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

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It has been 400 years since the days of Folleville and Châtillon. That long period has not wizened the Vincentian charism like the oak at the Berceau. It is as alive as a spring high in the mountains.

The Polish artist, Mariola Zajączkowska-Bicho, on a sketch by Father Luigi Mezzadri, CM, wrote a folding triptych icon. It connects us to the beginnings of our charism, speaking to us not with difficult concepts, but essentially with images and colors, understandable to the wise and the ignorant, as in the noblest tradition of the Church. In fact, Jesus said, “I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to the childlike” (Matthew 11:25). We all know that, when we come before a picture of ancient or modern art, we need a thorough knowledge of art history. However, to understand the icon we need to pray.

The triptych icon appears closed with the following dimensions: 60cm x 40cm x 6cm. If we open the two panels, the 23.75-carat gold that makes-up the backdrop dazzles us. Gold is the divine light that surrounds Saint Vincent, who holds a Bible and a loaf of bread. These two symbols remind us of the events of Folleville (January 1617) and Châtillon-les-Dombes (August 1617), when a young priest had the courage to commit to beginning the work of the missions and to organizing the laity in the “Charities” in order to make known a God who forgives and who invites us to solidarity. The divine light is the divine seal on the Vincentian charism.

The saint is not old, as in our iconographic tradition, in which we want him to appear “old as a young man” (senex a puero, as in the Litany of Saint Vincent), but he is young, because he shares in the fullness of God (Colossians 2:10). He has a white habit, as in the icons of the Transfiguration, because he lived transfiguring service into vision. He is wrapped in a blue cloak, a color that in times past was obtained from the fragmentation of lapis lazuli. Blue is the color of faith, which clothes us in immortality. In his hands, he has a book and a loaf of bread. The book is red like the work of the Holy Spirit, who, at Folleville, “opened his mouth,” as in the Ephphatha rite of Baptism, and inspired him to proclaim the wonders of the Lord. The bread is neither white nor honey-colored, like the bread of the rich, but very dark, like the bread of the poor.
Father Mavrič blesses new venture for homeless men in Catania

This work enters fully within the scope of the Vincentian project, celebrating the 400th anniversary of the birth of the Vincentian Charism of support and service to the poorest.

The ceremony was attended by some institutional authorities, among whom the Undersecretary Giuseppe Castiglione and the Advisers Giuseppe Barretta and Angelo Villari, who have been asked to lend also two premises near the new structure for its use.

The men who will be guests of this new house were excited and proud for the great work developed and the possibility that has been offered them. Also present at the opening were more than 100 volunteers and people close to the project. Father Tomaž Mavrič, CM, Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, inaugurated the structure, cutting the ribbon and serving as spokesperson for the works of the Vincentian Mission in Catania and the world.

Father Mario Sirica, who is responsible, among other things, for the “Good Samaritan Inn,” a structure that already houses various people in difficulty, will also be in charge of running the new welcome house for men, which will host some 25 homeless men.

The house is located in Via...
Sant’Agostino, in the heart of the historical center of Catania, inside a premises lent for free use by the Provincial Health Authority. The work departs from the traditional models of a service like this, which only offer a dormitory for lodging. The project aims to become a true “laboratory” of community life. In fact, the guests will enjoy individual follow-up in order to overcome difficulties and be able to reintegrate socially. One of the projects is the development of a daily reception center that will accommodate even the production of the street magazine, “TeleStrada Press,” which is a work rehabilitation project for people experiencing homelessness or social disadvantage.

