FOUR HUNDRED YEARS OF FIDELITY TO ITS CHARISM AND THE NEW EVANGELIZATION
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Pag.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jubilee: Charity and Mission. 400th anniversary of the origin of the</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vincentian Charism 300th anniversary of the presence of the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congregation of the Mission in Portugal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Superior General’s Visit to the Alberoni College in Piacenza,</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Relics of St. Vincent de Paul are on Pilgrimage</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Various Cities Throughout Mexico</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII Session of the School of Vincentian Spirituality (CLAPVI)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The visit of Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican Secretary of State,</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sparked joy in the village of Akamasoa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY – PERU: January 2017</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The APVC Annual Meeting-2017, Vietnam</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordinations in Ocean Province</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curia</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curia</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Jubilee: Charity and Mission

400th anniversary of the origin of the Vincentian Charism 300th anniversary of the presence of the Congregation of the Mission in Portugal

by: Fr. Agostinho Sousa, CM [Provincial Secretary]

In 2017 throughout the world we celebrate the 400th anniversary of the birth of the Vincentian charism. The words of Vincent de Paul: *these people are dying of hunger and are damned*, inspired concrete responses to meet the needs of his era and has continued to animate Vincentian activity throughout these past four centuries. *Charity and Mission* --- elements proper to all those individuals who seek to follow the Saint of Charity, also known as the “mystic of action” (Dodin, “St. Vincent de Paul mystique de l’action religieuse”, *Mission et Charité*, #29-30, January-April, 1968, p. 26-47).

In this part of the world known as Portugal, we have another reason to celebrate and praise the Father of Mercy who desired to establish the Congregation of the Mission in the midst of “this garden near the sea”. For three hundred years courageous men have not only proclaimed the Good News to the people of this country but have brought the same Good News to other continents. These individuals were often persecuted and some of them shed their blood as they wrote the wonderful history that recounts their dedication to Jesus, the Evangelize of the Poor and their commitment to Vincent de Paul, the father of the poor.

The Episcopal Conference in Portugal, aware of the Jubilee Year and the presence of the sons and daughters of Saint Vincent and the presence of the whole Vincentian Family, gave formal recognition to that reality on November 10th, 2016 (a day proximate to the commemoration of the arrival of Father Gomes da Costa in Lisbon). The Bishops referred to certain challenges: *Strengthen the “new ardor”, search for “new methods” and embrace “new expressions” in the transmission of the Vincentian DNA to new generations; accept the call of the Church and the world to permanent renewal …

renewal that is faithful to the lines of the mystique of charity; commit yourselves to confront all those situations that degrade the dignity of the human person!*

Jubilee celebrations and the presence of the Superior General

On January 25th, the local communities of the Province of Portugal, together with the Vincentian Family and all the People of God, participated in various festive celebrations.

In Lisbon, the seat of the Province, the official opening of the Jubilee Year took place on January 28-29 in the parish church of Saint Thomas Aquinas. On January 28th, the superior general, Thomaž Mavrič, CM, was welcomed into our midst and was the guest of honor at a concert that was offered by the choir of the parish church. The music selected was: Bach’s Mass in C Minor. The concert was followed by a toast which was offered in a manner very typical to the Portuguese. There was then an opportunity to view the exposition which told the history of the presence of the Congregation during the past 300 years (the exposition was arranged in several rooms with ten different themes).
The climax of the day was the celebration of the Eucharist which was presided by the superior general. The concelebrants included Father Jose Alves (Visitor), Nélio Pita (Pastor) and fourteen other priests. Father Mavrič captivated the assembly as he celebrated the Eucharist in Portuguese. The children of the parish offered Father some commemorative gifts (the parish has always been administered by the Congregation). After the Mass a dinner was offered at the Motherhouse.

