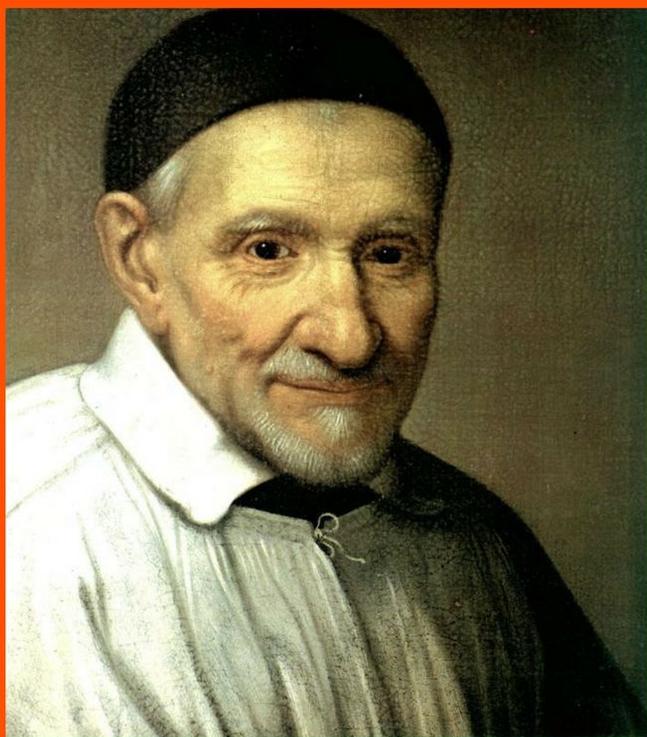


VINGENTIANA

**39th year- N° 1:
January/February 1995**



**FEATURE:
The C.M. at the time of
African Synod**

VINCENTIANA IS CHANGING ITS FORMULA

Emeric Amyot d'Inville C.M.

Our wish is to use this change to increase the emphasis on Communication and Formation in the Congregation so as to reflect and make more powerful the activity of the confreres; a new Vincentian publication to help the new forms of Evangelisation to which the Church is calling us; a publication which gives a stimulus to an apostolic zeal and our actual and inventive love for the poor.

At a General Council Meeting in June 1994, approval was given for Vincentiana to be published in the 3 official languages of the Congregation - French, English and Spanish - starting with the first number of the year 1995. This allows us to reach (directly) almost 70% of all confreres.

Though we would have wished to increase the number of languages we found ourselves, much to our regret, up against many practical problems which seemed insurmountable, such as difficulties in regard to translation and cost of printing. In an effort to offset this difficulty, we have asked the Provincials concerned to let us know in which language they wish the publication to be sent to each of their houses. Besides, if an article appears in a language, other than the three mentioned above, we will send a copy as well as those sent to the countries speaking that particular language.

The other changes have to do with the content, which aims at being close to the life of the Congregation and a pabulum, spiritual and intellectual, calculated to be of more use to the members. We have already commissioned several articles on many up-to-date matters - Vincentian spirituality, our history, personal documents detailing experiences of great interest. Even if, from time to time, there may be an edition of another calibre quite distinct from the norm, you will still find in each the following aspects:

Curia General - official report

Features - i.e. an important aspect of our life and mission, undertaken under different headings and in a series of articles.

Studies - Articles on spirituality, history etc.

Life of the Congregation - Articles dealing with important events, declarations and, at the appropriate time, a page given over to some important member on his death.

Vincentiana is brought out by an Editorial Board, made up of Fathers Emeric Amyot d'Inville, Secretary Gerleral (Director), Ignacio de Mendoza, Vicar General and Thomas Davitt, Archivist of the Curia, who decides on the orientation of the publication, on the articles to be commissioned, on the publication of those sent

directly to the Curia and to have them translated. Those are the confreres to whom you should send your articles and your suggestions. The texts are scanned on arrival and paginated by our devoted secretary, Sabrina, before printing.

Seeing as we do, that Vincentiana is an important instrument of communication and formation, we would hope that, apart from the subscriptions of the community houses, individual confreres would subscribe. The price (for 6 editions per year) is 250 francs, 35\$ (American), 300 Pesetas or the equivalent in one's own currency, all to be settled with the appropriate Visitor, with whom the account will be settled with the Curia.

The Editing Committee wish to thank all who collaborate in the work, in particular authors of articles and translators who have already shown great generosity.

January 1, 1995

To the members of the Congregation of the Mission

My very dear confreres,

May the peace of the Lord be with you in this new year!

I write to you today to share with you some good news.

As you know, the General Assembly of 1992, in its sixth commitment (New Evangelization, N_ 6) stated: "Our Congregation commits itself in Eastern Europe to at least one missionary project as a concrete sign of our Community's participation in new evangelization." In response to this directive of the Assembly, we began a new mission in Albania in 1993. There are now five confreres working there along with three communities of Daughters of Charity. At Christmas I heard from both the confreres and the sisters. They express great joy in their new life and mission. At the same time, confreres from the Provinces of Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia have begun to work in the Ukraine, Byelorussia, and Lithuania.

Meanwhile, with the gradual opening of Eastern Europe, we have received a number of other appeals. After examining these and reflecting on them for almost two years, I decided, with the members of the General Council, to hold a meeting here in Rome on December 5 and 6 with Frs. Karol Ho_ubicki (Visitor of Poland), Anton Stres (Visitor of Slovenia), and Augustín Slaninka (Visitor of Slovakia), Milan Šášik (Secretary to the Nuncio in the Ukraine), and Kazimierz Stelmach, who served as translator.

Two reasons in particular moved me to assemble this group to examine the appeals that we have received from Eastern Europe. First, God has blessed the Congregation with numerous vocations in the East, particularly in Poland. Secondly, a knowledge of one of the Eastern European languages is a huge advantage for a missionary going to one of these countries.

At our meeting, I was deeply moved by the generosity of the Visitors in deciding to respond to the appeals that we have received. With much joy, therefore, I announce to you today the following decisions made at this meeting:

1. In September 1995, the Congregation will open a new mission at Charkib, in the Ukraine.

2. We intend to open, in 1996, after further investigation and negotiations, a new mission in Siberia.

3. In 1996 or 1997, depending on negotiations for the reacquisition of our property, the former mission of the Province of Poland in Lithuania will be reopened.

When in Advent the prophet Isaiah said to us (43:19-20), "See, I am doing a new deed, even now it comes to light: can you not see it? Yes, I am making a road in the wilderness," these decisions had not yet been made. They were possible only because of the generosity and missionary zeal of the Visitors. The Province of Poland will bear the heaviest burden in sending missionaries. I see this as a courageous response, on the province's part, to the Lord's gift of so many vocations. The Provinces of Slovenia and Slovakia are also eagerly offering their assistance, so that these teams will be international in their membership. Other volunteers, of course, will always be welcome. Because of the difficulties involved in learning the languages, however, it may be best that confreres from other parts of the world focus, for the most part, on our other international missions, while volunteers from Eastern Europe focus on these.

Actually, the three Visitors also pledged their assistance in several other places in Eastern Europe, on a more modest basis, but further conversations will be necessary with the bishops involved, before such commitments can be finalized and announced publicly.

The financial support for these missions will fall largely on the General Curia, which has relatively meager resources, so we will be attempting to create a fund, with the help of the provinces and individual confreres, to give the new missions a sound economic base.

In speaking about our missionary vocation near the end of his life, St. Vincent told the confreres: "Great reason have we, my brothers, to praise God and to thank him unceasingly for this grace!" (SV XII, 80). I join with you today, my brothers, in thanking God for the grace of calling us to Eastern Europe, through the cries of the poor there, through the voice of the General Assembly, through the invitations of bishops, and through the faith-filled response of the Visitors and the confreres. I trust that God who is beginning this new work among us will bring it to fruitful growth.

Your brother in St. Vincent,

Robert P. Maloney, C.M.
Superior General

P.S. Would the Visitors please make a copy of this letter available to each of the confreres.

To the members of the Congregation of the Mission

My very dear confreres,

May the peace of the Lord be with you in this lent en season.

There must be some daring in the following of Christ. Without risks, Christianity becomes bland. "If anyone wants to come after me," Jesus proclaims, "let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me" (Mk 8:34). Martyrs, celibates, monks, missionaries --- all remind us that love of the Lord engenders daring dreams.

Lent is a time of daring resolution. It speaks of a fundamental risk. In lent we pledge our free, loving participation in the passion of Christ. We say *yes* to the journey to Jerusalem. We renew the commitment made at baptism to die with Christ in the hope of the resurrection. Historically, lent has always been a moment of radical decisions: when catechumens stepped forward to follow Christ; when Christians chose to do penance for their sins; when penitents undertook the long fast.

May I ask you to dare this lent? This challenge does not come merely from me; it echoes the New Testament. The letter to the Hebrews sings the praises of a long series of risk-takers, from Abel to the martyrs and other heroes in the early days of the Church --- "the world was not worthy of them" (Heb 11:38) ---, and it urges us, surrounded by this great cloud of witnesses, to fix our eyes on Jesus who risked the cross in the hope of the resurrection.

I suggest that we be daring, among other things, in regard to the traditional lenten works. These works are intimately bound together in that they all aim to set us free. The proper practice of each demands attention to the others. By them, "we empty ourselves in order to put on Jesus Christ," as St. Vincent loved to say to the Company (SV XI, 343; cf. Rom 13:14).

1. *Fasting*. Christian fasting evokes longing for the Lord's return. Through it we experience hunger, emptiness, yearning for the great heavenly feast. As we fast, we bow down before the Lord, recognizing that he alone is our fullness. Isaiah reminds us that true fasting also involves "setting the captive free, breaking every yoke, sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and the homeless, clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own" (58:6-7). These are intrinsically linked with fasting because a longing for the Lord and his kingdom drives us to do the works of justice. Do many of us fast today? We know, of course, that cutting back on the consumption of tobacco, alcohol, and some kinds of food can have obvious health advantages. Do we dare to reach out for these benefits? Even

beyond that, could we risk real fasting this lent, being satisfied with simple fare and giving the proceeds to the poor, as St. Augustine (cf. Sermon 208) and so many others since him have suggested.

2. *Almsgiving.* There is a strange paradox in Christianity. We believe, with the author of Genesis, that the material things God has created are good; yet Jesus warns us not to let them weigh us down. Missionaries especially must be free, unencumbered, ready to go wherever the Lord sends them. Our goods are instruments in reaching out to others, especially the poor, rather than buffers that insulate us from them. Are there material things that hold me back? Can I use my goods more socially, as ways of embodying my love and service? The lenten call is quite stark: "Go, sell what you have, give it to the poor, and come follow me" (Mt 19:21). May I ask that we all be daring in this regard too? Is there a generous gift I can give that will be an effective sign to the poor that the kingdom of God is at hand? Is there a special project that you as an individual, or your house, your mission team, your parish, or your province might undertake as lenten "alms" to the oppressed?

3. *Prayer.* Both fasting and almsgiving flow from and lead to prayer. Dare to pray more intensely this lent. You may, if your experience is anything like mine, find inner resistance to this suggestion: are not there "more important" things to do? am I not often "wasting time" distractedly when I pray? But the initial lenten gospel (Mt 4:1-11) tells us that before Jesus begins to preach, he prays; before he mingles with the crowds, he enters into solitude; before he seeks out the sick and sinful, he contemplates the face of his Father. Since your schedule is probably already full, I suspect that your saying *yes* to more intense prayer in lent will necessarily mean that you risk saying *no* to something else. What is it that I must set aside in order to pray more this lent?

Sometimes, timidly, we merely sip of life. Lent encourages us to drink a deep draught. "Can you drink the cup that I will drink?" (Mk 10:38), Jesus asks. His cup is deep, filled with risks, but transforming. From it flow strange signs, like martyrdom, simplicity of life, solidarity with the poor, celibacy, community, missionary zeal. When we drink it, we begin to die, but we also begin to live a new kind of life.

With you, I ask the Lord to bless the Company, that we might all dare to live lent fully.

Your brother in St. Vincent,

Robert P. Maloney, C.M.
Superior General

Appointments and confirmations by the Superior General

*Beginning with this first issue of 1995, it has been decided to **publish only the appointments and confirmations which are made by the Superior General**, and no longer those made by Provincials, because there are provincial bulletins for these latter.*

In the past, all appointments in the Congregation were at least confirmed by the Superior General and for that reason Vincentiana published them. But that is no longer the case. Therefore, there is no reason for publishing them in this magazine. On the contrary, you will find all Congregation appointments in the annual Catalogue.

