C. M.
Translated: Charles T. Plock, CM

Pilgrimage of the Relic of Saint Vincent de Paul's Heart to Folleville

The 400th anniversary of the Vincentian charism began with a gathering of the Vincentian Family at the Motherhouse of the Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul at 140 rue du Bac. At 8:15 am, all assembled in the alley of the Chapel of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal. We accompanied the departure of the relic of Saint Vincent's heart in a festive way, with songs and a prayer, and many videos and photos.



Then the Vincentians and the Daughters of Charity went to the rue de Sèvres to take the bus. Father Benoît Kitchey, CM, checked on his list that all the pilgrims were present and on their way to Folleville! The departure from Paris gave us a little wink from Monsieur Vincent. The traffic contingencies brought us into the territory of Clichy. For some of our confreres from Indonesia, Brazil, etc., it was the first time in their life that they came to Saint Vincent's parish. A fleeting, but symbolic, sign.

After a trip without problems, we arrived in Folleville to a wonderful welcome from the municipality, represented by the Mayor and a Deputy. Sister Stanislawa, DC, spoke to a journalist from the France 3 television station. The church was well prepared, with warm lighting and orchids at the foot of the altar. There was great effort for the sound (thanks to our colleague Father Philippe Lamblin, CM, Provincial Treasurer) and for the heating (thanks to our hosts in Folleville), neither of which is obvious for a small country church. The Pastor greeted us from the sanctuary. We must add the presence of "Ozanam TV," which came from Brazil!

In short, the joy of the participants, the joy of the event, but also the joy of finding Vincentian confreres, Daughters of Charity, members of the various branches of the Vincentian Family coming from many different backgrounds, all contributed to the day's success.

After a dynamic and well-sung entrance, with Saint Vincent's heart placed near the altar, Father Bernard Koch, CM, gave a very scholarly lecture on Folleville and its origins, as well as on the origins of Madame de Gondi's Family. After all, was it not the right day to put the spotlight on this woman without whom nothing would have gotten started on 25 January 1617? The conference also helped to situate the social relationship between Madame de Gondi and her humble confessor.

Upon completion of this talk, we enjoyed a substantial meal in a room where our hosts were able to seat everyone. It was a time of fraternal sharing and table conversations that lend themselves so well to forging the day's happy memories.

We went back out, without forgetting to go see the remains of the château. Then we returned to the Church for a celebration flowing with talent by Father Yves Bouchet, CM, on the guitar (also the author of the songs!) and Sister Adriana, DC, and Sister Analilza, DC, who accompanied him with enthusiasm. The white of the albs and stoles, the incense that rose harmoniously, contributed fully to prayer and general fervor. The Visitor, Christian Mauvais, CM, again gave meaning to our pilgrimage: calling us to open ourselves more and more to the other in order to be energized following Saint Vincent in the service of charity.

Alas, everything must end. It was time to conclude the celebration. However, to mark this memorable day, Father Christian invited everyone, Vincentian Family and Folleville inhabitants, to gather for a photo taken in the choir of the church.

We left quickly, but not without congratulating the team which welcomed us. We left Sister Stanislawa, DC, there on a mission in Folleville to visit the schools and the retirement houses of the sector with Saint Vincent's heart. On Sunday, 29 January, the Bishop of Amiens planned to celebrate too, with the inhabitants, the charism of the great saint of the great century!

Bertrand Ponsard, CM

VFEC Meeting at the beginning of the 400th Anniversary

The VFEC held its annual meeting on 6 and 7 January in Philadelphia, PA, USA. This was the first time the meeting was held outside of Europe because the Vincentian Family Office is located in Philadelphia. It was a good opportunity to see the Office and its development.

The current members of the VFEC are: Father Tomaž Mavrič and Father Joseph Agostino (Congregation of Mission), Sister Kathleen Appler and Sister Francois Petit (Daughters of Charity), Renato Lima de Oliveira and Edmund Keane (Society of SVP), Brother Broer Huitema and Brother Lawrence Obiko (Brothers of Our Lady, Mother of Mercy), Alicia Duhne and Maria Eugenia Magallanes (AIC), Sister Veronika Haeusler and Sister Blandine Klein (Sisters of Charity Strasbourg Federation), Sister Julie Cutter and Sister Eileen Haynes (Sisters of Charity USA Federation.)



The meeting started with a celebration of the Eucharist in the Chapel of the Provincial House of the Congregation of Mission at 11:00 am. Father Tomaž Mavrič, Superior General, presided. He invited us to celebrate as a Family the 400th Anniversary of the Vincentian Charism. After Mass, everyone was invited to go to the blessing of the Vincentian Family Offices. It was a moment of gratitude for having a place where the Vincentian Family can strengthen its connections in order to serve better those who are poor.

In the afternoon, Father Joe presented the tasks of the Vincentian Family Office followed by Sister Donna Geernaert, Sister of Charity of Halifax, who spoke about "Living into a Structure." As followers of Saint Vincent de Paul, we are invited to work with others. Collaboration is not a goal, but a way of living. Why are we doing alone what we can best do together?



At 5:00 pm there was a reception given by the community at St. Vincent's Seminary followed by supper.

On Saturday, activities began at 8:00 am. Mass was celebrated in the Shrine of the Miraculous Medal which is a beautiful church that depicts the Apparition of Virgin Mary to Saint Catherine Laboure. The Mass was presided by Fr. Joseph Agostino, Coordinator of the Vincentian Family Office. He talked about the Incarnation of Jesus and invited us to recognize him in the face of those who are suffering. At 9:30 the VFEC met at the Conference Room. The items for the morning included discussions about 4 special plans for the 400th Anniversary of the Charism.

