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REPORTS - Commissions

Report by the Coordinator of SIEV

Corpus Juan Delgado, CM

I. SIEV: WHERE HAVE WE BEEN? WHERE ARE WE? WHERE ARE WE GOING?

The Superior General and his Council created SIEV (the International Secretariat for Vincentian Studies) in response to a postulatam that was approved by the 1980 General Assembly: *It is proposed that each Province or group of Provinces have its own organization for the promotion of basic studies and for making them known (St. Vincent, St. Louise, the history of the Companies, etc.). An organization on the international level will have as its goal the coordination of these efforts and the communication of their results.*¹

In December 1982, Father Richard McCullen approved the first Statutes of SIEV² and thereby put in place a team composed of five Missionaries. The annual meetings of this group resulted in various Vincentian Colloquies and Meetings, as well as an exchange of experiences and publications among the various provinces: bibliographies, documents, images, etc.

- 1984: Vincentian Month.³
- 1986: Colloquy on the Vincentian Christ.⁴
- 1987: Vincentian Month dedicated to formators.⁵
- 1990: Vincentian Month dedicated to the Directors of the Daughters of Charity.⁶

¹ Cf. *Vincentiana* (1980), p. 258.

² Cf. *Vincentiana* (1983), pp. 8-18; these Statutes were revised and approved by the Superior General, Robert Maloney, (22 October 1999).

³ *Vincentiana*, (1984) pp. 257-838. This gathering was held in Paris, where the other meetings would also take place. I will indicate when a meeting is held in a different place.

⁴ *Vincentiana* (1986), pp. 233-408.

⁵ *Vincentiana* (1987), pp. 349-899.

⁶ *Vincentiana* (1990), pp. 363-968.

- 1993: Vincentian Month on the New Evangelization: new men and renewed communities.⁷
- 1997: Vincentian Month on popular missions.⁸
- 1999: Vincentian Month: Our apostolate in the Muslim world.⁹
- 2001: Vincentian Month: Directors of the Daughters of Charity.¹⁰
- 2002: Vincentian Month: Advisors of the Vincentian Family.¹¹
- 2004: Program for Young Missionaries dedicated to Vincentian Studies.¹²
- 2008: Colloquy to promote research and Vincentian Studies.¹³
- 2011: Colloquy on the study of Vincentian spirituality and history.¹⁴
- 2012: Dialogue with Islam.¹⁵

When Father Robert Maloney developed the International Formation Center (CIF) in 1993,¹⁶ he was responding to a desire that was expressed during the General Assembly of 1992. During that time, SIEV maintained its activities.

In 1994, Father Maloney wrote to the Visitors announcing a new CIF program that was called the *Institute for Vincentian Specialists*,¹⁷ and stated: *One specific group that could be served by this Institute would be formators of our own who need to have a special appreciation of our Vincentian roots. This is intended to be an intense program with the primary emphasis on guided research and self-study.*¹⁸ Nevertheless, this program was not implemented.

⁷ *Vincentiana* (1993), pp. 240-532.

⁸ *Vincentiana* (1997), pp. 201-444.

⁹ *Vincentiana* (1999), pp. 217-387; this meeting was held in Beirut; cf. *Vincentiana* (2000), p. 140-141.

¹⁰ *Vincentiana* (2001), pp. 201-443.

¹¹ *Vincentiana* (2002), pp. 259-507.

¹² Bulletin from the Province of Zaragoza (May 2004); this was held in Rome and had a duration of one week.

¹³ *Vincentiana* (2008), pp. 111-114; (2010), pp. 87-103.

¹⁴ *Vincentiana* (2012), p. 393; this gathering took place in Dublin.

¹⁵ *Vincentiana* (2012), pp. 103-225; this meeting was held in Indonesia.

¹⁶ The first meeting of CIF took place in Paris in September 1994; cf. *Nuntia* (1994), July-August-September, p. 2.

¹⁷ Cf. *Vincentiana* (1999), p. 392-394.

¹⁸ *Vincentiana* (1999), p. 392.

In 2014, Father Gregory Gay, responding to the need to develop a renewed interest in Vincentian Studies and for the purpose of giving a new impulse to the International Secretariat for Vincentian Studies, convoked ten Missionaries from various provinces and cultural traditions and asked them to reflect together with the members of his council on the mission of SIEV in order to give a greater precision to its purpose and objectives.

