

October 15, 2001

To the members of the Congregation of the Mission

My very dear Confreres,

May the grace of Our Lord be always with you!

You can feel the fire in St. Vincent's heart when he speaks about the foreign missions. Recently I went to Poland to celebrate the 350th anniversary of our mission there, founded by St. Vincent himself, so I spent some time reading about its beginnings. One evening I came upon these stirring words which St. Vincent spoke to the confreres:

Let us give ourselves to God so that we might go out to the whole world carrying his holy gospel. Wherever he leads us, let us remain at our post, faithful to our commitment until we are recalled at his good pleasure. May difficulties not deter us when there is question of the glory of the Eternal Father, the fruitfulness of his Word, or the passion of his Son. The salvation of others, and our own, is a good of such magnitude that it deserves to be bought no matter what the price. It matters not if we die in the fight. But let us die with our weapons in our hands, and happy too, for by our death the Company will not be the poorer, because "the blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians." For every missionary who gives his life out of charity, God will raise up others who will do the work he left behind (Abelly, Book II, Chapter 1, 194-195).

I write today, as I do each October, to appeal for volunteers for our new international missions as well as for other urgent missionary needs. This year was a very eventful one in our missions. Below, let me offer you some news. Then I will make several appeals.

News Briefs

- **Tanzania:** I am happy to inform you that the Visitor of Southern India, with his council, offered to take over the government of the mission in Tanzania in order to better guarantee its future. By next February three new missionaries will be going there, two from Southern India and one from Northern India. Later in the year, Fr. Chacko Panathara, who along with Fr. Dick Kehoe, was the founder of the mission, will be leaving Tanzania. After a study and renewal program, he will set off to begin a

new mission, as I will mention below. Meanwhile, I am very grateful to the young Indian confreres who are serving so generously there.

- **The Vice-Province of Sts. Cyril and Methodius:** In an earlier letter, I communicated to you the happy news that a new Vice-Province of Sts. Cyril and Methodius has been erected, encompassing our missions in Byelorussia, Ukraine, Siberia, and (hopefully, soon) Lithuania. Fr. Paul Roche, from the Province of Ireland, is the first Vice-Provincial. A house has just been purchased in Kiev which will serve as provincial headquarters, the novitiate, and a pastoral center. Over the next year, the confreres will be taking practical steps toward formulating an overall Vice-Provincial Plan, composing Norms, and creating a sense of identity as a Vice-Province. Anton Ovtar from the Province of Slovenia, who has been working in Canada in recent years, will soon be joining the members of the vice-province. As you can imagine, Paul Roche has his hands full as he works at organizing the structures of the new Vice-Province and seeking the funds for the new Provincial Center in Kiev.

- **Mozambique:**
 - a. **Nacala:** The mission remains under the government of the Province of Salamanca. José Eugenio López García and David Fernández, both from the Province of Salamanca, and four young JMV lay volunteers are now laboring in Nacala under very difficult circumstances. I deeply admire the courage of these six missionaries. Their work is wonderful, but life is hard. They have all had malaria recently. Emmanuel Ugwuoke from Nigeria will be joining them in December. My dream is to have five confreres there within a year or two. We have been dialoguing with the interested parties about other possible forms of government for the mission in the future.

 - b. **The Vice-Province of Mozambique:** Jorge Pedroza, the Vice-Visitor is working energetically with the confreres to formulate a new pastoral plan which will allow the confreres to have deeper communal bonds in their life and work. Daniel Bogliolo from Argentina has recently joined the team there, as have two confreres from the Province of Mexico, Ismael Olmedo Casas and Raúl Zaragoza Medina. An Eritrean confrere, Ghirmazion Negasi, has been serving there since last year. Here too in the southern part of the country, life is very difficult. Malaria is rampant.

- **Solomon Islands:** Marcelo Manimtim, who along with Tom Hynes and Stanislaus Reksosusilo, founded the mission, has now returned to the

Philippines for a new assignment. Frank Vargas, formerly provincial in the Philippines, is the new superior and rector of the seminary. He has been joined by Marek Owskiak, from Poland, and Agustinus Marsup, from Indonesia. This is surely a huge transition for the team in the Solomons. Jack Harris, from the Province of Ireland, is now the veteran!