*However, the General Curia reminds **Provincials that they should continue to send it the appointments that they have made in their provinces as they have done in the past.***

DATE	NAME	OFFICE	PROVINCE
09/01/95	Andrzej SIEMINSKI	Director DC 1/6	Zaire
10/1/95	Giuseppe GUERRA	Provincial 1/6	Naples
19/01/95	Ettore ZOPPI	Director DC (2nd term)	Sardinia
19/01/95	William BOGEL	Director DC (3rd term)	Normandy

Necrology

Because the names of the deceased are published each month in *NUNTIA* and recapitulated for the entire year in the *CATALOGUE*, we will no longer publish them in *VINCENTIANA*

OUR CAUSES FOR BEATIFICATION AND CANONIZATION (I)

Giuseppe Guerra CM

In this report we intend bringing up to date that given to the General Assembly in 1992 (Cf *Vincentiana* XXXVI (1992), pp 532-537). This report, also, is divided into three parts: our beatified confreres and sisters who are awaiting canonization; the servants of God whose beatification process is under way; those whose beatification process has just begun, or will begin.

I THOSE ALREADY BEATIFIED

1. Blessed John Gabriel Perboyre for Canonization:

A miraculous cure of a Daughter of Charity in 1889.

The miracle which was recently accepted by the medical commission of the Congregation for the Saints, and which will bring about the canonization of John Gabriel Perboyre (1802-1840), was obtained more than a hundred years ago by a Daughter of Charity in Héverlé, Malines, in Belgium. Sister Gabrielle Isoré DC (1851-1906) was cured, at the age of 38, of a type of paralysis, diagnosed as acute progressive spinal lepto-meningitis.

The Sister, in a desperate situation, invoked Blessed John Gabriel. A Sister suggested a novena, which was organised by the superior, Sister Josephine Hauff, who asked all the community houses in Belgium to unite in prayer. The novena was to finish on the day of the beatification in Rome, Sunday 10 November 1889 (Cf *Annales de la CM*, 55/1890 pp 239-242).

The sister had been reduced to total immobility, with a poor prognosis; her death was by now expected. On 9 November the doctor said: "...I had given up all hope of seeing Sister's condition improve. I thought she was close to death". Instead, on Sunday morning Sister Isoré got up, cured. "...I then went as far as the chapel, opened the door, and shouted: I'm mad, or I'm cured!". As she herself and the sisters had promised, there were prayers of thanksgiving, and devotion to Blessed John Gabriel spread. The sister, who from now on would be called Jean-Gabriel, always enjoyed good health afterwards and continued to work right up till her death in 1906. The doctor had to admit: "For an illness which had reached the state to which Sister Gabrielle Isoré was reduced, months of active treatment would be needed to obtain a cure, which perhaps would not be total". The Process was opened in Malines, Brussels, in 1892, with her doctor, Dr Boine, the superior, Sister Isoré herself, and others, as witnesses.

In 1901 there was the ante-preparatory commission in Rome, and the preparatory commission in 1903 with a new "*positio super miraculis*".

Everything suggested a favourable outcome. The Postulator, Fr Veneziani, wrote to the Superior General: "As you will see from the catalogue of causes for beatification and canonization dealt with by the Congregation of Rites, which I sent you some weeks ago, the cause of Bl. Perboyre is the one most favoured by the Congregation to partner that of Bl. Chanel. So, if nothing to the contrary happens, our blessed martyr will, along with Bl. Chanel, be solemnly inscribed in the catalogue of the saints by the time of the forthcoming papal jubilee, or at the latest by the time of the 50th anniversary of the definition of the Immaculate Conception. For the present, things are going rather well; already a doctor appointed *ex officio* is studying the position for the voting on the miracles. The Rev. Promoter has promised to let me have the comments soon" (From a letter of Fr A Veneziani to the Superior General, Rome, 11/6/1901).

"As I wrote to you previously, Dr Lapponi, the chief Pontifical Physician, is convinced that the proposed miracles are excellent. Morani, the advocate, who is most experienced in these matters, says the cause will succeed" (From a letter of Fr A Veneziani to the Superior General, Rome, 23/12/1902).

But then came some objections, or rather doubts, put forward by two doctors who questioned whether the diagnosed "leptomeningitis" might not rather be due to hysteria, and therefore functional. At the level of the Preparatory Commission, which met in 1903, it was decided to make further examinations. The Pope agreed to a new more detailed examination by two very experienced doctors.

The difficulties being met with (Fr D'Isengard, meanwhile, had succeeded Fr Veneziani in 1908) also involved a second similar miracle, which took place in Reims, concerning Sister Josephine Destailleur DC, and probably discouraged further attempts.

In a letter to the Congregation of Rites, dated 3 June 1957, the Postulator, Fr Bisoglio, reported: "From enquiries made, from that decision onwards nothing was actually done". He therefore asked that the more detailed examination requested be carried out.

We have, in fact, a *Report by Professor Vincenzo Lo Bianco*, 10/5/1959, on the miracle relating to Sr Gabrielle Isoré, in which the Professor says, in substance, that he cannot add anything further to what the doctors had already said for and against.

So we concentrated our attention on the case of Sr Gabrielle Isoré DC to see whether, in the light of modern scientific progress, the doubt which blocked discussion at the time could be dealt with in a better way: is it a question of an organic or functional illness? And can the cure, as it is documented, be explained in a natural way?

In a detailed report (23/12/1993 & 28/5/1994) the two present medical experts first of all interpreted the documents in the light of more advanced scientific knowledge, thanks to which they were able definitely to exclude functional illness (hysteria), saying that

the more appropriate diagnosis of the case would be to call it *progressive poliradiculonevritis*. The opinion of the medical commission appointed to advise (17/11/1994) was that the cure must be regarded as instantaneous, total and permanent, and inexplicable according to our scientific knowledge.

Also, from the files in the archives of the Daughters of Charity (Rue du Bac, Paris) from 1887 to 1906 it can be seen that the sister's health, which was originally very bad, was good from the year of the miracle, 1889, up to her death in 1906.

When the Theological Commission summoned by the Congregation for the Saints, and the meeting of the cardinals concerned, have received the results from the aforementioned Medical Commission, it will be up to the Holy Father, with the infallible authority of the Vicar of Christ, to pronounce his definitive and decisive judgement on the canonization of our blessed martyr, which the Vincentian family above all, all over the world, await with impatience.

2. Bl. Francis Regis Clet, beatified 27 May 1900.

3. Bl. Marie Madeleine Fontaine & her companions, beatified
13 June 1920.

4. Bl. Ghebre-Micahel, beatified 3 October 1926.

5. Bl. Louis-Joseph François & Jean-Henri Gruyer, beatified
17 October 1926.

6. Bl. René Rogue, beatified 10 May 1934.

7. Bl. Marie Anne Vaillot & Odile Baumgarten, beatified
19 February 1984.

As has been said many times, nothing can be done in Rome about these causes if there is no miracle, which is necessary for canonization, even of martyrs; no miracle is needed for beatification of martyrs. It is necessary to spread knowledge of them, to pray with confidence, and to let the Postulator know, so that the required documentation may be assembled.

(Continue n.2)

(Traduction J-F. Gaziello, cm)

VINCENTIAN FORMATION IN AN AFRICAN CONTEXT¹

My brothers, it is good that we are here. This is the first such meeting, on African soil, in the history of the Congregation. It is a sign of how important Africa has become in the life and the mission of the Company.

SOME FACTORS INFLUENCING WHAT WE SAY AND DO

Our context is very important. St. Vincent loved Africa. He himself sent the first missionaries here. But this huge continent is quite different in our day from the Africa he knew. Let me mention three factors that profoundly influence what we say and do today.

1. *The shift from the North to the South.*

During the fifteen-year pontificate of Paul VI, a striking shift took place in the Church's statistical center of gravity. Striking though it was, few actually noticed it. The turning point arrived in 1970: fifty-one percent of the Catholic population was living in the southern continents. By the year 2000, seventy percent of all Catholics will be in the southern hemisphere.² Walbert Bühlmann calls this the "coming of the third Church."³

In an existential sense, Catholicism is becoming truly a "world-church," as Karl Rahner pointed out on many occasions.⁴

Many religious communities are experiencing this dramatically. In our own Congregation, for example, while there are few vocations in western Europe and North America, where formerly they flourished, the Company is growing not only in Poland, but also in Ethiopia, Eritrea, Nigeria, Zaire, Mozambique, Madagascar, the Philippines, India, Indonesia, Colombia, Mexico, and Central America.

For the Congregation, the opportunities and the challenges are enormous. The confreres from these countries enrich the Congregation with their own cultures and religious traditions. They often, for example, bring us an experience of life lived out continually in intimate contact with the poor. Such provinces frequently have active, even thriving, programs for ministerial formation among both the clergy and the laity. But they also express two striking needs: 1) the need for trained personnel to carry on the work of our own formation; 2) the need for further inculturation of the gospel, so that the Christianity and culture might interact with one another at a deeper

¹Opening discourse at the Conference of Visitors of Africa and Madagascar in Kinshasa, June 24, 1994.

²W. Bühlmann, *The Church of the Future* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1986) 4-5.

³Cf. W. Bühlmann, *The Coming of the Third Church* (Slough, England: St. Paul Publications, 1976).

⁴K. Rahner, "The Abiding Significance of the Second Vatican Council," in *Theological Investigations* XX, 90-102; cf. also "The Future of the Church and the Church of the Future," in *Theological Investigations* XX, 103-14.

level, both enriching and purifying each other. Rahner points out that the *globalization* of theology is one of the greatest needs of the Church in the years ahead. He notes that up to the present there has been an unfortunate tendency to "canonize" what was really only a manifestation of the thought patterns of western culture.⁵

Right now, many growing, younger provinces, and particularly those responsible for formation within them, face the difficult challenge of teaching philosophy and theology (so often formulated in a European context), while searching for new categories in an African or Asian setting. Similarly, they search for the appropriate forms for expressing poverty, chastity, obedience, and life-long commitment to the poor within cultures very different not only from St. Vincent's, but also from those of the writers of most of the philosophy, theology, and spiritual reading books written up until recent times.

Along these same lines, the place of women in society and the social mores in relating to them vary greatly from north to south and, in both hemispheres, from continent to continent. To talk with a woman on the street may be as "natural" in Los Angeles as it is "scandalous" in the Islamic Republic of Mauritania.

2. *The Church has just celebrated the first special Synod of Bishops for Africa, Madagascar and the Islands.*

Its focus was on: "*The Church in Africa and her evangelizing mission toward the year 2000: _You will be my witnesses_ (Acts 1:8)," under five subheadings: proclamation, inculturation, dialogue, justice and peace, and means of social communication. It treated the inculturation of faith, women's roles and status, and dialogue with other churches, with Islam, and with traditional religions. It examined the roles of priests, religious, laity, families, African theologians, catechists, and others. Both the fact of the meeting and the lively participation of African representatives are a vivid sign of how deeply the Spirit of the Lord breathes on this continent.*

The synod sounded an eloquent call to communion and inculturation: "*It is the Church as family which manifests to the world the Spirit which the Son sent from the Father so that there should be communion among all. Jesus Christ, the only begotten and beloved Son, has come to save every people and every individual human being. He has come to meet each person in the cultural path inherited from the ancestors. He travels with each person to throw light on his traditions and customs and to reveal to him that these are a prefiguration, distant but certain, of him, the new Adam, the elder of a multitude of brothers, which we are.*"⁶ Our purpose here is not to examine the conclusions of the synod in detail, though this will surely be one of the most important future agenda items for all of our provinces and missions here in Africa.

⁵Cf. citation in Bühlmann, *The Church of the Future* 193.

⁶*Origins*, May 19, 1994 (Vol. 24, No. 1) 5.

3. *Africa is experiencing the pains of terrible turmoil and violence.*

I cannot leave unmentioned today the pain that the world, the Church, and our own Vincentian family is experiencing here on this continent so rich in faith and varied cultures. Our own Vincentian Family shares in this pain and has suffered from this violence, recently in Rwanda and Sierra Leone, and over the years in Burundi, Cameroon, Mozambique, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Zaire. But these are only the most dramatic examples. Overt or hidden structural violence ravages Africa. The synod reminded us that the Lord has given us two great gifts of the Kingdom, which he is in person. These are justice and peace. It demanded greater justice between North and South. It called for an end to presenting Africa "*in a ridiculous and insignificant light on the world scene after having brought about and maintained a structural inequality and while upholding unjust terms of trade!*"⁷ It remembered the dozens of millions of refugees and displaced persons in Rwanda, Sudan, Mozambique, Angola, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, and parts of Central Africa, and it called upon the United Nations to intervene in order to reestablish peace. It pleaded for a stop to arms sale or the flow of the instruments of violence from the northern hemisphere to the southern. It asked for a substantial, if not total, remission of the continent's debt. At the same time the synod encouraged the churches of Africa to examine their own conscience on the question of financial self-reliance and urged them to do everything to bring this about, particularly through transparent management and a simple lifestyle consonant with the poverty, even misery, of many of Africa's own people.⁸

FORMATION IN AFRICA

Our own meeting focuses on formation in Africa, a topic that the synod too treated. The synod emphasizes several key elements in regard to formation:

1. It envisions the integral formation of people who are well-inserted in their milieu, and who witness therein to the kingdom which is to come.⁹

2. It states that this is to be done by means of evangelization and inculturation, of dialogue and involvement in justice and peace, as well as by means of a presence in the new culture constituted by the world of the mass media.¹⁰

3. It declares that programs and houses of formation, especially seminaries and novitiates, should reflect the concern manifested by the synod to see inculturation and the social teaching of the Church taken very seriously.¹¹

⁷*Origins, ibid.*, p. 7.