The meeting took place in Rome (5-9 October 2014) with the following participants: Corpus Juan Delgado Rubio, Nélio Pereira Pita, Emil Hoffmann, Daniel P. Borlik, Andrés Roman María Motto Gaglia, Vinícius Augusto Teixeira Ribeiro, Franciscus Xaverius Eko Armada Riyanto, Jean Rufin Nkee Mokelo-Mo-Eyali, Francisco Javier Álvarez Munguía, and Augustinus Heru Priharsono.

After listening to the advice of the General Council, the members of the team developed a new proposal for SIEV, which included a reflection on its Statutes and the relationship between SIEV and the General Council, the Company of the Daughters of Charity, CIF, the Universities administered by the Congregation, the archivists, librarians, and the various Vincentian formation programs organized by individual provinces or by groups of provinces.

As a result of its reflection on the purpose of SIEV, the team developed lines of action for the coming years and here I highlight those that are most significant:

1. A Reflection Group

- To prepare a reflection theme for our annual meeting and then share this reflection with the provinces and the larger Vincentian Family. We hope to publish very soon the fruit of our reflection in 2015 on the theme of 400 years of mission and charity.
- To develop a resource bank that will bring together the formation material from the various language groups and internet sites, thus placing this material at the service of the provinces and the Vincentian Family.
- To establish a procedure for classifying Vincentian material that can be applied in our work to make this information available to the provinces and to the Vincentian Family.
- To take greater interest in the present archives in the Congregation and reflect upon a proposal for a work in common.

With the collaboration of other Missionaries, the members of SIEV are working in these areas and bringing to a conclusion some work that was initiated by SIEV in the past.

2. A group that will encourage Vincentian studies and new specialists

- To develop a Study Plan that is mindful not only of the materials that have to be studied, but that also takes into consideration methodologies and strategies in order to promote greater interest among the Missionaries and the provinces.
- To offer the confreres and the members of the Vincentian Family online counseling in order to deepen their Vincentian studies in some specific area.
- To propose that the Visitors designate a confrere from their province to attain a deep understanding of some aspect of Vincentian spirituality/history.
- In accord with the Superior General and his Council, to promote the implementation of a Master's Degree in Vincentian Studies, working in collaboration with one or more of the universities administered by the Congregation.

3. Publications

- To activate the section "SIEV" on the webpage: cmglobal.org.
- To offer, each year, in *Vincentiana* a specific "dossier" with regard to Vincentian Formation.
- To publicize and make accessible the resources (bibliographies and digital formation material) that are presently available.

II. THE CHALLENGES AND HOPES OF SIEV DURING THE COMING YEARS

During our time of reflection as a team, we became aware of several challenges that we would like to address.

1. The need to actualize and refashion the Vincentian Charism

The introduction of the document, *Mutuae Relationes*, reminds us: *The very charism of the Founders appears as an "experience of the Spirit," transmitted to their disciples to be lived, safeguarded, deepened and*

constantly developed by them, in harmony with the Body of Christ continually in the process of growth ... The specific charismatic note of any institute demands, both of the Founder and of his disciples, a continual examination regarding fidelity to the Lord; docility to His Spirit; intelligent attention to circumstances and an outlook cautiously directed to the signs of the times ... Especially in our times that same charismatic genuineness, vivacious and ingenious in its inventiveness, is expected of religious (Mutuae Relationes, # 11, 12, 23).

Pope Francis, on the occasion of the celebration of the Year of Consecrated Life, has reiterated the call to deepen and actualize the specific form of life into which the gospel has been translated (our charism) in order to respond to the needs of the Church: *At their origins we see the hand of God who, in his Spirit, calls certain individuals to follow Christ more closely, to translate the Gospel into a particular way of life, to read the signs of the times with the eyes of faith and to respond creatively to the needs of the Church. This initial experience then matured and developed, engaging new members in new geographic and cultural contexts, and giving rise to new ways of exercising the charism, new initiatives and expressions of apostolic charity* (Pope Francis, Apostolic Letter addressed to all consecrated persons, 21 November 2014, #1)

The Congregation of the Mission and the whole Vincentian Family understand the need to actualize and recreate the Vincentian charism in the midst of the new cultural and existential contexts of the present era.