By: Davide Di Bernardo, JMV

Martyrs of the Vincentian Family (Spain)

CANONIZATION PROCESS OPENED IN THE DIOCESE OF MADRID

June 30th, 2004 and is referred to as:

FATHER JOSÉ MARÍA FERNÁNDEZ SANCHEZ
AND THIRTY-EIGHT COMPANIONS

On March 23rd, 2017,
The Holy Father, Pope Francis
Authorized the publication of the following decree
This group of martyrs of the Vincentian family is composed of thirty-three members of the Congregation of the Mission, seventeen of whom are priests and sixteen are Brothers. This process was initiated in November 1960 by ecclesiastical authorities and now we must complete this process by adapting it to the new canonical norms. To this group of thirty-three religious, we have joined six laymen, Knights of the Miraculous Medal, members of a lay group who nourished their faith under the maternal gaze of the Virgin at the Basilica in Madrid. Those individuals were formed in the school of St. Vincent de Paul, lived with the Vincentian martyrs, participated in their apostolic and charitable mission and, like them, were victims of a ferocious religious persecution that sought to exterminate the Church in Spain. I must state here that they were not the only members of the Association who gave their lives in defense of the faith. These six have been selected from a list that was made by the administrators of the Basilica in 1939 and because reliable official documentation is available, stating with names and surnames that they were taken prisoner and murdered for the sole reason of serving in positions of leadership in the aforementioned Marian Congregation. In addition, we have direct testimony from among their relatives and friends. It is a beautiful page in the history of the Church and the Vincentian Family, and therefore, we want to approach this with respect and devotion, convinced that their example and their intercession will help us overcome the temptations of mediocrity and lack of hope that constantly threaten us.

In 1936, the Congregation of the Mission had five communities dedicated to the Institute’s various ministries in the Diocese of Madrid, which ministries included preaching the Gospel and Christian morality during popular missions, authentic spiritual renewal in the parishes; ministering to the Daughters of Charity; public worship, the celebration of sacraments, especially the Eucharist and penance and service in all their parishes; a unique organization of charity and the promotion of the needy, through the Associations of the laity.

Let us look at this in greater detail. The Provincial House was located at 45 García de Paredes and thirty-seven priests and nineteen brothers resided there. On the night of July 24, 1936 the house was attacked by a group of revolutionaries ... those individuals launched a simultaneous attack on the three doors of the house. At one time the militiamen considered all the residents together, but they were too many and so they decided to postpone the execution. Some were able to escape the following day and sought refuge with family and/or friends. Others were taken prisoner. Thirteen of the Servants of God were residents in this house, including the superior, Father Ibáñez.

Another community, located at 38 calle Lope de Vega, next to the Novitiate of the Daughters of Charity, was composed of nine priests (all of whom were involved in the formation and the spiritual direction of the Sisters) and five brothers. This was the most persecuted house ... only four priests survived and those because they were outside of Madrid. Ten of the martyrs are from this community including Father José María Fernández whose name is at the head of this list of martyrs.

A third house was located in the town of Hortaleza (Madrid). Six priests, seventeen brothers and thirty-six novices resided there. The novices and most of their formators had been sent to Tardajos (Burgos) ... only sixteen religious remained in the house and all of them were taken prisoner on July 21 ... six of them were martyred.

Five priests and four brothers resided in the house in Valdemoro (Madrid). These individuals were also arrested on July 25th and taken to the prison at Getfe. Later they were transported to the prison at Ventas ... two priests and one brother were martyred.

A community at 21 Calle Fernández de Hoz was composed of five priests from the Province of Aquitania ... Father Manuel Requejo Pérez was among those martyred.

For greater clarity, I will proceed in chronological order.

The first martyrs were Brother Vicente Cecilia Gallardo, 22 years old (a native of Cabra, Córdoba) and Brother Manuel Trachiner Montañana, 21 years old (a native of Puzol, Valencia and educated with the Daughters of Charity in the Beneficencia in Valencia). Both of these brothers resided in the Hortaleza house. As they traveled to Madrid to receive appointments from their superior they were killed on the Canillas Highway in the early hours of July 20th. The reason given for the execution was that in their baggage they had a crucifix and a cassock.