⁸*Origins, ibid.*, p. 8.

⁹"Final Message of the Synod for Africa," *Origins*, May 19, 1994 (Vol 24, No. 1), § 49.

¹⁰*Ibid.*

¹¹*Ibid.*, § 50.

4. It thanks God for the gift of vocations which are increasing everywhere in Africa but calls upon the Church in Africa to receive this gift with responsibility, being concerned with the quality of vocations, the discernment process in identifying them, and the setting up of criteria for admission, and the offering of a rich formation.¹²

5. It calls upon the Church to prepare formators well.¹³

6. It tells formators: "*On the quality of your life and on your fidelity to your commitments depends the credibility of what you are teaching the seminarians and the success of the formation that you are giving them. If your intellectual competence is not put at the service of a holy life, you will be increasing in the Church the number of priest functionaries who will not give to the world the only reality that the world expects from them: God.*"¹⁴ Formators should be genuinely holy - role models for our students.

7. It tells religious: "*You will succeed in inculturating religious life in Africa only by assuming, as it were, by representation and anticipation, the profound values that make up the life of our cultures and express the end pursued by our peoples. In this way you will give spiritual hospitality to Christ, chaste, poor and obedient, who has come not to destroy but to fulfill.*"¹⁵

8. It tells seminarians: "*Be convinced that spiritual formation is the key to the whole of your formation. An intense prayer life and a generous spiritual combat will enable you to properly discern your vocation and to grow as witnesses....*"¹⁶ It encourages them to strive after the simple lifestyle of laborers for the Gospel in solidarity with the poor of the continent.¹⁷

VINCENTIAN FORMATION IN AFRICA AND MADAGASCAR

What should seminary formation be like in Africa when the Gospel and the Church are truly to be inculturated here? There is always the danger that the buildings and the ideas of another world will be simply transported to Africa. Our great missionaries, like Justin de Jacobis, recognized from the start that this is insufficient. The gospel must take root and blossom within the deepest values of African cultures. At the same time it must transform what is not of God and what violates the human person.

¹²*Ibid.*, § 51.

¹³*Ibid.*, § 51.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, § 52.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, § 58.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, § 60 and 61.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, § 61.

In each African country, there is a need for communion with the larger worldwide Vincentian family and, at the same time, genuine rootedness of the Congregation within Africa. Toward that end, formation is crucial.

Let me place before you a series of challenges, while being very conscious that you have already generously begun to labor at them.

1. I ask you, in dialogue with one another, to make *real* for our seminarians the five Vincentian virtues. We know what these virtues meant for St. Vincent. There are many studies in that regard. What do they mean in an African context?

a. Simplicity involves communicating the truth as it is, without dissimulation. How can one best express here the core of Jesus statement that our yes should mean yes and our no, no?¹⁸ How can simplicity be expressed here? How do the relationships of the speaker and the listener (superiors, elders, the young) affect communication?

b. Humility for St. Vincent involves a grateful recognition that all is gift. It involves a consciousness that we are God's creatures, that we depend on him, upon one another, and upon the created reality around us. It involves an awareness that we are sinners too and that we need God's forgiveness. How will this consciousness be expressed in the African context? What concrete forms will humility take?

c. Meekness entails gentleness, warmth in relating, non-violence. The Church has surely had little success in proclaiming that "*the meek shall possess the land*"¹⁹ in Europe, Asia, and the Americas, as well as in Africa. What can be done to remedy this for the future? What can African formation do to wipe out strife, especially violence for instance between tribes?

d. Mortification involves renunciation of certain goods in order to pursue other more important ones which we have freely chosen. It involves disciplined labor in the service of the gospel. It involves the sacrifices necessary for keeping our commitments. What concrete forms should mortification take in Africa? What are the concrete areas in which seminarians should learn to become disciplined men?

e. Zeal is love that is on fire. It involves burning love for the person of the Lord and a "*new ardor*" for a "*new evangelization*." It implies hard work, the attitude of a servant. Its enemies, St. Vincent tells us, are sloth and indiscreet zeal. What forms do zeal and its enemies take in Africa at the dawn of a new millennium?

2. What is the concrete meaning of the Vincentian vows in Africa today?

a. What are the challenges for living out the vow of poverty? How should it be lived out concretely in societies where families may make increasing demands on their sons as they become better educated and take on a prestigious societal role?

¹⁸Mt 5:37.

¹⁹Mt 5:5.

What constitutes a simple lifestyle in this context? How can we live in greater solidarity with the poor?

b. Celibacy has its own particular challenges in Africa. Africa is not alone in this regard. Celibacy is difficult. Each culture in each part of the world has experienced struggles and trials as it labored to find the ways of living out this gospel value genuinely and with great simplicity. What are the obstacles to celibacy in each country? How should it be lived out concretely in a context where generativity is held in such high esteem?

c. How does one live out dialogue and obedience concretely in a context where authority structures have been traditionally different from those in other parts of the world? Where wisdom figures, like elders, play a very significant role? How can candidates be formed to express their views directly to superiors?

d. St. Vincent regarded stability as a keystone in the life of the Congregation and as crucial for the service of the poor. What are the values within African society that support it? What are those that work against it?

3. Tribal structures, which play a very significant role in African societies, have the potential for mutual enrichment or for profound division. How will our formation programs help our candidates to recognize the richness of their various heritages, and those of others, while at the same time living out profoundly the deeper, more universal bonds that unite us as the people of God in the body of Christ and as members of the family of St. Vincent? How can we avoid tribal rivalry and strife?

4. What form will community living take in Africa? What will be the structures of dialogue? How will our lifestyles and our houses give witness to the simplicity to which the gospels call us? What are the ways of living together as "*brothers who love one another deeply*"?²⁰ What will our local community plans be like?

5. What are the most appropriate prayer-forms for Africa? The Church in Africa is already developing a liturgy that is well inculturated, with their own styles of prayer, of song, of dance, of symbols, of gestures. Are there ways too in which our community prayer spaces, as well as our prayer forms, can truly reflect the African culture? Mental prayer, for example, was very important to St. Vincent. He proposed a method for meditating that flowed from the culture in which he lived. What are the methods that are most useful within the African culture, for listening to God, reflecting on his gifts to us, and speaking with him?

Formation is crucial, my brothers. Our evangelizing mission in Africa depends on it. Our community life will be vital only if we are well formed as

²⁰CR VIII, 2.

members of an African apostolic family. Our prayer will be genuine only if it takes forms that touch the African heart.

I place these challenges before you with great confidence. Our Congregation has a long, rich history in Africa. Many wonderful missionaries have come here and many of them are still here. Many generous young African candidates have entered our Company. This gives me reason for great confidence. I offer you these challenges today because I trust that you will receive them with open hearts, with creativity, and with responsibility. The Church and the Congregation have a great future here in Africa. It lies in your hands and in your hearts.

Reflections on the special session of the Synod of the African Bishops

by Germano Grachane, C.M. Bishop of Nacala

The theme of this 8th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of the Bishops was "*The Church in Africa and its evangelizing mission as we move toward the year 2000: You shall be my witnesses, (Acts 1,8).*"

It was an indescribable happiness and an invaluable grace for me to have the privilege to participate in this Synod, and not only for being my baptismal experience of a Synod, but, most of all, because it was a Synod that brought to light the evangelizing mission of the Church in Africa, whose mission is "*the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity 1.*"

But, in a particular way, the evangelizing mission is also the mission of the Congregation of the Mission. For this reason, the grace of having participated in this Synod, was also a particular grace to rediscover the specific contribution that the Vincentian vocation gives to the evangelization of Africa as the year 2000 approaches, taking into consideration the situation of the continent; its history; its present and its future; its social, cultural, political and economical situation. Truly, the general theme of the Synod (evangelization) or its five subtitles (proclamation, inculturation, justice and peace, dialogue and the means of social communication) were a direct provocation, a challenge and an interpellation today to all the Congregation of the Mission in the African continent. This current interpellation of the Synod to the Congregation of the Mission in Africa, was particularly strong regarding the Synod's unanimous statement on the need to create an African clergy, zealous in the evangelization of this continent whose nations and people, regardless of the different situations, have the common denominator of being formed by a multitude of authentic poor people: a clergy invested with the spirit of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who made Himself poor, humble, gentle and obedient for our love, is what the Synod says almost literally.

For me, a Vincentian African priest participating in the Synod, this was a singular opportunity to understand again my Vincentian vocation and the Vincentian style to practice priestly-episcopal ministry, a style characterized by the five fundamental Davidic stones that are revealed as more necessary today than ever in the combat of the faith and of the mission.

In 1990, I participated, behind the scenes, in the Synod on clergy formation, as President of the Episcopal Commission of Mozambique for Seminaries and vocations.

The Conference of the Bishops of Mozambique proposed my name as delegate of the Synod some months after my episcopal ordination in June and some months before that Synod. Due to the lateness of the proposal, it was not possible for the General Secretary of the Synod to replace the name of the former President of the

Seminaries' Commission with mine -- the new President and already functioning as such at the time of the Synod. But, in November, 1993, exactly six months before the African Synod, all the Episcopal Commissions were renewed and I ceased being the President of the Seminaries' Commission to become the President of the Commission for Evangelization, Catechesis and Faith. With this title of President of the Commission for Evangelization I was elected by the Conference of Bishops among the six delegates to the African Synod, whose main and unifying theme was the evangelization of the African continent.

From my experience of this providential moment of grace that was the Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops, gathered together *cum Petro et Sub Petro*, I got to retain some of the best aspects of the *mirabilia Dei* in the evangelization of the African continent celebrated in the Synod: the collegiality, the universal communion, where the evangelizing mission of the Church in Africa is of interest to the Universal Church, because no particular or local Church is separated from the one unique group that is the universal Church.

From its first moment of convocation to its preparation and execution, this African Synod was a true Pentecost, as the work of the Holy Spirit².

1. General Theme of Evangelization

Against the danger of a partial and limited vision of the evangelization, the Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops, following the Council and the post conciliar pontifical magisterium, says that evangelization is a pastoral and global mission of the Church in the four fundamental dimensions: evangelization to spread and profess the faith, evangelization to celebrate faith with the sacraments, evangelization to witness to the faith in life and evangelization for a life of prayer/adoration in spirit and in truth³.

In summary, to evangelize the African continent is to make it live from Jesus Christ, the only Redeemer of mankind⁴.

The evangelization leads to the birth of the Church and is the work and vocation of the Church. This is the family of God brought together and summoned to meet in the communion of love, in unity and truth, in the Word of the Living God: Christ the Lord⁵.

An aspect that was constantly repeated by the Fathers of the Synod was that the evangelization of Africa should be based on Jesus Christ the Lord, the Gospel of God, Father of infinite love. In His condition of Son of the Living God, Jesus is the first Evangelizer: The One who came to reunite dispersed humanity, and He did it with His own life and person, His presence, His word, His works and, especially, the work of the Paschal⁶ mystery in Pentecost, where he gave us the fullness of his Spirit of infinite, holy love⁷.

In affirmation of this fundamental truth of Christ the Lord, the Good News of God and the first Evangelizer, the special session of the Synod of the Bishops for Africa, according to the living tradition of the Church, says that the evangelization of the African continent does not change the essential content (Christ the Lord), but needs to renew the method and zeal.

In this line of ideas, the Fathers of the African Synod emphasized the pastoral need of an inculturated evangelization, that will create an inculturated Church in the African continent.

Evangelization is an action of the Church, that takes place in the Church, dominated by the fundamental law of the word of the living Gospel in the community: is the continuation of the mission of the Son of God by means of His Spirit⁸.

The infinite love of God that manifested itself in Christ, continues to become manifest in the Church, the Mystery⁹ of the manifestation of God's love that creates and saves mankind.

This infinite love of God, present and operating in the Church, has its own power to transform and to renew a person, all of one's personal and social life, all of one's history.

Whereas the Gospel is the power of God for the salvation of mankind, the Church in Africa has to renew the culture of the African people with the power of the Gospel itself¹⁰.

The model of Church, formed in Africa according to the Gospel, is the model of Church as family of God, mystery of the communion of love and, therefore, in intimate dialogue and on all levels inside and out.

In terms of proclamation, the evangelization of the African continent should be centered in the person of Jesus Christ, should announce Jesus Christ, *the same yesterday and today, permanent newness of the love of God for us*¹¹.

In this model of Church-Family, God and Father, Jesus Christ is the firstborn of all people rescued by him, and the Holy Spirit is the love that unites all people as brothers and sisters and as children of God.