2. That all who share the same charism might have access to the Vincentian sources

The Vincentian Family possesses an important spiritual patrimony.¹⁹ Brother Bertrand Ducournau wrote a memo (CCD: XI:xxvii-xxxii) for those seen as having important roles in the Company, encouraging them to accept the commitment, against the will of Vincent, to preserve an accurate collection of his words and conferences so that future generations might continue to drink from

¹⁹ When speaking about "patrimony," we understand this word as outlined in Canon 578: *The whole patrimony of an institute must be faithfully preserved by all. This patrimony is comprised of the intentions of the founders, of all that the competent ecclesiastical authority has approved concerning the nature, purpose, spirit and character of the institute, and of its sound tradition.* In the writings of Saint Vincent, we read: *There isn't a single Company in the Church of God that has for its portion persons who are poor, devoting itself totally to the poor ... like Jesus Christ (CCD:XII:71)*

this fountain: *The best legacy of fathers is the good instruction they leave to their children ... the first Missioners will be committing the same acts of injustice toward those who are to come after them if they do not pass on to them the words of life of M. Vincent because, since he is their common father, everything he leaves to them must also be in common. If the works he has done are works of God, as they seem to be, God must have given him His Spirit to do and maintain them: consequently, the advice and teachings used for that purpose must be considered divine and be gathered up like manna from heaven ... Now, it is important that the talks of M. Vincent be preserved in the Company so that, if God is pleased to maintain it, they may reveal in all ages and to every nation the spirit of this apostolic man ... Someone else may say that M. Vincent says nothing that cannot be found in books. I reply that this may be so; but we know that the best food for babies is their own mother's milk, and that the loving instructions of their fathers make a greater impression on their minds than those of teachers because of the natural respect and affection God has given to all sorts of persons for those who have begotten them. In addition, it is very difficult to find in books the beautiful inspirations and good impulses we receive from the talks of this kind father because he gives them according to our needs and obligations, which differ in many things from those of other Companies that have written about what concerns them.*

The arguments that Brother Ducournau presented, those arguments challenge us as Missionaries and impel us to use all the means at our disposal so that those who share the same charism (especially young Missionaries and the lay members of the Vincentian Family) might have easy access to the Vincentian sources and, therefore, might actualize the charism in a creative and faithful manner.

3. The urgency to prepare some Missionaries so that they might provide a dynamism to our Vincentian spirituality

This challenge flows from the two previous ones and has been the focus of our reflection when we come together as a team. How can we interest the Visitors and the provinces of the need to prepare some Missionaries as Vincentian specialists? How can we create a situation in which each province will have several Missionaries who are experts so that they might be able to animate the reflection of the confreres but, more importantly, so that they might be able to train others in the Vincentian spiritual experience?

Those challenges are also our hopes and the goals that we want to achieve in collaboration with the other members of the Congregation of the Mission and with all the groups and members of the Vincentian Family.

III. SIEV'S PROPOSALS FOR THE COMING YEARS

In the coming years, SIEV wants to accomplish the following proposals:

1. Master's in Vincentian Studies Program

This program is designed for members of the Congregation of the Mission and members of the larger Vincentian Family. The names of the candidates are to be presented by the Superior General or by one of the Visitors of the Congregation.

The proposed objectives of this program are the following:

- Deepen one's knowledge of the history and the spirituality of the Vincentian charism;
- Prepare individuals for the service of Vincentian animation;
- Facilitate the present-day contextualized reading of the sources of our Vincentian heritage;
- Engage in a proper methodology in order to reflect upon and research matters related to the Vincentian charism.

This program (normally a two-year program) is developed in a semi-presence manner; that is, it combines a time of actual presence in one of the centers where the required documents are available with time that will be spent on the internet communicating and interacting with professors and tutors.

This program is developed with an interactive methodology, focused on the process of developing the competency of each participant.

The part of the program that requires actual presence is carried out in accord with each one of the centers where the necessary documents are available or through videoconference or through a virtual classroom.

The Superior General and SIEV are investigating means that will provide official academic recognition of this degree. This is being done through the various universities that are administered by the Congregation.

2. Classification of Vincentian material

The CDU System is utilized in various libraries and, by assigning each book and/or document with a specific number, it facilitates locating such book. As a result of the work done by previous members of SIEV, we are attempting to acquire such numbers for our Vincentian bibliography. This, in turn, will allow us to unify our system of identifying books and will multiply the possibilities with regard to accessing books and documents.