On the same day, July 20th, the residence at Hortaleza was attacked ... all the brothers and priests and the pastor of the town were taken prisoner. Confusing news arrived at the Provincial House and Brother Roque Catalán Domingo offered to go to Hortaleza in order to know what was happening and to assist the confreres. Before leaving he asked for a blessing from the superior and told his companions: if I do not return, pray a Te Deum for me. Brother Roque did not seek martyrdom; he simply sensed that it
was approaching and accepted it for what it was, namely, a grace of God. Disguised in a dark blue shirt and a cane, he arrived at Hortleza, at the convent of the Holy Family. There, however, he was apprehended, questioned and executed because he was a religious. He was born in La Aldehuela (Teruel) and was sixty-two at the time of his death. His primary spiritual teacher was his father, who, after several years of being a widow, became a brother and left behind him a trail of virtue and evangelical simplicity.

Father José Ibáñez Mayandía, the superior, was threatened on the night of July 24. Valiant and fulfilling his duty, he remained in the house. On Sunday, July 26th, very early in the morning, he went to celebrate Mass in the neighboring convalescent Hospital, where he was arrested and imprisoned in one of the Catholic schools that had been converted into the Liberian Athenaeum Chamberí, (this school had belonged to the Daughters of Charity who were disposed of that property). They left him for dead in Dehesa de la Villa, but the next day, when they went to the same place to execute another victim, they found him alive. They brought him back to the school tortured him in a most cruel manner and then executed him ... his crime: he was a priest. Father Ibáñez was born in La Puebla de Hijar (Teruel) and was martyred on July 27th, 1936 at the age of 59. He had been a zealous missionary and during the African Wars he accompanied and provided for the spiritual needs of the Daughters of Charity who were to minister at the Hospital of Larache.

On August 11, the bodies of Brother Perfecto del Río Pármo and of Brother Estanislao Páramo Marcos (cousins), as well as the body of the chaplain of Saint Joseph’s Church, Cecilio del Río (brother of Perfecto who had welcomed both Perfecto and Estanislao into his house), were found near the walls of the slaughterhouse. Their religious status had been discovered and they were taken prisoner 3 days earlier. Both Brothers were born in Pedrosa del Río Urbel (Burgos) and were, respective, 54 and 51 years of age at the time of their death.

On August 12th, Fr. Hilario Barrioconal Quintana was martyred, as were two members from the community of García de Paredes and also from Burgos, Father Quintanavides, who was secretary to the Provincial and chaplain at the social center, Gota de Leche (the drop of milk) located on calle Espada. Father Quintanavides had taken refuge there, but on August 9th, the militiamen of the Socialist Circle of Segovia Bridge, seized the building. Father Barrioconal had been able to pass himself off as a relative of the porter, but someone gave him away and on August 11th, at 6:30 in the afternoon, he was taken to the church of Santa Cristina and on August 12th, 1936, he was murdered at the Casa de Campo. He was 67 years old.

During the second half of August the scene at Chamberí became appalling. The parish churches of St. Therese and St. Elizabeth were destroyed and the Basilica converted into a stable. Headquarters of the secret police were established in various religious houses. On August 21st, José Garvi Calvente, a native of Madrid, 55 years old, a businessman, married, father of one daughter, after being interrogated by the secret police of Communist Party Radio 9, located in 46 Santa Engracia, was martyred in the graveyard of Aravaca.

On the 23rd of the same month, at the secret police headquarters located at the Cuartel de la Montaña, four other members of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal parish were martyred: Justo Ramón Piedrafita, born in Huesca, 40 years old, doorman, married and father of six children; Agustín Fernández Vázquez, a native of El Escorial (Madrid), 41 years old, postman, treasurer of the Association and person always willing to serve at the Basilica, married with no children; Felipe Basauri Altuve, a native of Bilbao, 55, employed, married and father of three daughters; Eduardo Campos Vasalto, a native of Orduña (Vizcaya), 52, an assistant at the Public Works Authority, married and father of six children.