**The Vincentian Family gathered together to give thanks**

On Sunday, January 29th, a large multitude of people, which included people from many different branches of the Vincentian Family, gathered together to celebrate the Eucharist (which was televised throughout the country). The Mass was presided by the Cardinal Patriarch of Lisbon, Manuel José Macário do Nascimento Clemente. Also participating were: the superior general, Thomaž Mavrič, CM and the Vincentian Bishop-emeritus of Portalegre-Castelo, Augusto César. Three deacon ministered at the altar and some thirty priests concelebrated. The liturgy had been prepared by the members of the Vincentian Family, parishioners and the choir of Saint Thomas Aquinas. In his homily, the cardinal praised the Congregation of the Mission and its founder, Saint Vincent de Paul ... a man who lived the Sermon on the Mount and who lived in accord with the words: 

*desire what God desires, act in accord with the manner in which God desires to act and where God desires to act.*

After the Eucharist, a parish group (the Saint Martha Society) served a luncheon which included a cake on which were the words “400 years of the charism”. In the afternoon, the superior general met with the members of the Vincentian Family, during which he offered some suggestions with regard to the manner in which they might live this holy year and do so in accord with the activities that have already been planned. He emphasized that all their activity during these next twelve months should be oriented to our theme: *I was a stranger and you welcomed me.* Later in the evening Father went to the central house of the Daughters of Charity where he prayed *Vespers* with them and dined with them. After the meal, he had a dialogue with the Sisters.

**Work and Visit to Fatima**

January 30th began with Morning Prayer and was followed by a meeting of the Provincial Council. There the superior general came to a greater understanding of the history of the province and the challenges that the confreres must confront in the coming years. Father thanked the confreres for their cordial reception and reminded them about the lines of action from the 2016 General Assembly.

On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the appearances at Fatima, representatives from the Congregation of the Mission and the Company of the Daughters of Charity accompanied the superior general to Fatima, where they prayed together at the feet of the Virgin.

All those who met with the superior general during his time in our province commented on his simplicity, humility, approachability, calmness, and openness. We believe that the superior general was content with his visit and promised that he would return. At the same time we were happy and thankful for his presence. We pray that he will soon return to be among us and we also pray that God will help him fulfill his mission.

*Translated: Charles T. Plock, CM*
The Alberoni College was founded in 1751. Cardinal Giulio Alberoni wanted an institution to form priests of the Piacenza Diocese who did not have the means necessary to support themselves in Montecitorio. Cardinal Alberoni entrusted the formation to the priests of the Congregation of the Mission, whom he had met during his stay in Rome. Since the time of Saint Vincent, the missionaries had had a house in Rome. In the Cardinal’s time, they preached Popular Missions and formed the clergy in Rome. For this reason, and knowing the style of their work, spirituality, and commitment to the service of the clergy, he gave them the responsibility of carrying out formation in the seminary.

The Superior General, Father Tomaž Mavrič, CM, visited there on 19-20 February. He spent two days sharing with the seminarians and the formation community. The superior, Father Erminio Antonello, welcomed him on 19 February and he immediately met the 12 Vincentian seminarians who are studying in that seminary.

After Lauds on Monday, he met with the administrators of “Opera Pia” (the institution responsible for the financial management of the seminary).

An important moment of the day was the meeting with the 38 seminarians from Brazil, Cape Verde, Congo, Egypt, Haiti, Lebanon, Poland, Tanzania, Togo, Ukraine, and Italy. The meeting was held in the Tapestries Room, named for the 16th-century tapestries, displayed in the complex that forms the Alberoni Gallery. During the meeting, they presented several videos about the life of the seminary itself and some representative places in Piacenza. The presentations alternated with songs prepared by the seminarians.

In the afternoon, Father Tomaž met again with the Vincentian seminarians and their director. At this time, they asked questions, which Father Tomaž answered with simplicity, intensity, and a lot of humanity. When asked what the characteristic of the Vincentian priest should be, Father replied, “The best quality for a Vincentian priest today is the ability to put himself on the same level as the poor person in order to see himself in the same poverty.” At the conclusion of the meeting, Father Tomaž left the following message: “In bringing Jesus to the poor, we bring love and the person, feeling loved, is able to heal.” The day ended in the afternoon with the Eucharist with the whole community of the Alberoni College in the Church of Saint Lazarus. The following day, to conclude the visit, he shared the prayer of Lauds and the Eucharist in the seminary chapel.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9UqTigokw5g
The Vincentian Family is living this Jubilee Year with much enthusiasm as we commemorate the 400th anniversary of the origin of our charism. This Jubilee Year is a time of grace, a time of blessing and a time of renewal.

The Congregation of the Mission has developed a series of proposals for this year: Eucharistic celebrations, meetings with the various branches of the Vincentian Family, youth encounters, conferences, rosaries, Holy Hours, promoting Vincentian vocations, development of Vincentian material, etc.