3. Digital Vincentian Libraries

There are already such libraries located in various places and in various formats; that is, there is already a depository of Vincentian digital resources. We do not want to create a new digital library but we propose facilitating intercommunication and universal access to the existing resources. At the same time, we will also suggest the digitalization of other resources.

IV. WHAT DOES SIEV NEED FROM YOU?

1. From all the Visitors

SIEV requests all the Visitors commit at least one member of their province to participate in the Vincentian Studies Master's Program. If the province has an adequate Vincentian Library, then the confrere can reside in his own province but will be required to dedicate thirty to thirty-five hours a week to study. If the province does not have such a library, then the confrere can seek hospitality in another province in order to engage in the program.

2. From some Visitors

SIEV requests that the Visitors of those provinces that have adequate Vincentian Libraries offer hospitality to confreres from those provinces that do not have such facilities. This will enable confreres from those provinces to participate in this program.

3. From all of you and from the Missionaries whom you might encourage

SIEV intends to carry out the proposals that have been presented and we depend on the generous and disinterested collaboration of Missionaries like yourselves. Can you imagine the resources that we could share among ourselves and with the other members of the

Vincentian Family if, for example, we dedicated two hours a week to collaborate in the accomplishment of the proposals formulated by SIEV? Here I refer to how Missionaries might take time to develop a Vincentian bibliography in their province or who might translate a document or some presentation into their proper language and then share that document with everyone else, etc.

Vincent had no hesitation in referring to Missionaries involved in the formation of priests as *the instrument of Our Lord ... who enlighten and fire them up at the same time*. He then stated that *in this you do the work of the Holy Spirit, who alone enlightens and inflames hearts* (CCD:VI:413). Can all of us commit ourselves to the task of enlightening and encouraging others to deepen and enliven the Vincentian charism?

Director of C.I.F.

Daniel P. Borlik, CM

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you about our International Center of Formation, Saint Vincent de Paul, or more commonly known as CIF, located in **Paris, France**.

I have prepared this particularly for you at the General Assembly, and will have more information for the Visitors later.

In the brief time I have I will cover: The growing importance of Ongoing Formation in our world today; the Foundations of CIF (founded in 1993); glancing at CIF today and looking forward to its future; and a description of the “CIF Packet” and suggestions concerning personal conversations these days with me, the current Director.

The idea of an intensive program such as CIF has been around since the First Assembly of the Congregation of the Mission, but our program began to take place for all confreres after the General Assembly of 1992. As Number 10 of our Constitutions states, we follow Jesus Christ as Vincent did. We are a Congregation called to carry out the work of evangelizing the poor...

Ours must be a very *dynamic* formation, a *lifelong*, ongoing formation, since, like our world and its changing needs, we too need to develop and grow, in order to be truly today's disciples of our father Vincent de Paul

Vincent's notion of Christ was neither cool nor intellectual, certainly not distant. Vincent often spoke of Jesus, the Evangelizer, as his spiritual guide. In the end, Vincent would often say that the love of Christ was the source of our vocation and of all apostolic activity.

In general, CIF is an integral program of Vincentian formation, destined to help participants to realize the goal of following Jesus Christ the Evangelizer of the poor. Each program of CIF includes academic disciplines (with lectures and guided seminars), deepening of the vocation and ministry of the members (questions for personal reflection on one's life and vocation, sharing in various groups),

liturgical celebrations, and an experience of community life with CMs and/or Vincentian Family members of other countries and cultures.

So, why have the CIF program in Paris?

From CIF's beginnings, our Vincentian French heritage has made a deep impression on our confreres and other participants. To walk along the same steps where Vincent walked, to pray where he prayed, to recall those whose friendship and efforts made his mission realizable have certainly helped each of us to understand better and to seek what Vincent sought.

CIF today?

We have continued with a shorter version of the "Ongoing Formation" program, originally almost four months and now two months in length. Our next such program is this autumn from early September through early November. We now are preparing our second Vincentian Family program, one-month long, for the spring of 2017. Programs such as Heritage programs and other special group sessions continue as needs arise.

And the future of CIF?

In dialog with the Superior General, his Council, and especially with the Visitors throughout the Congregation, CIF will continue to respond to needs with new or updated programs.

CIF also is committed to promote and assist the wider Vincentian Family. We certainly know of Vincent's leadership and encouragement of new groups that were founded for the same charism. We also know that our worldwide Vincentian Family shows great promise. But the question remains, how better can we promote and assist formation in these groups today?