These four individuals were interrogated by the secret police of the Socialist Circle of the North, who had offices in a building that had previously been. It was these members of the secret police8, who were with finding the parishioners of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Parish.

Fr. Manuel Requejo Pérez entered the Congregation as canon of the Burgo de Osma. During the time of the religious persecution, he found refuge with the Little Sisters of the Poor where he was disguised as one of the elderly residents. A Redemptorist priest, Father Antonio Girón, found refuge in the same place and both were martyred together on Sunday, August 30, accused by a militiaman who was serving as a porter at the Residence. When they saw that they were going to be killed, they confessed to one another and began the prayer of the rosary together. Father Manuel was born in Aranda de Duero (Burgos) and was 64 years old at the time of his death.

Sr. Ma. Angeles Infante, DC

Translated:

Charles T. Plock, CM
I WAS A STRANGER AND YOU WELCOMED ME

At the end of January of this year, no one could have foretold the emergency situation that the country is now experiencing. Life in northern Peru, specifically in the Region of Lambayeque, seemed quite normal and everyone was preparing for the beginning of the 2017 academic year. The truth is that no one realized that the rise in temperature during the last weeks of January was not normal. The temperature rose and suddenly shot up from 22-24 degrees to 28-38 degrees. The sea warmed slowly and the clouds became charged and moved silently across the country.

The Lambayeque Region is in the northern part of Peru. It is divided into three provinces and comprises a total of 38 districts and hundreds of populated centers. It has a population of more than 1.2 million inhabitants. The people are friendly and hard-working and have an extraordinary history. It is the land of the Lord of Sipan. This area, with its large desert plains and cultivated lands, as well as the cities and the villages in the countryside, was suddenly flooded with water that rose to levels that were unseen since the first decades of the last century. The long-time residents of this area said: “We’ve never seen such a situation!”

Torrential rains have caused the collapse of the drainage system of many villages and has made it unsafe to utilize the drinking water. In several places where the roads were paved, there is now nothing but mud and water. Many places that were linked together by highways, are now inaccessible. At the present time, there are still many isolated villages. The main rivers of the region (the Motupe River, the Leche River, the Reque River) have overflowed and destroyed countless homes, farmlands and farm animals, schools, drinking wells, medical centers, etc. Above all, the rain has swept away the tranquility and hope of many people. Nevertheless, this same reality has created a large network of solidarity … a network that is slowly advancing toward the most isolated regions.

We have been living in the midst of this crisis situation for more than a month. In many areas, the schools have been totally destroyed or are...
flooded with water. Throughout the region, classes on every level (primary, secondary, and university) have been cancelled. The city, however, has not been paralyzed ... people who can, are working and the main institutions of the city are functioning. People are adapting to this new reality. Life must go on!

Many people are now housed in tents that have been set up by the municipalities and/or the Ministry of Civil Defense. Many other families have taken refuge in some house that remains standing and many others are literally living under a tree. Some families, who have had a bit more luck, have received plastic that enables them to cover themselves. It should be noted here that the heat and the sun are still very intense. There has been no rain recently, but according to the forecast, more rain is expected and those rains will continue until the end of March.

Several needs have come to light and have been magnified by the ravages of nature and it should be noted that there are many villages and centers throughout the Lambayeque Region that have been affected by this crisis.

At the parish, we have responded to the emergency in various ways. We have focused our attention on the town of Santa Rosa, an area that was particularly devastated. We have established a soup kitchen there and we are rehabilitating a house that will provide shelter to children, women and the elderly. We have also set up a soup kitchen in the area of Arenal.

We have also reached out to a sector called Santa Isabel (an area in the district of Mórrope). There we have established nine centers and in this area alone we are providing about three thousand people with food, clothing and water. In recent days, we have trucked in trucks to the districts of Íllimo, Jayanca and Mochumí.

