

October 15, 2000

To the members of the Congregation of the Mission

My very dear Confreres,

May the grace of Our Lord be always with you!

I am very happy to announce today that, after much consultation and with the unanimous consent of the members of the General Council, I have just signed a decree establishing a new vice-province encompassing our houses in the Ukraine, Byelorussia, and Russia. It will be called the Vice-Province of Sts. Cyril and Methodius, with its seat of government in Kiev. I have just launched the consultation for the naming of the new Vice-Visitor.

As you recall, the General Assembly of 1992 made the following pledge:

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.

I think of it as a grace that the response of the confreres over the past eight years far surpassed the expectations of the Assembly of 1992. As you probably know, the mission in Albania, which the Congregation undertook as an immediate response to the decree of the General Assembly of 1992, is now a Region dependent on the Province of Naples. Besides the confreres, there are now also a large number of Daughters of Charity working there.

Today we have 20 members of the Congregation laboring in the Ukraine, Byelorussia, and Russia, along with a number of communities of the Daughters of Charity. Two Vincentians have already been ordained from the territory of the new Vice-Province. Several more ordinations will take place in the next few years, and other candidates follow these.

In this case it is certainly true, as St. Vincent liked to say, that "I never thought of this idea, nor did Monsieur Portail, nor did Mademoiselle LeGras. It was God who created...." By the gift of God, the idea and the energy for the creation of the vice-province came through confreres of the region itself and from the Visitors of Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia, who have been so generous in sending missionaries to the Ukraine, Byelorussia, and Russia.

I ask your support and prayers for those engaged directly in this new beginning. I thank God for the gifts that he has given the Congregation in this missionary thrust toward the East and, by this letter, I simply want to share with you this good news.

Your brother in St. Vincent,

Robert P. Maloney, C.M.
Superior General