There is no space for inactive members in the Church-Family, but all participate actively in the same evangelizing mission of the family, in its work, in its past, in its present and in its total and definitive future: therefore, in the plurality of ministries and services for the edification of the Church-Family of God in Africa¹², bishops, priests, deacons, religious men and women, but especially the faithful laity, are all called to proclaim today the mystery of the Kingdom of God in Africa¹³.

More than being the work of evangelization, essentially a work of the Church and for the Church, it is first the communal subject and object of evangelization in

Africa and, within the Church and after the Church, it is the family, the domestic Church, the first subject and object of evangelization. In the family, domestic Church, all of its members are evangelized and evangelizers in relation to one another: the spouses between each other, the parents in relation to their children and viceversa, the siblings between them, and a family in relation to other families. And as well as the family, the domestic Church, is the first model of the Church, it is also the first model of the inculturated Church in Africa.

2. The evangelization as inculturation and sanctity

For the Fathers of the special session of the Synod for Africa, the evangelizing mission of the Church in the continent needs to be inculturated, that is, seen and carried out in the frame of the mystery of the Incarnation of the Word of God, culminated in Easter and in Pentecost. All this means that the final goal of inculturation is sanctity and, in this sanctity, the best inculturators are the saints. Truly, only by living in sanctity can one inculturate the Gospel. In Christmas, the Son of God assumed the human nature. In the Paschal Mystery, the Son of God communicates His divine life to the human nature, sanctifying it until it is exalted: *"You did not want sacrifices nor prayer; but You gave me a body... then I said: Here I come ... to do, Oh, God, Your will¹⁴".*

In the mystery of Pentecost, in the gift of His Spirit, Christ the Lord universalizes His work of unique Mediator of salvation, that is, of communion and union between humanity and divinity and also between mankind: He attracted mankind to Himself, all cultures, all the things and all the cosmos. Today, the mystery of Pentecost of Christ the Lord is effectively operating in the Church in Africa, attracting the whole continent to itself.

It is within this global frame of the Mystery of Christ, sole Mediator, on whom the Fathers of the special session of the Synod for Africa reflected on the problem of evangelization and inculturation of the inculturated Church in Africa today. Within this frame, I want to mention that I felt proud to be a Vincentian and African Bishop when the Congregation of the Mission in Egypt and Ethiopia was mentioned expressly and publicly at the Synod's opening as singular example of a Church and an evangelization inculturated in the African continent for many centuries. In fact, the only Patriarch that participated in the African session of the Synod was Patriarch Stephanus II Ghattas of Alexandria.

I will also like to mention the other three subtitles of the Synod for Africa:

1. Evangelization is a problem of Justice and peace in the African continent, plagued by an extreme poverty provoked by many circumstances, from wars to the difference in structure, from famine and illnesses to the humiliating external debt, unemployment, low rate of education, and other social problems.
2. Evangelization as dialogue within the Church with separated brothers and sisters, with believers of non-Christian religions, with traditional African religions, with people of good will, and the problem of the sects.

3. Evangelization as communication and the problem of social means of communication and African oral tradition.

There is not enough time nor space to talk about these subthemes of the African Synod. But let me remember the exciting moments of the solemn opening and closing Masses of the African Synod, they were truly African inculturated liturgies, which resumed the meaning and essential message of the Synod itself, *Synod of Resurrection, Synod of Hope*:

"Christ, our Hope, is alive, we will live¹⁵!"

[nota1] Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 14

[nota2] Cf. *Instrumentum Laboris*, 1.

[nota3] *Ibid.*, 12.

[nota4] Cf. *Ad P.D.N.*, 9.

[nota5] Cf. *Instrumentum Laboris*, 7,11.

[nota6] Cf. *Ibid.*, 8.

[nota7] Cf. *Ad P.D.N.*, 9.

[nota8] Cf. Mt 28: 18-20.

[nota9] Cf. Mt 13:11; Col 1: 9-14

[nota10] Cf. *Relatio Post disceptationem*, 4.

[nota11] *Ad P.D.N.* 19, 9.

[nota12] Cf. *Relatio Post disceptationem*, 5.

[nota13] Cf. *Instrumentum Laboris*, 13.

[nota14] Heb 10: 5-7.

[nota15] Synodus Episcoporum, Coetus Specialis pro Africa, Vat. 1994, *Ad P.D.N.*, 2.

The Impact of the African Synod on the Vincentians in Africa.

by Jean-Baptiste NSAMBI e MBULA, C.M.

The famous call by Pope Paul VI at Kampala, Uganda, in 1967; "Africans, you can, and must, have your own Christianity", contained the seed of both a new evangelical impetus and a hope for the African church. The Special Assembly on Africa held by the Synod of Bishops in Rome, the very heart of catholicism, illustrates this under two headings. Firstly, through the recognition of the existence of a true church in Africa. Secondly, through the acknowledgement that this does not exist, in principle, as a peripheral church, since all the local churches make up, in equal part, the one Church of Jesus Christ.

The Congregation of the Mission, whose sense of belonging to the Church is part of the heritage which it has received from its founder, feels called on by this synod. It wants to discern what it can do in its work in Africa and also to concretise its 'insertion' with regard to what is at stake on this continent.

The celebration of the African Synod will have been the occasion, if there is still need of one, to do away with the idea of a "Missionary Christianity" (in Africa) and the start of an African Christianity, or, according to the expression used by Cardinal Tumi at the closure of the proceedings of the Synod, the gradual transition "from the status of a mission-Church to that of a Church on Mission."

It is in the light of this new understanding, which is also the logic of the incarnation, that the work of the Vincentians in Africa is best understood.

THE AFRICAN SYNOD AND THE VOCATION OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION IN AFRICA

The task of evangelising is, for the C.M., its gift, its proper vocation and the expression of its deepest identity. Article 13 of our Constitutions gives a response, in principle, to what the Vincentians in general and the C.M. in particular, could expect of the African Synod;

Faithful to the spirit and example of St. Vincent, the Provinces will decide for themselves the forms of apostolate that they must adopt in order to ensure the insertion of their apostolic activity in the pastoral action of the Church, according to the directives and teachings of the Holy See, the Episcopal Conferences and the diocesan Bishops".

The African Synod encourages congregations working in Africa to rediscover the gospel dynamic appropriate to this continent and to situate themselves in it as communities living out their own particular charism. The C.M., for its part, is called to work in Africa under two headings; firstly, in conformity with its specific vocation and, secondly, in collaboration with the local churches .

The transition from a Mission-Church to a Church on Mission implies, on the part of religious congregations, a redefinition of their charism, or, at least, a reorientation of their presence in the Church in Africa.

The courage of missionaries, a courage the synod recognised, has been vital in order that the African Church might reach its present maturity. This same initial courage will be vital to us as missionaries in order that we might rediscover our place in this Church on Mission.

In this way of thinking, the C.M. has a sure future in Africa. For it will not mean that we redefine our vocation but, rather, that we recover it, since our proper vocation fits marvellously into a Church on Mission. Following on from the Synod, and even examining what the Church in Africa already is, the change which must be undertaken by the C.M. in Africa is by way of being a rediscovery of its own identity; the evangelisation of the poor which echoes in Africa today with such a relevance that it is astonishing that, in this most poverty-stricken continent in the world, the C.M. is not there as a matter of priority. Perhaps this way of seeing things is a bit naive, but it does serve to underline the wonderful part which the C.M. could play in the evangelising mission of the Church in Africa. It is also urgent that, taking this very same nature of its vocation as a starting point, the C.M. in Africa take up certain challenges.

1.1 The challenge to inculturate the Vincentian vocation

A congregation is not called on to transplant the life of the Church from which it originates into another context. It seeks to live out its (gospel) spirit which is the vocation that the Church entrusts to it. Success is not measured by reference to its realisation in other continents or places, but, rather, by reference to the realisation of its own particular end. The African Synod has renewed the commitment to inculturation. The C.M. must, in the same way, inculturate itself from within Africa. This is what allows it to take up the challenge of apostolic activity and to succeed in its insertion of itself as a community in a particular church. And if, for the African Synod, following the teaching of the council and the popes, this work is not firstly a work either for or with the Africans, but a work of the Africans in a direct link with all the other churches in the world as a sign of communion, then it must be the same also for the C.M. in Africa. The time is now long gone when one could say that it was necessary to "take account" of the Africans who are in our communities. This is not the understanding of the synod, of the incarnation or of inculturation. And it's not simply a matter of personnel (which, all the same, should not be neglected) but it is a matter of our spirit.

The Vincentian community is the first locus of the inculturation of the Vincentian charism. The Vincentian charism being essentially one of mission, it is therefore with this prior consideration that the C.M. must confront its mission at the heart of the African Church.

1.2 . The Challenge of Apostolic Activity

In terms of our particular law, it is our vocation, that's to say the end, the nature and the spirit of the C.M., which must direct the life of the congregation. Since the Vincentian charism is essentially one of mission, the C.M. can, and even must, take advantage of its own works which express its particular vocation which fits so wonderfully with the Mission of the church in Africa as perceived by the African Synod. The sense of Article 13 which we have already quoted, allows us to understand the characteristics of apostolic activity in the C.M. defined by article 12. The different points set out in this article have an internal complementarity which is fractured each time one is exclusively adopted, with the wilful omission of the others. The same complementarity extends to the conditions for applicability described in the articles of the Statutes referring to apostolic activity. (Ss 1-12) The place for the clarification of these apostolic choices is the community, and provincial, projects.

In the African context, the works of the African Synod have included orientations which may open new ways for the C.M. in Africa and maintain our communities in a constant state of renewal (C.2). These orientations are all directed at an evangelisation which, in terms of our constitutions (esp. C12 & 18), and in the light of the apostolic exhortation of Paul VI "Evangelii Nuntiandi", forms a whole with the work of human development (EN 31) as Vatican II has already affirmed; "the task of development is an integral part of the mission of the Church". (GS 14)

For the Vincentians in Africa, the impact of the synod will therefore consist in the deepening of these orientations and their application, according to the Vincentian spirit, in the context of both our life and work, along two basic axes; that of in-depth evangelisation and that of the care and promotion of integral human development, the whole being realised in a community for mission which is our distinctive quality (cf C . 21.1) . In a church which wishes to be the Church-Family of God, this, for the Vincentians of Africa, is no small asset. Here we find, perhaps, in present day terms, the traditional Vincentian duality; Mission and Charity.

The C.M. can no longer be content to have a poor environment as its apostolic field in Africa. The actual presence of poor people in our work environments should be no consolation to us. It is a constant call on us which must urge us to discern God's plan ceaselessly and to act in conformity with this saving plan. Hence the need to plan initiatives with a view to permanent action, because what constitutes a life-option to live out the work with and for the Poor cannot be reduced to simple acts of generosity, however praiseworthy these might be.

In this we see the importance of a work which is realised in the context of community. This indeed is a chance for the future of the C.M. in this Africa of many poverties. In Africa, community for mission represents a triple value for the Vincentian. In the first place, it is a choice which the founder expressly desired and which the congregation has always maintained as a patrimony which may not be altered without fundamentally changing the nature of our mission. In the second place, community is the life-giving soil of the African, a heartland which the Church ennobles by purifying it of all narrowness of vision; due less to the essence of African culture than to a problem of horizons. The Synod understood this well when

it put the focus on the idea of the "Church as family". In the third and last place, community for mission is an assurance of the continuation of the work of the C.M. in Africa, with African Vincentians who are themselves from poor backgrounds. This last point may need some clarification.

When works for the promotion of the Poor are over-identified as the work of individual confreres, they will last only as long as those confreres are involved, which entails the risk of "immovable confreres". If however these confreres should leave for, or are called to, other works, these excellent undertakings may vegetate before expiring at the hands of a poor successor, to the detriment of those who should have benefitted from them. And, to cap it all, the popular understanding will not grasp the fact that manna will no longer fall from nordic skies. People will then easily impute the entire responsibility for the collapse to the poor successor. If he should also be an African, himself poor by origin, it is an easy step to the conclusion that the Africans are still not ready to take on major responsibilities, even that they are incapable of doing so. In such a way, even in ecclesiastical circles, is the myth perpetuated, which portrays the African as an eternal infant, constantly in need of help.

The sense community spirit would avoid such disagreements for the poor confreres, especially if, as well as being seen in a community framework, these works were seen not merely as acts of assistance, but as self-managing development initiatives. Thus, community for mission allows us to develop the theories of development in the third world by moving from assistance to liberation. For the Vincentian, therefore, it is a clear follow-on that community is the place to expand our notion of mission while blockage in community (especially for reasons of personal preference) is the death of mission and the misfortune of the poor. In this last case, we are led to a flagrant negation of the identity and special quality of the Vincentian vocation. This spirit of community, so real in the African soul, must be protected, purified and expanded towards the larger horizon of the Gospel, right from the start of formation for mission.