I want to thank the members of the Vincentian Family, (teachers, lay people of the parish, parents, students and alumni) for their support and solidarity. All of them have been working tirelessly since the beginning of this emergency. The laity have divided themselves in such a manner that they are able to provide to assistance to the people in the various zones of the city of Chiclayo. It should also be said that many government and private institutions are working hard to help the population ... but still there is a need for more assistance.

The questions we ask ourselves as Vincentians are: after the emergency, then what; after the initial “shock” passes, what’s next? The reconstruction phase will have to be initiated. There will be a need to think of creative ways to generate work for so many women (single-mothers) who have been left with no place of employment. There will also be a need to provide credit to farmers so that they can plant their field anew and provide food for the people of this nation. We must also look for ways to help hundreds of young people and children of limited resources continue their studies. In summary, these are questions that require answers that flow from our Vincentian mission and charity. The so called, “outsiders”, who need to be accommodated in this part of the world, are those who have been affected by the rains.

What does the Lord want of the Vincentian missionaries who are preparing to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the birth of its charism? Like Jesus, our charity is to be inventive unto infinity. Therefore, we must go to serve the poor as if we were going to put out a fire.

by: Father Ricardo Cruz, CM
Translated by:
Charles T. Plock, CM
March 16 and 17, 2017: Symposium on the Vincentian Charism

On Thursday, March 16th and Friday, March 17th the members of the Congregation of the Mission in Slovenia organized a symposium on the Vincentian charism. That symposium was part of the program to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the origin of the Vincentian charism.

The development of the charism was presented through an analysis of the reality of the seventeenth century and then, comparing that reality to the present-day reality. Today there are as many urgent challenges as there were during the time of Vincent de Paul. Together, the Vincentian Family can respond in an effective manner to those challenges.

On Sunday, March 19th, there was a celebration to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Saint Joseph Cultural and Spiritual Center in the mission house at Celje, the place where the Missionaries of the Congregation arrived in 1852. The bishops of Slovenia participated in this celebration and Cardinal Franc Rode was the primary celebrant at the Eucharist.

Meeting with those responsible for the branches of the Vincentian Family in Slovenia

March 18, 2017: Encounter of Father Tomaž Mavrič with the Leaders of the Vincentian Family in Slovenia.

On Saturday, March 18th, 2017, the superior general, Father Tomaž Mavrič met with the leaders of the various branches of the Vincentian Family ministering in Slovenia. Father Tomaž informed the group about the various activities that have been planned for this Jubilee Year, including the meeting with Pope Francis. He encouraged the branches to collaborate with one another and to plan a national common project. The superior general also encouraged the group to form a National Council. The leaders committed themselves to designate one member of their group to form part of the National Council and the first meeting of the council was scheduled for April 19th, 2017.
The Bribris and the Cabecar play an important role in the ecclesiastical history of Latin America. The Spaniards were unable to colonize these two indigenous peoples. They remained isolated for centuries while guarding the beautiful mountains of the Cordillera de Talamanca, the most important Central American region without an army.

From 20-25 March, Marvin Robles, CM, and Rolando Gutiérrez, CM, accompanied the Bishop of the Diocese of Limón, Monsignor Javier Román, in his visit to the communities of Alto Telire, the furthest from the indigenous mission. They had to walk five days on the mountain with journeys of up to 13 hours through mud, up slopes, in rain, and over raging rivers. Four laymen and four religious were also part of the mission.

The images we share allow us to see a reality where misery and life mingle among the hundreds of children, taught on earthen floors in classrooms that have a few wooden tree trunks for walls. They sleep where they manage at night, almost always among dogs, hens, and pigs; without toys and with very few notebooks. There the Little Company is still present, trying to bring hope and encourage development, at the same speed that one can walk those difficult mountains.

Father Marvin Robles, current parish priest of the mission in Talamanca, states “the challenge here is too simple and at the same time too complicated. It is a question of how to be near them over such long distances. I believe that my greatest challenge is to be close to them,” explains the missionary.