A committee was formed in Mexico to plan activities on a local level. The committee presented a series of initiatives to celebrate this Jubilee Year.

Among their proposals, I highlight here that of organizing a pilgrimage of the relics of Saint Vincent de Paul … a pilgrimage to the various places where the Vincent Family is ministering. We requested relics from the General Curia and they immediately sent relics to Mexico (relics of the first degree … a bone from one of Vincent’s fingers).

At the same time, we had an image made of Saint Vincent, using as a model the remains of Vincent as seen in the Motherhouse in Paris. The relic that was sent to us by the General Curia was then placed on the chest of the image of Vincent.

The Jubilee Year began on January 25th and at that time the relics began their pilgrimage. The scheduled visits include the following sites: Ciudad de México, Estado de México, Michoacán, Guanajuato, Jalisco, Aguascalientes, San Luis Potosí, Tamaulipas, Nuevo León, Coahuila, Durango, Chihuahua, Baja California Norte, Jalisco, Querétaro, Ciudad de México, Morelos, Puebla, Veracruz, Chiapas, Yucatán, Campeche, Veracruz, Estado de México, Puebla, Tlaxcala, Ciudad de México, Hidalgo and Ciudad de México.

In each place the Eucharist (presided by the local bishop) is celebrated in the cathedral. There are also presentations on the Vincentian charism, Holy Hours, the recitation of the rosary, publicity on the various means of communication, etc. This is an opportunity to make known to the all the people of the community the richness of the Vincentian charism.

In the places where the relic has already traveled, the people have experienced an extraordinary joy and understand that this pilgrimage of the relics of Saint Vincent is intended to strengthen them in their commitment to serve their sisters and brothers who are poor.

It should be mentioned here that this pilgrimage of the relics is taking place as a result of the collaboration among the various branches of the Vincentian Family. The conclusion of the Jubilee Year will take place at the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe (December 16, 2017). You can follow the pilgrimage at: www.facebook.com/reliquiasvicentemexico.

Translated:

Charles T. Plock, CM
Curitiba has been the seat of the School of Vincentian Spirituality (CLAPVI), which in 2017 offered its eighth session of on-going formation. Sixteen confreres participated in this session, confreres from Argentina, Colombia, Rio de Janeiro, Curitiba, Chile, Puerto Rico and the region of Panama.

This course on spirituality began on Sunday, January 29 with the celebration of the Eucharist that was presided by Fr. Odair Miguel Gonsalves dos Santos, CM (Visitor of Curitiba) who welcomed the participants and then invited them to gather together for fraternal sharing in the classrooms of the Vincentian Faculty of Philosophy and Theology which are located next to the Motherhouse.

The course on spirituality was developed over the course of four weeks. The first week, which dealt with Vincentian fundamentals was directed by Fr. Marlio Nasayó, CM (Colombia). Two themes were presented during the second week: Latin American theology by Fr. Francisco Salamanca, CM and liturgy by Fr. Gilson Camargo, CM (Curitiba).

The third week was dedicated to deepening one’s understanding of the Vincentian virtues and that material was presented by Fr. Daniel Arturo Vásquez, CM (the former Visitor of Colombia). The fourth week began with a presentation on the biblical foundation of our spirituality which was presented by Fr. Carlos Fonsatti, CM (Curitiba). Then the session ended with a spiritual retreat that was directed by Fr. José Antonio Ubillús, CM (Peru).

The presence of confreres from other countries provided an opportunity for the Province to initiate the Jubilee Year to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the origin of the Vincentian charism. During the time together the confreres had an opportunity to know the distinct ministries of the Congregation of the Mission, the pastoral ministry of Rodoviaria as well as the ministries of the Daughters of Charity. There was also time to visit the city and time to form community among the participants of the on-going formation session.

Translated:

Charles T. Plock, CM
The visit of Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican Secretary of State, sparked joy in the village of Akamasoa

Pietro Parolin said in his speech.

For 28 years, Father Pedro Opeka has tried to lift thousands of families from poverty in Antananarivo by developing Akamasoa. Currently, Akamasoa has 26,000 residents, 13,500 junior high school, high school, and university students.

“I came to share with them the joy and bring the presence and affection of Pope Francis. You know that Pope Francis is very close to the poor. He is a great defender of the poor. I think he would feel very comfortable with those people. It is something to represent the figure and the word of the Pope,” he explained, speaking about the purpose of his visit to Father Pedro Opeka and his protégés.