2. Successful insertion in the local church

Part of the hope of St. Vincent de Paul, who always believed in the Church and considered his work as a work of the Church, was for the most effective participation in the pastoral activity of the whole of the local Church. We can therefore say that insertion in the local reality is, for the C.M., a true living out of its faithfulness to its specific vocation. The C.M. which, like many other congregations, has helped develop mission territories into local churches, which see themselves as adult and capable of taking charge of themselves, must now live out the experience of the unworthy servant of the Gospel as well as the spirituality of the Baptist; to allow the local church to increase, and to be a witness there of both the universality of the church and of a specific vocation which, while now shorn of all the responsibility of the ecdesial constitution, has greater ease in expressing itself, especially to the degree that it (the community) relates to the preoccupations of the people and the church of Africa.

While we may speak of Africa under the heading of the "New Evangelisation", it seems clear that this should not be understood here as a "reevangelisation" but, rather, as a "depth evangelisation". In fact, even if the first proclamation remains a constant, we must recognise that "Christian Africa" has not lost its faith as such. It wishes to deepen it. The mission of the C.M. in Africa must be seen in such a light. In the Proclamation of the Good News, popular missions could be reviewed in terms of their methodologies in order to correspond to the needs and aspirations of the peoples of Africa, without, in any way, sacrificing the essence of the message (cf C.14). In the pastoral plan, the Synod has confirmed the option for vibrant ecclesial communities in the ChurchFamily of God. Wherever the C.M. works in parishes, may it contribute to the spread of these communities as the natural locus of the genesis of the faith and of the transformation of the Earthly City.

This pastoral framework is only possible if the agents of evangelisation are assured of an adequate formation. Helping both clergy and laity is set down in the very definition of the purpose of the Congregation (cf. C.1) There is in that an expectation which deserves to be further examined. Vatican II having pronounced on the preferential option for the poor, and the extraordinary synod, as the Church of Africa in Synod, having reaffirmed it, the Vincentians have a secular witness to bring to it. This witness continues with greater spirit if future priests are brought, right from the start of their formation, to take a greater part in this option.

From the laity's side, this same effort must be led by the Vincentian who, strong in the secular experience of the congregation in the frame-work of movements of Vincentian inspiration, is called on to open new ways of action. However, one point needs to be made; one cannot limit the Vincentian spirit only to those movements of Vincentian origin. The Vincentian spirit is part of the heritage of the Church, and it goes without saying that even those movements or commissions of the laity originating in Africa which have no umbilical ties with what we call the "Vincentian laity" still have need of the Vincentian spirit. It isn't necessary for us, under the pretext of developing the Vincentian mission in Africa, to create movements which, in fact, replicate or run concurrent with what the Church in Africa already has. Rather, the Vincentian spirit encourages us to offer our collaboration and experience in order to support these local initiatives.

The C.M. must also reinforce its insertion in the local church of Africa in the area of dialogue under all these headings; intra-ecclesial, theological, ecumenical, inter-religious and cultural. Our contribution in this area comes from the fact that, for us, dialogue is an effective means of sharing and deepening our common vocation.

The C.M. and the means, and culture, of communication(cf C.12). We often speak now of a new world economic order and, after the cold war, of a new world political order, based on the rule of law. A new world order of communication is no less important as a incontrovertible prelude to a new humanity. In this area, there would be quite a lot of things to do at the heart of the Church and the Congregation. When you open the information organs of the C.M. for example, you get the distinct impression that the Vincentians of Africa don't do too much. Which, of course, is not true. The information is simply not passed on. Could this be because oral culture is

still so strong in Africa? But even oral tradition needs support. Therefore, as well as participating in the pastoral activity of the church in this area, the C.M. in Africa must set up a communications structure, not primarily to make itself known (it's not the proper function of the humble C.M. to make noise or to blow its own trumpet) but to open up and share one another's experiences.

CONCLUSION

To speak of the impact of the African Synod on the Vincentians in Africa, is, in fact, to see the Vincentian charism faced with the social and ecclesial situation in Africa. In effect, the African Synod today synthesises the whole context of the evangelical mission of the Church of Africa. Rooting the Vincentian charism in Africa calls us to an enriching reciprocity. On the one hand, the Vincentian charism sets out to take African life by storm in order to root itself there and to become an african heritage as much at the level of expression as of physical presence. Theologians speak here of the dynamic of inculturation which necessarily implies a reinterpretation which will tend to take up again, in a new manner and a new context, the same evangelical message. In the Congregation we speak of the "Preservation of the Primitive Spirit" which is understood in terms of a "living tradition". Therefore, Africa can enrich the Vincentian charism. On the other hand, the Vincentian charism enriches Africa, in the sense that, through interaction, it sets out to offer to Africa a spirit capable of helping it to deepen its life in Christ. In this time of in-depth evangelisation, our reflection is most apposite.

The African challenges high-lighted by the African Synod and the situations which the Church in Africa is called on to face offer to the Vincentians in Africa both a vast panorama of the mission but also a reading of experience made in a typically Vincentian spirit. This is a real grace for the Congregation. We must seize it in order to offer Africa a "Vincentian therapy", which, since it is part of an African reading of events, is, in short, an African therapy. This seems to be the recurring theme of the Vincentian involvement in Africa.

Africa needs us, not simply because of the fact that we are there but because we have our place there and all that Africa experiences in its heart-break can be seen as replicating the Vincentian charism. Thus, may we not also be distracted by life-sapping hesitations, as much about the peoples of Africa as about the image of the family of St. Vincent de Paul.

It is said; "Who risks nothing, has nothing". What would be the risk for Vincentians with regard to our vocation? We have to run to suffering as we run to fire. Can a Vincentian take the risk of waiting until everything is going well before acting, without, by this very fact, denying his vocation?

We must remain men of hope. As the African Synod wished to be a synod of hope, the C.M. in Africa must be a community of hope. And hope doesn't cause us to cross our arms and wait; it makes us act. This phrase of St. Vincent de Paul must resound in our hearts; "Let us wait patiently, but let us act...."

THE VOHIPENO MISSION

Vincent de Paul Tsangandahy, c.m.

"A year of grace, a year of prayer"

That's how I would describe the mission which took place in Vohipeno, in the diocese of Farafangana (Madagascar) from the 7th to the 21st of August 1994. It was organized under the direction of a group of missionaries, Vincentian priests and a priest of the diocese of Ihosy, along with a certain number of seminarians, Vincentian and diocesan. Fr Tonino Cogoni was in charge. I find it difficult to give a detailed account of how the mission went, but I would like to share these few ideas with you.

1. The mission was the decision of the parish as a whole.

The actual experience of the Christian community in Vohipeno forced them to ask themselves questions about their Christian identity: they were facing the challenges of Islam, their relationship to ancestral customs, and moral problems. Taking stock of this situation seemed to us, the priests of the region, to be a call from God to deepen Catholic faith: that was the basic reason for the Vohipeno mission. On the other hand, being still a young Vincentian and convinced about parish missions, I wanted to have personal experience of being a parish priest in charge of the preparations for a mission.

From November 1993, Vohipeno parish decided to organize along with the Vincentian mission team, a parish mission for August 1994.

2. Preparation, a necessary condition for a mission.

We were convinced that "A mission needs a year of preparation".

Fr Cogoni, in charge of missions in the Province, came to Vohipeno twice to create, with the local Christians and priests, the spiritual environment for a mission.

a) The Feast of Christ the King

Fr Cogoni's first visit, in November 1993, was in order to get to know the place and to work out a plan for the mission with the Christians. The year's programme was to be ready by the Feast of Christ the King:

- A prayer for the mission was drawn up and was to be said every day, in the parish church and in families.

- Taking into account the Christians' wish to deepen their faith, the theme of the mission was based on Jesus' words: "**BUT YOU, WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I**

AM?", and so the areas to be examined in depth during the fortnight were focused on that theme.

- The timetable of the preparation was divided into three stages, according to the liturgical seasons.

b) Advent and Christmas

For the Christmas season the aim was:

- To launch the daily prayer for the mission, in the church and in families;
- To visit people in positions of authority, in the social and administrative fields, in the parish;
- To invite lay volunteers to form a group for animating the mission.

All this was to be done within the normal pastoral work of the parish, making use of the parish's own vitality.

c) Lent and Easter

Before Lent the mission team had to be prepared, so that it could be missioned on the First Sunday of Lent. Preparation for Easter, then, was marked by the mission team going to the different districts of the parish to get them ready for the mission. There were 26 persons in the team, six Daughters of Charity, six lay people and fourteen young persons. By making two visits a week the team visited all 500 families of the parish during Lent. Prayer was organized as follows:

- every day, in the family;
- every Saturday evening families met together, by districts;
- every Sunday evening, people from all districts met in the church for prayer together.

d) The month of May, the heart of the preparation

The month of May was the peak of the preparation. By then everyone was supposed to know all about the mission. The task of the team was to let each district know the mission programme by distributing invitations.

During this month of May Fr Cogoni's visit allowed us to organize masses in the districts and to finalize details of the programme for the fortnight's mission. Each district chose a Patron Saint.

These four preparatory stages were the four pillars of the mission. It is good to point out also that a catechetical programme for all the parishioners took place in the parish every Sunday evening to tackle the different themes chosen for the mission. Every Wednesday evening a youth mass was celebrated, to deepen understanding of

the mission themes, and every Friday evening there was a children's mass with suitable preaching. All this was animated by the team.

3. The mission fortnight

Seven priests and seven seminarians from the major seminary gave the fortnight's mission. At the opening the bishop, Mgr Charles-Remy Rakotonirina, blessed the missionaries.

Each of the seven districts of the parish was given to a missionary. Group animation, for children, youth, women, men, was also shared out according to the missionaries' talents.

a) The first week

As in all missions given in the Province the first week was devoted to home visitation in the districts and group animation. There were between one and two hundred people at mass each morning. The attendance at the evening talks increased day by day. At the end of that first week there were masses in the districts with the distribution of mission crosses

b) The second week

During the second week a special theme was allotted to each day:

- Monday (15 August): Marian day with Rosary procession;
- Tuesday: Day for the sick;
- Wednesday: Youth day;
- Thursday: Family day;
- Friday: Day of the Cross;
- Saturday: Children's day.

All this was celebrated with enthusiasm. The closing of the mission, Sunday the 21st, was the feast of our Blessed Victoire Rasoamanarivo.

I can certainly say that this Vohipeno mission was a success, both on the part of the missionaries and that of the Christians. The missionaries blended together into a good team for work and prayer in common.

For my own part, I have had the opportunity to work on eight out of the twelve missions given in the Province, four while a seminarian in the major seminary, three as a priest-preacher and one as a parish priest.

I thank the Lord when I observe the efforts made by the Province for Vincentians to extend their charism in Madagascar. I believe in a Vincentian presence in Madagascar. I thank all those who prayed for this Vohipeno mission, and I know that it was your prayer which was heard.

I can humbly state that "*Providence smiled on Vohipeno*".

VINCENTIAN PRESENCE IN NIGERIA 1960_1994

Richard Ikechukwu Diala, c.m.

A RESUME

The Irish Province of the Vincentians came to Nigeria on November 1st, 1960, exactly one month after Nigerian Independence, at the invitation of Bishop James Moynagh of Calabar diocese. Fathers Frank Mullan CM, Harry Morrin CM, and Paddy Hughes CM, were the first set of explorers.

As soon as they arrived, and after their orientation and apprenticeship courses, they set up a temporary house together in the township of Ikot Ekpene. Around this temporary abode were built the presbytery and St. Vincent's parish church, in 1963 and 1965 respectively. These structures were sponsored by the generous people of Phibsboro, Dublin, Ireland. This first group of Irish Vincentians had its early remarkable sad moment when, at the end of May 1965, Fr Harry Morrin suddenly died of a heart problem. Nevertheless, by 1966 there were about seven Irish Vincentians, including Fr Frank Mullan CM who in later years became Provincial.

Most of them were mainly involved in mission and retreat work, in parishes, to priests and religious, schools etc. They criss-crossed the length and breadth of Eastern Nigeria, especially Igboland. By the time the Nigerian crisis started in July 1966, with massacres in the northern part of the country and progressed into a civil war in May 1967, the Vincentians had gone to Abakaliki in the then Ogoja diocese, Uzoagba and Atta in Owerri diocese.

The Nigeria--Biafra War, as it was called, halted the progressive expansion of the Vincentians into other parts of the country, especially when most of the missionaries in the Biafran side were forced to leave, either owing to the intensity of the war, or by the Federal Government, between 1967 and February 1970.

However, at the end of the Civil War in January 1970, with the intervention of the Apostolic Nuncio in Lagos, seven Irish Vincentians left Dublin: Fathers **Roderic Crowley, Frank Murphy, Padraig Regan** and **Bill Clarke**, for Port Harcourt diocese in the east, while Fathers **Vinnie O'Brien, Tom Devine** and **Tim Casey** left for Makurdi diocese, a new expansion towards the middle belt of Nigeria.

The Vincentian missions and retreats were appealing to young Nigerians and, as early as 1968, some had started showing interest in becoming Vincentians. By late 1970, the first two Nigerians to be accepted, and sent to Ireland for novitiate and seminary training, were Timothy Njoku and Anthony Njoku.