The mission in the mountains of Talamanca has been the achievement of the Congregation of the Mission with a permanent presence of the Church in these lands since 1962, when Bernhard Koch, CM, and later Bernardo Drüg, CM (God bless him), managed to settle among the natives. They entered through the passage that the second bishop of Costa Rica, Monsignor Bernardo Augusto Thiel, CM, had opened between the mountains to bring baptism to indigenous peoples in the late 19th century.

The “Fathers Bernardo” team is today a heroic chapter in the history of the Church in Costa Rica, not only for its evangelizing mission, but for the authentic human and social development that these men promoted in a village where everything bears their name: elementary and secondary schools, health centers, roads, aqueducts, transport, etc. Other missionaries such as William Benavides, CM, current Vice-Visitor; Fabio Flores, CM; and Brother Álvaro Herra, CM, have given much of their lives to this Vincentian mission too.

By: Fr. Rolando Gutiérrez Zúñiga, CM
Vice-Province of Costa Rica
A Small Province with Great History

Introduction

I would like to share with you my personal experience of the visit I made to the province of Hungary (last February 2017). It is a small province with a great story! It was also my first visitation to any province of the Eastern Europe: a world unknown to me. I take this opportunity to thank all the confreres of the province of Hungary for their warm welcome and fraternal hospitality and sincere dialogue, I am particularly grateful to the Visitor, Father Viktor KUNAY, for making me feel at home, and with my own brothers and confreres.

During my brief stay in Hungary I realized how fascinating the is country and people is. This is the reason why I wanted to write this short note on Nuntia. Hungary: a very fascinating story of an adventurous people. The remote origins of the Hungarians are uncertain and it seems that historians have many debates about it. According to the late reconstructions they would arrive in central Europe towards the end of the first millennium (around the year 895 DC). No matter where they come from, the Hungarians, especially from the tenth century onwards were respected and feared in Europe because they made several raids in central Europe, and up to Northern Italy. They have the reputation of being tough and proud rulers. However, they were also smart because if they were not sure to win the wars they were at home or think about matching in alliances as it happened in Austria at the beginning of the second half of the nineteenth century. It is this spirit that will lead them to that compromise, for those times, and not only, a very surprisingly and unexpected compromise. That of June 30th 1867.

This Austro-Hungarian Empire preliminary agreement, which lasted for fifty years, foresaw a single empire under one King keeping the two capitals, Budapest and Vienna, with the two respective parliaments and prime ministries with full internal decision-making powers. The foreign policy, their defence, their army building, and their competent factories were united under the same umbrella. The foreign policy, their defence, their army building, and their competent factories were united under the same umbrella. The foreign policy, their defence, their army building, and their competent factories were united under the same umbrella. The political and economic level was highly competitive and ambitious. It will be the First World War, in 1918, to dismantle, break and shatter this ambitious project of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The winners of IInd World War will ask to pay a very high price especially to Hungary. In fact, in 1920, with the Treaty of Traianon (France), the winning powers of the II World War would impose to Hungary a territorial reduction so drastic that the country will loose more than half its territories, slices the size of its neighbouring countries (Romania, Slovakia, Czechoslovakia ...).

It is this history that explains and justifies the existence of our young confreres, Hungarians with full rights but with Romanian passport.
and nationalities or Slovakian or still others. It sounds strange but it is true that none of our confreres of the Province of Hungary, except P. Termeczky Jeno, has the Hungarian passport, though, if they are willing to have it, nowadays it is very simple to have it (this is what the young Hungarian confreres told me during my visitation).

The province of Hungary: small in number but very young!

The statistics of this province do not put it between the powerful provinces. At present it is composed by only 8 confreres. However, only one, Fr. Termeczky Jeno is 95 years old, the other seven missionaries are young (between 33-48 years). The average age of the active confreres is 39.8 years. So, the Hungarian province is one of the youngest Vincentian European province. Of course, the number is what it is but since it is a young province, the future is theirs.