Now some words on the CIF Folder:

- a). Contains information and instructions that are important and very practical in order properly to prepare your confreres before attending CIF in Paris;
- b). The CIF invitation and description of our sessions for autumn 2016 and the year 2017;

- c). Instructions on how to prepare documentation for the confere to be sent to CIF: Which documents? When and how to prepare them? Why? Who is responsible for what?
- d). Explanation with models or examples of the Visitor's letter, the Visa worksheet, specific information needed for the French Bishops' invitation, etc.

Coordinator of the Commission for Systemic Change

Ministries in the Service of the Vincentian Family

Giuseppe Turati, CM

Commission for the Promotion of Systemic Change

The first commission for systemic change for the Vincentian Family worked together, to great effect, for seven years. There was a transition period to establish a new commission including wider representation of the Vincentian Family. This transition period was completed in 2014 and the new commission has now worked together to set the direction of its work and travel for the upcoming three years.

The work of the first commission laid the foundations for spreading Systemic-Change thinking even further. The work that was done in developing the tool kit, providing seminars, and developing structures for communications has provided a platform for the new commission moving forward.

The work of the current commission has always been to work to change the mindset of the whole Vincentian Family to learn how we can use systemic change to support the poor to move themselves out of poverty. The challenge is how to embed systemic change on a global level.

This commission seeks to focus on building the resources of others to act as multipliers of the value of systemic-change work across the Family. This plan seeks to ensure that we build a sustainable structure, continuing to provide seminars, but using this as an opportunity to build a network and structure to ensure the spread of systemic-change thinking and teaching across the Family.

The current commission is formed by seven members from six different branches of the Family. They are: Mizaél Poggioli, CM; Rose de Lima Ramanankavana, AIC; Giuseppe Turati, CM (Coordinator of the commission); Sister Maria Teresa Mueda, DC; Juan Pablo Solarte,

VMY; Jim Claffey, SSVdP (Executive Secretary); Sister Teresa Kotturan, Sister of Charity of Nazareth (SCN) and member of the Sisters of Charity Federation.

The commission relies heavily on the leadership of the Vincentian Family to promote and support this work. The commission is keen to ensure that its work is embedded in existing structures so that systemic change has a lasting impact within the Family.

The Strategic plan 2015-2018 contains our vision, our mission, and four Strategic Aims.

Our **Vision** is to promote systemic change to bring about a new mindset about how to help the poor out of poverty in the way of Saint Vincent de Paul.

Our **Mission** is to be multipliers for sustaining systemic change for all the Vincentian Family.

Our **Strategic Aims** are to:

- 1). Continue to provide seminars, targeting and developing multiplying agents.
- 2). Develop sustainable structures for national and regional Coordinators
- 3). Establish effective tools for communication and to sustain systemic change within the Vincentian Family
- 4). Ensure the promotion of the systemic-change mindset for the next three years and beyond.

What do we need from the Congregation to support our ministry? First of all, that leadership at all levels within the Congregation follow the guidelines on systemic change found in our *Ratio Formationis*:

- Regarding General Reflections and Directives for Formation, the Congregation will seek to “embrace ‘systemic change’ as a way of alleviating poverty and of empowering the poor” (see *Ratio Formationis*, Chapter 1, Section 1, Point A, last bullet).
- In the Major Seminary “the student will attend carefully to the Church’s teaching with regard to social justice. He will seek to discover ways of facilitating social justice nationally and globally, and comprehend systemic change as a way to promote a more just society and a means of empowering the poor” (see *Ratio Formationis*, Chapter 7, Section 2, point D, N. 5).

- Regarding Ongoing Formation, “each Province will have a Director of Ongoing Formation who will know the resources for ongoing formation which are available to the confreres. These include (...) programs for effectively meeting the needs of the poor, such as training in systemic change” (see *Ratio Formationis*, Chapter 8, Section 2, Point C).

To be very concrete, I would like to conclude this presentation by inviting the Visitors present here to a triple focus on promoting systemic change in their provinces:

- First of all, keep systemic change in mind when drafting the provincial plan and then add it to the *planning*;
- Secondly, use it in such planning as one of the key criteria in *making decisions*;
- Finally, find the tools for evaluating the effectiveness of *formation* programs, both initial and ongoing.

Thanks for your attention.