The meeting finished at lunch time. The VFEC decided to hold the next meeting (2018) again in Philadelphia. They felt at home in their home. Everyone was grateful for the welcome, hospitality, and the organization of the meeting.

From the Vincentian Family Office, we thank all those who helped to make this meeting possible: the CM Eastern Province, the Daughters of Charity, the Sisters of Saint Joseph, the Team of Translators, and the staff of Saint Vincent Seminary.

An Historic Encounter: the Commissions of the Vincentian Family Meet in Rome

"An historic encounter": that is what it was called by Joe Agostino CM (the Vincentian Family Office Coordinator), and Aidan Rooney CM (Coordinator of .famvin, the web and social media services of the Family), the two organizers of the meeting. It was "in fact the first time that the four committees met" to promote mutual understanding, coordination and to value each other.

It was held at Casa Maria Immacolata in Rome, Italy.

The four commissions or entities are:

- .famvin (web and social media services)
- The Commission for the Promotion of Systemic Change
- the Commission for the Vincentian Family Haiti Initiative
- The Vincentian Collaboration Commission



Some 30 people, divided into five working groups, addressed the issues on the agenda. The tasks were introduced by a report of Father Tomaž Mavrič, Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission and the Daughters of Charity and presiding officer of the Vincentian Family Executive Committee.

In his talk, he began by noting the importance of mutual understanding and cooperation within the Family. Then he unveiled four major initiatives that the family has committed to achieving this year (2017) on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of the birth of our charism. More to come on that soon!

Subsequently, work groups took up and deepened some aspects common to the commissions, especially around the ideas of inter-communication and information sharing. They also considered a draft document that helped describe the relationships among commissions, the Executive Committee and the Vincentian Family Office.

In the afternoon, the various committees presented aspects of their own work and plans, explaining their work, their members and their current and future initiatives.

The meeting of the commissions ended Saturday. The individual, committees continue to meet separately, to carry out their initiatives and see how to value internally what emerged from two days of work.

By: Giuseppe Turati, CM

Chilean Provincial reports on catastrophic fires

Dear Friends:

The various means of communication have reported to the world the devastating consequences of the forest fires that have ravaged various regions of Chile. These fires reached heavily populated zones and have left thousands of people homeless. The most recent government report stated that 11 people died and 3,780 people were injured. Some 1,047 homes were destroyed and the area affected covered 547,190 hectares.

Once again mother nature has revealed her anger with our nation and our people. The area affected by these fires is the same area that was devastated by the 8.8 earthquake and the subsequent tsunami that struck the area on 27 February 2010. The difference being that the area the area affected by the fires is precisely the area where the people who fled the tsunami have settled.

As often happens in these situations, solidarity is immediately made real. Many Chileans and foreign residents have traveled to these areas to help combat the fires and to provide other forms of assistance.

Solidarity has also been manifested by people outside our country: the prayers and the closeness of the Holy Father, the arrival of fire brigades from various Latin American countries and other nations from throughout the world (Peru, Argentina, Colombia, Mexico, Canada, France, Spain and others). The gestures of solidarity range from a large tanker plane to fight the fire (a plane sent by the Russian government) to a donation from a poor person in Argentina who sent some coins and some candy with a note expressing his shock because the houses of the people in Chile are burning ... and therefore I send you what I have, even though it is so little.

The Vincentian Missionaries have also mobilized the members of their parishes and communities to send as much help as possible to this devastated area. At the present time, the confreres are organizing volunteers to go to this area to help with the reconstruction, a work that will begin as soon as the present emergency comes to an end.



Other branches have been concerned about the works that they have in this area, works that could be destroyed by these fires.

Many people have organized prayer chains and in some dioceses the bishops have asked that the Masses this Sunday be offered for the people affected by this catastrophe (for the deceased, the injured, those who have been left homeless, for those combatting the fires).

We are sending our greetings to our brothers, members of the Congregation of the Mission and to all the members of the Vincentian Family. We ask that you accompany us and help us especially with your prayers. Those persons most affected by this disaster are the poor, our lords and masters.

Sincerely,
Fernando Marcias Fernández, CM
Visitor of Chile

Translated:
Charles T. Plock, CM

Nominaciones/Confirmaciones

SANTOS SOUSA Adriano	04/01/2016	DC Director Amazonia
GONZÁLEZ ANTÓN Jesús María	25/01/2017	Visitor St. San Vincent de Paul - Spain

Ordinationes

MADANU Praveen Kumar	Sac	InM	07/01/2017
PERIYANAYAGA RAJ David	Sac	InM	13/01/2017
BITWAYIKI Joseph	Sac	Col	15/01/2017
DUKUZUMUREMYI Jean Damascene	Sac	Col	15/01/2017
MUVUGHA MATSINGA Henri	Sac	Col	15/01/2017
NSHIMIYIMANA Innocent	Sac	Col	15/01/2017

Necrologium

Nomen	Cond .	Dies ob.	Prov.	Aet.	Voc.
TOULEMONDEÉmile Henry	Sac	06/01/2017	FRA	94	77
CUESTA VILLA José Luis	Sac	09/01/2017	MAD	84	66
MESTROM HERMANO H.G.(HOL)	Sac	19/01/2017	FOR	86	67

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