

May 23, 1998

To all the Confreres of the Congregation of the Mission

My dear Confreres,

May the grace of Our Lord be always with you!

In a month and a half we will already be in General Assembly. The Preparatory Commission worked well in developing the themes that were to be studied in the Domestic and Provincial Assemblies. Then, the same Commission worked on the replies from the provinces and vice-provinces and prepared the Documentum Laboris, with which we will begin the Assembly. This document will serve to direct the work of the Assembly and might also be chosen as the basis for the conclusions of our four weeks of meetings and discussions.

One of the weeks of the Assembly will have a special character because it will take place with the participation of 33 guests from the Vincentian Family. Since the central theme of the Assembly is the Vincentian Family in view of the third millennium, we wanted to speak with the Daughters of Charity, with the laity of the groups most closely tied to us and with representatives of religious Congregations which take their inspiration from St. Vincent, and not simply speak about them. Among the guests, we have invited a confrere from continental China, who has had a rich experience which will touch us and will be able to help us be courageous in the commitments which we must make for the future. All the guests accepted to participate in the Assembly.

We will have a round-table presentation by the participants of different groups of the Family and a series of conferences on the essential points of our belonging to the Family of St. Vincent. We will publish all this in Vincentiana, in order to give all the confreres the opportunity to benefit from these riches.

We have invited Br. Licínio Loureiro Miguelo, from the Vice-Province of Mozambique, to represent the Brothers of the Congregation, and I intend to ask the Assembly to give him the right to vote, like the Visitors and the delegates (cf. Decree 8 of the Assembly of 1980 and the decisions relative to the presence of the Brothers made in the Assemblies of 1986 and 1992).

In seeing the agreement expressed by the majority of the members of the Assembly with regard to the new Directory, I have taken the initiative in naming the people there indicated. Thus, to direct the Assembly (cf. Art. 19), I have chosen, with the General Council, three Moderators from among the members of the Assembly: Frs. Christian Sens (Visitor of Toulouse), Jaime Corera (delegate from Saragossa), and Joseph Levesque (Visitor of the Eastern Province of the United States). Moreover, we have chosen some Commissions for the good unfolding of the Assembly: there will be two "facilitators" (cf. Art. 20), Fr. Serafín Peralta (Philippines) and Sr. Germaine Price, Daughter of Charity of the Province of St. Louis in the United States; there will be a Commission for preparing the presentation and the vote on the postulates and decrees (cf. Art. 38), composed of Frs. Antoine Douaihy (delegate from the Province of the Orient), Miguel Pérez Flores (Vice-Visitor of Costa Rica), and W_adys_aw Bomba (delegate from Poland); there will be a Commission for the liturgy including Frs. Robert Stone (translator), and Gilson C  zar

Camargo (delegate from Curitiba); and other commissions for various services during the Assembly. I have asked three members of the Council or the Curia (Frs. Lauro Palú, Emeric Amyot d'Inville, and Patrick Griffin) to take care of the million details necessary for the good running of the Assembly.

This little Commission will assure all the services that the confreres need during the Assembly, foreseeing and doing things at the most appropriate time and in the most convenient manner. For the convenience of the members of the Assembly, the two houses (Casa Maria Immacolata and the Leonine College) have made available for us a sufficient number of rooms, with improvement in the material conditions of the houses (showers, toilets, double

glass in the windows, air-conditioning, etc.). For the hall of the plenary sessions, they have purchased new chairs, surely more comfortable than those of preceding Assemblies. In the coming days, we will have installed additional lines for telephone, fax, the Internet, and e-mail. We are preparing the liturgies and the materials needed for the celebrations (missals, lectionaries, chalices, etc.). The Secretariat is being set up with a new photocopier and some computers for the young confreres who will help us with the texts that must be written in English (Fr. Raul Pura), Spanish (Fr. Diego Luis Vásquez) and French (Thierry Guené, theology student from Paris). We are preparing the prayers for the beginning and end of our meetings.

In the provinces, some confreres are preparing for special tasks: a chronicler (Fr. Alvaro Quevedo of Colombia), a "video-reporter" (Fr. Lourenço Mika of Curitiba), an Internet expert (Fr. John B. Freund, delegate from the Eastern Province of the United States) who will give us all the information needed for using the Internet most effectively, sharing with us good experiences of what can be done. The 14 translators are preparing to help us understand what is said in the variety of languages of the Congregation. For the first time, the Acts will no longer be in Latin. They will be translated each day into the three languages mentioned above. These pages will serve for the regular dissemination of Assembly news via the Internet. Starting on June 7, you will be able to find our site on the Internet: <http://www.famvin.org>.

In the coming days, we will send to the members of the Assembly the information on the rooms reserved for them, at the Via Ezio or at the Leonine College, with other interesting or necessary information.

This week I wrote a letter to all the members of the Vincentian Family with whom we have contact asking for prayers so that God might bless our efforts and give the Church and the poor good fruit following this Assembly. Today, I wanted to give you the above information on our daily work in preparing the Assembly. The members of the Assembly will find other information when they arrive. We are certain of your support and we count on your prayers.

Your brother in St. Vincent,

Robert P. Maloney, C.M.

Superior General