In Makurdi diocese the Vincentians were involved in the training of catechists, "*Church Leaders*", and eucharistic ministers, and in missions and retreats. Fr O'Brien became the Principal of Emmanuel College, Obokolo, in January 1973. St Vincent's Parish, Ogobia, was also assigned to the Vincentians. At Port Harcourt the Vincentians were involved in the Minor Seminary, in Our Lady's Parish, Creek Road, as well as in preaching retreats.

The end of the crisis saw the Vincentians return to Ikot Ekpene, where they had started in 1960. Thirteen years later, in 1973, a remarkable joyous moment came when the first Nigerian Vincentian, Fr Timothy Njoku CM -- having completed his novitiate and studies in Ireland -- was ordained by Bishop Dominic Ekandem, the local Ordinary. This joy was to be climaxed ten years later (in the same Ikot Ekpene, in 1983), when the "*foundation novices*", who were totally trained in Nigeria, were to be ordained, on July 16th, by Dominic Cardinal Ekandem. Thus Fathers Richard Ikechukwu Diala CM and Michael Ime Edem CM were to become the litmus test for locally trained Vincentians.

The year 1975 is also special in the annals of the history books of the Vincentians in Nigeria. This year saw the ordination of the second Nigerian, Rev. Anthony Njoku (who is seen by some as being on loan to the Owerri Diocese), and the opening of the Nigerian Vincentian Novitiate at Ogobia, Makurdi diocese. Fr Paul Roche CM (the great builder), the first Novice Master, with the three "*foundation novices*", Richard Diala, Michael Edem and John Amadi (who left after some years), started the novitiate programme in August/September 1975.

In 1974 and 1976 respectively, the Vincentians were involved in the formation of the local clergy, in the largest seminary in the world in recent years, the Bigard Memorial Seminary, Enugu and Ikot Ekpene. Fr James Cahalan, "*Papa*" as he was fondly called by his students, of blessed memory, was at Bigard, Enugu. Fathers Myles Rearden and Roderic Crowley were at Bigard, Ikot Ekpene. The two campuses of theology and philosophy would number more than 700 students.

By 1979 the Vincentians had been invited by the Archbishop of Onitsha, Francis Arinze, to come and run a new parish at Oraifite, which eventually formed the base of the retreat team for the coming years. The Vincentians also established a vocational school for girls there. In order to consolidate the community and Vincentian spirit among the seminarians a student house was built at Abiakpo, Ikot Ekpene diocese, in 1982, from where they were attending lectures at the nearby Bigard Seminary, Ikot Ekpene campus. In 1990, a hostel was hired at Enugu for the theology students studying at Bigard Seminary, Enugu. Prior to this, the Vincentians had built and opened the Regional House in Enugu in 1988. The proposed Retreat/Pastoral Centre, at Oraifite, archdiocese of Onitsha, is still to be realized.

There is no doubt that the Vincentian charism and apostolate are much appreciated by many members of the Nigerian ecclesiastical authorities. There are a lot of invitations from dioceses and provinces for the Vincentians to come and work, either in parishes or seminaries, but unfortunately the Little Company has not

been able to answer most of them owing to lack of personnel and qualified manpower. So, the Vincentians' preoccupation in Nigeria is not so much what to do, as the personnel to do what is available, and also what lies ahead. The numbers are yet few, which makes it even more difficult to send confreres for specialised training.

In spite of all, there is progress and hope - the "*slow motion*" notwithstanding - and it is believed that the Irish Province would, like the local dioceses and other religious communities, cash-in on the vocations boom in Nigeria now, because the Nigeria of tomorrow could be like the Europe and America of today, with few vocations. Today, there are nineteen Nigerian Vincentian priests, one brother and thirty-one students and novices.

Having been involved myself in vocation and retreat works in this Little Company, it is true to say that the Vincentian charisms of care for the poor and the preaching of the word, among others, appeal to many African youths, more than other charisms would. That accounts for the many applications we receive each year.

Looking back over thirty-four years of the Vincentian presence in Nigeria, one could say that something has been achieved. Nigerians know that the Vincentians exist and that they are a group that preaches the gospel for the upliftment of the poor. Nigerians have also experienced this Vincentian involvement in the prison apostolate, even as seminarians; also chaplaincy work with the Society of St Vincent de Paul at both diocesan and national level; the rehabilitation of the homeless, care for the disabled etc.

It is hoped that, before the year 2000, the Irish Province would consolidate the more her missionary activity in Nigeria by increasing the number of physical structures and local personnel, in order to establish a formidable base for the birth of a Nigerian Province. Nigerians will ever remain grateful to our Irish confreres, both the living and those who have gone before us, signed with the sign of peace.

TOWARD A NEW EVANGELIZATION

- Some Reflections regarding the Congregation of the Mission -¹

Have you dreamt any dreams lately? Have you had any visions? In times of renewal, "young men see visions and old men dream dreams," the prophet Joel tells us.² In this time of renewal in the Congregation, I ask the Lord to stimulate all of us to new dreams and to new efforts at making them come true.

TOWARD A NEW EVANGELIZATION

Pope John Paul II has made the expression "new evangelization" part of the contemporary Catholic vocabulary. Few topics have received more attention in the Church in recent years. He speaks of an evangelization that is new in its ardor, in its methods and in its expression.³

But John Paul II's teaching has many antecedents over the last several decades. Noteworthy among these is John XXIII's opening address at the Second Vatican Council, where he called for a new expression of the Christian faith:

*The substance of the ancient doctrine of the deposit of faith is one thing, and the way in which it is presented is another.*⁴

In the same discourse he also stated: "...at the same time she (the Church) must ever look to the present, to the new conditions and new forms of life introduced into the modern world which have opened new avenues...."⁵

The Medellín document, which had dramatic effects in Latin America, called for a re-evangelization of human existence.⁶ It envisioned a Latin American Church that would be an Evangelizer of the Poor, committed to living in solidarity with them.⁷ The final document at Puebla continued this analysis of a renewed evangelization.⁸ The Santo Domingo document, building on the experience of two decades, provides an extensive development of the contents of "new evangelization."⁹

¹Talk to members of the Eastern Province of the Congregation of the Mission in Philadelphia, June 1993.

²Jl 3:1; cf. also, Acts 2: 17.

³Discourse at the 19th Ordinary Assembly of CELAM, Haiti, March 9, 1983; also, in the Dominican Republic, October 12, 1984.

⁴John XXIII, Opening Address, October 11, 1962. Cf. Walter Abbot, ed. *The Documents of Vatican II* (New York, 1966) 715.

⁵*Ibid.* (Abbot, 714).

⁶Medellín, VIII, 8.

⁷Medellín, XIV, 8.

⁸Puebla, 340f.

⁹Santo Domingo, Conclusions 23ff.

Almost all commentators agree that Paul IV, while not using the term "new evangelization" is one of its principal architects. *Evangelii Nuntiandi* provides some of the richest source materials for the new evangelization¹⁰:

Evangelization loses much of its force and effectiveness if it does not take into consideration the actual people to whom it is addressed, if it does not use their language, their signs and symbols, if it does not answer the questions they ask, and if it does not have an impact on their concrete life.

Naturally, like many popular expressions, "new evangelization" has taken on a variety of meanings. Also, some controversy has arisen over the terms "new evangelization" or "re-evangelization," the role of the charismatic movement in the process of "new evangelization," the relationship in the past between "evangelization" and "colonization." Apart from these controversies, today I want to focus on the positive implications of a new evangelization.

SOME REACTIONS

1. "Nothing is new."

Of course, there are those who, like Qoheleth, feel that nothing is new under the sun.¹¹ There is a hidden truth in this assertion, but one that needs to be balanced by another truth. The New Testament provides a basis for those holding this position. "Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever."¹² The fullness of revelation has broken into history in the person of Jesus and the announcement of the Reign of God. So, "guard the deposit of faith."¹³ "If I preach any other gospel, let me be *anathema*."¹⁴

This fundamental stance emphasizes the *already*, sometimes at the expense of the *not yet*. It accents the basic creed, while being slow to acknowledge that there is development in credal statements.

2. "Everything is new."

Some are always in process. They are uneasy with the stable, the structured, the given. They are eager for the old things to pass away and for the new to emerge.

There are ample grounds for this position in the New Testament. "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation."¹⁵ "Behold, all things are new."¹⁶ "I will create a new heaven and a new earth."¹⁷ The good news is *news*.

¹⁰*Evangelii Nuntiandi* 63.

¹¹Ecc 1:9.

¹²Heb 13:8.

¹³2 Tim 1:14.

¹⁴Gal 1:8.

¹⁵2 Cor 5:17.

¹⁶2 Cor 5:17.

This fundamental stance emphasizes the *not yet*, sometimes at the expense of the *already*. It accents the Church as mystery, as fathomless, as always revealing the inexhaustible riches of Christ. It cites the many historical instances of development of doctrine. It focuses today on the continually changing interface of Christ and culture.

Of course, the truth lies in a tension between these two views. As Matthew's gospel reminds us: "the wise steward brings forth from his storehouse new things and old."¹⁸

3. "What's new?"

Pope John Paul speaks¹⁹ of an evangelization that is new in its:

a. ardor

Here the emphasis is on the conversion of the evangelizer. "We have found the Messiah, the Christ," the disciples cry out in John's gospel.²⁰ Only someone who knows the Lord and loves him deeply can proclaim the word of God with joy, enthusiasm, conviction.

There are many ways of conversion. The focus in new evangelization is not on any particular path, like the charismatic movement, the neo-catechumenate, or the many new forms of community springing up in the Church, though many, in fact, are converted in and through new communities. One must surely be converted. Finding the way is the challenge.

In this light, the new evangelization raises a series of questions for us. Have I really found a way of conversion myself? Has the Congregation as a whole been genuinely converted? Has live contact with the poor been for us, as it was for St. Vincent, the path to conversion? Have the poor revealed to us how God sees the world's priorities?

b. methods

There are many new means at hand. They too pose enormously challenging questions to us.

Do many in the Church, or the Congregation, really use the mass media (TV, radio, movies, the press) as a means for evangelizing? Are there many provinces that have trained even one person in the use of the media and have organized one good media project? Do many in the Congregation use computers to full advantage in pastoral activities?

¹⁷Is 65:17; cf. Rev 21:1.

¹⁸Mt 13:52.

¹⁹Discourse given in Santo Domingo, Oct. 12, 1984.

²⁰Jn 1:41.

In our pastoral methodology, do we work not only *for* the poor, but *with* them?
Do we regard base communities as a peculiarly Latin American thing, or do we work at forming Christian communities wherever we evangelize?

c. expression

Every era and every place has its own language and its own culture, or its own languages and cultures. Today, differences in culture pose an increasing challenge, since we live in an information society, where rapid communication brings us into contact with the global community.

In the Church, we live in an ecumenical era. In philosophy and theology, hermeneutics play a very significant role. There is strong emphasis on the need for the inculturation of theology.

In fact, in contemporary Church documents, there are some accents that are quite new. I do not mean that they are completely new. Actually, you can find almost all of them, at least in some form, in the Fathers of the Church. But as the Church interfaces with contemporary societies and contemporary cultures, there is a new emphasis on:

- the preferential option for the poor
- the effects of sin on social structures
- the systemic aspects of justice and injustice
- life issues (war, peace-making, abortion, euthanasia, capital punishment)
- the erosion of family structures and sexual morality
- integral liberation
 - ecology

Beyond these new emphases in Church documents and contemporary theology, one can also discern in our 1984 Constitutions and in the official documents of the Congregation in recent years a number of significantly new accents:

- on Christ as the Evangelizer of the Poor
- on the link between Evangelization and action for justice
- on searching out the causes of poverty and concrete solutions
- on specializing in the Church's social teaching
- on investigating the new forms of poverty
- on being evangelized by the poor
- on the poor as not merely the object of Evangelization, but its subject
- on forming basic Christian communities
- on a global world-view.

A DESCRIPTION OF EVANGELIZATION AND SOME CRITICAL DISTINCTIONS

As a basis for the reflections that follow, I offer you this description of Evangelization²¹ used by Paul VI:

Evangelization is a complex process made up of varied elements: the renewal of humanity, witness, explicit proclamation, inner adherence, entry into the community, acceptance of signs, apostolic initiative. These elements may appear to be contradictory, indeed mutually exclusive. In fact they are complementary and mutually enriching. Each one must always be seen in relationship with the others.

From the writings of Paul VI and John Paul II, it is evident that evangelization has many facets, all of which play a significant role in the overall picture. Within that context, let me highlight two critical distinctions that play a significant role in describing Evangelization in the Vincentian tradition:

a. *we evangelize "by word and work"; we serve "spiritually and corporally"*

St. Vincent was deeply convinced of the link between what we say and what we do. Again and again, therefore, he spoke of Evangelization by "word and work." He calls both the Vincentians and Daughters of Charity to serve the poor "spiritually and corporally." When speaking to the members of the Congregation, he warned us²²:

If there are any among us who think they are in the Congregation of the Mission to preach the gospel to the poor but not to comfort them, to supply their spiritual but not their temporal wants, I reply that we ought to assist them and have them assisted in every way, by ourselves and by others.... To do this is to preach the gospel by words and by works.