- **China:** In the past year the confreres in Taiwan took on a second parish, among the aborigines on the east coast, with several mission stations attached. It is right next to the first parish with nine mission stations. So, it is like a missionary zone with the promise for further development. Also, this summer five confreres from different provinces came to participate in a seven-week program introducing them to the mission in Taiwan and China. It was very successful. This year there are two confreres and three lay volunteers teaching English in mainland China. There are other developments on the mainland, but I must save that news for another time.
- **Rwanda/Burundi:** As you have read in the newspapers from time to time over the past year, conditions here continue to be precarious. The Colombian confreres are serving very generously, having committed themselves to a simple lifestyle among the people. At present we are searching for a Director for the Daughters of Charity, who recently established a new Province of Central Africa with its seat in Rwanda.
- **Bolivia:** The five confreres on the mission have just entered into a contract with the Province of Chile for the formation of their students. Franc Pavlič, from Slovenia, is the new superior. The confreres are now engaged in the process of formulating an overall pastoral and community plan.
- **Albania:** The agreement among the three Visitors of Italy concerning the government and financing of this mission was renewed for another three years. It reaffirms that the mission in Albania is an interprovincial one even if juridically the Visitor of Naples is responsible for it. The Formation House in Scutari was inaugurated on December 9, 2000. It is located near the Interdiocesan Seminary and is called: Blessed Frederick Ozanam. The students have now begun their courses. This new house and the other house in Rrëshen depend on the Regional Superior who has specified delegated powers. The Daughters of Charity have also constituted an Albania-Kosovo Region, and fruitful collaboration is developing between them and the confreres.
- **Cuba:** Life continues to be difficult for our confreres in Cuba. Their numbers are few. I am happy to say, however, that recently the

government gave permission for José Gerardo Pérez from the Province of Colombia to enter the country as a missionary.

- **Algeria:** In Algeria, as in other places in Northern Africa, the confreres have much contact with immigrant workers from sub-Saharan Africa, as well as from other countries. Our youth groups too have sprung up in Algeria and Mauritania. Recently, Gladys Abi-Saïd, the International JMV President, visited both these countries.
- **Papua New Guinea:** Rolando Santos communicates with me quite frequently by e-mail. He is very enthusiastic about the work there, though life conditions in the country are poor and sometimes dangerous. Homero Marín from the Province of Colombia is now at St. John's University in New York studying English in preparation for going to Papua New Guinea.
- **Haiti:** All attest that the mission in Haiti, which is under the responsibility of the Province of Puerto Rico, has been considerably strengthened by the presence of Jaroslaw Lawrenz and Stanislaw Szczepanik, both formerly missionaries in the Congo. This past year Stanislaw Szczepanik was named Director of the Daughters of Charity for the new Province of Haiti.

At present we are in the midst of conversations with the Archdiocese of Chicago, in the United States, to begin an experimental international mission among the immigrant communities in that city. Just before the Visitors' Meeting in June, an invitation arrived here from Cardinal George outlining this possible work. In the General Council we found his proposal quite interesting, so I presented it to the Visitors in Dublin. It got an enthusiastic response. As I write today, I have already received four volunteers for this mission. I hope to be able to conclude the conversations soon.

I want to add here the good news that Fr. Pedro Castillo, from the Province of Venezuela, has been named the Director of the International Secretariat of JMV in Madrid. Sr. Asunción García García, a Daughter of Charity from the Province of San Vicente in Madrid, is working full-time side by side at the Secretariat with Pedro and three full-time lay volunteers, Ana Maria Escaño from the Philippines, Gloria del Carmen Santillán Martínez from Mexico and Ivanildo Dantas from Brazil. At present we are looking for a French-speaking lay volunteer.

First Appeal

As I have mentioned in previous letters, our first priority right now is to consolidate our present missions in order to lay down firm foundations for the future.

As you can imagine, we also receive new appeals from bishops throughout the world, but I will be slow to respond positively to these until our already established missions are firmly rooted.

Some of the most urgent appeals I hear at present are:

- **Mozambique:** As I trust was clear from what I wrote above, I am still very eager to give further assistance to the mission in Nacala, as well as to the Vice-Province of Mozambique which lies further to the south. I do not want to hide from you the fact that these are both tough missions because malaria is so common.
- **Ethiopia:** Our confrere, Msgr. Demerew Souraphiel, who is now the Archbishop of Addis Ababa, has repeatedly asked my help in finding an English-speaking confrere who might be able to strengthen the formation team at the diocesan major seminary there. It is important that this confrere would have previous experience in formation work. Likewise, Abba Markos Gebremedhin, the new Visitor of the Province of Ethiopia, has asked for two confreres from the international community to help for a few years. He offers these job descriptions: For the formation of our confreres, he would like someone to be the spiritual director of our own Vincentian major seminarians, assist in the administration of the seminary (if possible, in the course of time, be the rector of the seminary), and he could also be a resource person for the ongoing formation programs of the province (optional) and perhaps teach in the institute some courses in theology or philosophy (optional). For the provincial office, he would like someone to help in the administration, to help in writing projects and finding funds, to set up and coordinate an office for the development works of the province, and to be a resource person for helping the houses better implement the developmental and pastoral works and for helping confreres to keep accounts and write reports properly.
- **Solomon Islands:** Around the beginning of 2003, Fr. Chacko Panathara will be going to the Solomon Islands, where for a long time we have envisioned the opening of a missionary parish that would work in conjunction with the seminary there. I hope that he could be accompanied by other confreres in this new work.
- **Vice-Province of Sts. Cyril and Methodius:** The Vice-Province is just getting underway, as I mentioned above. It now needs to develop a

formation program for its students. It also needs to consolidate its personnel in Byelorussia, Ukraine, and Siberia. We hope, moreover, at some time in the future, to reopen the house which the Congregation possesses in Lithuania. Volunteers are very much needed if our presence in this part of the world is to grow.

- **Congo:** The Visitor, Dominique Iyolo Iyombe, has asked for help at our Vincentian major seminary in Kimwenza. He is looking for a French-speaking confrere who could be spiritual director for our seminarians.
- **Albania:** As you know, the government of this mission has been entrusted to the Province of Naples, with the pledge of support from the Provinces of Rome and Turin. Giuseppe Ferrara, the Regional Superior, has written asking the presence of other confreres from the international community.
- **Zambia:** The Nuncio came to see me to speak about a project which the bishops of Zambia have. They are looking for a Congregation that would undertake the direction of a secondary school which they hope might eventually develop into a university. Our conversation expanded to the possibility of our undertaking a small mission in Zambia. The country has 73 languages, but English is the unifying language of all those who attend school. The various tribal groups, he told me, communicate with one another in English.

Second appeal

As you know, we are continuing to build up the International Mission Fund, IMF: 2000-2004. The confreres and provinces have been wonderfully generous in contributing to it. This past year, using the interest from IMF: 2000 and from the Mary Immaculate Seminary International Seminary Fund, we were able to distribute a very significant amount of money to our missions and poorest provinces. I am immensely grateful to the provinces and confreres who have now pledged or are already making generous donations to IMF: 2000-2004. Some have also left legacies, which are now bearing fruit in the missions.

This past year we were also able to help some of our poorest provinces to begin to set up endowment funds for their future. This is very encouraging not just to me, but to them too. I deeply appreciate the huge donations that have made this possible.

The preparatory document for this year's Synod in which I am participating right now ("The Bishop: Servant of the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the Hope of the World," 125) states that one of the most important contemporary

challenges is to promote communion of goods within the Church, with a special care for the missions and the poorest of the poor. Our provincials and very many individual confreres have shown wonderful generosity in recent years in doing this.

My appeal is straightforward. I ask you, with as much simplicity as I can, to reflect on whether you as an individual can make a contribution, small or large, to IMF: 2000-2004. I also ask each of the Visitors to discuss with the members of your council whether your province might be able to make a contribution, small or large. I am enclosing a sheet that will provide you with instructions as to how this can be done.

That is the news and those are my two appeals. Thank you for the wonderful missionary spirit that has been evidenced by the number of volunteers over the past years and by the financial contributions that so many individuals and provinces have made.

Your brother in St. Vincent,

Robert P. Maloney, C.M.
Superior General

IMF: 2000-2004

Methods for Making a Contribution

Provincial Contributions

1. Checks made payable to: "Congregazione della Missione" and with "Deposit Only" written on the back. These should be sent to:

Elmer Bauer III, C.M.
Econome General
Via dei Capasso, 30
00164 Roma
Italy

2. For Italy and France, the CCP account can be used following exactly the information in the Catalogue, page 1.
3. Other possibilities for transfers can be discussed with the Econome General.

Individual Contributions

1. Checks made payable to: "Congregazione della Missione" and with "Deposit Only" written on the back, sent to the address above.
2. Other arrangements can be made via the Provincial Econome, who will be acquainted with various methods of transfer.

In every case:

1. All gifts received will be acknowledged.
2. If your contribution is not acknowledged in a reasonable time, please contact us for clarification.
3. Please inform us if you are making any transfer of money, as described above.