The CM, an NGO at the United Nations

“The city of God in the Palace of Nations”

Guillermo Campuzano, CM
CM NGO Representative at the UN

We, Vincentians, decided to be present at the UN to walk along with the peoples of the world in the ‘ups’ and ‘downs’ of their history. We are convinced that the service of humanity, especially those who live in poverty, is something worthy of our best years, our finest talents, and our most dedicated efforts. We want to be in places where we can serve excluded humanity! This is why we are at the UN today.

At the UN, we are a part of RUN (Religious at the UN), a coalition of representatives of NGOs of congregations of consecrated women and men. We relate to each other for support and sharing of information, strategies, and resources. Our meetings are an opportunity to reflect upon our common NGO mission in view of our different charisms and missions. The ‘diakonia of truth,’ justice, and peace is the main mission of Catholic-Inspired NGOs at the UN. We understand that “This is a time for a new presence of religious in the public arena.”

Catholics have been present in the United Nations system since its beginning, first through International Catholic Organizations (NGOs) and later on through the mission of the Holy See. Many documents show the relevance of this presence and the importance of the work done by religious groups at the UN.

Many Catholic/Religious NGOs add a necessary spiritual and ethical dimension to the UN debates regarding the complex problems confronting today’s society. At this global forum, we have the opportunity to speak on behalf (advocacy work) of the people of faith in order to remind the community of nations of its collective responsibility to respond to so much suffering. We are not here (UN) to discuss respective doctrines and their merits, but to consider the

issues that pose a real and immediate threat to our humanity and to our planet, and to ask ourselves, “What must be done?” (Madame de Gondi).

We live in liminal times, “we passed from an international society composed of the juxtaposition of sovereign states, to an understanding of the duty to build a global community.” The Congregation of the Mission has a responsibility in this universal effort to build a world where the dignity of all, especially those on the margins, is always protected. “Authentic peace is only possible if the dignity of the human person is promoted at every level of society and every individual is given the chance to live in accordance with this dignity.” The language of the UN Human Rights discourse and that of Catholic Social Teaching and *Laudato Si’* converge to a very significant degree. This language can be easily incorporated into our CM documents and practices so that we reinterpret the meaning of our vocation and our mission for a challenging time like ours.

Pope Francis once said “The UN is a Gospel place ... We can do prophetic work here ... Politics is the highest level of charity...” Our Charism cannot be excluded from this prophetic work. Charitable work, systemic change, and political advocacy are three inseparable dimensions of the prophetic aspect of our Vincentian heritage. This is why we are present at the UN along with other branches of the Vincentian Family.

The presence of the Congregation of the Mission at the United Nations:

1. Our faithful and creative contribution to the building of the International Community;
2. An opportunity to give foundation (global context) to the necessary reinterpretation of our Charism for a new time;
3. To expand the understanding of our mission, recognizing that it includes works of charity, justice, advocacy, lobbying, public policymaking, with a broader perspective of systemic change;
4. To be a source of consultation and information for our general, provincial, and local leadership;
5. To offer new elements of ongoing formation in collaboration with CIF and to the educational spaces of the Vincentian Family;
6. To offer a global context to the local works of the CM and to bring the voices and stories of real people (local level) to the UN;

7. To encourage education for global citizenship and our contribution to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (UN agenda 2030).

These are the UN Civil Society Committees where the CM is currently represented:

1. Social Development
2. Religious NGOs at the UN
3. Migration and Refugees
4. Human Trafficking
5. Mining Working Group
6. Global Coalition for Social Protection Floors
7. Human Rights

Priorities of the Vincentian Family at the UN:

- We share efforts and critical information around local and global concerns, in collaboration with other organizations who share our values.
- We bring the voices of the most vulnerable and those we work with through our Vincentian Family to the United Nations, and take global UN concerns back to our members, so that there is mutual input towards effective solutions.
- We create awareness and educate the Vincentian Family for advocacy at the grass roots, national, and global levels.
- We ensure that the Vincentian Family focus will be on the formulation of policies around social inclusion, economic justice, and care of the environment.
- We promote a systemic-change perspective among Vincentian Family members at all levels.
- We address issues from an integral ethical and moral perspective, with human rights, responsibilities, and personal dignity at the forefront.