Historically the Hungarian province is the spiritual child of the Province of Austria. Before the Communist occupation, that is, until the end of World War II, the number of the province, between priests and brothers, was more than 70 members working in thirteen houses and communities. It was a very prosperous province and had more than forty students in philosophy and theology in Szob. Unfortunately, communism has trampled all those beautiful flowers reducing our reality to what we see at present.

The traditional works were: Popular Missions, youth ministry (especially in schools and colleges), the formation of the clergy and ours, and that of the Daughters of Charity. Today, mainly due to the small size of the confreres and the devastating secular mindset in the country, the province is struggling to restart the Popular Missions and the youth ministry in schools and colleges but they are far from being successful so far. Many changes are underway in the country, mainly the secular mindset is terrible.

After the fall of communism in 1989, the Hungarian government began to give us back many of our properties confiscated by the Communists. Unfortunately this restitution of our properties, most of them semi-destroyed and empty, will cost an eye to put them up again, and the province, despite all the efforts of the visitors since 1993, is unable to put them up and running as we had / still have many properties and buildings especially in Piliscsaba, Zsob and Budapest. Some few months back we returned also to Oradea to retake the parish there (Oradea is in Romania but with clear and dominant Hungarian backgrounds) and the province is investing to make our house hospitable, a house given to us by the DC sisters.

In total we have about nine properties; I would say that all these properties are very big and large and still in need of a considerable investment to make them useful again. At present, unfortunately, the province is doing its best but still we are too far from being able to rehabilitate these houses due to the economical constraints of the Province. This Province needs help. Certainly the current visitor, like his predecessors, has done a lot to renew and transform these properties to better use and to make them produce some income, but it still needs to continue because it’s not enough. To take off this province still want human strength and financial resources. It is clear that there are hopes and prospects there. We just have to strain the dawn of this province by giving her a big hand. It’s general climate is very good and has some promising young confreres.

The future of the province of the hungarian province

The future belongs to God. However, it is also true that “the future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams”. In Hungary we have a wonderful group of young confreres capable of dreaming together because “to dream” is the proper quality of young people. “If we dream together, our dreams will come true” (Tomaz Mavric, at the conclusion of the last General Assembly, 15.7.2016). We all know that our tomorrow depends in large part with our perception and vision of today because life can only be understood from the past and must be lived with courage and hope ahead, that is, in our future. And I must say that among the confreres of the Hungarian province there is a justified concern for their future. They know well that it’s there, in their near future, which plays everything and they are engaging greatly in youth ministry (vocation ministry), especially in Transylvania, in Oradea, where vocations can still come as before.

Fr. Zeracristos Yosief, CM
General Assistant
On March 1, I made my first trip to Europe as the Executive Director of the Vincentian Solidarity Office (VSO). The goal of the trip was threefold, (a) present a quarterly report to the Vincentian General Council, (b) visit funding agencies in Germany, and (c) discuss the sharing of resources with the house in Panningen, The Netherlands, and the Province of Poland. Fr. Miles Heinen, C.M., planned our trip through Europe. My role was to learn from Fr. Miles about the steps involved in advancing projects of the VSO and cultivating relationships with our funding partners.

As we travelled to the various agencies in Germany, we met with many dedicated laypeople and a few priests. The German Church plays an important role in the funding of the world Church (Weltkirche). Many dioceses in the developing world as well as religious men and women, including the Vincentians, have benefited from the initiative, creativity, and generosity of the various Catholic funding agencies. Our funding partners shared with us important information, such as funding trends and their current guidelines and priorities for projects.

In turn, Miles and I shared with our partners about the initiative for systemic change and the Vincentian Family’s collaborative on homelessness.

Our itinerary included two stops at Vincentian houses, (a) Panningen, Holland, and (b) Krakow, Poland. Our plan included three days stay at each location. Both provinces have a long and illustrious history of staffing and funding missionary work in foreign countries.