Oasis of Hope

He thanked especially the Argentinean priest who has spent nearly 47 years of his life fighting poverty in Madagascar. “In the name of Pope Francis, we are grateful particularly to Father Pedro and all those people who embark on social projects,” Cardinal

Thirty-thousand people per year also benefit from nutritional and health care. The association has some one-hundred recipients who have successfully completed their studies.

Father Pedro, the project manager of this “oasis of hope,” reminds our leaders that they should not expect “glory” by rendering service to the Nation. “Our leaders refrain from telling the truth. Others are in this place for their glory and do not fulfill their duty as they should. For me, as a man of the Church, service is my only motto. If you do not serve the population, what are you doing here? It is an honor to help our children, our young people, the population,” he emphasized. Words on which our leaders should meditate.

By: Emile Ghadi, CM FAMVIN Francés

Miangaly Ralitera – L’Express de Madagascar
Within the Congregation of the Mission, provincial assemblies are an important element in life of every province. We know that each province is organized hierarchically, a Visitor leads an individual province and that confere is assisted by the members of his council. The destiny of the province is basically in the hands of the Visitor and his council. Nevertheless, there are times when the Visitor needs a broader consultation which can only be provided by those who are ministering in the various areas of the province, that is, those areas where the nature of the Congregation of the Mission is being made effective. Thus, we see the importance of the provincial assemblies: they are the best means of consultation that is available to the Visitor, they provide the Visitor with the best understanding and vision of the province and they help the Visitor and the Province to move out toward new goals and to renew commitments to present goals. This has been our experience as we, the members of the Province of Peru, gathered together in Lima to celebrate our provincial assembly (January 30 to February 4th, 2017).

As established in our Provincial Norms, twenty-four missionaries representing the twelve local communities in Peru, were called together in the Provincial House of the Daughters of Charity. On Monday, at 9:00 we celebrated the Eucharist and prayed for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. After the Eucharist, we gathered in the Assembly Hall where the Visitor, Father Pedro Guillén, verified the assistance of all the delegates. Then, the Visitor, declared that the Provincial Assembly was now open.

The Preparatory Commission, which had been established some months before, had informed us that the primary objective of the Assembly was to develop a new six-year Provincial Plan. This new plan was to be grounded on the conclusions of the 2016 General Assembly. The Visitor suggested that we use the outline of the previous plan as we begin to develop a new plan. The Assembly accepted this suggestion and then began its work.

The schedule of the day was organized in the following manner: the first activity of the day would be morning prayer and the celebration of the Eucharist; the delegates would then work the rest of the morning in two groups and then gather together for a plenary session. In the afternoon, after lunch and a “siesta”, the same process would be followed. In the evening the redaction commission would be involved.
in its work ... little by little, as the days passed, the new Provincial Plan was developed.

Perhaps it would be best to highlight those themes that created much discussion among the participants in the assembly as well as those themes in which one was able to notice a great concern among the delegates. The first heated discussion revolved around the approval of the objectives, the mission and the vision of the plan ... what was to be expected from this plan. We attempted to establish the nature and goals of the plan. The majority of the missionaries agreed that the province ought to become more missionary (with concrete plans for assisting those who are poor and with an intention of moving out to the peripheries). After much work, those ideas were incorporated into the objectives of the plan. Another theme that was debated was that of vocational promotion. Many suggestions were made in this area: deepen our ministry with young people, appoint one confrere who would dedicate himself exclusively to this ministry, become more conscious of the witness that we give to other, etc. Some of these suggestions were also incorporated into the plan.

At the end of the week, we saw that our Assembly has produced much good fruit: the Province of Peru has a goal and a path to follow during the next six years. I believe we have developed a realistic plan, one that is viable and sensitive to those who poor. Now we have to live this plan and, as I said at the beginning, this depends on the Visitor, his council and each one of the confrere ministering in all the different areas of the province.