Possibilities/Proposals:

- 1). To establish Offices of JPIC (Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation) in provinces or regions where possible. Confreres responsible for this ministry can act as liaisons to our UN office

- in one of its tasks of coordination, collaboration, training, formation, discernment, etc.
- 2). Sustainable Development Goals (UN Agenda 2030): local and regional formation for the Vincentian Family on issues concerning the places where they live that are connected to the SDGs and to our Charism: mining, human trafficking, traffic of drugs and guns, refugees, human rights, the rights of women and children, etc.
 - 3). Training for confreres and the Vincentian Family on advocacy, influencing public lawmaking, lobbying, and collaboration, always with a global perspective.
 - 4). Direct communication between our office and the provincial and local leadership of the CM to share information, materials, documents, etc.

Sustainable Development Goals – The United Nations 2030 Agenda

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. These goals are deeply connected with the ecclesial agenda that Pope Francis is implementing in our Catholic Church.

These 17 Goals build on the successes of the Millennium Development Goals, while including new areas such as climate change, economic inequality, innovation, sustainable consumption, peace and justice, among other priorities. The goals are interconnected – often the key to success on one will involve tackling issues more commonly associated with another. The heart of these goals is the new Eco-Human paradigm. This is also the paradigm that Pope Francis introduced for us in *Laudato Si'*. The cries and the needs of humanity and mother earth are deeply (systemically) interconnected.

The SDGs work in the spirit of partnership and pragmatism to make the right choices now to improve life, in a sustainable way, for future generations. They provide clear guidelines and targets for all countries to adopt in accordance with their own priorities and the environmental challenges of the world at large. The SDGs are an inclusive agenda. They tackle the root causes of poverty and unite us together to make a positive change for both people and planet. “Supporting the 2030 Agenda is a top priority for the UN.”

The SDGs (UN Agenda 2030) have an unquestionable relationship with our Vincentian Charism and the aspirations of the Catholic Church, prophetically expressed by Pope Francis in his teachings. Reading them carefully, we realize that they refer to matters in which we should all be working in one way or another. What can we do to assist in the implementation of the SDGs in the regions where we live and work? What do these SDGs mean for my province and me? What can we do to connect our works of systemic change with the SDGs? What kind of training do we need to raise awareness and to identify ways in which we can connect our local agendas with the global agenda of humanity?

I want to invite you personally and the province you represent to join your efforts with ours: to share information and spaces of formation, to expand our vision and the understanding of the many possibilities of our Charism today. Thanks!

Vincentian Solidarity Office (VSO)

Miles Heinen, CM

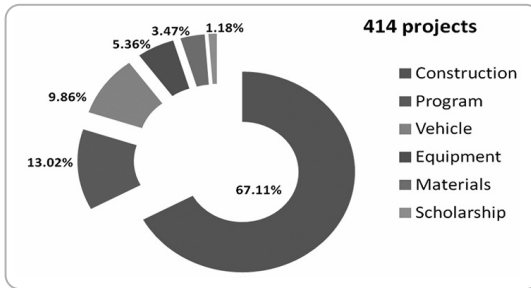
The Vincentian Solidarity Office or VSO is staffed by two full-time persons: me, Father Miles Heinen, as Executive Director since 2009, and Mr. Scott Fina, Ph.D., as Associate Director since 2004. A part-time person, Mrs. María José Pacheco, serves as project manager since July 2015.

The VSO is an office of the General Curia. It raises funds to help provinces, vice-provinces, and missions in developing regions with their needs and their work for the poor. The General Curia determines who is eligible for VSO service. There are now 52 provinces, vice-provinces, and missions eligible for our service. The list is on our web-page <http://cdn.cmglobal.org/vso-en/files/2007/01/VSO-Eligibility-List-English.pdf>.

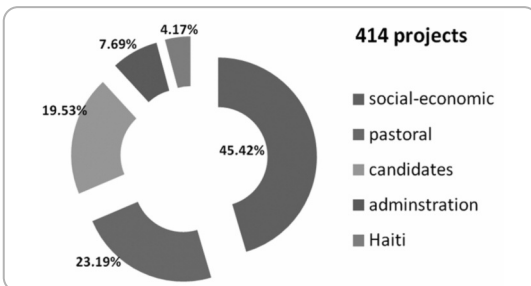
The VSO also promotes solidarity within our Congregation. It publicizes the needs and good works of the provinces, vice-provinces, and missions it serves. It provides opportunities for other provinces to share their financial resources to help meet these needs and support these works.

