

Letter to the Missionaries

Rome, October 26, 2015

Dear Confreres,

May the grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ fill your hearts today and always!

By means of this letter I want to share with you the news that on October 21, 2015, at 8:50am in the Honiara Hospital in the Solomon Islands, our confrere, RAÚL EDUARDO CASTRO VIDELA, C.M., departed for his mission in heaven.

Raúl was born on August 3, 1962, in Villa María (Province of Córdoba, Argentina) and admitted into the Congregation on March 19, 1984 (Province of Argentina), incorporated on December 3, 1988, and ordained a priest on June 3, 1990.

In November 1996, Father Raúl wrote to Father Maloney, superior general at that time, and volunteered for the international missions... *As a member of the Congregation of the Mission I am deeply grateful for the missionary vocation that you are promoting at this time.*

On April 15, 1997, Father Maloney responded to that letter. In May of the same year Father Raúl expressed a desire to serve in the missions in Africa and stated: *I am willing to go to the place that you believe to be most appropriate.* In August, Raúl expressed a desire to minister in Tanzania, but nevertheless, on October 8th Father Maloney proposed *going to the mission of Cuba or Mozambique, one of the poorest countries in the world.* On October 18th Father Raúl responded: *I prefer the mission in Mozambique.* Father arrived at the mission in March 1998. Then in July 2005 Raúl sent me a letter and spoke about his missionary experience: *since 1998 I have ministered here in Mozambique and have done so in some very distinct ways: evangelization in rural areas (1998-1999, 2005), formation of candidates for the Congregation (2000-2004)... I am seeing now that this stage of my life is coming to an end... I will leave Mozambique in December but only after I have fulfilled all my obligations. Let me bold and ask you to send me, if you believe it best, to another mission. Father Ubillús mentioned a possible place where I might be able to continue the mission, that is, Papua New Guinea, where there are few missionaries. I offer myself, however, as a volunteer to go to the place where you believe I might best contribute my humble service of collaboration.* In a letter dated March 24, 2006, Father Raúl wrote to me once again: *It has been some weeks now since I left Mozambique and at the present time I am relaxing here in Argentina. This has been a time of reflection and prayer and I request to remain in this Prov-*

ince for two years. After that I believe I will be in condition to rejoin the international missions.

On November 4th I received the following letter: *On the one hand I am a formator and on the other hand I am a member of the Provincial Council. Because of these commitments I cannot abide by the timeframe that I previously spoke about with you. Nevertheless the missionary spirit continues to stir in my heart and I want to take up those activities once I have fulfilled my present obligations. Both responsibilities will come to an end in December 2009.* On November 13th, 2009, Raúl sent me another letter: *with regard to the place for my next mission... even when I was in Mozambique I had expressed a desire to minister in Papua New Guinea... it is a mission that is lacking in personnel and according to the call that you extended in October the situation seems to be the same, that is, there is need for a missionary to engage in pastoral activities and not only to teach in the seminary. I am willing to exercise that missionary ministry with and for those brothers and sisters residing there.*

On March 15th, 2010, during our Tempo Forte we reflected on Raúl's offer to volunteer for the international missions. After consulting the members of the Council I decided to send Father Raúl to the Solomon Islands for a period of four years (after which his stay could be further renewed). I received a prompt response... on March 20th, 2010, Raúl wrote: *I have received your letter. Thank you for this new missionary assignment and I will try to arrive there as quickly as possible.*

Today, Father Raúl has departed from this earth and his Creator has welcomed him with open arms. Raúl was 53 years old, 31 years in vocation and 25 years a priest. He had been the rector at the Seminary of the Holy Name of Mary.

Funeral services will be celebrated on October 23rd at 10:00 am.

Your brother in Saint Vincent,

G. Gregory Gay, C.M.
Superior General