Translated:

Charles T. Plock, CM

The APVC Annual Meeting-2017, Vietnam

The Asia Pacific Visitors’ Conference (APVC) held its annual meeting at Durando Philosophical Institute, Dalat, Vietnam, from Feb. 17-24, 2017. Fr. Mathew Kallammakal (Asst. General), Frs. Venerando Agner (Visitor, Philippines), Tomichan Joseph (Visitor, Southern India), Vijay Kumar Nayak (Visitor, Northern India), Augustine Huu Gia (Vice Visitor, Vietnam), Manuel Edi Prasetyo (Assis. Visitor, Indonesia), Ferdinand EstarejaLabitag (Delegate, China), Peter Reedy (Delegate, Oceania), Paulus Suparmono (Mission Superior, Solomon Islands International Mission), Emmanuel ValmorriaLapaz (Mission Superior, Papua New Guinea Inter-

The APVC Commission on Charism and Culture (CCC) also held its annual meeting at the same venue and interacted with the Visitors and delegates of the APVC concerning the future activities of the commission. The CCC members are Peter Reedy (Chairman, Oceania), Jenson Kalloor (Secretary, Northern India), Joseph Loftus (member, China) and Paul (Member, Vietnam). The responsibilities of the CCC commission are the following:
1. To stimulate research and reflection on Vincentian charism within the region
2. To assist APVC in the formation of formators
3. To assist the APVC in organizing the regional programs for confreres engaged in various ministries

Visitors of APVC meet every year and the meeting is rotated through each province. The reason for rotating the meeting through each province is to introduce the participants to the life situations, customs and realities of the host province through a personal experience. After the meeting or before the meeting two days are kept for visiting the confreres and their works, for visiting the Daughters and their apostolate and for visiting the local people to get know them first hand. Keeping with this tradition the participants were taken to various mission centers operated by the Vice-Province of Vietnam.

The purpose of APVC is to carry the spirit and charism of St. Vincent into the evangelizing of people and cultures of the Asia-Pacific Region. Thus the main focus of discussion is always on the ways and means of promoting interprovincial collaboration in the Asia-Pacific region to advance the Vincentian charism and spirit in this part of the world.

The meeting began with a presentation of a paper on the Catholic Church in Vietnam and the New Evangelization by Fr. Anthony Nguyen Ngoc Son, the secretary of Vietnam Bishops’ Conference. Each Visitor/vice visitor and the delegates presented report of the respective province that included the history, mission, and specific activities and programs. The APVC 2017 discussed the following points and in some cases decisions are made.

APVC Commission on Charism and Culture (CCC)

1. The current team members, Peter Reedy (Oceania), Joseph Loftus (China), Jenson Kalloor Northern India), and Paul (Vietnam), will continue as the core team of the CCC while Southern India, Indonesia and Philippines will nominate a confrere each to the Commission.
2. The CCC will continue to meet annually to plan its regional workshops and programs. They will work on a long-term plan of action for the APVC and maintain and update the APVC website.

Regional formators’ meeting 2017 in Indonesia

3. The APVC decided to hold the Formators’ Meeting of 2017 in the province of Indonesia in the month of June and the formation in-charge of Indonesian Province will organize the event this year. And from the next time onwards, the CCC will organize the Formators’meeting in collaboration with the host province.
Common Internal Seminary in Asia-Pacific Region

4. Based on the agreement arrived at the 2016 APVC meeting held in Chicago, the 2017 APVC meeting decided to have the Common Internal Seminary program for the Asia-Pacific Region. The Common internal seminary will be held in the Province of Philippines from May-June 2019 onwards and each province will send minimum two or more students to the common program. The APVC meeting 2018 will decide the Director and assistant director of the program.

Regional Popular Mission experience

5. The APVC decided to organize a regional meeting of the confreres engaged in Popular Mission preaching. This will provide an occasion for confreres to share their popular mission experience and learn from one another. The CCC in collaboration with the Province of Indonesia, will organize the event in March 2018.

APVC Solidarity Fund

6. The APVC decided to create an APVC Solidarity Fund to support the provinces/vice province of the region in times of natural disaster. Ten percent (10%) from the annual contribution of the member provinces/vice province to the APVC Account at the Curia will be credited to the Solidarity Fund. The President of the APVC, with the executive secretary, will manage the Solidarity Fund.

Regional Ongoing Formation program for confreres under five years of their ordination

7. The APVC decided to organize a regional ongoing formation program for confreres under five years of their ordination in the Asia-Pacific region. The CCC is entrusted with the responsibility of organizing this program towards the end of 2018. An appropriate topic related to human formation will be selected for this program. The venue of the meeting will be announced later. The proposal to hand over the administrative responsibility of Solomon International mission to Indonesian province by June 2017 was discussed. The details yet have to be worked out.