The VSO is not a funding agency. It helps provinces, vice-provinces, and missions obtain monies from other sources. The VSO develops and maintains good relationships with funding agencies. This helps us obtain monies from them for the projects of our provinces, vice-provinces, and missions.

Since its inception in 2002, the VSO has helped secure funding for 414 projects, of which 110 are micro-projects. These projects are distributed over 49 countries. The majority of the projects involve construction, some 67%. The other 23% involve, in order of magnitude: vehicles; programs; equipment as in computers, solar panels, and the like; materials as in furnishings, medical supplies, brochures, and the like; and scholarships.



45% of these projects have focused on the socio-economic needs of the people we serve, 23% on pastoral purposes, 19% on initial formation and ongoing formation of confreres, 8% on administration needs internal to the Congregation of the Mission (CM), and 4 % on the Haiti Initiative.



Since 2002, the total amount in US dollars that has flowed to the projects of the CM mission with the help of the VSO has been 12,515,469. Of that amount, 2,058,000, or 16% has come from CM provinces, vice-provinces, and individual confreres.

The VSO also assisted our Congregation with its Patrimony Fund Project. The VSO's goal was to raise 5,000,000 US dollars in order that the Franz Foundation would give an equal amount. Our Congregation has surpassed this goal by over 400,000 US dollars. 86% of the monies contributed have come from our General Curia, our provinces and vice-provinces, and individual confreres. What a wonderful example of Vincentian solidarity!

CHALLENGES

The VSO is facing the opposite of global warming in the climate of fundraising. The worldwide economic recession that started in 2007 has greatly reduced the monies funding agencies have available for projects — especially in Europe where the VSO obtains most of the grants for projects. The recent scandals within the Church have also reduced the monies available to the funding agencies in Europe.

As a consequence, funding agencies now award fewer and smaller grants and are limiting where they work and what kinds of projects they support. Competition for grants has increased. The VSO has to apply to multiple agencies to secure the funding for a project. It is more difficult to obtain funding for projects and it takes more time.

You saw above that 67% of the work of VSO involves construction. Inflation in the cost of construction has been enormous. So while the funding available has decreased, the need for more funding has increased. In response, the VSO often advises that projects be split into phases and that the funding, likewise, be sought in phases over multiple years. The VSO also needs to find more funding for projects from other sources such as obtaining more donations from individuals through appeals and by directly asking people to make larger gifts.

Increasingly, funding agencies are also requiring proof that projects have been well planned, that projects will have good and sometimes systemic impact, and that projects will be sustained over time.

Funding agencies are also requiring more detailed reporting on projects, and that reports be sent on time. Good reporting is absolutely essential, absolutely essential, if a province, vice-province, or mission hopes to obtain more funding from an agency in the future.

Goals for the next three years

The main goal of the VSO is to spread the fire of Saint Vincent's love of the poor by involving people in the mission of the CM especially by increasing the amount and sources of funding for the CM's work.

The VSO will further promote Solidarity in Mission worldwide by increasing distribution of the VSO bulletin and using social media.

The VSO will work with provinces, vice-provinces, and missions that submit projects to set priorities in the context of a long-term vision. This will lead to more dialogue on projects.

The VSO will reinstate the Micro-Project Program as the number of provinces contributing to the VSO on a regular basis increases.

Needed from the Congregation

From the provinces, vice-provinces, and missions, which submit project requests to us, the VSO respectfully asks:

That you do more extensive planning to develop a long-term vision for your mission and use that vision to set priorities for determining new projects.

That you use the method of systemic change in the design of any type of project. In doing so, you will ensure that the new projects will be sustainable and respond to the need that elicited the project.

That you actively seek out local opportunities to generate revenue for your mission. One idea would be to organize the parents and the alumni of any school that you run. Another idea is to rent unused space in buildings.

From the provinces who are not eligible to receive VSO services, we ask that you:

Encourage the confreres to sign on to receive the VSO bulletin and forward it to people they know, who might be interested in the mission of the CM.

Help the VSO connect to people who want to help the CM and who might contribute funding for projects.

In closing

Our confreres choose to be among the abandoned poor in order to make the gospel really effective. The VSO helps them to make their dreams become real by increasing the solidarity among ourselves as confreres and by expanding that solidarity to include others, who are touched by this flame from Vincent de Paul. Join us.