He tells the Daughters of Charity again and again that their works must be accompanied by words of faith.²³

First, do. Then, teach. That is St. Vincent's rule for "effective" evangelization. In other words, St. Vincent sees preaching and human promotion as complementary to one another, and as integral to the evangelization process.

b. *evangelization can be direct/indirect*

Neither St. Vincent nor the history of the Congregation provide any grounds for a fundamentalism in regard to evangelization of the poor. St. Vincent clearly recognized that not all could serve the poor directly and that some would necessarily serve them indirectly. He handled this dispute in his own lifetime. As

²¹Evangelii Nuntiandi, 24.

²²SV XII, 87.

²³SV IX, 59; IX, 593; XI, 364; XI, 592.

examples, he cites seminary teachers and directors of the Daughters of Charity. He saw their role as necessary if the poor were to be served well. There will always be cases like that.

There is a need for caution in using the direct/indirect distinction. It must be evoked with great moderation. Unless a very large number of our members is involved in direct evangelization we will hardly merit the name "missionaries."

TOWARD A NEW EVANGELIZATION IN THE CONGREGATION OF THE MISSION

Our most recent General Assembly calls the Congregation to make six commitments:

1. **Remembering that St. Vincent's encounter with the poor was a decisive factor in his life, we will have personal contact with people whom our society has disinherited and abandoned.**

This is the peculiarly Vincentian way of conversion. It is not the only one, of course. But it is the way that St. Vincent trod and the way in which he calls the Company to walk. If the new evangelization is one that is to be new in its ardor, then it must rest upon the foundation of a genuine conversion.

Let me simply add here that the controlling *spiritual* force that will enable us to live out this first commitment of the General Assembly is the lived conviction that we who are Vincentians follow Christ *as the Evangelizer of the Poor*. Focus on, and commitment to, *this* Christ is the heart of Vincentian spirituality.

Is it really possible for everyone to have first-hand contact with the poor? The Superior General surely does very little in that regard. Certainly not everyone can have as his principal ministry one which brings him into direct contact with the poor. But I would suggest that for most of us it is possible to have at least *some* direct contact, even if not every day.

2. **Recognizing the complexity of our world today, we will investigate and urge others to study the root causes of poverty in order "to promote long and short term solutions, which are concrete, flexible and efficacious."²⁴**

The *direct/indirect* distinction comes into play here. Does one do more good by ministering directly to the hungry person, giving him food, or by investigating the causes of famine, and working toward a resolution of the problem? The pope calls on us as Vincentians to use our gifts not only in direct service to the poor, but also in the kind of indirect service that will be even more beneficial in the long run.

The Congregation can play a very significant role here. We have formidable educational and financial resources for investigating the causes of poverty.

²⁴Address of John Paul II to the delegates at the General Assembly of 1986.

Recently, I met with the presidents of three of our Vincentian-sponsored universities to encourage them to mobilize the energies of their faculties, staff, and students to study the root causes of poverty and search for solutions. Through two very generous donations, the University of St. John's in New York has now established a Vincentian Chair of Social Justice.

In our preaching, we can also encourage others to develop a global world-view, and challenge them to make their own an ethic in which justice is a foundation stone.

Are there ways in which we can engage in a critique of contemporary society from the point of view of justice? Anyone living in Italy, as I do, is very conscious today of the need to evangelize economic and political life, since gospel values and ethical values have given way to wholesale corruption. The same is true in many countries.

This kind of critical, prophetic role of the Church and of theology, of course, creates a new relationship between the Church with the world, not one of alliance with the powerful, but of solidarity with the oppressed and defense of the rights of the poor.

3. **We will give a privileged place in our own formation and in the formation of priests and laity to a spirit of dialogue and collaboration with contemporary society, in the light of the social teaching of the Church. The goal will be to promote creative solidarity in favor of the poor, who long for their own liberation and personal well-being.**

Let me make three points here:

- a. The General Assembly speaks of dialogue with contemporary society. I hereby appeal to all candidates for the Congregation, and as many members as possible, to become bi-lingual. Dialogue and mobility in contemporary society demand it. In the United States, for example, almost 50% of the Catholics do not speak English as their first language. Spanish has become an essential tool for a missionary there.

St. Vincent felt strongly about the need to learn other languages. He told the confreres²⁵:

Now the diversity of languages is very great, not only in Europe, Africa and Asia, but also in Canada. For we see by the reports of the Jesuit Fathers that there are as many languages as there are tribes. The Hurons do not speak like the Iroquois, nor the latter like their neighbors. And a person who understands one group of Indians does not understand the others.

²⁵SV XII, 26-27.

How then can Missionaries, bearing these differences of language in mind, go throughout the world announcing the Gospel if they know only their own language?

b. The statement also speaks of the social teaching of the Church. Are there ways in which not just our educational institutions, but all of us, can communicate the Church's social doctrine more effectively. Pope John Paul II writes very forcefully in *Centesimus Annus*²⁶: "The 'new evangelization' which the modern world urgently needs and which I have emphasized many times, must include among its essential elements *a proclamation of the Church's social doctrine.*" The Church has been proclaiming this doctrine in a rather clear way now for more than 100 years. Are Catholics really well evangelized in this regard? Is this social doctrine part of their explicit consciousness? Are we Vincentians "experts" in teaching this social doctrine?

c. Do the clergy and laity in whose formation we assist really become "experts" in the Church's social doctrine? Do they look back on their Vincentian teachers and directors with gratitude for having moved them to drink deeply from this rich source?

4. **We will give to all our pastoral activity a clear missionary character, attending to the most abandoned and marginated and fostering the effective participation of everyone in the life of the Christian community. We will be ready to hand our work over to others when we consider our mission completed.**

The key here is mobility. The missionary's goal is the formation of new or renewed local communities. He is aware that there are "other villages where the gospel must be preached"²⁷ and that therefore his time commitment in a given place is limited. When the Christian community is self-sufficient, the missionary moves on.

The statement speaks of the effective participation of everyone in the life of the Christian community. Today we are aware that the poor are not just the *object* of evangelization, but its *subject*. The poor themselves evangelize. Our evangelization is *with* and *for* them.

Consequently, the new evangelization calls for a new way of being for the missionary. His ministry is characterized by community-building, by the active participation of all, by the distribution of functions, by the emergence of new ministries and charisms, by solidarity with the oppressed.²⁸

I must raise a question here that pertains to Vincentians in many parts of the world. There are now hundreds of thousands of basic Christian communities

²⁶*Centesimus Annus*, 5.

²⁷Cf. Mk 1:38.

²⁸Leonardo Boff, *Nova Evangelização. Perspectiva dos Oprimidos* (Fortaleza: Vozes, 1990) 122-26. In this very interesting work, the author also mentions new *contents* in the new evangelization: a new kind of spirituality, a new relationship of the Church with the world. In regard to *method*, he focuses especially on the poor as the *subject* of evangelization.

throughout the world. More and more in these communities, the gospel is read together and meditated on, interpreted in an environment of prayer and communal sharing, and lived in relationship to the problems within the people's culture. Has this mode of evangelization been sufficiently explored and put into practice in the Congregation?

What is being described here, in the second, third, and fourth commitments cited above, is a very demanding pastoral methodology,²⁹ which had already been outlined in the document "Visitors in Service of the Mission":

- *to work within the world of the poor (the poor as a class), not just with isolated persons (Lines of Action 1986, 4 and 11);*
- *to work on the level of structures, not just in responding to particular situations (Lines of Action 1986, 6 and 11);*
- *to work to confront injustice, not just to meet the needs of individual poor people (Lines of Action 1986, 4 and 11);*
- *to work with groups (small communities), so that the poor person is an agent, and not simply an object, of evangelization (Lines of Action 1986, 4 and 11).*

5. **We will foster the work of the popular missions and the missions *ad gentes*, working for the creation, the growth and the maturity of Christian communities, which will be both evangelized and evangelizing and which will promote the integral development of persons.**

Centesimus Annus puts the challenge very clearly³⁰:

Present circumstances are leading to a reaffirmation of the positive value of an authentic theology of integral human liberation.

Integral development and integral liberation are two key phrases in our own documents and in those of Pope John Paul II. Integral human liberation embraces all the aspects of people's lives: personal, social, intellectual, affective, cultural, religious.

Renewed popular missions and missions *ad gentes* will develop new methods for fostering integral liberation, a new pedagogy that is adapted to the oppressed,³¹ where the educator and those being educated learn mutually, where we not only evangelize but are evangelized by the poor.

As in Jesus' ministry, so also in the new evangelization there will also be new recipients of evangelization: the culture, popular religiosity, marginalized women, prostitutes, street people, AIDS victims, those without housing.

²⁹Cf. "Visitors in Service of the Mission" (Jan. 25, 1990), 16.

³⁰*Centesimus Annus*, 26.

³¹Cf. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.

6. **Our Congregation commits itself in Eastern Europe to at least one missionary project as a concrete sign of our community's participation in New Evangelization.**

As you know, we sent three missionaries to Albania last year and two more this year (there are also three groups of Daughters of Charity). Although one hears less of Albania, it is probably the poorest country in all of Europe. Nothing functions and nothing is available. The economic and political structure of the country was utterly devastated during the years of communist domination.

We now also have missionaries working in the Ukraine, in Byelorussia, and Lithuania. We hope to send more.

Let me conclude by asking these fundamental questions. Can the Church, as it commits itself to a new evangelization, really become a church of the poor, as Pope John XXIII called it to be in his opening address at Vatican II? Will we, the members of the Congregation of the Mission, really be followers of Christ *as the Evangelizer of the Poor*, as our Constitutions call us to be? Will our provinces really be communities of priests and brothers evangelizing the poor and leading others to evangelize them, as their apostolic plans envision? The answer can surely be *yes* to all these questions.

And if we succeed in undergoing a profound conversion, and in engaging in a new evangelization, will all this result, as Jaroslav Pelican suggests, in "new persecutions"?³²

³²Cf. Jaroslav Pelican, *Jesus through the Centuries* (New York: Harper and Row, 1985) 51.

The CIF: A Vincentian Pilgrimage

The Spanish speaking participants

Vincentiana asks the Spanish-speaking participants of the CIF for a brief description of the experience. With great pleasure and eagerness we undertake this task. We think that we have been very privileged to have been the "*founders*" or "*pioneers*" in this great happening in the life of the Congregation of the Mission.

We share with the readers what we have lived and experienced during this three month pilgrimage. For us it has truly been a pilgrimage with all that this word implies; a road, a reflection, formation, prayer, camaraderie, accompaniment, strength and expansion.

The idea that brought the CIF to life comes from the Superior General and his council in accord with our Constitutions: "*Our formation should be continued and renewed during our whole lives.*" (CC. c.VI, n. 81). And the Last General Assembly inviting us to a "*Renovation of all our ministries and our communities as we seek an integral formation guided by the principle of following Christ the Evangelizer of the poor*".

1. Goals of our Pilgrimage

Our program had clear objectives and concrete goals. This is of utmost importance. Our journey was well-planned.

a. **Know each other and share experiences.** We were all of the same family but we did not know each other. Our first task was to get to know each other, establish a human community. In this way our group came to reflect the unity and universality that is the Congregation of the Mission.

b. **Deepen our knowledge of St. Vincent.** By visiting the places where he walked we were able to come to know him and to walk in his path.

c. Reflect upon our own lives and community experience in order to better our capacity as evangelizers.

2. There is no pilgrimage without pilgrims:

Thirty Vincentians from all over the world arrived at the motherhouse on Rue de Sèvres on Sept. 4, 1995. We were a truly international community: six from Spain, five from the United States, three from India, two from Mexico, two from Central America, two from Puerto Rico, two from Brazil, two from Indonesia, one from the Philippines, one from Portugal, one from Peru, one from Colombia, one from Ireland, and one from Eritrea.

3. There is no pilgrimage without a plan and a method:

It is not possible to walk just any way one pleases. We did our pilgrimage with a special plan in mind. Of course it was difficult to get tuned in, but in time we caught on.

Our journey together was based on four basic cornerstones:

a. presentation of a theme

-This was usually done by an expert and the presentation was followed by questions.

b. personal reflection

- One of our criticisms was that there was not sufficient time for this reflection.

c. group work

- In this task we dialogued about the presentation and about the questions presented.

d. plenary session

- On Thursday and Friday our meeting place turned itself in a Parliament as the group began to report on their findings. Very often the creativity of the presentations was outstanding and the session were much anticipated.

(The next paragraph is not clear in the text. It contains some contradictions and I have opted for a concise summary. (The translator)

The pedagogy had its efficacy and its values, but also its deficiencies.

In general the methods used were very good, but more than anything the fraternal climate of the group must be underlined as a highlight.