The first meeting of The Asia-Pacific Visitors Conference was held in Sydney, Australia, in April 1994. At that meeting the Visitors established a simple set of guidelines to govern the conference’s activities, which came to be known as “A Minute of Understanding.” This Minute of Understanding is reviewed every year and passed with or without changes.

Fr. Baiju A. Chittuparamban
Executive Secretary, APVC
The ordination to the Priesthood of Rev. Benjamin Paka, Rev. Lorensio Kinika and Rev. Jeffrey Werner was a wonderful event. The ordinations were held at Red Beach Parish of the Good Shepherd, Honiara. There was a very big congregation, some arriving a few days earlier and pitching “tents” or other temporary dwellings and living in the old church on the grounds of the Parish. The music, singing and cultural dancing took us all to a special place wherein the faith, hope and love expressed by the people strengthened all of us. It was truly moving. Archbishop Christopher Cardone OP reminded us of our calling as Vincentians and the work before us in the Solomon Islands. In rehearsing our history he displayed a strong grasp of the key moments in Vincent’s life and how these relate to us now. He truly appreciates the Vincentians and would like a long association with us in the years ahead. Three priestly ordinations of local Solomon Island men is a good start.

Two of the newly ordained have been appointed to the Red Beach Parish to work alongside Fr. Brian O’Sullivan who is the Parish Priest. The two confreres are Lawrence Kinika and Benjamin Paka. It is a three-year appointment. Jeffrey Werner has been appointed to our Parish at Nausori in Fiji. He will be the third member of a young, vibrant team.

This is a significant step in the life of the Archdiocese and the Vincentians. Underlying these ordinations is a commitment by the Province of Oceania to the Vincentian Curia and the Archdiocese to be responsible for the Parish of the Good Shepherd in conjunction with the Seminary Community and however that is made up.

I am appending some photos for your perusal and I will attach more photos in the following emails.

Gregory Brett CM
Provincial
New Procurator General and Postulator for the Congregation of the Mission

The superior general, Father Thomaž Mavrič, has appointed Father Giuseppe Guerra from the Province of Italy, as Procurator to the Holy See and Postulator for the causes of the Saints of the Vincentian Family.

Father Giuseppe was ordained on March 19th, 1968 and has ministered as a formator, was Visitor of the Province of Naples (1995-2004 and 2010-2016) and has served as Postulator General (1989-1995 and 2004-2010).

At this time, Father Guerra is working on the causes for the canonization of the Blessed and the causes for beatification of our Servants of God, especially those who are in the final stages of those processes, for example the blessed martyrs of Spain (Vicente Queralt Lloret and his twenty companions and Fernando María Sánchez and his thirty-eight companions) whom we hope will be beatified during the celebration of the 400th anniversary of the birth of the Vincentian charism.

New Superior of the General Curia: Father Giuseppe Carulli, CM

Father Giuseppe Carulli was born in 1968 and was ordained in 1996. He was superior of the Curia from 2011-2014.

Father is a member of the Province of Italy and has served as National Advisor to the VMY and regional assistant to the AIC in Abruzzo.

As superior he will continue his ministry with the VMY and the AIC and will also serve as Legal Representative of the Procurator General of the Congregation of the Mission (2017-2020)

New Econome General

We welcome Father Paul Parackal, CM from the Province of Southern India who on March 1st, began to offer his services to the General Curia as Econome General. Father Paul was ordained on January 10th, 1998 and ministered as pastor for three years and econome at the Major Seminary for three years. He also served as Financial Administrator at De Paul International School and as Provincial Econome from 2007-2014 ... he has also served as Vice-Principal of the same school in Mysore from 2014-2016.

We also want to send our greeting to Father Shijo Antony Kanjathamkunnel who, during the past four years, has served as Procurator to the Holy See and Postulator for the causes of the Saints. On February 27th Father became a member of the International Mission Team in Anchorage, Alaska ... Let us join together and continue to pray for him.

Father Paul has worked at the General Curia as assistant to the Econome General, Father Joseph Geders, who will accompany him for a brief period of time.

Translated: Charles T. Plock, CM
Información General

Ordinationes

T. Lithin    Sac   InM   05/01/2017
KINIKA Lorensio   Sac   Aul   04/02/2017
PAKA Benjamin   Sac   Aul   04/02/2017
WERNER Jeffrey Richard   Sac   Aul   04/02/2017

Necrologium

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