The Dutch are no longer organized as a province. Despite the diminishment, the confreres remain deeply rooted in the Vincentian charism. They are in the midst of a process for implementing a plan for instilling the Vincentian charism to the Dutch Catholic Church in the area of Panningen. The historian and former provincial, Fr. Victor Groetelaars, C.M., took us on a pilgrimage to Steyl which houses the remains of St. Arnold Janssen, the founder of the Missionary Society of Divine Word and the home of Bp. Frans Schraven, C.M. Our confrere, Bp. Frans Schraven, was born on the 13th of October 1873 at Lottum, (Limburg, The Netherlands) and grew up in Broekhuizen. His childhood home is located a short half hour’s drive from the Vincentian house and former seminary.

In Krakow, Poland, Fr. Miles met with Fr. Kryspin Banko, C.M. to discuss the canonical visit of 2020. I also discussed the province’s support of the Vincentian Solidarity Fund. The Province of Poland continues to encourage vocations and has over 30 seminarians in formation. Fr. Miles and I had the opportunity to meet most of our seminarians on two occasions. The first meeting with the 8 novices took place at the Vincentian retreat house in Krzeszowice, Poland. The novices were taking part in workshops on human formation. The second meeting took place at our seminary in Krakow over coffee, after Sunday Mass. Two things impressed us about our seminarians, (a) their fluency in English, and (b) their enthusiasm for community life.

Looking back on the experience, I compare our travels in Europe to similar journeys, namely, those made by Paul and Barnabas. I’ll leave it to the reader to decide which role to assign to Miles and me. Together, we walked many a city square, rode several hundred kilometers of Deutche Bahn Railways, and met many collaborators. Both Miles and I were touched by the spontaneous acts of hospitality from our European hosts, not least of which were our confreres at the Vincentian Curia, The Netherlands, and Poland. From our funding partners, we learned much about the areas where the VSO has projects. Our partners encouraged the VSO in its fine work. Finally, I am grateful to Fr. Miles for giving himself so generously on this journey for the service of the Congregation of the Mission.

Gregory J. Semeniuk, C.M., S.Th.D.
Directeur exécutif du VSO

(Endnotes)

1 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frans_Schraven
What is an indulgence?

In the document, Indulgentiarum Doctrina (January 1, 1967), Pope Paul VI attempted to regulate in a more modern way the practice of indulgences and summarized, with ample doctrinal and historical explanations, the meaning of indulgences. In paragraph four of that document the Pope stated: There reigns among men, by the hidden and benign mystery of the divine will, a supernatural solidarity whereby the sin of one harms the others just as the holiness of one also benefits the others. When my prayer or my good deed is “indulgented” by the authority of the Church, I obtain a perfection of the forgiveness that I have already received through repentance, prayer and the sacraments.

How many types of indulgences are there?

Paul VI has simplified the list of indulgences. Indulgences do not depend on objects or places but on certain activities of the faithful. There are partial indulgences (no longer determined quantitatively by days and/or months) which represent a duplication or a reinforcement of that which the prayer or the action of the faithful has achieved; and there is a plenary indulgence that which wholly perfects the repentance and forgiveness obtained in prayer and the sacraments.

Can I obtain an indulgence for another person?

In light of the reality of the communion of saints, that is, in light of the reality of solidarity that exists among the faithful as well as among those persons who are deceased, it is not only possible, but it is also desirable, to obtain an indulgence for another person.

How can one obtain the indulgence that the Pope has granted to the members of the Vincentian Family during this Jubilee Year?

In the first place, one must fulfill the general conditions that are necessary for any plenary indulgence: confession, communion and prayers for the Pope. One must also participate in some community celebration during the Jubilee Year. Nevertheless, such a community celebration can be substituted with prayer (the Our Father, a profession of faith, the invocation of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Saint Vincent) ... this is especially so with regard to those individuals who might be unable to assist at a community celebration, for example, those who are infirm.

Translated: Charles T. Plock, CM
Nominationes / Confirmationes

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**NECROLOGIUM**

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