As we said above there was not enough time for personal reflection. Also the different language groups caused a difficulty, but we survived by forming special language groups. Another obstacle was the lack of reference sources. For a group of thirty students the reference materials were not sufficient.

4. There is no pilgrimage without guides.

Every pilgrimage must have its guides and our guides were good ones: **Fr. Rybolt, Fr. Renouard, and Fr. Sterling**

Many others supported us with their orientation, company, and materials.

Father Jose Maria Roman: He put us up to date about Vincentian studies and gave us hermeneutical keys to the understanding of St. Vincent.

Father Braga: He introduced us to the Constitutions. This had to be the way we would walk. His profound knowledge of the Constitutions made us enjoy the learning. We worked with the texts and we came to know the Constitutions and to love them.

Father Poole: He taught us about "apostolic activity". Beginning with Saint he showed us the development of this theme over the years and right to the present.

Father Maloney: He shared with us a day on our pilgrimage. He taught us with clarity and simplicity just what our mission is and who the missionary should be, how we should evangelize and he motivated us to accept the radical challenge that our vocation presents us today.

Mr. Cotinaud: This layman psychologist taught us about community life. He made astute observations about human relations and the difficulties and traps in good communication.

Father Rybolt: During the fifth week he taught us about community life from the time of Vincent until today. His presentation made us reflect whether our own community houses really are evangelizing communities.

Father Renouard: He taught us about the five characteristic virtues pointing out not only that these virtues have not lost their importance but that they are at the heart and should of the spirituality of the Vincentian.

Father Catalan, S.J.: He taught us about the vows from the point of view of a psychologist/ psychiatrist. He delved into the area of childhood showing us how our childhood influences our adult lives.

Father Ubillus: He is the provincial of Peru. He taught us about the vows and how they are to be lived in different cultures. Despite the differences from country to country he showed us the challenge and efficacy of the vows in the task of evangelization.

Father Lautissier: He is the director of the Daughters in France. He taught about the identity of the Daughter of Charity and her relationship with the person of the Superior General.

Sister Elizabeth Charpy: She is a D.C. She taught about the spiritual journey of Louis and her participation in the the founding of the C.M.

Father Sterling: His presentation was about the Sacrament of Penance. Also he taught us about the richness and importance of the Divine Office. Also he tried to make us aware of the wonderful treasures contained in popular religiosity.

Father Renoard: In his second presentation he spoke about Marian devotion in the spirituality of Vincent and Louise. He showed the importance of the Miraculous Medal and how Marian devotion must be an important part of our spiritual lives.

Sister Juana Elizondo: She is the Superior General of the Daughters of Charity. She informed us about the recent Synod in Rome where she had been invited. She spoke to us about the fraternal, spontaneous and respectful climate that encouraged freedom of expression.

Father Koch: His theme was prayer and he taught for the last two weeks of the course. His teaching was enriched by a Vincentian flavor and he awakened in us a desire to discover new forms of prayer and to share our prayer communally.

5. Pilgrimage to Vincentian Sites:

Our time of study would not have been complete without a visit to the places where Vincent walked. As we visited we were able to walk in the footsteps of Vincent.

We walked in his steps and saw the places that gave birth to the Congregation: FOLLEVILLE, CHATILLON, CHATEAU L'EVEQUE, DAX, TOLOUSE, BUZET, ETC.

These visits helped us to come to know even more our founder.

6. Pilgrimage to our interior:

Our journey brought us to the heart of our souls where we had the meeting between us and our God.

Our time at the Berceau was highlighted by four days of retreat directed by Fr. McCullen. He based the retreat on the vows and it culminated in the renewal of vows by all the participants.

7. Pilgrimage that should continue:

During our last week we had an evaluation of the experience. In this reflection the great question was: "*Are our apostolates and our community life really Vincentian?*"

The answers were rich and varied, and we finished with a great desire to continue developing the way that the course had indicated.

Our course is open-ended. It will be difficult to forget what this experience has meant.

The poet Antonio Machado has said: "*Traveler, there is no road; one makes the road while walking.*"

We agree, but we also know that the CIF experience has made us who we will be in the future.

We close with this prayer:

THAT YOUR ROAD MAY WIDEN AS YOU ADVANCE;
THAT THE SUN MAY ALWAYS SHINE ON YOU;
THAT THE SUN MAY BE ALWAYS AT YOUR BACK AND THAT THE RAIN
MAY FALL GENTLY ON YOUR FIELDS, AND THAT UNTIL OUR NEXT
MEETING MAY GOD GUARD YOU AND KEEP YOU IN THE PALM OF HIS
HAND. AMEN.

(Translated by Kevin Lawlor)

Father Gui Tianjue, C.M., Confessor of the Faith in China

Omnis Terra (1)

Fr Gui Tianjue (Joseph Kuei) was the first martyr of the diocese of Yujiang in the province of Jiangxi. The inscription on his tombstone says he died in 1953.

He was a Vincentian. After ordination he studied for a while in the United States. Before 1950 he worked in a Catholic church in Fuzhou, also in the province of Jiangxi. He founded the "True Light" secondary school, which he ran for over ten years. An American, Fr Steven Dunker, C.M., was one of his companions at that time. The present regime began in 1951. All priests and Christians were invited to join the Patriotic Association, which set up the Movement of Threefold Independence of the Church, at which time the police listed the false accusations against the American missionary, S. Dunker. Fr Gui spoke up in defence of his companion and refused to join the Movement. He was therefore arrested and imprisoned, bringing his breviary with him.

The Christians brought him whatever he needed. All he would accept were raw vegetables. With the passage of time it became more and more difficult to visit him. Once a month the prison authorities accepted parcels brought by the Christians, but they never gave them to the prisoner. He died in 1953 but no one received permission to see his body. It was only sometime later that two Christians succeeded in finding it in a ditch and were able to bury it in the church cemetery.

Evidence of his pupils

Fr Gui followed the example of Jesus. He lived poorly and willingly helped the poor. When he was a professor in the seminary he lived with the seminarists and like the seminarists. When he had to bring the sacraments to the Christians he prayed along the way. He always found time to do good to others. He knew a little Chinese medicine, which enabled him to help the sick poor. He had great humility. And, with all his learning, he carried out his ministry like a simple priest.

The first miracles after his death

During the ten years after his death many people came to pray at his grave and collect the herbs that grew there. The first person to receive a grace was the Christian Gong De. He had been present at the religious burial ceremony of Fr Gui. He had a stomach ailment for years. He drank a brew made from herbs which grew on the priest's grave and was healed.

But the most astonishing case of a cure was that of a child in a pagan family. He was feverish and howled all day and all night. The mother, in desperation, came to pray at Fr Gui's grave, and almost at once the child stopped crying and the fever abated.

Fr Zeng, a curate in the diocese of Yujiang, was also cured of cancer after drinking a brew made from herbs collected on Fr Gui's grave. That was in the spring of 1992. But the most significant thing is that, for more than 40 years, Fr Gui's grave was a meeting place for liturgical celebrations by the Christians of the diocese of Yujiang. In order to put a stop to this popular devotion the government wrecked the tomb in the winter of 1992.

Many Christians who witnessed the profanation of the grave smelt a beautiful scent. In the open grave all that was found were some ornamental buttons, of a type commonly used in the 1950s.

Very little is known of Fr Gui's life. The bishop called him: "The Martyr of Charity".

(Translation: Thomas Davitt, C.M.)

(1) In *Omnis Terra*, Pontifical Missionary Union Magazine, N_ 41, October-December 1994

Fr. José-Oriol Baylach, c.m.

by Andre Sylvestre C.M.

Last September, I had the great pleasure of a second meeting with Fr. Jose-Oriol Baylach, in the old Provincial house of Calla Rocafuerte. Though ill from cancer, he kept all his usual sprightliness. With very little reference to his illness he spoke mainly of his work in historical study. He was engaged in assembling all his sources needed for the life of our confrere, Mgr. Schumacher, one of the great Bishops of Ecuador. He was very interested in the promotion of the cause of Bl. Perboyre. On parting from him I felt, seeing his state of health and age, that I would see him no more until we met in Heaven.

Born 27/4/1914, in Mas de Cabrile in Catalonia, between Barcelona and Gerona, his family had given to the Church two confreres and a Daughter of Charity. He was one of that group of Spanish confreres, mostly from Catalonia, like the much regretted Frs. Majuan and Pares, who did their secondary studies at the Berceau, which resulted in them being fully bi-lingual. When I was in the Seminaire in St. Lazare (1938-39) he was a student there but we had little or no contact with the students. Due to the war he did his priestly studies in Spain. After ordination (1941) he went, in due course, to Ecuador, together with Frs. Majuan and Gonzalez de Rivera as well as a few French confreres.

Working in Ecuador in Seminaries - since that was the only work for confreres at the time - he specialised in Religious Sociology, rendering great service to the Ecuador Bishops in this field. Recalled to Rome in 1980 to take the place of Fr Cid, who had died, he was Director of Vincentian Publications at the Curia. His facility with languages was very helpful in this. I often met him during that time, in Rome and again at the funeral of a mutual friend, Fr. Majuan.

He had been pining to get back to Ecuador, to which he returned for good in 1989. He took up his sociological and historical pursuits. But during that year, the Visitor, Fr. Sorja died, while his successor, Fr. Montalvo, almost immediately after installation, died also at the end of that year. The confreres of the Province chose Fr. Baylach to succeed these two confreres in that sad series of trials. His age and experience enabled him to pick up the reins and so, it was under his wise guidance that the Province was enabled to face the future with confidence - with God's help, they will have 4 new confrere-priest in a few months' time.

Fr. Baylach was present as Visitor of the Province at the 1992 Assembly in Rome. He astonished us by the interest he showed in every subject of discussion, and by his wise interventions.

When his period as Visitor had finished, he once again resumed his studies in the field of history, but unfortunately, was unable to finish his work. So, it must be left to someone else to write the Life of Mgr. Schumacher.

"Good, wise missionaries are" so St. Vincent used to say, "the treasures of the Little Company." It is one of these treasures that the Province of Ecuador and all Fr. Baylach's friends are now mourning.

POST-SRIPTUM OF FATHER P. ROBERT MALONEY, C.M.

Let me add a brief postscript to André Sylvestre's tribute to José-Oriol Baylach. I knew Oriol well, having lived with him for three years here in the General Curia. He had a wonderful vivacity about him.

He also had a deep love for the Congregation. It was surely at the cost of great sacrifice that he accepted the office of Visitor at a rather advanced age. He was one of the oldest members of the General Assembly of 1992, but all those who were present, I am certain, remember his lively interventions.

Oriol was quite *"original."* Like David, he was capable of dancing before the Ark. I have fond recollections of him pacing up and down in the rec hall, with a smoldering cigarette hanging from his mouth (as all of us waited for the ashes to drop), recounting some tale, and occasionally breaking into song or dancing three or four steps! He often intrigued us with little pieces of information or piles of data that he had compiled about the Congregation.

He lived next to me. Once I thought he had burned to death, when I noticed that smoke was pouring out from under the door of his room. I barged in to find that he was not there, but that his desk was on fire (one of the hanging ashes had evidently found its way into the waste paper basket!). When Oriol returned to his room, obviously quite troubled by what had happened, the first thing he did was light up another cigarette!

I was in Paris when I heard the news of Oriol's death. I had many happy memories of him that day. I was also impressed by how many confreres came to me to express their sorrow at this loss to the Company. May he rest in peace.

Bibliography

MICHAEL PRIOR, C.M. - WILLIAM TAYLOR

Christians in the Holy Land

Wift

(The World of Islam Festival Trust Publisher), London 1994

There has never been a more comprehensive and authoritative account of the Christian Church in the Holy Land than is found in this collection of studies. It includes the most recent research findings of sociologists, and the most up-to-date and informed comments of theologians and other scholars. Above all else, it allows the Holy Land Churches to speak for themselves.

FERNANDO ESPIAGO, C.M.

A la Misión del Cielo por el Martirio, Sacerdotes y Hennanos Paáles Mártires (1934-1939)

Vicepostulación en España-Padres Paüles, 1995

Sixty confreres from the Congregation of the Mission gave their lives for their faith between the years 1934 and 1939. Among these, 15 are the subjects of a process of beatification: three from the community of Alcorisa (Teruel): Frs. Fortunato Velasco Tobar and Leoncio Perez Nebreda and Br. Luis Aguirre Bilbao; four from the community of Guadalajara: Frs. Ireneo Rodríguez Gonzalez, Gregorio Cermeño Barceló, Vicente Viluinbrales Fuente and Br. Narciso Pascual Pascual; three from the community of Oviedo: Frs. Tomás Pallarés Ibáñez, Vicente Pastor Vicente and Br. Salustiano Gonzalez Crespo; four from the community of Gijón: Frs. Amado Garcia Sanchez, José-Pelayo Granado Prieto, Ricardo Atanes Castro and Andrés-Avelino Gutiérrez Moral; and one from the community of Rialp (Lerida): Fr. Antonio Carmanlu Mercader. All of them entered the heavenly mission as martyrs.